A HANDBOOK
FOR THE TEACHING OF
ENGLISH 87: BASIC WRITING SKILLS II

COMPOSED ON SABBATICAL LEAVE
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SAN JOAQUIN DELTA COLLEGE
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Introduction

English 87 is a place where two tributaries meet before entering into the main river of English 79. The two tributaries are English 70 and English 85. In English 87, native and near-native English speakers from English 70 are introduced to the English 85 students who have just completed the English as a Second Language program. While native English speakers do enroll in the course, most students in English 87 are non-native English speakers. For example, eighteen of the twenty-two students who completed one section in the fall of 2007 were ESL students. Originally designed as a bridge course for ESL students, English 87 in the past year has been serving more native and near-native English speakers as the English 70 program has developed. With the possibility of even more growth in the near future, English 87 seeks to continue to improve basic writing skills of students before they enroll in English 79, Preparatory English.

In the spring of 2006, the course curriculum of English 87 was revised to institute a mandatory portfolio examination to be evaluated by a group of English 87 instructors at the end of the semester. The new curriculum also aligned the entry skills of English 87 with the exiting skills of students completing English 70 and English 85 and established more precise course objectives, which ensure that students completing English 87 have the fundamental skills necessary for entering English 79. Since the English 87 portfolio requirements involve an objective summary, a subjective response, a narrative essay, and an argumentative essay, the curriculum includes these as sample writing activities for the course. With the change in curriculum, more students have been recommended to enroll in English 87 than in years past; as a result, English 87 has grown in the number of sections offered in a semester. Before the fall of 2005, English 87 was usually limited to one or two sections, but the number of sections has increased, and the course now has three or four sections in the fall and spring semesters.

Another change in curriculum concerned prerequisite courses. English 87 now requires successful completion of English 70 or English 85 in order to enroll in English 87. An advisory committee of composition course coordinators and faculty in the English, English as a Second Language, Reading, and Assessment areas determined that this requirement would help to create a sequence of composition courses that would appeal to the students from English 70 and English 85. Students wishing to enroll in English 87 had to complete either English 70 or English 85 beforehand. The goal was, with the limited number of sections, to take care of those students who had already completed course work at Delta College. Students from other directions, such as through an assessment score or
through a previous enrollment in English 79, had to find alternative means to refresh their skills. Suggestions were made that these students could enroll directly in English 73.

At the present time, English 87 functions in an unusual way in that it is considered a component of a sequence of composition courses (English 70/85, English 87, English 79, and English 1A), but it does not correspond directly to one of the levels of composition at Delta College. English 70 and English 85 are the traditional Level I composition courses, English 79 is Level II, and English 1A is Level III. Since English 87, a Level I composition course, does not by itself represent a level of composition, it can only be offered as a recommendation to students and not as a requirement. Based on a portfolio evaluation, students who successfully complete English 70 and English 85 receive a recommendation from their instructor to enroll in either English 87 or English 79. However, since this is only a recommendation, students can opt to skip English 87 and enroll directly in English 79. Students who have chosen to bypass English 87 have stated one of the causes to be the limited number of sections of English 87 offered. In the fall of 2007, the evaluators of the English 70 Portfolios recommended 200 students to take English 87, but the following semester three English 87 sections, serving only ninety students, were offered. For a number of international students, one more reason to skip English 87 has been the high cost of another composition course. Currently, there is discussion to change the English Department curriculum from three levels of composition to four levels, thereby making English 87 a required course for those students completing English 70 and English 85.
An Interview with the English 70 Coordinator, Dr. June Gillam

Q: When students complete English 70, they are recommended to go to English 87 or English 79, depending on their skill level. What are some of the general differences between these two groups?

A: Students recommended to English 87 would probably not write as much on their assignments in their portfolios as students recommended to English 79. Students heading to 87 do not have enough detail, lack development, and have significantly more sentence problems, such as noun forms and verb forms. Students skip the “s” on plurals and drop helping verbs. Also, students drop the “s” on present tense verb forms.

English 79 students have better development, have a firm grasp as readers, and have a stronger writer’s voice, which makes a claim, even in simple writing like a reader response. English 79 students get to the point quicker than 87 students who wander around more with their writing. Students who have a strong voice and have more authority in their voice go to English 79. When 70 portfolio readers have to struggle more to make meaning of the writing, then the students need English 87. These students could use a combination of more skill, practice, and confidence.

Q: What are the types of writing areas that students who enter English 87 need to concentrate on?

A: In English 70, students need conversation, thinking, and writing activities. Students in 87 could use more work on five-paragraph argumentative and four paragraph narrative essays. English 87 instructors could also weave in some kind of vocational focus.

Q: Do you have suggestions on how to address these particular writing needs?

