

WRITING IN THE CORE AND BEYOND

What do we know so far about writing at
HMC?

A timeline

- Nov 2008- SVCIC establishes the Writing Course Subcommittee (later the Ad Hoc Writing Course Committee)
 - Imagines a half-semester fall writing course for first-years
- Fall 2009– Pilot (3 sections; 40 students)
 - Assessment
 - Outside evaluators reviewed final papers; all learning objectives assessed were met (5 of 8)
 - Student papers comparable in quality to Hum 1 papers
- Fall 2010– 14 sections of Writ 1 taught by 13 faculty members plus Director of Learning Programs
 - Assessment of thesis statements
 - Students demonstrated moderate competencies (aggregate mean scores 2.5 on 4-pt scale on four dimensions of thesis strength.
 - Stability from one half-semester to the next

2011 Summary Recommendations from Ad Hoc Writing Course Committee

- Maintain 8:1 student to faculty ratio
- Course staffed by full-time, permanent members of HMC faculty
- Instructors free to develop course topics, BUT the content of the course is writing; common due dates and assignments
- Adoption of Joseph Williams' *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*, 9th edition
- Revised, trimmed learning objectives (from 8 to 5)
- Weekly instructor meetings (pods)

“Faculty should continue to consider how writing experiences throughout the curriculum can extend the training and practice students will receive in the first-year writing course”

2011 Summary Recommendations of the
Ad Hoc Writing Course Committee

Sustainability

- From the January 2010 committee report:

“[T]he writing course will become sustainable only when [... the] instructor ‘pool’ contain[s] 30 faculty members, or about 40% of the full-time, tenure-track HMC faculty [...] who would rotate through the course at roughly 50% duty cycle when not on sabbatical leave.”

Sustainability

- As of today:
 - 39 faculty members have participated in the week long faculty development seminar
 - 33 are still members of the HMC faculty
 - Of these 33, 28 have taught or are teaching the course

Writ 1E

- Fall 2011:
 - Faculty approve a spring continuation course for students who complete Writ 1 but fail to demonstrate the academic writing competencies necessary for further work
 - A grade of C- or better in Writ 1E results in a retroactive Pass in Writ 1, and 3 credits for a “floating” elective.

Spring 2014 Writ 1E Assessment

- 45 of the 46 students enrolled in Writ 1E since 2011 have passed and received retroactive Writ 1 passing grades.
- Writ 1E students persist at rates comparable to their non-Writ 1E classmates.
- 2013 NSSE Writing Module Data show no significant differences between Writ 1E students and their non-Writ 1E classmates on any dimension measured.

Writ 1E Alum Focus Groups

- All respondents found Writ 1E a useful class
- Confidence was a recurring theme, both in their continued disappointment at initially failing Writ 1, but also in their developing confidence in their new skills as writers

Focus Group Voices

How were Writ 1 and Writ 1E different for you?

- “In Writ 1E you really brainstorm with your peers.”
- “Time scale of Writ 1E really helped– we had a week to write, then a week of feedback, then a week of peer review.”
- “In Writ 1E we edited our paper as a class. Really helpful. Learned how to give feedback.”
- “Writ 1E is humbling.”

What are the most important take-aways from Writ 1E?

- “Writing is about logic. Making an argument, conveying valid ideas, how to present an idea [and use]evidence.”
- “What academic writing *is*. I did not understand what I was supposed to do in Writ 1.”
- “I got more experience writing; I gained confidence.”

