

Curriculum Design for a Community College Basic Skills Course

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I get the distinct impression through casual conversations with some of my colleagues and through analysis of formal departmental documents that many community college instructors do not invest much time or effort in curriculum design. I have no way to verify or quantify this statement, but it makes a certain amount of intuitive sense given that most community college instructors have no formal training in curriculum or instruction.¹ Many community college instructors seem to just choose a textbook (or have a textbook chosen for them) and then structure their course straight from the structure of the book. This can have its advantages: it saves time for the instructor; provides a somewhat of a coherent structure and voice for the students to follow (depending on the quality of the book); and it could potentially save students some money if a single book were used, although many of the best comprehensive textbooks cost between \$60-\$100. The disadvantages, however, are many: the instructor is completely reliant on the structure of the book and the judgments of its author; the

¹ Grubb (1999) makes a similar argument, although he seems to limit it to part-time faculty (p. 200), but in general he seems to indict the whole community college faculty for sub-standard teaching and curriculum development.

instructor has no ownership over the curriculum and content of the class – the instructor is merely a facilitator of the book; over-reliance on a single textbook can instill a passive deference to the authority of the text for both the teacher and the student; and the instructor can easily fall into an unimaginative “teach-to-the-text” skill-and-drill method, which has proven to be ineffective for basic skills students.

For those instructors who do take an active role in designing their course curriculum, they might think that the first place to start would be obtaining the official “course outline” provided by the department. Most departments that I have worked for make it seem as if this should always be the first step in curricular design, and many departments have explicitly made it clear that no deviance from the official course outline is allowed. In fact, many departments demand that instructors copy verbatim the course description, student learning outcomes, and course topics – and sometimes demand that instructors only use pre-approved textbooks listed on the official document. There are practical organizational and administrative reasons for these demands (like creating a framework for departmental coherence or helping to facilitate articulation agreements); however, there are also disadvantages: limiting instructor professionalism through the authoritarian structure; stifling instructor creativity; encouraging authoritarianism in senior full-time faculty; and potentially reifying established course parameters, which can promote departmental passivity and become a barrier to institutional or classroom innovation. Thus, no instructor should begin to develop a course by looking at the approved department “course outline.”²

² Grubb (1999) alludes to the insufficiency of relying only on the approved “standards” for a course, but he does not criticize this practice sufficiently, although he does make reference to larger issue which I develop further in this essay. Grubb wrote: “the standards developed for transfer courses are based on the syllabus and content of a course, not on issues of pedagogy or how that content is delivered. Therefore the real content –

The first step (1.A) of curricular design is for the instructor to *conceptualize, organize, and verbalize a theory or philosophy of education*, including their principles of teaching and learning. Most community college instructors do not start with this step because very few are actually trained in the methods and theory of curriculum, instruction, and student learning. So perhaps the first step of curricular design (and better teaching in general) would actually be to teach community college instructors about these subjects and, thereby, empower them to become more competent professionals, but that is beyond the scope of this essay.

In order to describe my own theory of education I will need to borrow a couple of paragraphs from an essay I wrote called “The Ecology of Education.” Education is a formalized social process, whereby, the traditions, activities, relationships, knowledge, and values of a society are communicated and conveyed to students in experientially relevant ways through a conducive milieu. Education is the situated meeting of a student, peers, teacher, curriculum, and a structured milieu whereby learning is enacted and co-produced by all participants. In understanding education as part of the larger process of socialization, students both experience and transform inherited social practices in a process of co-constructing the society of which they are a part (Dewey, 1916/1966; Dewey, 1938/1997; Nasir & Hand, 2006). Learning is an experience mediated by engaging in a social practice, and as such learning cannot be “designed:” “Learning happens, design or no design...it can only be designed *for* – that is, facilitated or

the curriculum actually taught, rather than the formal curriculum – may be quite different from that envisioned in articulation agreements” (p. 236).

frustrated” (Wenger, 1998, p. 225, 229). If one wants to consciously and deliberately initiate learning, one must “design social infrastructures that foster learning” (p. 225).³