A: Instructors could, for example, give the students a choice in reading selections. Instructors should give the students a choice to read about vocational areas. I am now working with Mary Jo Zimmerman, an electrical technology instructor. In this certificate program, there is a high level of technical reading. English 87 instructors could offer students options in reading and writing. Have students argue options about their occupational choices. Let trade students fit in.

Q: Aside from the need for improved writing skills, what other areas could students spend more time on?
A: Reading. Try to get students to work on addressing a piece of reading directly in their response. Interestingly enough, students in English 70 mostly did this in their summaries anyway, but more work could help.

Q: Do you have suggestions about teaching to these areas?

A: Work on using transitional devices from the summary to the personal response. Some students refer to the original writer. Some do so in a subtle manner. A sustained response with repeated references to the reading could be effective. In 87, instructors could build on this skill more. The English 70 Personal Response directions require the students to summarize the author’s thoughts, transition to a personal response, and give one main idea, which should have both general points and specific examples. This direction helps students move to connecting with authors. Instructors could also use school catalogs as readers. Students could read up on certification programs and vocational programs. Try this in 87. Explore the school catalog more for its content.

For reading activities, students in English 70 have kept reading logs while reading books on Pamela Pan’s Multi-cultural Reading List. After reading some of these books, the students in my class write letters to the authors of these books. I want the students to think of the authors as regular people, who want to hear from their readers and want to hear what they got from the book. The students connect to the writers in this way.

Q: What types of individual learning differences have you identified with students in developmental writing courses?

A: Lots of students have a range of differences. Some are slow to catch on to auditory directions and some even with written directions. Some students are easily confused. It is not easy for them to focus on directions and to focus on a task. I have used DVDs on vocational programs. The Delta College DVD on Delta careers works well. Ask the students questions. “Which career would be interesting?” The students remember specific information presented on the DVDs.

Q: Do you take into consideration these individual learning differences in your teaching? And how?

A: Yes. I have students do kinesthetic sentence building. The activity helps some students, but it is complicated. Some students need a small group exchange to get it. Some students work best in social situations. They help each other. They ask questions in small groups, which are less intimidating.
Another activity is the round robin paragraphs. Social group work is helpful. In groups, students catch on to the task faster. Every group gets the same topic sentence. Then, each student gets to add a sentence. Try this activity at different times during the semester. This activity works well because it is not individually graded. But I’m not sure how well this exercise transfers over into individual work. For a round robin activity, we would start with the same topic sentence, such as the following: “College students are worried about many things.” Then, each student in the group has to add on a sentence. Students writing sentences need to read what others have written before and try to apply transitional words. They also have to identify when examples are needed.

Q: What types of textbooks have you found to be successful? What are some reading activities that work with developmental writers?

A: I use Final Draft in English 70. Instructors in English 87 could use Delta Winds. I have not found any textbooks to stick with. “Writers World” can be split up into four parts, so I use the skinny, green one for 70 students and the writing process, blue one for 79. I use My Writing Lab for the grammar part of the class.

Another resource is “Silly Sentences: A Grammar Skills Practice Game” with packages of nouns and verbs, which are linked together to create sentences. Students create their own package of word forms, for example “dance, dances.”

I also use a dictionary in class. Students have to create ten cards out of words found in the dictionary. Students have to find words they haven’t used before. Then, they have to build sentences from these words. First, the students build two word sentences. Then, they build compound sentences. Then, they use subordination and more complex sentences. Early on, we learn about prepositional phrases in simple sentences to show how to add and delete prepositional phrases to find the basic noun/verb clause. We do this in teams, two or three times in 45 minutes.

I also give them a sentence pattern to match. The students have to create a sentence that copies the particular pattern. The sentence has to make sense, though. For the final exam, students have to create a 100-word sentence. If they do, they can win a prize. Two students did this. They enjoyed the challenge and worked hard. Students in the class enjoy the activity. They puzzle over it. They become active over it. But you need considerable space in a classroom for the activity. Students write funny things too. Almost all of the students seem to feel enthusiasm for building these sentences. They do catch on to creating a sentence that is
meaningful and that fits the pattern. Paragraph building, which is used in 79, is similar to this activity.

Q: How do you teach grammar? Is this a need for students in English 87? How would you recommend teaching grammar?

A: Grammar should be taught and not taken for granted. Even in English 1D, Critical Thinking, I have students work on grammar by choosing their own personal gremlins to work on over the semester. Sometimes I help them to identify particular grammatical areas.

