

New Approaches to Basic Writing

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UNIVERSITY *of* WISCONSIN
EAU CLAIRE

UW-Eau Claire Context – 2010

- Blugold Commitment Differential Tuition
- New Composition Director
- First-year Writing Program in need of reform
- Basic Writing within First-year Writing Program



Issues with Old Model

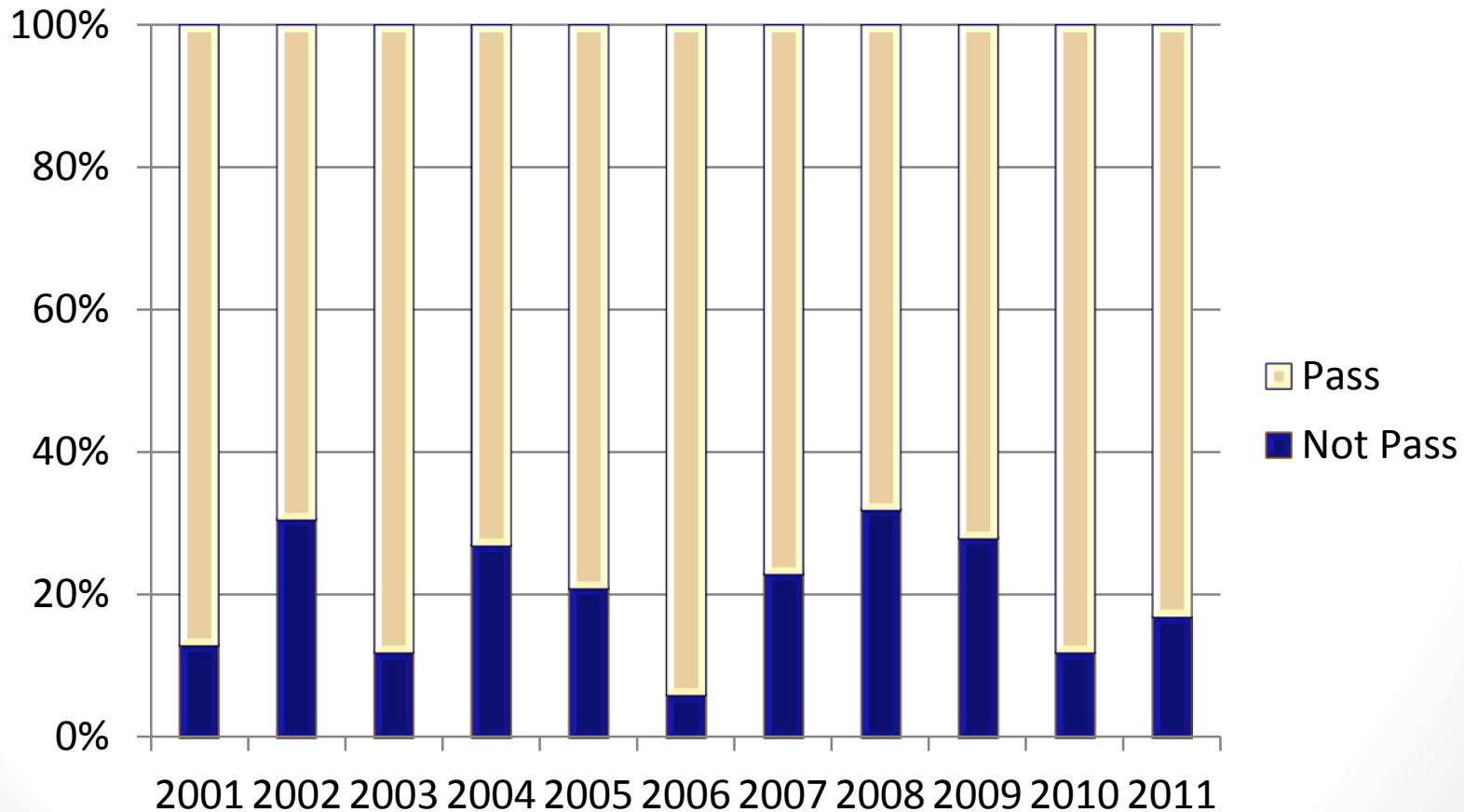
- Placement issues
- Curriculum issues
- Staffing problems
- Student learning issues

