Integrating Reading & Writing in a Corequisite Classroom

Complete College America Workshop, Louisiana

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Agenda

- Brief introduction to English placement and curriculum at my college & data on student outcomes

- Window into how I integrate reading and writing in my English composition classes, corequisite and regular

- Open Q & A

Skyline College
English Placement & Curriculum

- We're an open-access community college just south of San Francisco, CA.

- Stand-alone developmental English courses were fully replaced with corequisite models in fall 2019.

- Students with high school GPA 2.6 or higher are placed into standard 3-unit course, "English 100: Reading and Composition."

- Students with high school GPA below 2.6 placed into 5-unit course "English 105: Reading and Composition with Support" (students who don't have U.S. high school GPAs also placed here; any student can submit a challenge petition to take the 3-unit version).

- Most sections of the 5-unit course have an embedded tutor.
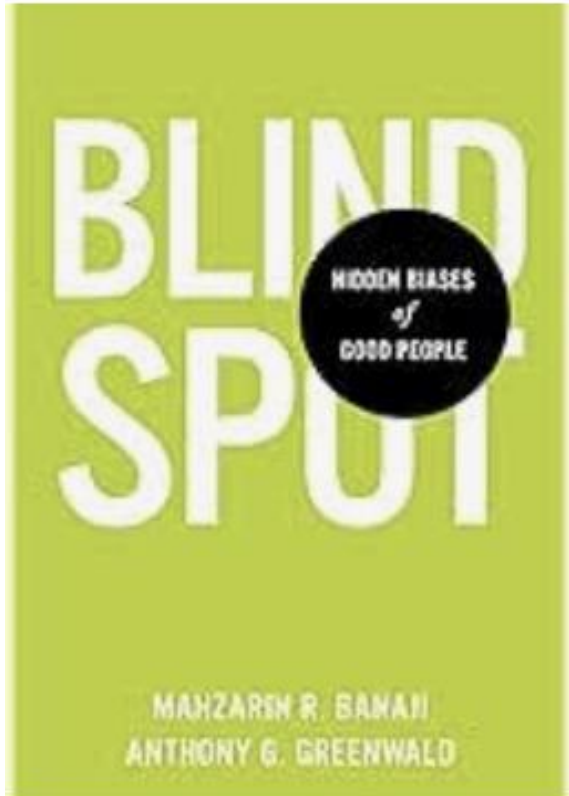
Successful Transfer-Level Completion Rates in English
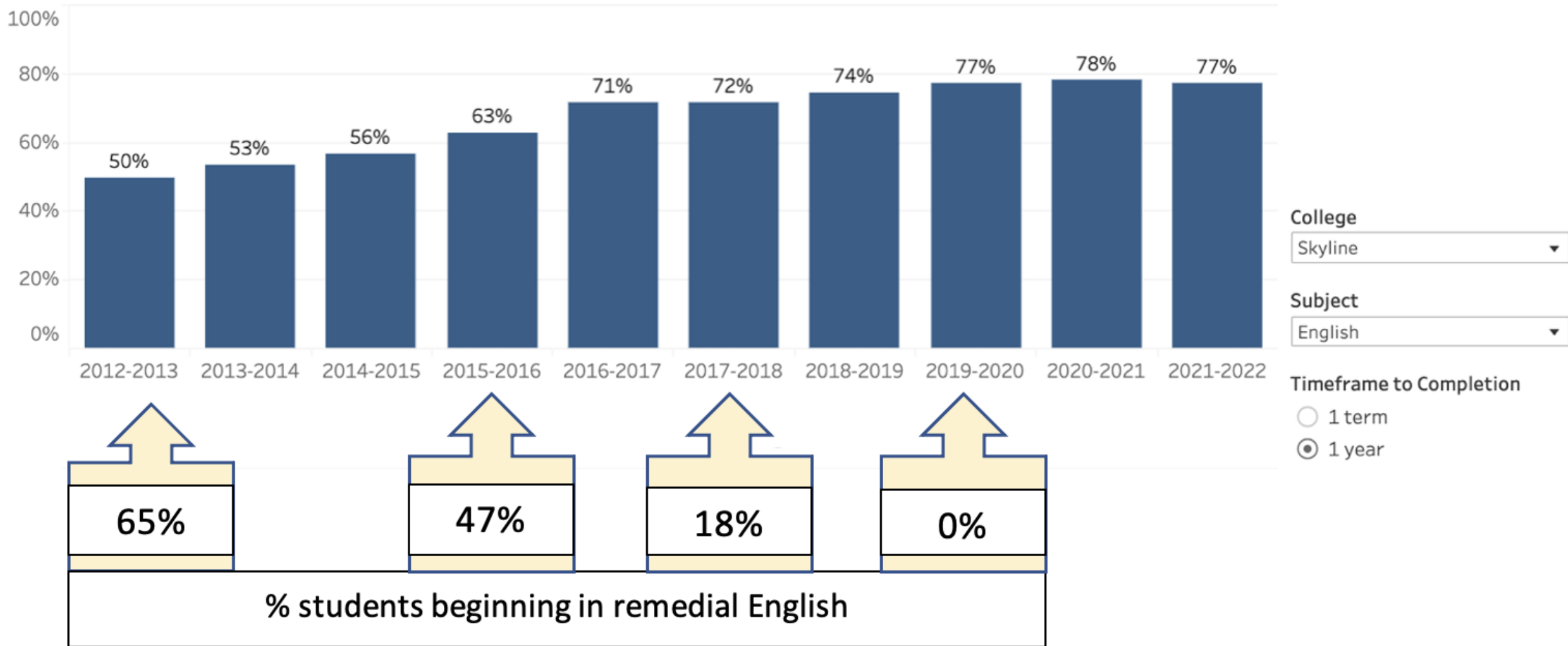
Source: Transfer-Level English and Math Completion Dashboard, State Chancellor's Office
One-year completion data follows students for two semesters from first English enrollment (fall-spring)
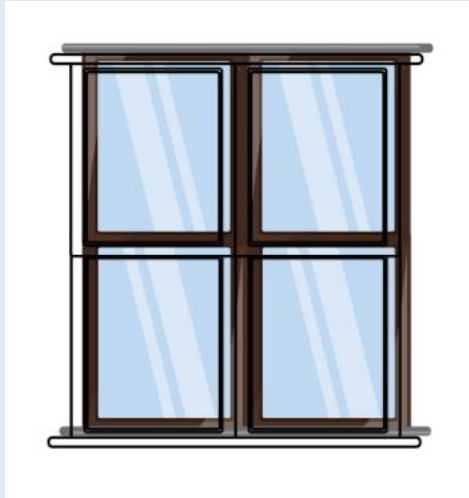
Window into the **Classroom**