In English 70, I teach grammar through sentence building cards and sentence composing. A good book for this is English Sentence Structures and Their Rhetoric by Nona Anderson at Sacramento City College, but it’s difficult to find since it was self-published. I also use self-paced grammar texts that focus on sentence composing for the different levels of school. Students have to unscramble sentences and put them back together. Another activity would be to have students copy a writing sample and make a change to only one grammatical point, such as change all of the verbs to past tense. The students have to practice exact copying, which makes them focus on accuracy. This activity may be valuable in English 87 classes.
English 87 Portfolio Requirements

**Responsibility:** It is the responsibility of the student to organize and maintain assignments in the portfolio.

**Portfolio Contents:** The portfolio should include one piece of writing from each of the four writing projects listed below:

1. **Summary of assigned essay**—written in class in 80 minutes. Instructors will be provided with two essays for students to choose from for their summary. All students in 87 should summarize one of these two essays. The work should be a first draft of an objective summary. The work should demonstrate reading comprehension.

2. **Response to assigned essay**—written in class in 80 minutes. Instructors will be provided with two essays for students to choose from for their response. All students in 87 should respond to one of these two essays. The work should be a first draft of a subjective response. The work should demonstrate an ability to respond appropriately to reading material and to a writing prompt.

3. **Narrative essay**—written in and out of class. Instructors will be provided with two topics for students to choose from for their narrative essay. All students in 87 should write on one of these two topics. The work should be about three paragraphs in length and should be in multiple drafts. The essay should reflect the use of narration as a method of development. The work should demonstrate an application of the writing process. Revisions should indicate an understanding of written suggestions from the instructors.

4. **Argumentative essay**—written in and out of class. Instructors will be provided with two topics for students to choose from for their argumentative essay. All students in 87 should write on one of these two topics. The work should be about five paragraphs in length and should be in multiple drafts. The essay should reflect the use of argumentation as a method of development. The work should demonstrate the use of general and supporting sentences to develop multiple points. The essay should demonstrate an application of the writing process with concern for organization, development, transitions, and focus. Revisions should indicate an understanding of written suggestions from the instructors.

**Due Dates:** Students must complete portfolios by date announced during the semester. Instructors should bring Portfolios to the Portfolio Reading.

**Portfolio Reading:** All English 87 instructors are expected to participate in the Portfolio Reading. Instructors may cancel their classes on that day. Adjunct faculty will be compensated for their time.
Frequently Asked Questions:

Expectations

Question: I realize that many students in English 87 are coming from English 85 (ESL) so does this mean that they do not take English 70 but go from 85 to 87?

Yes. Almost all of the ESL students in English 87 come from English 85, which is the equivalent of English 70. In fact, in the English 70 reading, the instructors are reading portfolios from students in 70 AND 85.

Question: My class this semester is comprised almost entirely of second language learners with the exception of maybe three students, and I am finding their writing ability to be much lower than that of the English 70 students I taught last semester. I somehow expected that the English 87 students would be more advanced writers than English 70. Is this a fair expectation?

That would be a reasonable expectation. Your English 70 class might have just been more advanced than the average 70. Other instructors of 87 are also surprised with the writing level of the students. In some ways, some instructors probably view 87 as an extension of 70.

Question: In English 70, the portfolio is calibrated at the end of the year and given a pass or no pass grade. Does this same method apply to English 87?

Yes, in 87 we have the same pass or no pass grade for each student portfolio. However, in English 87 the pass or no pass grade applies only to the material in the portfolio.

Sequence of Composition Courses

Question: My understanding was that students scoring a Level I on the Assessment/Placement test were placed in English 70 and then either progressed to English 87 or to English 79.

Based on the evaluation of the English 70 portfolio and the recommendation of the instructor, the students who pass English 70 go to 87 or 79. However, some students who pass English 70 do not choose to enroll in English 87. For some students, this decision is based on the time and money involved in enrolling in another semester of composition. Students can skip English 87 since, at this time, it is not a required
course, only recommended.

**Question:** Those not passing English 70 are either recommended to repeat English 70 or take English 87. Is this correct?

No. That is not correct. If students do not pass 70, they are recommended to take 70 again or try some supplementary courses like Reading 98 and English 73. Students who do not pass English 70 are not allowed to enroll in English 87.

**Question:** What about the students who do not pass English 87? Do they retake the class?

Students who do not pass 87 could retake the class. Or they could be advised to take the lab courses in the Reading/Writing Learning Center, such as Reading 98 and English 73. These are more individualized and are very helpful.

**Question:** I guess I am trying to wrap my brain around the progression of English classes at Delta so that I am aware of what I need to be offering the students in terms of curriculum. Every semester I am handed a different class, which is nice because I get to see the full range of student ability, but I need to be more aware of what to expect from each class.

Students in English 87 should be able to meet the exiting guidelines as stated in the English 70 curriculum. To review material up to this point, English 87 courses frequently emphasize basic sentence level skills, such as verb tenses, coordination, and subordination. From the sentence level area, students are also expected to work towards an understanding of the structure of a multiple paragraph piece of writing. The portfolio for English 87 requires two multiple paragraph writing samples, which can be from three to five paragraphs. These short essays should show competence in the narrative and argumentative methods of development. Students who pass English 87 should be prepared for the demands of an English 79 course, which focuses on the five-paragraph essay.