Understanding the effects of teaching on student learning and achievement are important (Good & Grouws, 1977; Grubb, 1999; Wentzel, 2002), but this is only one part of the ecology of education. Bronfenbrenner’s model for the ecology of human development (1979) can also be applied to the ecology of education (Zimmer-Gembeck & Mortimer, 2006, p. 537). Larger social structures outside the classroom as well as social factors inside the classroom will affect a student’s learning and achievement. Research on the larger context of schooling, especially at the primary level in relation to human development, has demonstrated the importance of socioeconomic status (McLoyd, 1998), ethnicity and culture (Nasir & Hand, 2006; Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992), gender (Harter, Waters, & Whitesell, 1997; Pomerantz, Rydell, & Saxon, 2002), the social environments of schools (Eccles et. al., 1993; Harter, Waters, & Whitesell, 1997), the social and curricular structure of the classroom (Ryan, Gheen, & Midgley, 1998), the social networking of peer groups (Grills & Ollendick, 2002; Hudley & Graham, 1993), and vocational education and adolescent development (Zimmer-Gembeck & Mortimer, 2006). Ryan and Stiller (1991) have argued that the subtler social contexts and “affective lessons” of schooling often get neglected by researchers and policy makers in their rush to focus on one aspect of the educational ecology – often student achievement. Ryan and Stiller argue that educational experiences and the

³ Wenger encourages educators to question the assumption that teaching “causes learning.” Instead, Wenger argues, “learning happens in “response to the pedagogical intentions of the setting:” “Instruction does not cause learning; it creates a context in which learning takes place, as do other contexts” (p. 266). And because learning through practice is so important to Wenger, he conceptualizes the role of educators as more than the deliverers of information or the creators of educational infrastructures. He points out that educators “constitute learning resources” through their “own membership in relevant communities of practice” (p. 276).

learning of students cannot be controlled from without by standards or precepts.

Learning is subtly “emanated from within” the social-psychology of the student.

Education is internalized by students who experience and engage with an educational ecology, and researchers studying the process of education must be mindful of the less visible psychological and social processes affecting more visible markers like student achievement.

Once instructors understand the complex ecology of education and is able to articulate their own philosophy of education, the next step (1.B) in curricular design is for instructors to *conceptualize, organize, and verbalize a coherent theoretical and thematic structure for the course – the content and theory of the course*. While this may be intuitive for many disciplines, I would argue this specific issue is very problematic, and thus ignored, by instructors in technique-oriented disciplines like composition, math, and vocational subjects.⁴ I utilize a couple of different thematic and/or theoretical structures for different courses in the writing sequence. For instance, in my lowest level basic skills class (three levels removed from college level writing) I have structured the course around the themes of “knowing your self,” “knowing your world,” and “learning how to express your knowledge,” while relying on basic skills theory. This creates a coherent framework for structuring textbook readings, assignments, tests, group work, and classroom discussion. In another basic skills class (pre-college level writing) I use the themes of American democracy and equality and the theory of “learning academic

⁴ Grubb (1999) points out that many basic skills instructors in English and Math do not “know enough about history, sociology, or business to carry the discussion forward in a responsible way, and therefore abandoned any content” (p. 185). He further states: “Many instructors solve the problem of content by making grammar or arithmetic the content of remediation, without any application” (p. 184).

literacy,” “joining academic conversations,” and “refining the craft of writing.”⁵ This framework also allows an instructor to coherently select readings for the course that will not only revolve around core themes and theory, but which should also relate to each other and provoke critical comparisons. Too often textbooks present a menagerie of unrelated texts and writing methods that unduly confuse and challenge to budding intellects of developmental students. In order to mediate this problem, instructors need to organize their own readings on a clear framework that will help facilitate not only a student’s reading of any particular text, but also help structure complex (and perhaps contested) knowledge about a subject.