Course Theme: Understanding Bias

Anchor Text

Blindspot: The Hidden Biases of Good People

Accessibly written psychology book about implicit bias
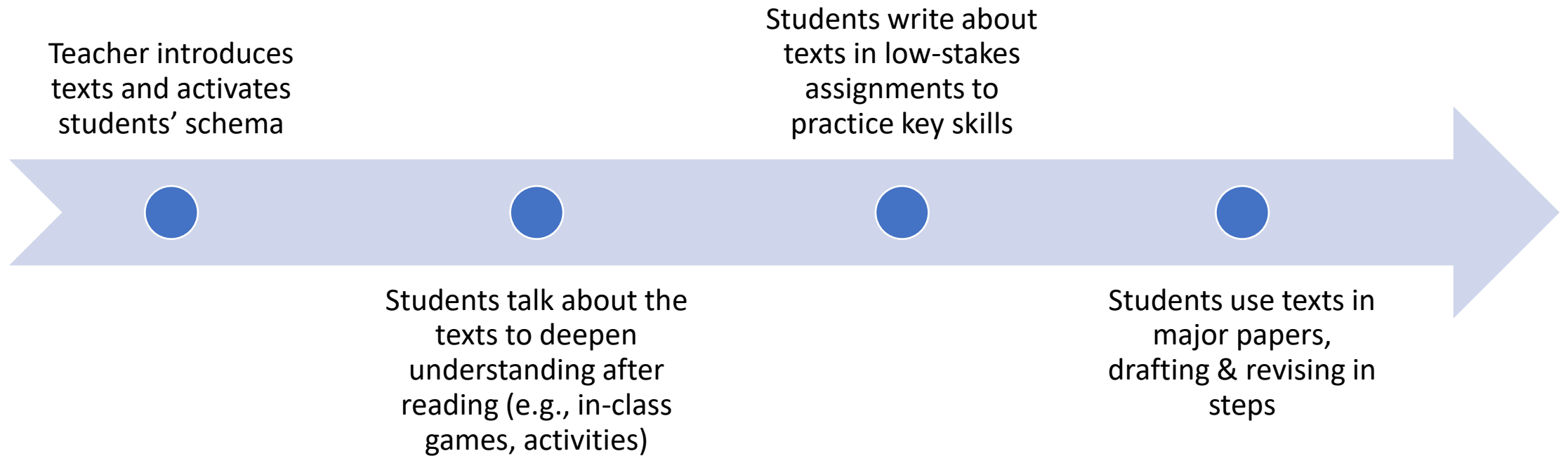
A Major Assignment

4-5-page essay analyzing the bias against a particular group, using concepts from *Blindspot* and other texts

Each student chooses their topic. I've received great papers analyzing biases toward poor people, people with learning disabilities, Christians, women in STEM, Asian women, people with autism...

Reading and writing instruction is contextualized within the theme.

Engaging Students to Actively Process Texts

Students write about
texts in low-stakes
assignments to
practice key skills

Teacher introduces
texts and activates
students' schema

Students talk about the
texts to deepen
understanding after
reading (e.g., in-class
games, activities)

Students use texts in
major papers,
drafting & revising in
steps

Before Reading: Activating & Building Schema

A key concept in *Blindspot* is the "implicit association test," which measures our "automatic associations."

Before students read about this, they take a practice test about flowers and insects.

In this test, you will see items that represent **INSECTS**, **FLOWERS**, **pleasant words**, and **unpleasant words**. As each item appears, you will be asked to make responses on the left or right side as quickly as possible. For touch devices, responses are made by tapping colored areas on the left and right. For keyboards, key presses are used to make responses.

| **INSECTS** | WASP | FLEA | ROACH | CENTIPEDE | MOTH | BEDBUG | GNAT |
FLOWERS	ORCHID	TULIP	ROSE	DAFFODIL	DAISY	LILAC	LILY
pleasant words	gentle	enjoy	heaven	cheer	happy	love	friend
unpleasant words	poison	evil	gloom	damage	vomit	ugly	hurt

Speed is important; work as quickly as you can. Your results will not be accurate if you go too slow. If you make a mistake, you will see a red **X** and should rapidly make the other response to correct the error.

I am ready to begin the test

https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/user/agg/blindspot/indexfi.htm

After Reading: In-Class Game to Assess Comprehension and Retention

What word or words go with "automatic mind"?