*The standards for the writing were very low.
I was never challenged. . .*

Sophomore, Music Education Major, Baseline Survey, 2010

Student Learning – Old Model

ENGL 099 Pass Rate



Student Learning – Old Model

- From 2001-2011, 6% to 32% of students did not pass the remedial writing course
- Average of 21% not passing
- In one horrendous semester, 50% of the students in the course did not pass
- In a subset for whom we could gather retention data:
 - Of the New Freshman (53) who took ENGL 99 during their first year, 42% (22) were not retained to their second year.
 - 10 were first generation students
 - 10 were students of color
 - 7 were low income

Research on Basic Writers

- Curricular Approaches that do not Work
 - Grammar/correctness
 - Developmental model
 - Additional/non-credit requirements



Research on Basic Writers

- Curricular Approaches that Work
 - Small class size
 - Differentiated instruction
 - Rigorous curriculum with high standards
 - Additional supports – writing center, writing fellows, studio classes
 - Countering stereotype threat

Creating a New Model

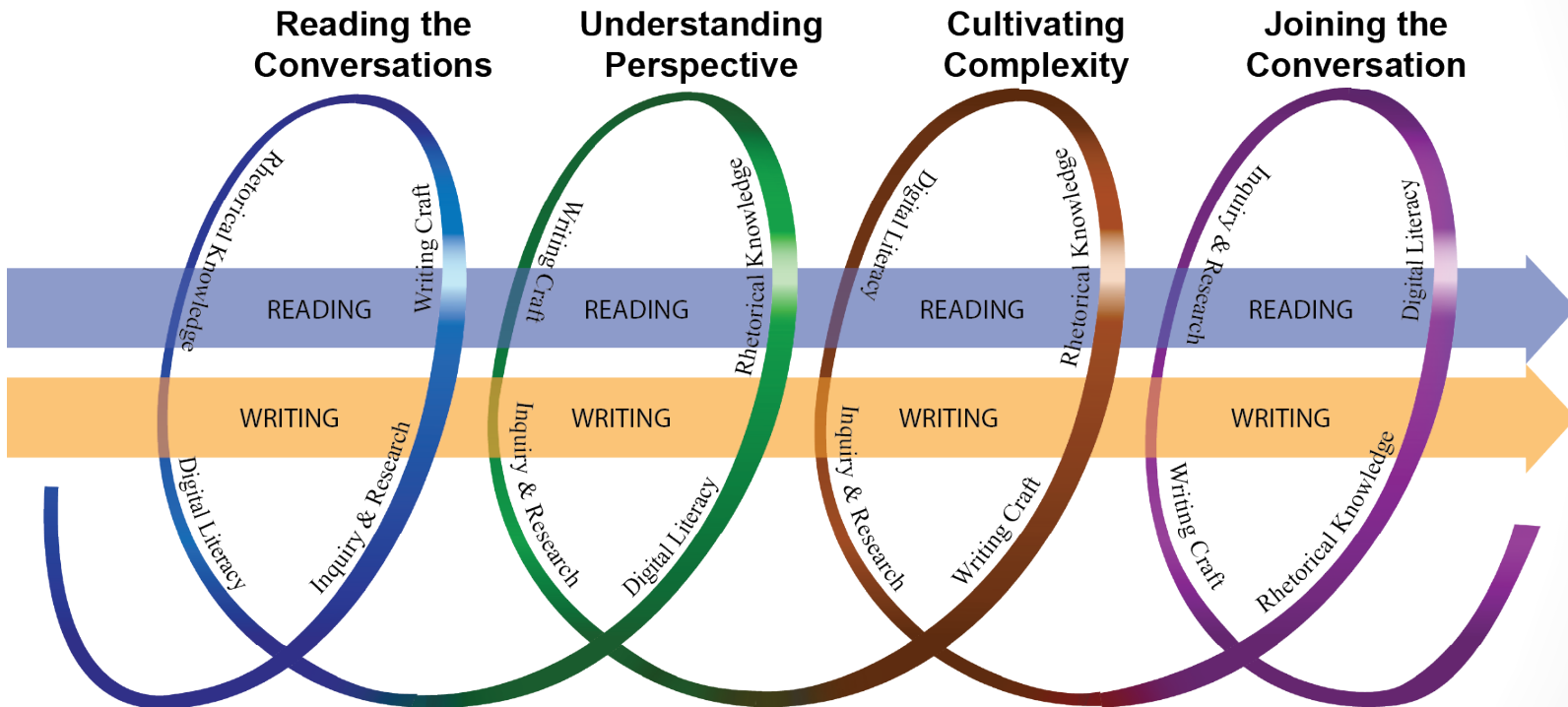
- Gathered Baseline Data
 - Faculty conversations
 - Student survey
 - Student focus groups
- Blugold Commitment Differential Tuition Grant
 - Research & best practice models including basic writing
 - Writing program redesign
 - Consultations with stakeholders across campus
 - Curriculum overhaul
 - Professional development program
- Student-Faculty Research Projects