**Question:** A student handed me a Petition for Declaration of Course Prerequisite Equivalent form. The form states that the student wishes to receive permission from the instructor to enroll in the course. What should I do?

According to the current curriculum, students must pass either English 85 or English 70 before enrolling in English 87. But on a rare occasion, a new student to the College can ask to enroll in English 87 based on the student’s evaluation through the assessment process. A new ESL student
to the school is assessed through the ESL placement by an ESL faculty member. If the student places at Level II reading and the ESL instructor recommends the student be enrolled in English 87, the student may be given the choice between English 85 or English 87. However, since the student has not satisfied the stated prerequisite, the student can only be allowed in the English 87 course if the instructor of the course allows the student to enroll in the course. If you wish to add the student to your course, you can do so by signing the form. The choice is yours.

**Portfolio Assignments**

*Question: How many assignments should I require in the portfolio?*

Four separate assignments are required for the portfolio: a summary, a response, a narrative essay, and an argumentative essay.

*Question: Does the department provide writing prompts like they do for the English 70 writing assignments?*

Yes. You will be provided with prompts for the portfolio assignments. The response, the narrative essay, and the argumentative essay all have specific topics. The summary assignment has no specific prompt or written instructions.

*Question: Where do I obtain the specific assignments for the portfolio?*

The topics will be provided to you before or during the course of the semester.

**Portfolio Assignments: Summary and Response**

*Question: How long do the summary and the response have to be?*

The summary and response can be one paragraph, although some students end up writing more than one paragraph. If you do have the students write one paragraph, aim for more than just a few sentences in the paragraph. Some instructors ask that the summary and response be one and a half handwritten pages.

*Question: I have been going over the portfolio assignments and have noticed that there are two assignments for the response; however, there is no summary assignment.*

There aren't any specific assignments for the summaries. Just ask the
students to summarize the designated Delta Winds essays. The two response assignments are for the two Delta Winds essays that were selected for the responses for this semester. The response assignments ask the students to respond in a particular manner.

**Question:** There are four Delta Winds essays in the material I received for this semester. According to the writing prompts for the Summary and the Personal Response, only two of the essays correspond to the prompts. So, do I have my students read all four? Do I have them read the two that they are supposed to write on only?

You have four Delta Winds essays since there are four assignments—two summaries and two responses. The student will get two chances to write a good summary on a Delta Winds essay, and the student will get two chances to write a good response on a Delta Winds essay. You do not receive specific topics for the summary assignments. Just ask the students to summarize the essays. The two writing prompts you have in your material correspond to the two responses the students are supposed to write.

**Question:** Regarding the summary and the personal response, do I have the students FIRST read the Delta Winds essay, give them time to think about it, discuss it, go over it, etc. and THEN give them the writing (say on a different day) OR do I give them the essay AND the prompt on the SAME DAY.

Have the students first read and discuss the Delta Winds essay. Give them some time to read the essay on their own if they wish to. In your next class, you could have the students write on the essay. Do not give the students the prompt until the day of the in-class writing. The students can read the essays beforehand, but the prompt for the response should be read only just before the response assignment begins. You can answer questions on the prompt to make sure the students understand the topic.

**Question:** I have a student who did not do well on the main two summaries, but the student did okay on the practice summaries. Can the student do one more summary? It appears the student has test anxiety.

The student should not be given another chance at writing the summary for the portfolio since that would not be fair to other students who have only one chance to write the summary. Allowing the student another chance to write the summary would set a precedent that would then cause problems in the future. The good thing about the 87 portfolio is that there are multiple writing samples involved. So the evaluation of the
student’s work won’t be based solely on the summary. It sounds as though you believe the student can do better work. You could include in the portfolio one of the practice summaries that the student has taken. The portfolio has to have the four assignments in there, but supplementary work could be provided. In the curriculum, there is no information that states that more student writing cannot be included.

*Portfolio Assignments: Narrative Essay and Argumentative Essay*

*Question: After the summary and the response assignment, what else goes into the portfolio?*

The other two assignments for the portfolio are the narrative essay and the argumentative essay. Those assignments are also in the material provided to you. The essays are supposed to be in draft form—the first draft in class and the remaining draft or drafts out of class.

*Question: Are the narrative essay and the argumentative essay written in class?*

The summary and the response should be done in class in one setting. But the short essay assignments (the narrative and the argumentative essay) should show work done in class and out of class. The essays should also show that the students can improve their work through multiple drafts and through revision and editing based on the instructor’s comments.

*Question: How long should these assignments be?*

Try for around three paragraphs for the narrative essay and for five paragraphs for the argumentative essay.