12

▲ Deliberate

◆ Rational

● Unconscious

■ All of the above
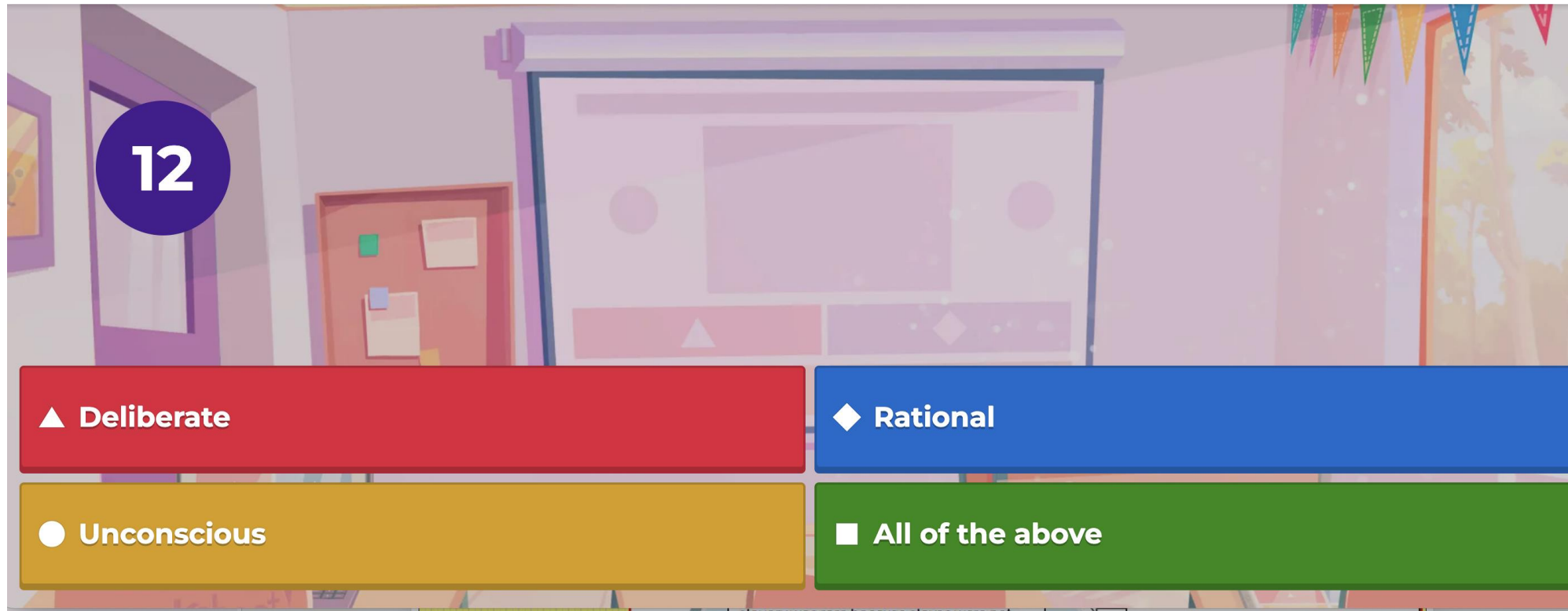
I use the free version of Kahoot.com to create games about class texts

Students Collaboratively Process Texts in Class
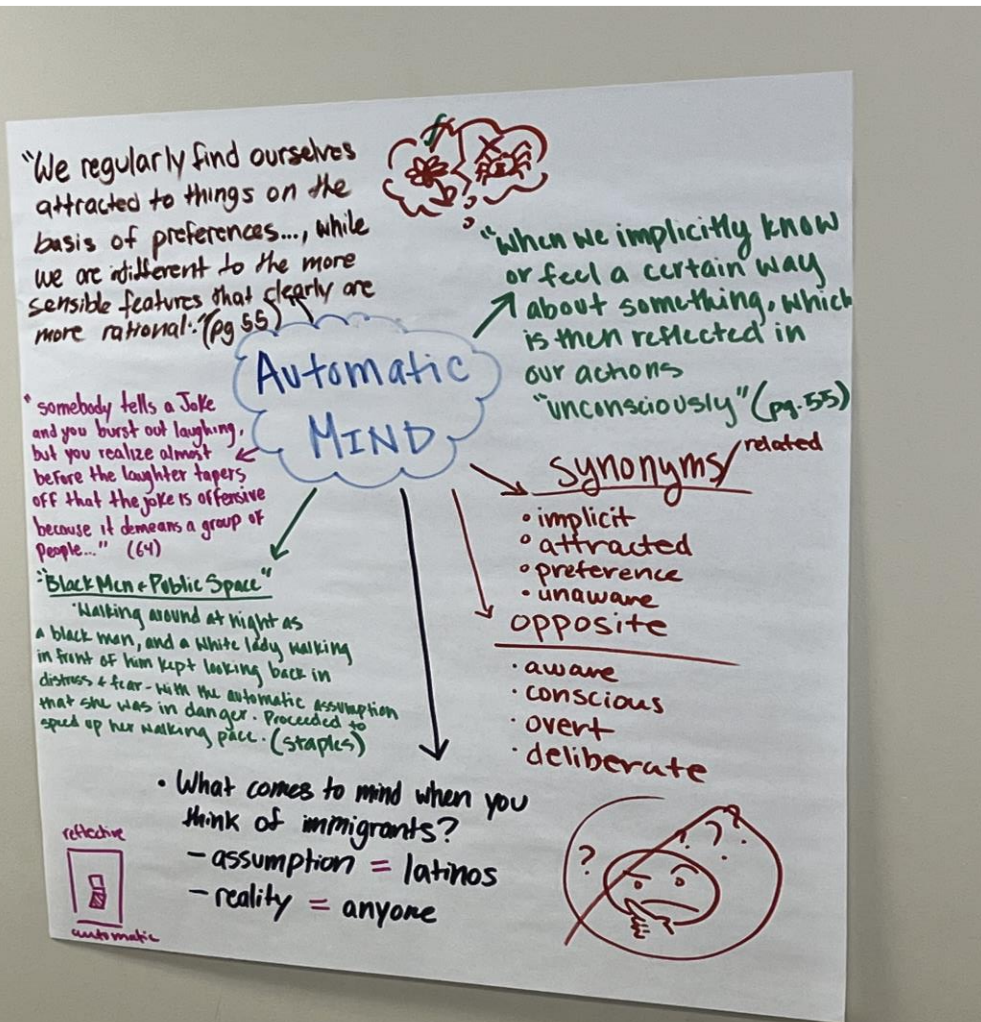
Students Work in Groups to make a poster about the concept of the "Automatic Mind"