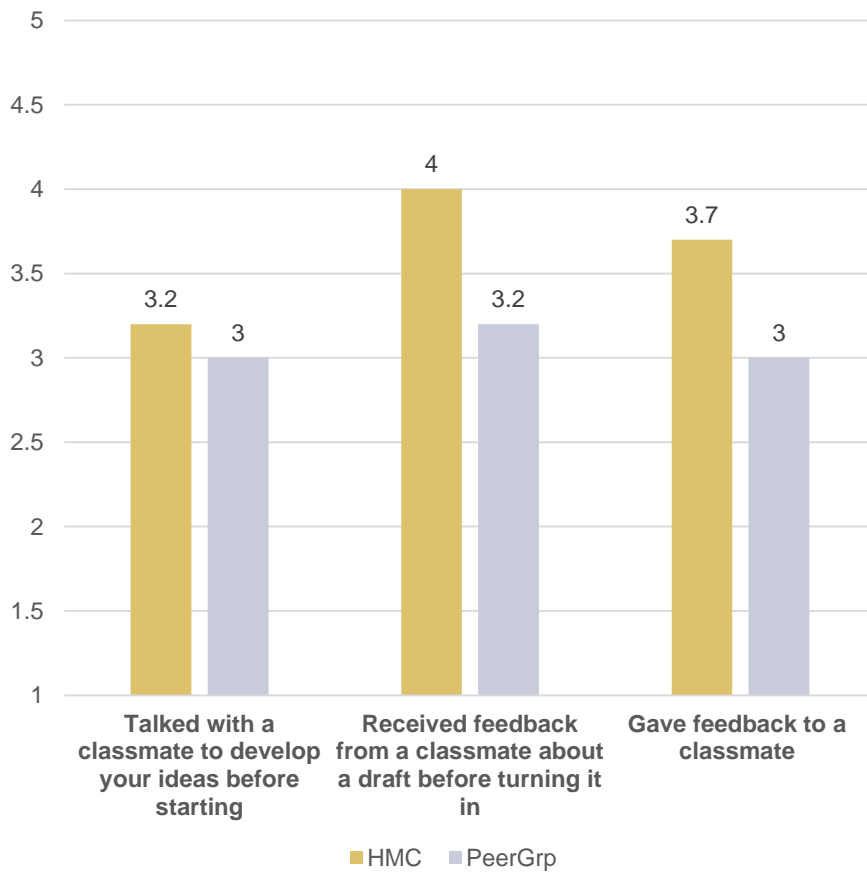
Advice to future Writ 1E students.

- “Take it. It will boost your confidence.”
- “It helps with HSA.”
- “Have multiple drafts. Learn from feedback”
- “I’m glad I took it. I’m glad they made me. It turns out to be good. It helped.”