Once an instructor has a clear philosophy of education and a coherent course structure, then the next step (1.C) is to review not only departmental “course outlines,” but also state department of education course outlines for high school classes⁶ (they may come before or concurrent with the course you are teaching), and course outlines for 4-year university classes (which most likely will come after the course you are teaching). It is important for the instructor to *have a coherent and holistic understanding of the secondary through post-secondary writing sequence* before any specific course is planned. In fact, it would be advisable for every instructor to structure an entire sequence of writing courses that might be taught at the current institution so as to understand, structure, and reinforce all of the requisite skills for every class within the sequence. It

⁵ The reader might be confused by the way I am using the terms “themes” and “theory.” Themes refer to recurrent and central thematic ideas that might appear over and over again in a course. For instance, the “themes” in my pre-college writing class are the central ideas of American democracy, access, equality, and discrimination, but I also structure in the composition theory of academic literacy, writing as conversations, and the craft of composition as I define it for my students.

⁶ For the California State Board of Education content standards see: < <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/enggrades11-12.asp> >. For the Reading & Language Arts curriculum framework see: < <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/fd/documents/rlafw.pdf> >. For an overview of California curricular standards and tests see: < <http://www.csun.edu/~hcbio027/k12standards/> >. For a basic overview of University of California expectations see: < <http://www.ucop.edu/a-gGuide/ag/a-g/welcome.html> >

would also be important to give a general sense of how institutions and disciplines of higher education are structured, and how your discipline fits within that structure. Students, especially developmental students and first generation students, need to be taught the big picture about how higher education works and how this particular class and these particular skills fit within that bigger picture.⁷

The next step in the process (1.D) is to *select textbooks and readings*. Textbook selection can be a daunting task for the instructor, especially in the field of composition, because there are hundreds of textbooks to choose from. Selected lists that departments usually assemble and attach to course outlines can help manage the deluge, but there are still many texts to choose from and they all seem so similar. For the time strapped adjunct or the overwhelmed full-timer, it is easiest to just randomly select a text (or have someone recommend or assign a text) and then stick with the text for years. But choosing the right textbook is very important and time should be set aside every year to analyze new texts for possible course adoption. Browsing through a departmental library or the collections often held in writing and learning centers is a great way to get a close up look, and most textbook publishers are happy to send you copies of new texts to review every year.

There is no golden rule for selecting a textbook and many composition texts are very similar in a lot of ways; however, there are at least four important issues that an

⁷ Instructors can get a sense of the larger picture of higher education in many ways. For instance, Pascarella & Terenzini (1991) offer a large volume of research on students and college; a historical overview of the evolution of higher education in a particular state, like California (Douglass, 2007), could also be helpful; and a discipline specific critique of the larger academy could be very informative, like Gerald Graff's English Studies oriented *Clueless in Academe* (2003). It is also important to mention the fact that most instructors in English in higher education have not been properly trained in composition and rhetoric, and therefore, it is important to have at least some exposure to the larger framework of the discipline of Composition and Rhetoric within the larger field of English Studies. Books on the subject range from highly structured, discipline oriented textbooks (Lindemann 1995), to more informal discussions of writing (Elbow 1981), to more complex philosophical analyses of rhetoric and social theory (Burke 1969).

instructor should consider before selecting a text. The first (a) is *compatibility*: Does the text fit with both your philosophy of education? Does it fit with your course structure? Does it fit with the student learning outcomes for the course that you are teaching? The next issue (b) is *comprehensiveness*: Does the text include all of the topics and issues you will cover over the semester? Depending on how comprehensive your course is, finding one textbook to cover everything can be a challenge, especially when it comes to course readings, of which more will be said in a moment. Another issue (c) is *coherence*: is the textbook coherent, clear, and easy for your students to read? Does it explain issues well, and does it connect different aspects of the writing process together into a coherent process? The final issue (d) is *cost*: Is the textbook affordable for your students, especially if you will require more than one text for the course? This last issue is very important and the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance has compiled many reports on both the affordability college (ACCSFA, 2001; ACSFA, 2002) and the affordability of textbooks (ACCSFA, 2006; ACSFA, 2007). Over the last 20 years textbooks have risen in cost over 186% (far beyond the general rate of inflation) and students at California public universities spent about \$898 on textbooks for the 2004-05 school year (ACCSFA, 2006). When at all possible, textbooks should be chosen because they are affordable for the students, and instructors should put at least 1-2 copies of each text in the library on reserve for those students who cannot afford to buy the texts.