*Scheduling of Portfolio Assignments*

*Question: Is there a specific day to give the summary or the response assignment? In the past, it was at the instructor’s discretion. Is it still true?*

Choosing the dates for any of the assignments is up to the instructor. It is essential, however, to have all of the portfolio assignments completed before the portfolio reading.
Question: How long should I give them to write the summary assignment and the response assignment?

You can allow the students 80 minutes to write the summaries and the responses in class.

Question: I know the summary assignment and the response assignment are supposed to be in class. Do they get to take them home? Or are they solely in class?

The summary and the response assignments are to be done solely in class.

Question: When do you have your students write the portfolio summaries and personal responses? Should I wait and do them towards the end of the semester?

If you wish to have the students do the portfolio summaries and responses near the end of the semester, you can. That is up to you.

**Evaluation of the Student**

Question: What does a student need to do in order to pass this course?

If the student's portfolio passes, then the first hurdle is completed. But the next hurdle is to get the required number of points in the course to earn a letter grade of C or better.

Question: It seems that there are two ways to pass English 87—either by the portfolio (the committee signs off on it stating the student is now allowed access to English 79) OR by passing the class with a grade of “C” or better regardless of what the portfolio says. Is this true? Can a student pass the class by simply doing assignments but receiving a No Pass on the portfolio?

The answer is no. The student must pass the portfolio in order to pass the course. The student must also have enough points in the course itself to pass the course. So there really are two things going on—the portfolio and the course assignments.

Question: How do the results of the portfolio affect the grading of the students in the course?

As for grading, the portfolio process is a tool to determine if the
student's work is considered passing or not. The work is evaluated by at least two English 87 instructors. How an instructor uses the portfolio in grading for the class is up to the instructor, but the portfolio is not meant to affect the specific grade for the student. The portfolio is given a Pass or a No Pass evaluation. While a student could have a passing portfolio, the student may still fail the course. In the past, students have passed the portfolio but have failed the course since they did not have the adequate number of points to earn a passing grade in the course.

**Question:** How are the students graded for the course?

This is NOT a Credit/No credit course. This is a letter grade only course.

**Question:** I am confused about the assessment for English 87. I don’t know why, but I was under the impression that English 87 functioned primarily the same way English 70 does and that is that there is no grade received for the class but rather a Pass/No pass and this is all dependent on the portfolio. Basically, if one doesn’t pass the portfolio, one fails and receives a No pass or Incomplete and must then retake the class.

There are similarities in the ways that English 70 and English 87 function. Both courses use a portfolio process. A major difference is that English 70 is a Credit/No Credit course, and English 87 is letter grade only course. Another difference concerns how students can pass the course. Just because a student in English 87 passes the portfolio does not guarantee that the student will pass the course. The student must still meet the requirements of that particular course to earn a passing letter grade. This distinction should be made clear in the syllabus of each course.

**Portfolio Procedure**

**Question:** Where do I get the portfolio folders?

As you prepare for the reading, you could pick up empty portfolio folders for your students in one of the file cabinets in Holt 201. Before the reading, be sure to fill out the information requested on the front of each folder. Do not fill out the Pass/No Pass part. We will determine that at the reading.

**Question:** While writing the summary assignment and the response assignment, can the students use a dictionary and/or a thesaurus?

Yes.
Question: While writing the summary assignment and the response assignment, can the students use a copy of the Delta Winds essay?

Yes.

Question: While writing the summary assignment and the response assignment, can the students use an outline?

No, but they can have notes on the copy of the essay that they are writing on.

Question: I am NOT planning on telling the students about the summary because I think they might cheat and write one at home. Do you let your students know ahead of time or not?

It is not only customary but also recommended to let the students read and discuss the essay beforehand. For many students, the vocabulary and content of the essays can be challenging. Just as in English 79, by reading and discussing the essay beforehand, students can dedicate their allotted class time to writing. If you are concerned about your students writing a summary ahead of time, you could bring in your own lined paper and have them put away all of their notes. Then, have them write on the paper you have provided. You could even use lined paper of a different color if you'd like to make sure the students are composing on that one given day.

Question: I was just checking my calendar and noticed that our reading portfolio date is coming up. I am a little concerned because I may not be done with all the writing assignments. I have very low students and I have spent a considerable amount of time prepping them. Do you have any suggestions? I still have two assignments to go.

Do whatever you can to get the portfolio assignments completed so that the group of instructors can read the portfolios on the scheduled date. If students do not have all of the assignments in the portfolio, they cannot get a passing score on the reading of the portfolio. Just let the students know the urgency, and they will most likely meet your demands. Make sure that you have at least one summary done and one response done, and then concentrate on the narrative essay and the argumentative essay. At the least, you should have two drafts of each of these essay assignments. The students can be doing the drafts as homework; the drafts do not have to be written in class.
Question: One of my students asked me if, on the day of the portfolio "put-together," I could help her choose which summary and personal response to put in her portfolio. Am I allowed to help her or is it her decision? I would think that she should be the one to decide.