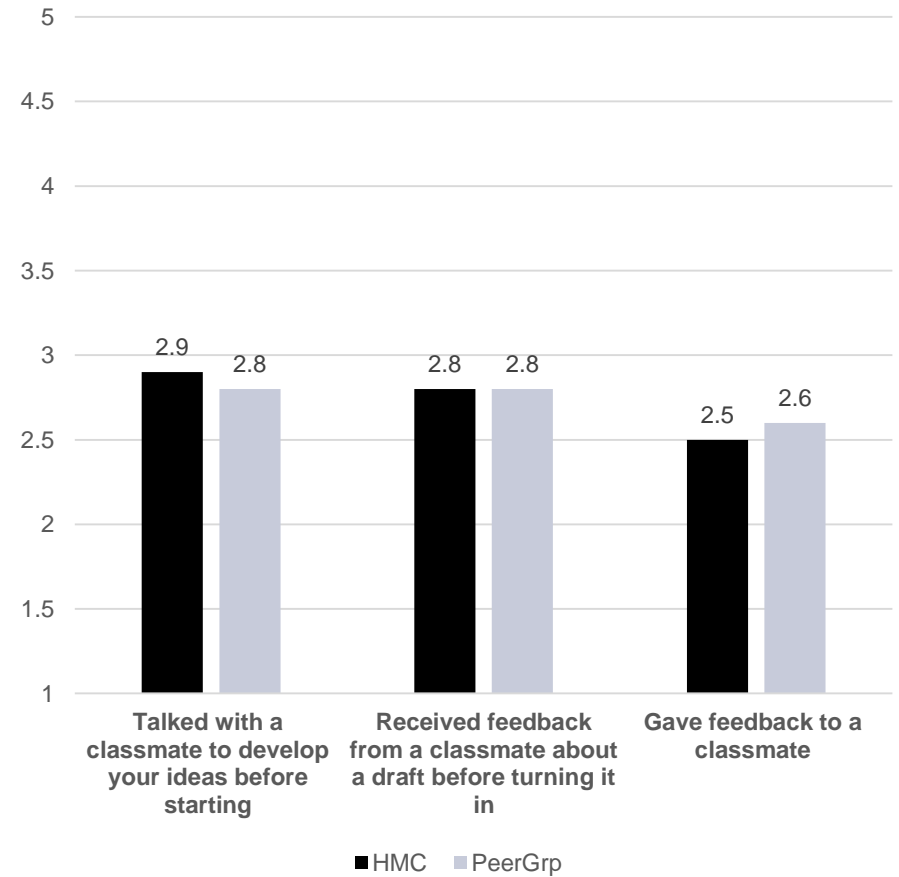
Zoom Out

Peer Review of Writing Assignments

First Years



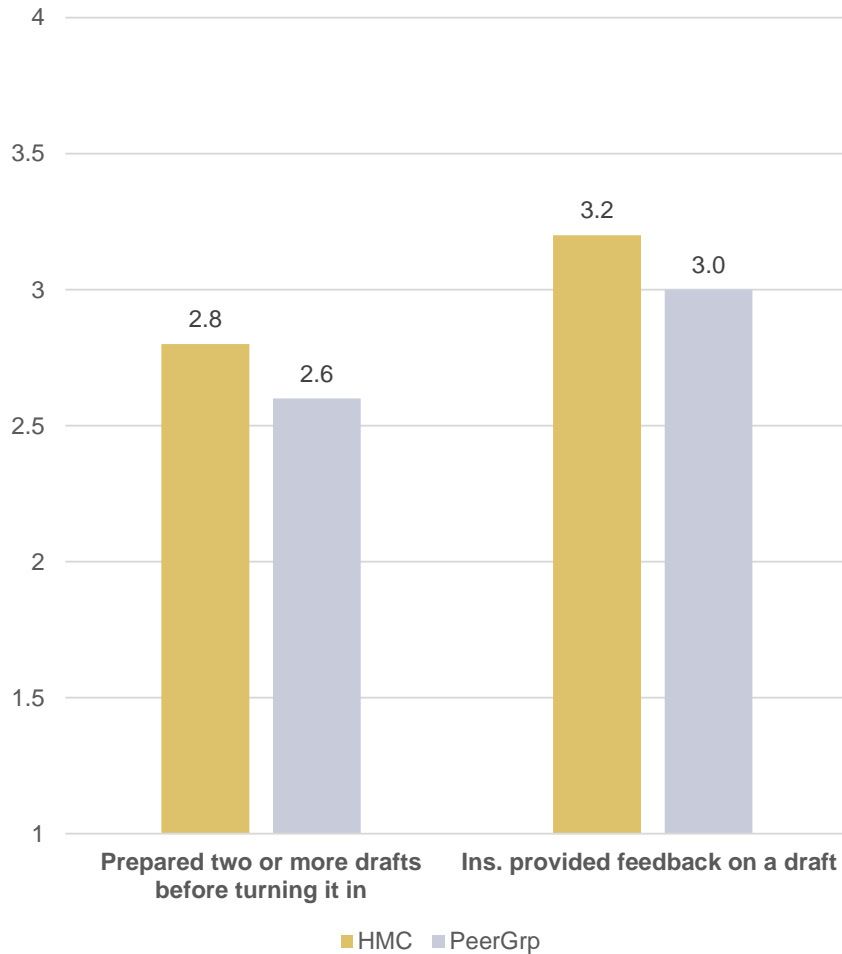