Sometimes an instructor will find a textbook with appropriate course readings that fit the structure and themes of the course, but often this is not the case, especially when an instructor covers themes that are not often covered in textbooks, for instance violence against homosexuals, racism in higher education, or global slavery. It is very important

to structure basic skills composition classes around academic literacy, which involves learning how to read (ideally college level texts) and learning how to respond in an academic way (Center for Student Success, 2007; Graff & Birkenstein, 2006). Course readings should be selected for many reasons, but here are a few of the most important considerations. First, readings should be selected for (a) their *content*. It is important to select content that will interest, engage, challenge, and enlighten readers. It is also important to have a broad, multimedia understanding of “texts” and popular films and documentaries should be used in writing classrooms to help engage students and spark writing based responses (I will discuss this issue at more length below). Next, readings should be selected for (b) their *quality as good models of diverse writing purposes and styles*. It is important to find texts that are written well, that model formal academic writing as much as possible, and that are clearly structured. Course readings should also be selected for (c) *length and difficulty*, especially for developmental writing courses. And finally, readings should be selected on the basis of (d) *affordability* for the students and (e) *convenience* for the instructor, which are not necessarily compatible goods. I photocopy a few short 1-2 page texts in my developmental writing classes and these are fairly convenient for me and they are free for the students.

At the same time that course readings are being selected, an instructor should also be planning (1.E) *course assignments, handouts, methods of student evaluation, and the syllabus*. All of these are pieces of the larger course structure that an instructor designs and, along with the selected texts and readings, all of these pieces formally come together at once in the creation of the syllabus. So, in the interest of time, I will discuss all of these parts as I walk through the construction of my syllabus, which for this paper is

focused on the first class in a basic skills writing sequence (three steps removed from college level writing).

A syllabus is always flux: I not only revise my syllabus each semester after evaluating its previous effectiveness, but I also tell my students on the first day of class that I reserve the right to revise the syllabus (in terms of the assignment calendar) during the semester. I strive to be very responsive to my students, and basic skills students are always present unique challenges, and every semester there is some assignment or subject that students need more time to complete, and I will adjust the assignment calendar when needed to allow for students to have more time to complete an assignment. But during the semester the basic structure of the class (textbooks, class policies, assignments, and grading) is constant, and so for my first sequence basic skills class I include not only a general assignment calendar (that can be easily modified when a need arises), but also a course assignment checklist, which allows for stability by providing students a structured list of all the assignments that will be completed that semester.

A sample syllabus is included in Appendix 1, and this provides the basic framework for the class, which I will not spend too much time discussing. Much of the language on the first page is required by the department and the class policies will be fairly self-evident for the readers. I would like to spend some time discussing a unique feature of my syllabus, the “course contract,” the nature of some of the handouts I provide my students, but most of this section will focus on the course assignments and student evaluation structure.

A syllabus is generally acknowledged as a type of “contract” between a student and an instructor, but this function is not often explicitly stated. After my first year of

teaching community college students it became obvious to me the many of my students did not have a clue about their responsibilities as students nor what my role was as their teacher. As part of my own philosophy of education, I developed an explicit statement in the form of a “contract,” which I included on all my syllabi, and which I make my students sign the first week of class, thus, signifying their agreement to participate in the course. I use the verbiage of this passage to give my students a short, motivational lecture on the meaning of education, their responsibilities as students, and my responsibilities as their teacher. I put into words the relationship that is forming and make it clear that we both have responsibilities to each other and to the learning process, and I tell my students that if they are not engaging in the class then I will ask them to leave because they are violating the contract they signed. I cannot quantify the effectiveness of this contract, I do know that it does help me not only lay the ground rules of our educational endeavor, but it also serves as a touchstone to remind my students what they signed up for at the start of the semester.