Blugold Seminar in Critical Reading & Writing

WRIT 114, 116, 118, 120

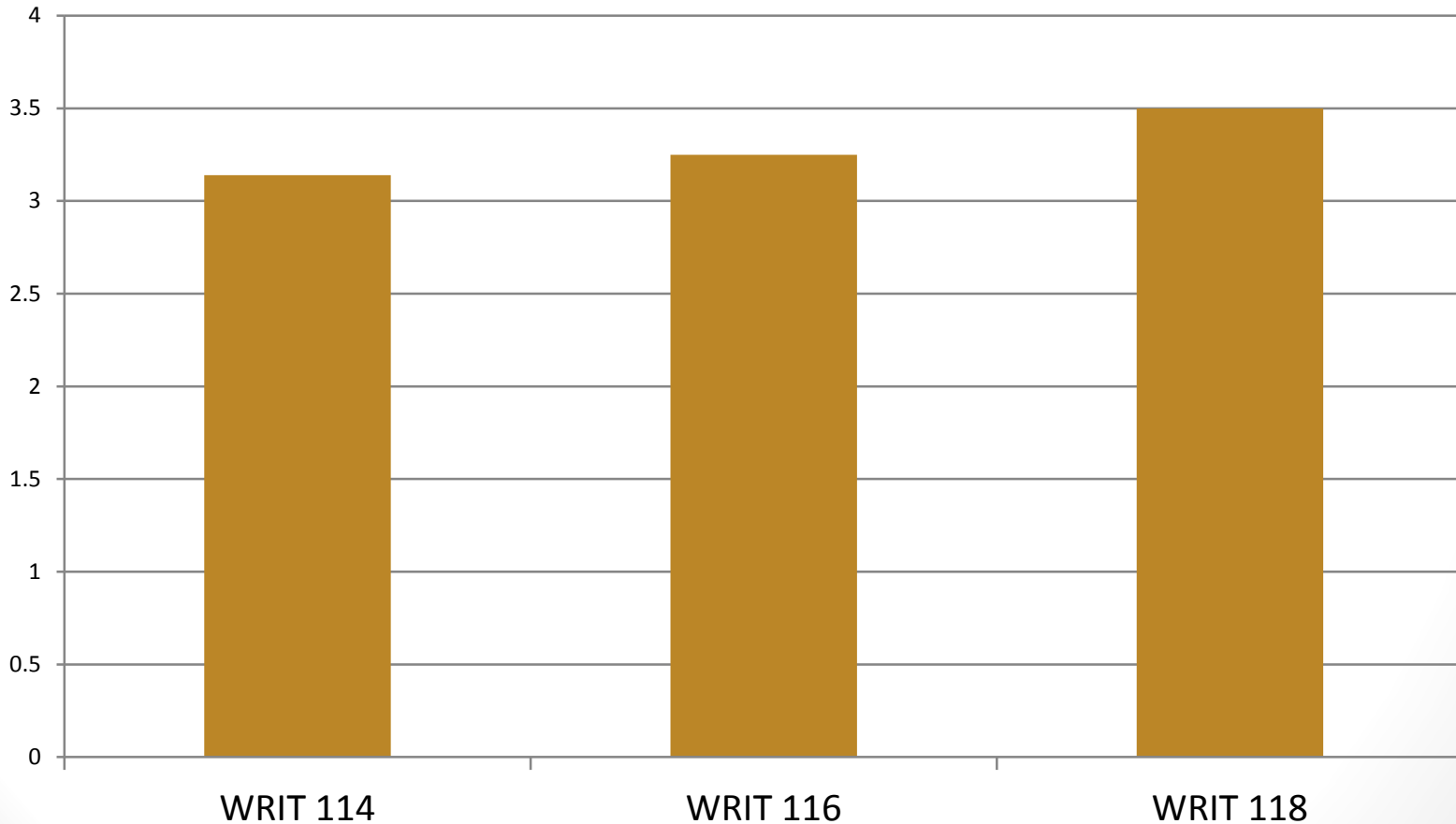
- Not sequential
- Each fulfills University Writing Requirement
- Same course outcomes & curriculum
- Different methods and pedagogies: pace, level of depth, and types of support
- Sustainable staffing model
- Ongoing professional development & teacher support