Seniors



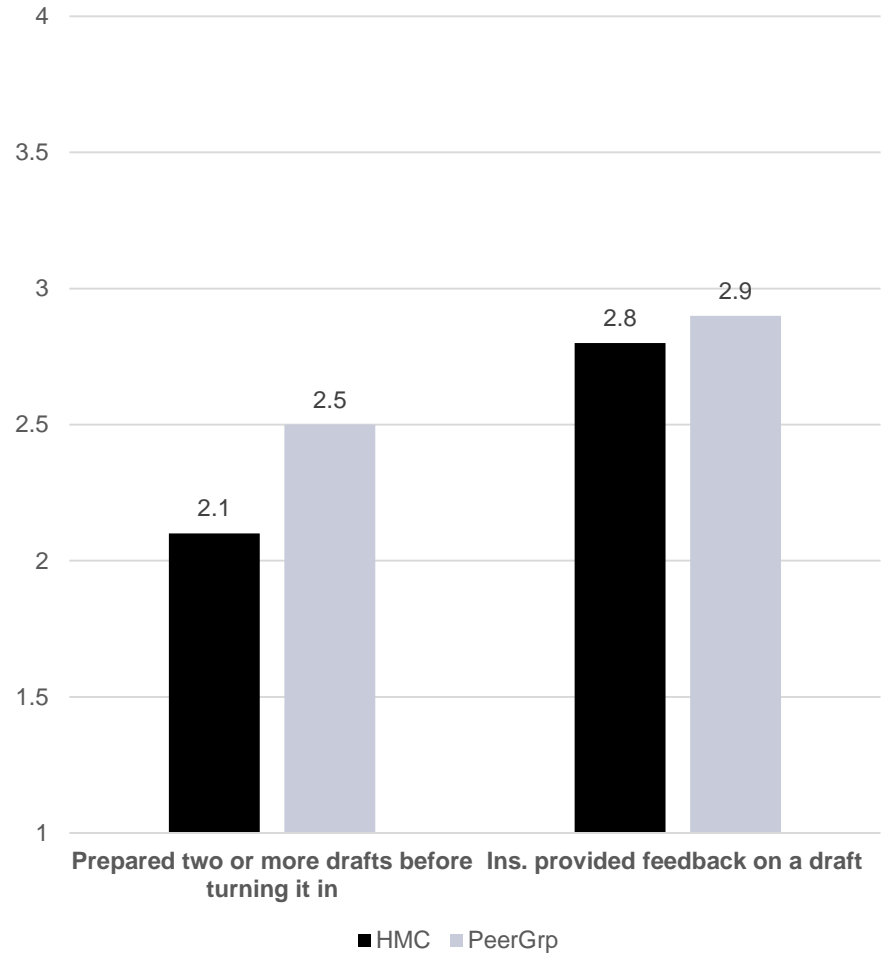
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Drafting and Feedback