Go ahead and help your student decide. In general, instructors choose which works to include in the portfolio. As long as all four writing assignments are in the portfolio, the student should be in fine shape. It goes without saying to choose examples that best reflect the student's level of writing.

**Portfolio Reading**

**Question: How long does a portfolio reading take?**

In the past, we have been able to finish reading the portfolios in three or four hours.

**Question: Will I be paid for participating in the portfolio reading?**

Since the portfolio reading for English 87 was initiated, the adjunct instructors have been paid for their time reading the portfolios. Make sure to fill out an hourly time form at the Division office.

**Question: Is there a norming packet for these portfolios?**

No. The English 87 instructors go through a quick review at the beginning of the portfolio reading to establish some common ground and to ask questions. When we are all agreement about the procedure, we begin reading the portfolios.

**Question: I have a problem. I am the only English 87 class this summer. What should I do about readers for the portfolios?**

Make arrangements to schedule a portfolio reading date with an instructor who has taught English 87 in the past. You will need at the very least two instructors to conduct the reading.

**Question: What needs to be inside the portfolio on the day of the portfolio reading?**

Be sure that you have all four of the assignments in the folder. The portfolio folder should contain one summary, one response, one multiple draft narrative essay, and one multiple draft argumentative essay. These
assignments should be clearly labeled. Your grades for the individual assignments should not be on the front pages. This measure is taken so the other readers will not be influenced by your grading. So if you haven't marked the assignments, please hold off on the grades on the actual pages in the portfolio. Of course, with the multiple draft essay assignments, you will be providing feedback to the students so the drafts are expected to have comments and marks, as you would do so normally.

*Question:* When you include assignments in the 87 portfolio, do they usually have instructor comments? I am thinking about the summaries and responses done in one draft for the 87 portfolio.

The summaries and responses in the portfolio do not have to have instructor comments.

*Question:* I need to know if we are supposed to assess (grade) the portfolios BEFORE the reading date? If so, how do I assess the portfolios?

We have tried excluding the original instructor as an evaluator of the portfolio, but lately we have been including the original instructor as a reader. The latter method seems to make the portfolio reading more efficient. Also, most instructors want to have a say in whether or not their students should pass the portfolio or not. So, please DO read the portfolios before the reading date and mark the back of the portfolio folder with your score of the portfolio material—either pass or no pass.

*Question:* How are the portfolios evaluated?

We have at least two readers for each portfolio. The first reader is the original instructor; the second reader is another English 87 instructor. If the two evaluations are NOT in agreement, then a third reader is called in to cast the deciding vote. We do not have a scoring rubric at this time, but with an understanding of the different skill levels involved we have followed the general distinctions made in the English 79 rubric to determine if a portfolio is at a passing level or not.

*Question:* How are the results collected onto a spreadsheet?

Copy and paste into an email to the person coordinating the portfolio reading your Drop Roster for your section. The Drop Rosters can then be collected into a spreadsheet with the names of all students in English 87 for that semester.

*After the Portfolio Reading*
Question: What should I do after the portfolio reading?

Please leave the response assignment inside the portfolio and return the portfolios to the Reading/Writing Learning Center (Holt 201) for storage in a file cabinet. The response assignment will serve as a proof of the student's writing. You can return the other portfolio assignments to the student.

Question: What should I tell the students after the portfolio reading?

As you know, if a student does not pass the portfolio, the student must receive a D or an F for the course grade. In general, you might consider advising students who passed but had a split reading on their portfolios and students who have a C for the course grade to enroll next semester in English 73 (2 units) and/or Reading 98 (1 unit) in the Reading/Writing Learning Center. These support courses can be taken before or while taking English 79.
Results of English 87 Portfolio Readings:

In the fall 2006 semester, with three sections of the course, a total of 53 students submitted portfolios. Of these portfolios, 47 were evaluated as passing for a total of 88%, and 6 were evaluated as not passing for a total of 11%.

In the spring 2007 semester, with four sections of the course, a total of 101 students submitted portfolios. Of these portfolios, 84 were evaluated as passing for a total of 83%, and 17 were evaluated as not passing for a total of 17%.

In the summer 2007 semester, with one section of the course, a total of 12 students submitted portfolios. Of these portfolios, 10 were evaluated as passing for a total of 83%, and 2 were evaluated as not passing for a total of 17%.

In the fall 2007 semester, with four sections of the course, a total of 87 students submitted portfolios. Of these portfolios, 75 were evaluated as passing for a total of 86%, and 12 were evaluated as not passing for a total of 14%.
Comparable Courses:

A study of comparable courses taught at various California community colleges can shed light on how English 87 can be taught in different ways.