Define the term & give relevant quotes from *Blindspot*

Come up with words that are related/similar

Come up with words that are different/opposite

Draw images related to the automatic mind

Come up with examples from our other readings

Come up with examples related to a group you belong to

Low-Stakes Writing about the Readings

3-5 low-stakes writing assignments/discussion boards each week

Students practice key writing & critical thinking skills before major assignments

Apply "Automatic Mind" to your Paper Topic
Write a PIE paragraph about one or more automatic associations people often have about the group you are writing about.

Point: Name an automatic stereotype about your group

Illustration: Explain what the automatic mind is and how it works, using 1-2 short quotes from *Blindspot*

Explanation: Connect this concept to the stereotype about your chosen group

- Graded Complete/Incomplete

- Individual feedback not usually provided

- Samples reviewed during class

Breaking Major Writing Assignments into Manageable Steps

- Students draft their essays one piece at a time, submitting each step for complete/incomplete credit (e.g., thesis statements and outline, body paragraphs, introduction, conclusion, works cited page, peer review feedback)

- Typical class activities:
  - Teacher projects anonymous student work on overhead, class discusses strengths and areas for improvement
  - Students practice key writing skills on classroom white boards & get feedback (e.g., paraphrasing, introductions to quotes, thesis statements)
  - In-class writing & revising with teacher and tutor circulating for support

Open Q & A

What questions/concerns come up for you
as you see this window into the classroom?

What concerns do you have as you plan for
full implementation of corequisite models in the fall?

Closing Thoughts: Other Issues to Consider

- Be intentional about community-building and lowering student fear, making it comfortable to try – I highly recommend *The College Fear Factor* by Rebecca Cox

- Be intentional about building in accountability for coming to class and doing the work, without excessive punitiveness

- Proactively reach out to students when they miss multiple classes and/or don't turn in work, set up Zoom appointments to check in and provide support, connect them with campus resources, such as counseling, financial support, and support for disabilities

- Use revision/rewrite policies to support growth – offer retakes for in-class exams, allow students to revise papers for a higher grade, require students who fail an early assignment to work with tutor on revision

- Be intentional about your grading policies – I recommend Feldman's book *Grading for Equity* for great concrete ideas, including not grading on a 0-100 scale, grading only on core learning outcomes and not things like lateness, participation, or perceived effort.