I have created many handouts over the years trying to condense the most important concepts or process of the class down into an easy to read charts, but I also use handouts to engage students and to give them additional information. I think it is important for instructors to take ownership of the basic concepts of the class and how they teach these concepts, but I want to focus here on the extracurricular uses of handouts. There is one handout that I used to append to the syllabus, but now I give it out separately, and this handout consisted of a “priorities” exercise and a weekly schedule. Depending on the time I have, this handout could be used to structure a how class through an activity or it could be briefly explained and assigned as homework.

Basically I use the handout to discuss the limited and constrained nature of human beings in their struggle to survive and the need we all have to create “priorities” in our life in order to not only be aware of the goods we seek, but also prioritize those goods for times when our resources, especially time, run thin and we must choose one good over another. I link this discussion to schooling and higher education and the sacrifice of time, money, relationships, and time that seeking a degree will demand.

I also link this discussion to another handout, which consists of photocopied pages from a district handbook. This handout includes a chart on the ranks of higher educational credentials (supplemented by my own knowledge of the social and economic value of these credentials), a “student educational plan” that counseling departments use, a “transfer checklist,” the flow chart for the English composition sequence of classes the students will have to take, and a chart on “how college is different from high school.” I use this handout to discuss and introduce my students to the basic structure of higher education, the skills and behaviors needed to succeed, and some of the specific paths to earn a credential – and of course I tell my students that I would be willing to go over this information in more detail if they have any questions, and I also direct them to the counseling center to meet with a counselor and fill out a “student educational plan.”

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the syllabus contains the assignment structure of the course and the methods for assessing student learning. Figuring out the right assignment and evaluation formula for this entry level basic skills has been very difficult. This has been the third time that I have taught this class in four years, and I think I have finally found a formula that satisfies me as an instructor and which seems to promote a high level of success in my students. The three basic components of the class,

as designated by the district, are grammar/sentence structure (highest priority), sentence & paragraph writing (next highest priority), and responding to reading (lowest priority). From previous experiences and review of the basic skills literature, I know several characteristics of my students: they do not like to come to class consistently, they rarely study, most have difficulty doing all the assigned work, most have weak reading skills, almost all of the students seem to retain very little knowledge and have trouble doing well on tests, and most are easily distracted in the classroom. So from this I concluded that (a) I had to structure enough time in class to allow them to finish their weekly work so as to cut down on homework, (b) I had to explain lessons in basic terms, repeat lessons over and over, and allow my students time each week to practice, (c) I had to limit “high stakes” testing and allow students to be assessed, but not to overly penalize early failure, (d) I had to structure writing assignments so that students could write first drafts in class, be able to discuss writing assignments with me, and have plenty of time to edit their work, (e) I needed to structure some type of individual meeting with each student to monitor their progress and give them individual feedback, and (f) I needed to find ways to keep them on task and entertained during class.

So with all this in mind I structured the class accordingly. First of all, I created a basic structure for the first ten weeks so students would clearly know what to expect each day: I would briefly introduce and explain a grammar/sentence structure lesson on Monday, we would practice a couple of homework exercises as a class, and then the class would individually work on their homework exercises as I circled the room and answered questions. On Wednesday we would have a “quiz” on the week’s lesson, and the majority of these quizzes were group quizzes and open book so that students were basically on task

an practicing, and many of these quizzes were turned into “game show” quizzes where I would give direct feedback and explanation for each question. Near week five I introduced and explained the basic structure of the paragraph and I gave them time in class each Wed to write the first draft of a series of paragraphs on their personal life. All this weekly work was graded with each assignment given a particular amount of points. If they did the assignment completely then they received full credit, with the exception of quizzes, which were graded according to correct answers. Overall, I had created a system where a student who did all the weekly book and writing work would be able to earn around a high C or low B grade even if they failed all the quizzes, thus, there would be no reason to drop out of the course for performance reasons up until mid-term. This weekly bookwork, assignments, and quizzes were worth 50% of the final grade.