Blugold Seminar in Critical Reading and Writing



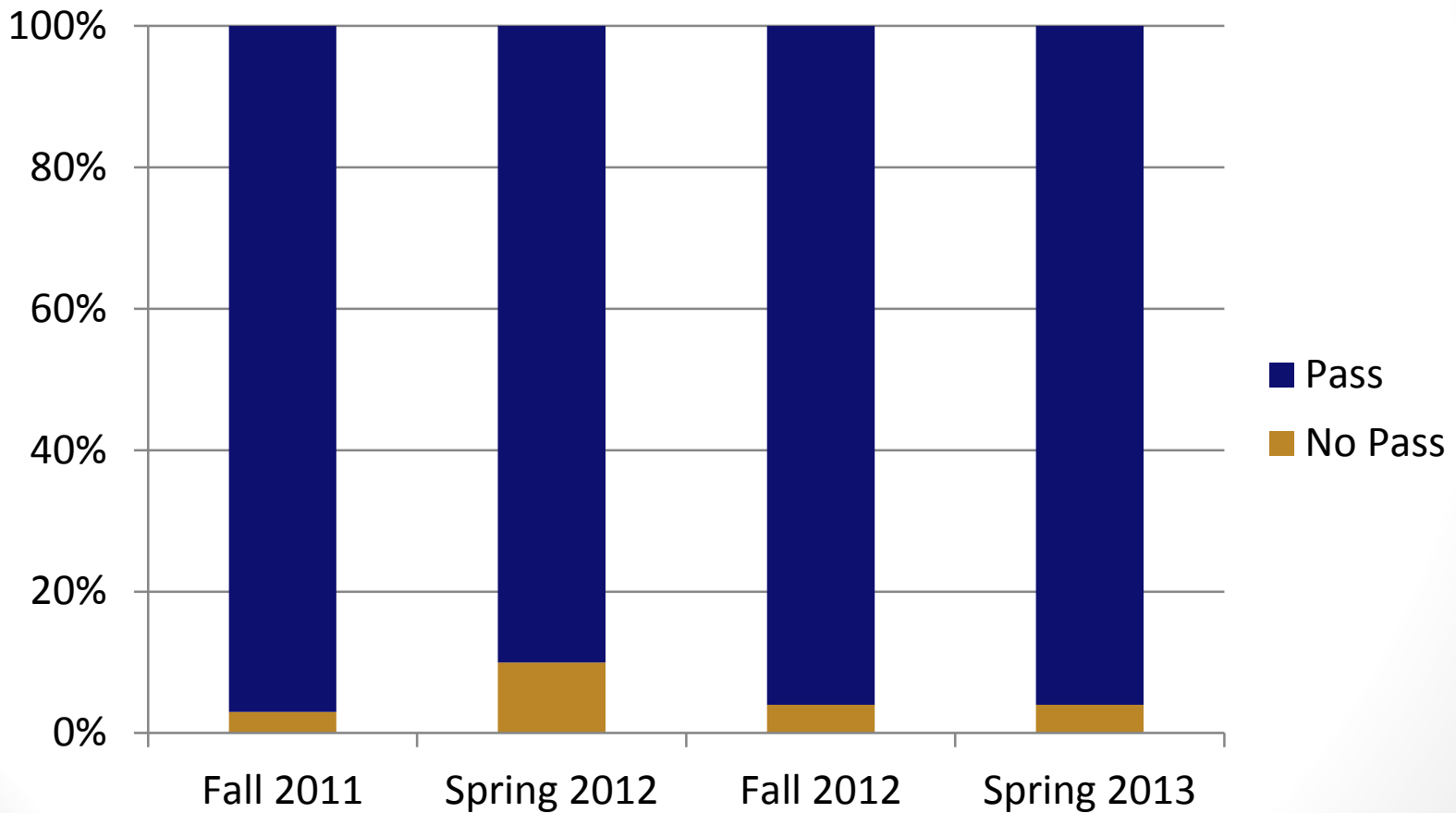
Blugold Seminar Performance Data

Group Mean GPA by Course – 2011-12



Student Learning – New Model

WRIT 114 Pass Rate



Student Learning – New Model

- 12/262 Students in WRIT 114 did not pass
- Overall no pass rate of 5%
- Of those 12 students, only 5 were not retained
 - Of those 5 students, 2 first generation, 2 low income, and 1 student of color
- 72 of these students would have taken English 099
 - Of these 72 students, 6 did not pass (8%)
 - Of those 6, only one was not retained

I thought it was a good challenge. . . I hate English, but I feel really proud of myself.

Freshman, Intensive Blugold Seminar Focus Group, Spring 2013