First Years

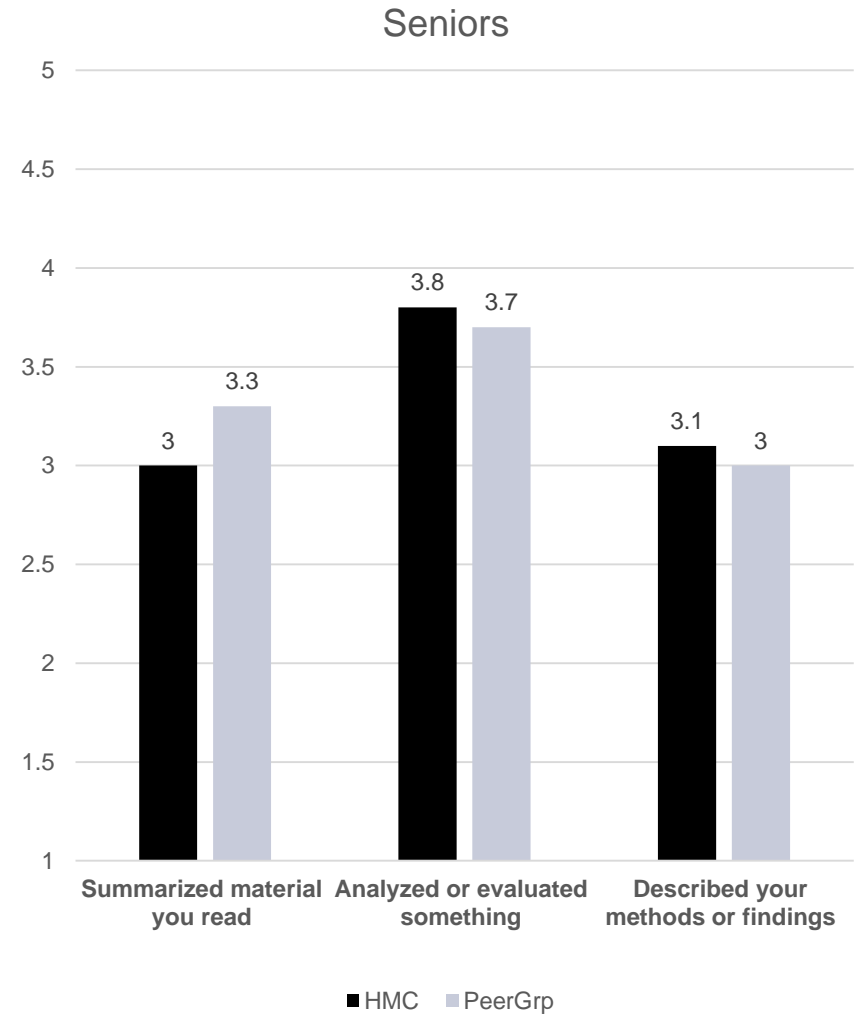