At Delta College, English 87 is five units. There is no lab requirement and no advisories for concurrent enrollment in a reading class. There is a departmental portfolio final examination. There are three sections offered in the spring 2007 semester. According to the College Catalog, “This course is designed to prepare students for English 79, Preparatory English. Emphasis is placed on writing and editing of paragraphs and short essays based on readings. Units earned in this course do not count toward an associate degree.”

At Sierra College, enrollment in English 501 (the English 87 equivalent) is limited to twenty students per section. The course is four units and five hours, suggesting that a lab hour is required. There are seven sections offered in the spring 2007 term. According to the Course Catalog, English 501 “focuses on basic writing skills through practice in writing and reading. Includes reading, studying and responding in writing to short, nonfiction selections from a variety of sources at a level appropriate to the course. Emphasizes the writing process leading to development of skills in writing sentences, single paragraphs, and multi-paragraph assignments. Designed for students who need review prior to enrolling in English A.”

At Ohlone College, an English 151A (the English 87 equivalent) instructor posts her course schedule online. The schedule includes the use of MySpace articles and films such as “An Inconvenient Truth” and “Who Killed the Electric Car?” It appears the instructor raises relevant social issues and uses these to initiate writing assignments. English 151A is three hours lecture and three hours in the lab for a total of four units for the course. The course schedule includes an advisory for students to have a concurrent enrollment in a corresponding reading course. There are twelve sections of English 151A offered in the spring 2007 term. According to the College Catalog, “This course focuses on fundamentals of grammar, punctuation, and acceptable usage as applied to writing clear sentences, paragraphs, and informal essay.”

At San Jose City College, English 335 (the English 87 equivalent) is 4.5 units, with four hours of lecture and two hours of lab. There are nine sections of English 335 offered in the spring 2007 term. According to the Course Catalog, “This course is designed to develop competence in basic writing skills 2 levels below English 001A. Topics covered include the
steps of the writing process, the development of paragraphs and short multi-paragraph compositions, the writing of summaries, and the basic rules of standard English usage. The lab component provides individualized writing help for each student.”

At Evergreen Community College, students in five different English composition courses have to take a departmental final examination on the same day. There are eight sections of English 330 (the English 87 equivalent) offered in the spring 2007 term. English 330 is offered to native English speakers or near-native English speakers. ESL students follow a different sequence of courses. The English 330 final, evaluated by at least two faculty members, comprises 20% of the course grade. English 330 is four units, with three lecture hours and three lab hours. According to the Course Catalog, “English 330 is devoted to developing competence in writing (1) standard English sentences, (2) paragraphs, and (3) short compositions by means of a study of grammar and practice in writing. Successful completion of both the lecture and writing center component of this course is required. This course may not be used in satisfaction of English requirements for the Associate Degree, but it is a prerequisite for students who place below the English 104 level on the College Placement Test.”

At Diablo Valley College, English 98 (the English 87 equivalent) is three units with three lecture hours and one hour in the lab. There are ten sections of English 98 offered in the spring 2007 term. It appears that an ESL 98 is the equivalent course for English as a Second Language students. According to the Course Catalog, “[English 98] is designed to help students gain confidence and fluency in writing essays or themes. In this context, students will learn to write clear, complete and varied sentences and coherent paragraphs. An additional goal is for students to learn basic rules of grammar, punctuation and spelling. Students will also become familiar with the steps of the writing process: drafting, revising, editing, proofreading.”

At De Anza College, English Writing 200 (the English 87 equivalent) is five units, has a Pass/No Pass grading, and requires an additional ½ unit of lab in English Writing 201. According to the Course Catalog, in English Writing 200, “focus is on writing fluency and familiarity with the conventions of standard written English. Students develop the ability to respond in writing and orally to written texts. Assignments show the interconnection among readings, class discussion, personal experience, observation, and social issues.” There are three sections of English Writing 200 offered in the spring 2007 term.
At American River College, English Writing 51 (the English 87 equivalent) is four units, and concurrent enrollment in a reading class is advised. There are eleven sections of the course offered in the spring 2007 term. According to the College Catalog, “This course focuses on basic writing skills, emphasizing the connection between writing and reading. This course includes reading, studying and responding orally and in writing to short, nonfiction multicultural selections at an appropriate level. The course emphasizes the writing process and development of specific skills within the sentence, paragraph and essay forms in preparation for English Writing 102 or 103. The course also emphasizes the reading process and development of comprehension skills. One or more hours may be required in the Learning Resource Center. This course may be taken twice for credit.”

At Cerritos College, English 20 (the English 87 equivalent) is three units, with three hours lecture and one hour in the lab. There are twenty sections offered in the spring 2007 term. According to the Course Catalog, “This course introduces students to the writing process as a means of developing ideas into clear, correct, and effective writing. The course concentrates on short essay writing in accord with the conventions of standard English.”

