Purpose of Research
The General Purpose of the research is to better understand how skills and information learned in the Blugold Seminar transfers to other courses and disciplines as well as how the Blugold Seminar affects students writing and academic abilities.

Methods
The method used in this study were a series of semi-structured interviews with students who have attended either the Blugold Seminar (BGS) or the regular English 110. These interviews were the first of many in a longitudinal study that will be conducted throughout many years. This semester there were 20 students who took part in the interviews. The aim is to follow these students as they progress in their college career and observe the effects that Blugold Seminar has on their performance, specifically writing, in college and see how well skills acquired in BGS transfers to other disciplines.

What is the Importance of Writing?

Communication
Writing is an important medium of communication. Being able to write means being able to convey a message more clearly; not only in academic situations, but personal and professional as well.

Used in many disciplines
Writing is important in almost every field. All disciplines in college requires some form of writing. Whether it be a dissertation on a complex theory or a weekly journal entry, writing is somehow incorporated into every field.

Critical thinking and the purpose of education
The original role of education in America wasn't to find a well-paying job; it was to create informed citizens who could make a wise decision on who will lead them. Critical thinking is fundamental to this process of deciding who the best candidate is. Critical thinking is also an important factor in almost every field, so it would seem fitting that education should nurture critical thinking and according to Lisa Tsui, a researcher for the Education Policy Center at the Urban Institute in Washington D.C, writing courses are the courses with the highest increases to critical thinking skills and papers critiqued by professors are the assignment types that yielded the highest marks for increased critical thinking skills. With these two factors, both being related to writing, it is clear to see why writing is such an important aspect of education.

What is Blugold Seminar?
“The Blugold Seminar is a writing-intensive and inquiry-based approach to college-level research and writing. The course grounds students in the reading, writing, and rhetorical demands necessary for success at UW-Eau Claire and beyond” (Blugold Seminar, UW-Eau Claire)

Findings
Positives
• Enjoyment of class as a whole.
• Smaller classroom sizes created a better atmosphere for learning, collaboration and group discussions.
• Peer editing, tutors, 1 on 1 conferences with instructor and use of writing center for further help.
• Enjoyed theme based courses as it made different assignments more relevant to one another.

Negatives
• Some students failed to see relevance of BGS to their specific major.
• Repetitive information or information that students had already learned prior to course.

Skills learned in course
• Students emphasized the courses ability to prepare them for an academic writing environment where they had to use a more formal tone in their writing.
• Understanding audience and usage of rhetoric in order to convey a more meaningful and stronger message.
• Create a stronger, more concise and more specific thesis statement.
• Identifying which sources were or weren’t credible.
• Being able to look from other perspectives through peer reviews, research and discussions.
• MLA and APA formatting.
• Summarizing/condensing information from readings, lectures or other sources.
• Organizing thoughts and ideas succinctly in essays.

Skills used in other courses
• The most common was the use of a more academic tone or formal language in their papers.
• The use of certain formats, APA or MLA, carried over to most students major.
• Summarizing and condensing information for papers and for note taking.
• Organization of thoughts in papers.

What is the Importance of this Research?
Designing a curriculum that tends to the needs of students is the role of the University. Understanding how the current program affects students as they leave BGS and go into their respective fields and taking into account all comments, positive and negative, will help the University ascertain the effectiveness of the program and allow for it update or enhance their curriculum to better suit the needs of students.

What are the Limitations of the Research?
At present there are 3 major limitations to this research:
Sample Size
The sample size is relatively small in comparison to the quantity that are required to take a freshmen English, but with every passing year a new cohort of students will be joining the sample size along with students of the previous year.
Time
These series of interviews are only the first in a long line of upcoming interviews and only show the initial effects of BGS; however, this is a longitudinal study aimed at also looking at the long term effects of BGS.

Qualitative Study
The qualitative aspect of this research means that it will be hard to quantify what has been learned or transferred to other disciplines, but, in lieu of the fact that doesn’t give hard numbers, the qualitative nature gives insight why students do or don’t transfer skills to across disciplines.

References
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