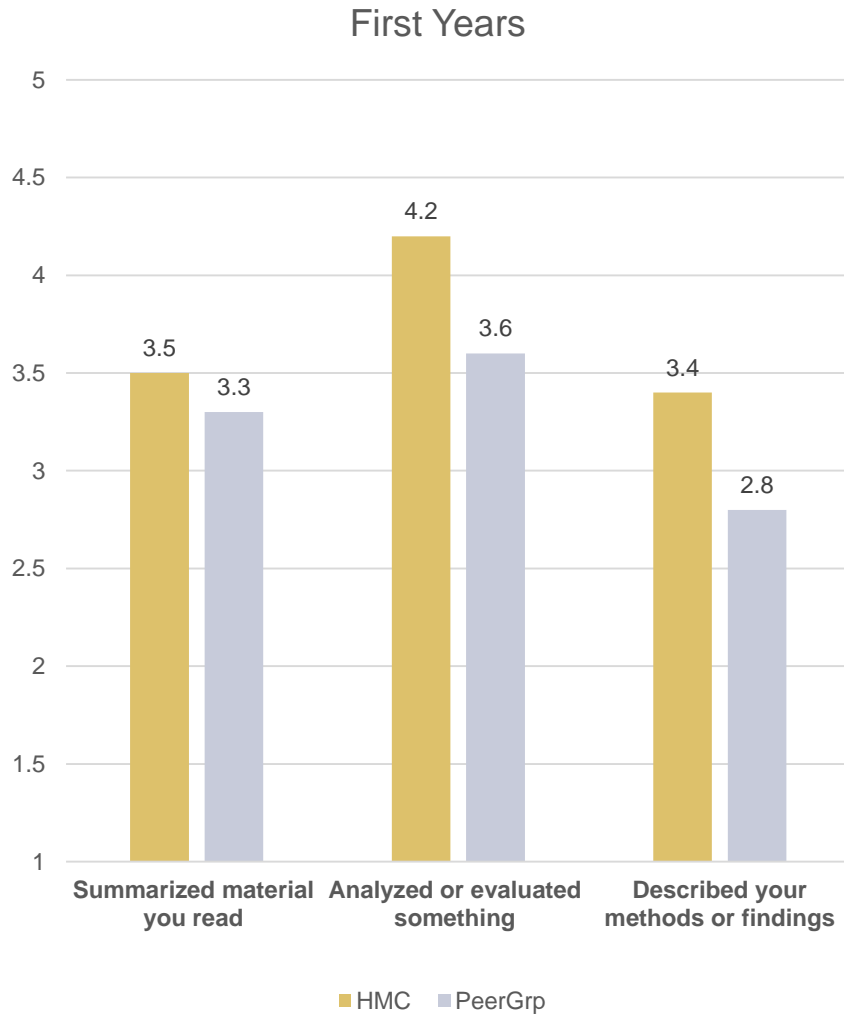