The remaining 50% of the final grade would consist of a large portfolio of 11 paragraphs (25%) and a series of “final” exams, two group tests and one individual test (averaging for 25%). I clearly established a framework for a “good” paragraph, and I gave each student an “editing sheet” (Appendix 2) that clearly listed all the criteria for A level writing. I asked students to photocopy the sheet so that they could use it to edit their paragraphs or to take to the writing center when meeting with a tutor. I also made it a point to meet with each student individually around mid-term and to fill out a student evaluation sheet to assess not only the students “grades,” but also their student skills, their educational goals, and personal matters in an attempt to develop a relationship with my students so that I could better counsel them to success (See Appendix 3). At this meeting I gave students their mid-term grade and discussed what students would need to do in order to successfully pass the class. I also used this time to tell the “failing”

students that they could still pass the class if they improved their performance (which usually meant not missing so many classes, turning in all work, and studying more), and I gave some of these students an opportunity to do and turn in past missed assignments.

Thus, the structure of the class put an emphasis on coming to class, doing assignments, participating in class, and practicing what they were learning. There were many “tests” of student performance, but they were offset by a more participatory centered grading system. I also used class time, after class, email, and the mid-term evaluations to establish relationships with my students to help motivate and encourage them. The plan of the course in terms of student evaluation were: (1) allow students structured time to practice and develop student skills, (2) give students enough time to write and edit their portfolio of paragraphs over the whole semester with feedback from both the instructor and the writing center, and (3) a series of “final” exams to assess knowledge of grammar and sentence structure, but strategically weighted to be only 25% of the final grade.

Finally, after designing and structuring the curriculum, the instructor also needs to plan (1.F) *teaching strategies* for particular types of assignments or classroom activities and (1.G) *methods for evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum and teaching*. For my own course I utilized several different types of teaching strategies: brief lectures, whole group discussion, individual work with instructor facilitation, structured group work, a couple of multimedia films chosen for particular content, individualized one-on-one instruction (before class, after class, and via email) individualized one-on-one relationship building, and I also use my web page to distribute links, post the syllabus, and post handouts, although I use this medium much less for my basic skills courses. To

evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and my teaching I created an end of the semester survey for students to fill out (See Appendix 4). The contents of the survey will be discussed in the analyzing the data section.

APPENDIX 1: SAMPLE SYLLABUS

**Josh Beach: English --- [Section -----]
(Mon & Wed 2 – 4:12pm)**

Instructor: Josh Beach

Email: jmbeach@jmbeach.com

Web Page: www.jmbeach.com

English Skills (8th ed), John Langan (2 copies available in the library)

The Least You Should Know About English (9th ed), Wilson et. al. (2 copies available in library)

J. M. Beach, *Educating for Democracy: Reading and Responding* (2 copies available in library)

A **Dictionary** is required: you need to bring it to class

(Please buy all your books by the first week)

Course Description:

In this class you will learn the principles of effective written expression starting with a review of grammar, mechanics, and usage of American English. The class will also review the paragraph form and you will learn how to effectively construct college level paragraphs with main ideas and supporting examples/evidence.

Learning Objectives: Students will be able to...

Demonstrate mastery of grammatically correct sentences as well as being able to employ a variety of sentence patterns in an effort towards writing developed paragraphs and a developed essay.

Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Recognize and apply correct sentence structure in a variety of patterns
2. Employ correct grammatical usage
3. Demonstrate understanding of basic rules of punctuation
4. Use proper spelling of commonly misspelled words
5. Construct a basic paragraph
6. Apply the patters of description and generalizations supported by examples to a basic paragraph

7. Identify key ideas in texts

Class Policies:

1) **Attendance is mandatory** Roll is taken promptly at the beginning of class.

3 absence = B or lower Grade automatically

4 absences = C or lower Grade automatically

5 or more absences = F (automatic Failure) unless they are emergencies

*Excessive lateness will result in the equivalent penalties as an absence

2) **NO LATE WORK.** Please be organized and plan ahead. Exceptions will be made in the case of a medical or family emergency IF you contact me ahead of time.

3) **Plagiarism** is basically using someone else's thoughts, ideas, words without properly citing the work (i.e. letting the reader know whose thoughts, ideas, or words are being used and where you got the information from). It is especially important at the college level to CITE every piece of information that you borrow in your essays using the appropriate citation method. If you do not cite a particular piece of information or quoted material than it is considered PLAGIARISM, which is a form of STEALING and it is a very serious offence. If you are caught plagiarizing at any time during this course you will receive an **AUTOMATIC F** as your course grade.