Seniors



1 = never; 2 = sometimes; 3 = often; 4 = very often

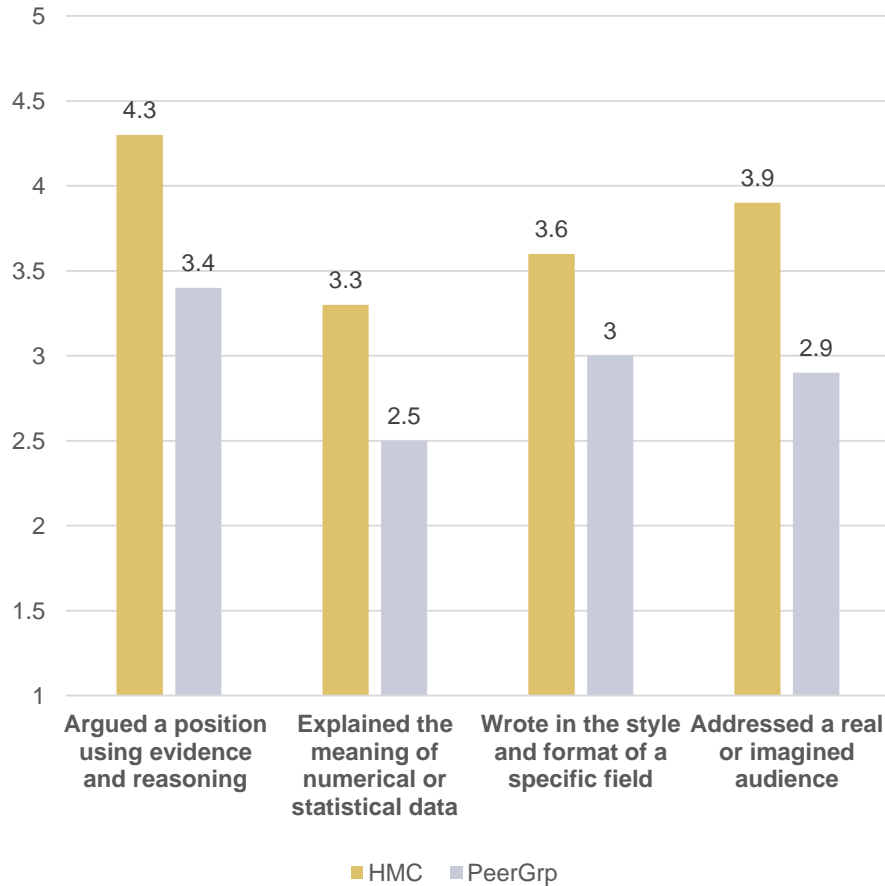
Conventions of Academic Writing



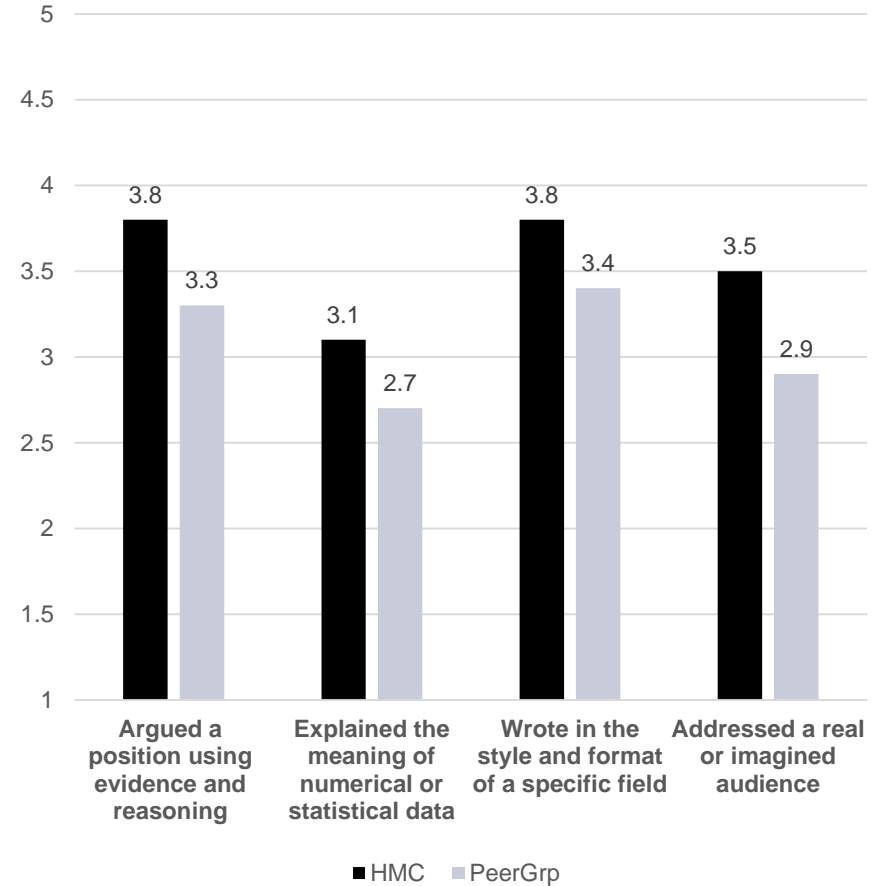
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Conventions of Academic Writing, Continued