Note: **Always play it safe. If you use a piece of information, any information, tell your reader where it came from and properly cite the source. If you ALWAYS do this you will never run into trouble with plagiarism.

4) The **Writing and Reading Center** is located in the Library, room AD 126 To Pass you must use the Writing Center a total of **18 hours**.

5) **CELL PHONES OFF.** Please make sure to turn your cell phones off during class as a courtesy to your instructor and classmates. This is standard policy for all colleges.

6) By coming to class you have agreed to participate. If you are not participating, if you are off task, or if you are distracting from the learning

environment, then you will be asked to leave and it will be marked as an absent for the day.

7) The last day to withdraw from this class with a “W” grade is _____

PARTICIPATION & WEEKLY COURSE WORK

50%

- I. Vocabulary & Sentences
- II. Book work
- III. In-class activities

QUIZZES & PARAGRAPHS

50%

- I. Quizzes & Comprehensive Tests 25%
- II. Paragraph Portfolios 25%

EXTRA CREDIT

- I. If you correct all grammar quizzes, they can be returned for 10pt extra credit
-

Course Contract

This syllabus is a contract. By signing this syllabus you agree to participate in this course and abide by the class policies. By signing you agree to participate in a learning process and you agree to give as much effort as possible to succeed in this course. If you do not participate in this course or abide by the class policies then the instructor will ask you to drop this course. The instructor will present materials, facilitate class times, grade

assignments, and conference with students, but only you can make learning take place, and only you can practice and master the material.

I _____ agree to participate in this course, abide by the class policies, and do my best to learn, practice, and master the material in this course.

I _____ agree to teach this course, present materials, facilitate class times, grade your assignments, conference with you, and help you learn during this course.

Week 1: Buy Books, Syllabus, and start first week's assignment (Intro to Dictionary)

Week 2 Mon: Discuss & Do Bookwork
Wed: Correct Bookwork; Quiz; Vocabulary; Inclass- Exercises

Week 3 Mon: Discuss & Do Bookwork
Wed: Correct Bookwork; Quiz; Vocabulary; Inclass-Exercises

Week 4 Mon: Discuss & Do Bookwork
Wed: Correct Bookwork; Quiz; Vocabulary; Inclass-Exercises

Week 5 Mon: Discuss & Do Bookwork
Wed: Correct Bookwork; Quiz; Vocabulary; Inclass-Exercises

Week 6 Mon: Discuss & Do Bookwork
Wed: Correct Bookwork; Quiz; Vocabulary; Inclass-Exercises

Week 7 Mon: Discuss & Do Bookwork
Wed: Correct Bookwork; Quiz; Vocabulary; Inclass-Exercises

Week 8 Mon: Discuss & Do Bookwork
Wed: Correct Bookwork; Quiz; Vocabulary; Inclass-Exercises

Week 9 Mon: Discuss & Do Bookwork
Wed: Correct Bookwork; Quiz; Vocabulary; Inclass-Exercises

Week 10 Mon: Discuss & Do Bookwork
Wed: Correct Bookwork; Quiz; Vocabulary; Inclass-Exercises

HOMEWORK: Langan Practice Test on pages 557-582 (Due on Monday)

Week 11	Mon: Comprehensive Tests (Part 1: individual test; Part 2: group test)
	Wed: Langan Paragraph Bookwork
Week 12	Mon: Paragraph Bookwork
	Wed: Write paragraph (2 drafts & final draft due on Monday)
Week 13	Mon: Paragraph Bookwork
	Wed: Write paragraph (2 drafts & final draft due on Monday)
Week 14	Mon: Paragraph Bookwork
	Wed: Write paragraph (2 drafts & final draft due on Monday)
Week 15	Mon: Paragraph Bookwork
	Wed: Write paragraph (2 drafts & final draft due on Monday)
Week 16	FINALS WEEK: Course Evaluation & Party

Course Assignment Checklist

GRAMMAR SKILLS (Wilson, *The Least You Should Know*)

- 1 ___ Dictionary & 8 Parts of Speech (Wilson 55-60, 23-28)
- 2 ___ Commonly Confused Words (Wilson 4-22)
- 3 ___ Subjects & Verbs (Wilson 63-68, 118-124)
- 4 ___ Prepositions & Pronouns (Wilson 69-74, 154-161)
- 5 ___ Verbs, Adjectives, Adverbs (Wilson 97-117, 29-35)
- 6 ___ Ind. & Dep. Clauses, Fragments, Run-Ons (Wilson 75 – 96)
- 7 ___ Sentence Patterns & Dangling Modifiers (Wilson 137-43,
133-136)
- 8 ___ Commas (Wilson 174-188)
- 9 ___ Punctuation & Capitol Letters (Wilson 167-173, 189-201)
- 10 ___ Practice Test (Langan 557-582)

PARAGRAPH SKILLS (Langan, *Writing Skills*)

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 ___ Langan 49 – 55 | 2 ___ Langan 55 – 64 |
| 3 ___ Langan 71 – 85 | 4 ___ Langan 88 – 99 |
| 5 ___ Langan 103 – 109 | |

VOCABULARY

9 weeks of vocabulary

- 1__ 2__ 3__ 4__ 5__ 6__ 7__ 8__ 9__

WRITING PARAGRAPHS: We will write 11 Paragraphs total

Paragraphs: 1__ 2__ 3__ 4__ 5__

Editing a Draft

Evaluative Standards for Effective Writing

(Please mark categories with + or – and explain marks in box below)

FORM (Quality of Writing) **Thinking**

___ Introduction of subject sentence

___ Topic Sentence w/ main point link ideas)

___ Transitions points

___ Grammar & Sentence Clarity

___ Supporting points

___ Conclusion restates main idea

___ Conclusion ends with concluding remark

CONTENT (Quality of

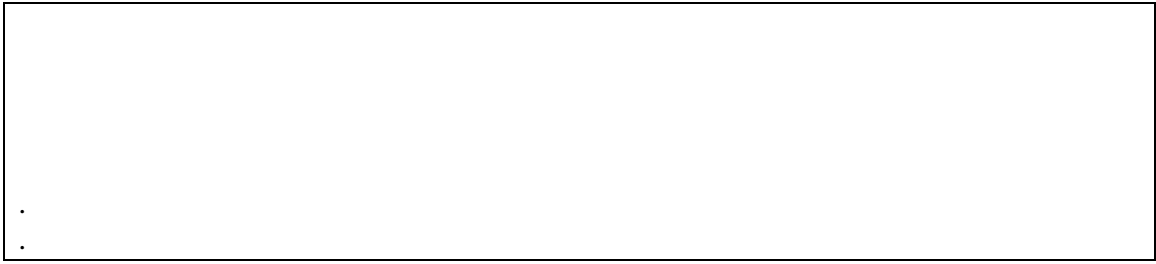
___ Clear & Detailed topic

___ Organized (transitions

___ Detailed supporting

___ Fully Developed & Explained Ideas

Draft Evaluation



APPENDIX 3: STUDENT EVALUATION

Student Evaluation

STUDENT SKILLS

- ___ Attendance
- ___ Punctuality
- ___ Remembers Due-Dates
- ___ Participation (in Class)
- ___ Stays on Task (in Class)
- ___ Communicates w/ Instructor
- ___ Respectful to Learning Environment & Students

LEARNING SKILLS

- ___ Completes all Homework
- ___ Satisfactory Grades (C + or better)
- ___ Asks Questions
- ___ Visits Writing Center Regularly

WRITING SKILLS

- ___ Knows General Grammar
- ___ Vocabulary
- ___ Clear Sentence Structure
- ___ Paragraph Skills
- ___ Edits & Completes Multiple Drafts

COLLEGE PLAN

- ___ Clear Goal?
- ___ Met with Counseling Center?
- ___ Planned out Required Courses?
- ___ Completed Official Plan?
- ___ Researched Program or Transfer Requirements?

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