First Years



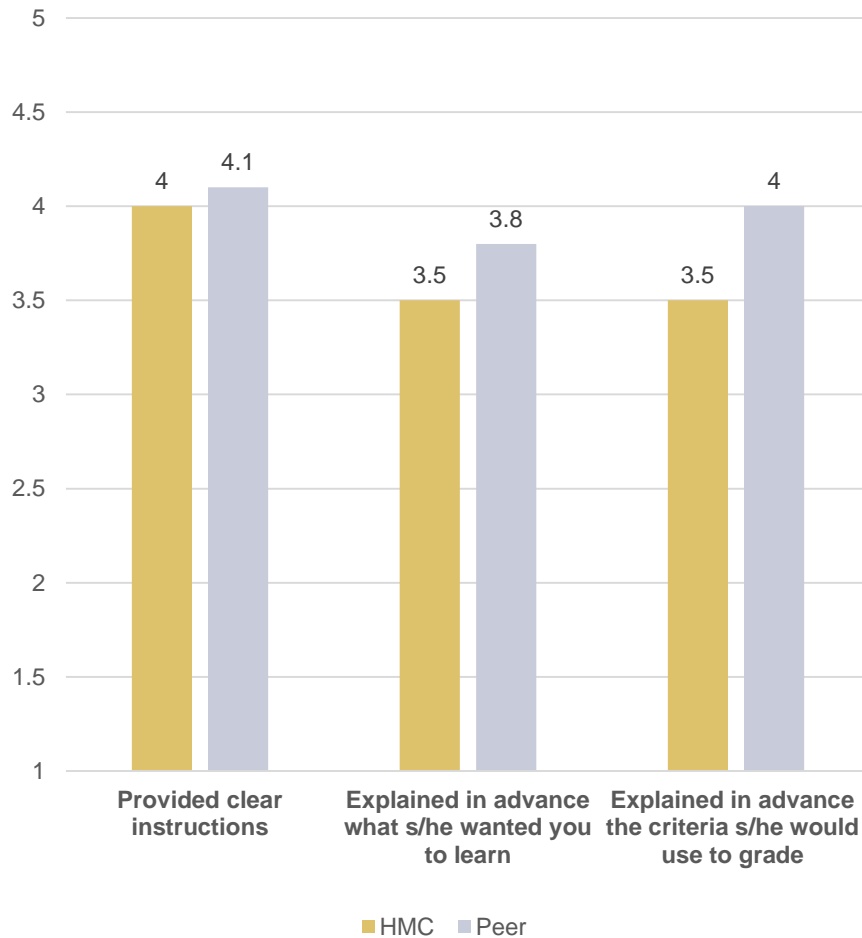
Seniors



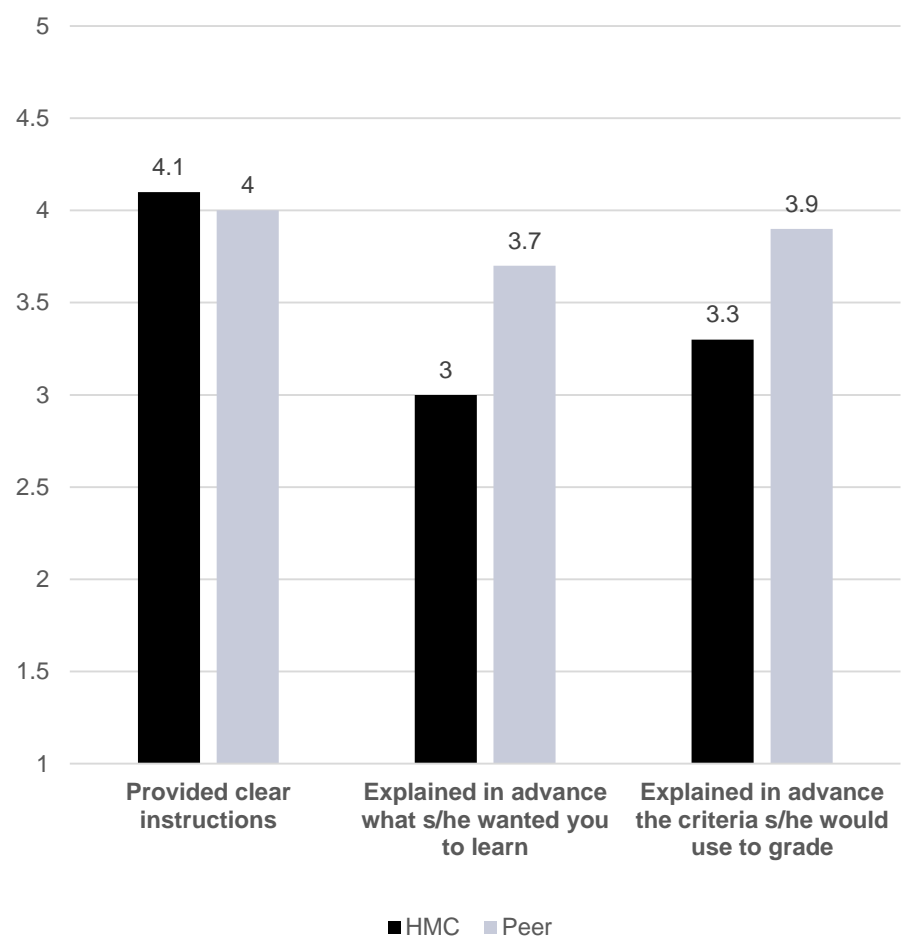
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Faculty Instructions for Writing Assignments

First Years



Seniors



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