At San Francisco City College, there are two options for associate degrees: a SFCC associate degree and a Transfer associate degree. English 93 (the English 87 equivalent) is three units. There are forty-four sections offered in the spring 2007 term. According to the College Catalog, English 93 involves “training and practice in academic essay writing and analytical reading. Emphasis is on learning to read and write pre-collegiate argumentative prose.”

It appears that a number of community colleges across the state have considered how a developmental writing course, such as English 87, should be incorporated into the curriculum. The course descriptions do not seem to be so different; many, in fact, accurately describe Delta’s English 87. In general, there are a number of similarities. The courses in this study seek to show the connections between reading and writing, specifically through writing assignments based on reading passages. Moreover, some of these developmental writing courses advise or require concurrent enrollment in a reading course. Many of these composition courses have a combination lecture/lab format and require additional hours in a lab setting where students earn additional units. This requirement follows a recommendation noted in a recent article intended for community college instructors. According to Pamela Kessler in “Best Practices in the Writing Center: A Collective Responsibility,” one of the
three best practices for writing centers is to “require mandatory attendance of developmental students in the writing center.”

A number of the course descriptions above also mention instruction in the writing process to assist skill development. The teaching of grammar and standard English is also usually included as an integral part of the course foundation. A few course descriptions refer to the use of social issues as an essential part of the reading for the course. As for the writing, the course descriptions frequently refer to informal essays and multi-paragraph compositions. Finally, a few of the courses mention the use of a departmental final examination. So while Delta College has taken steps to improve the course curriculum of English 87 through a departmental final examination and other changes, in order to keep with the standards of neighboring community colleges, English 87 could be further strengthened by requiring a lab component and requiring concurrent enrollment in a reading course.
Planning the Semester

With the four required assignments for the English 87 portfolio, instructors have found it necessary to take precautions in scheduling the semester’s activities. Sometimes the due date for the portfolio sneaks up and surprises everyone. To this end, it would be helpful to consider how some instructors plan the semester for an English 87 course, or for its equivalent at another college.

As part of her doctoral work on basic skills education, Pamela Pan, English Instructor at Delta College, observed an English 87 course for a semester. Based on her observations in the class and her many years teaching English 70, she believes “the key is improving both fluency and accuracy in writing. Students who do not make it to English 79 typically have both issues. English 87 classes will need to continue working with students on getting them to read a lot, write a lot, and work on conventions of writing. I'm often struck by how little our students read if we don't ask them to.” An advocate for extensive reading, Pamela Pan emphasizes multicultural readings and sees value in using student writing as models for study and as starting points for reading-based writing. When asked to complete a survey conducted by Pan, 93% of the students who responded stated that they enjoyed reading Delta Winds. Students varied in their responses as to why they liked the essays. While some students appreciated that the essays were based on real life experiences of fellow Delta students, whom they could identify with, other students preferred the variety of the content and the type of essay writing. A number of the respondents felt the student essays provided an opportunity to learn new vocabulary.

Zack Prince, who has taught the revised English 87 for four consecutive semesters, states that he is “always looking for ways to implement group exercises in the class since it helps break up the more solitary work in the class and encourages students to get to know one another. The instructor may need to remind students to be respectful with one another when working or reading in a group since reading, speaking and writing abilities may vary from one to another.” Prince notes that sometimes the differing abilities can be based on exposure to the English language: “Students who may have only begun learning English as immigrants to the U.S. may exhibit good grammar and writing abilities but have difficulty and feel embarrassed when speaking in class. On the other hand, native English speakers in the class may have difficulty finding the proper grammar during writing but excel at being able to verbally persuade others and to explain themselves.” Prince finds that many students have not become regular readers, so at the beginning of the semester, he discusses the importance of reading on a daily basis and shows the
students various types of material from novels to newspapers. After discussing the connection between reading and grammar and writing, he asks the students: “Why not add 30 minutes a day of reading time to your schedule?” Using journal writing as a way to prepare for the narrative assignment, Prince has students write a one-page entry each day for the first two weeks, and then asks the students if they wish for him to make grammatical corrections. He makes the corrections on the entries of those students who have requested him to do so.

Another English instructor who encourages students to read, Martin Rojas assigns one essay for reading every night to help student become more familiar and comfortable with reading. He ensures the students keep up with their readings by starting out every class with a ten–fifteen minute journal writing activity, which is treated like a quiz. For his developmental writing courses, he emphasizes multi-cultural narrative readings. When planning the semester, Rojas has found that using modules can be effective. The first three weeks are spent on high–interest activities concerning grammar and mechanics to strengthen sentence–level skills. The next few weeks concentrate on narration followed by two weeks of responses. He then has a three–week module on argumentative essays, and closes with three weeks on summaries. Rojas notes that students build on their skills and transfer easily from responses to narratives as the two are related in many ways. Throughout the semester, he returns to grammatical points as a way of recycling information taught earlier in the semester. For the narrative and argumentative essays, Rojas provides detailed handouts of the format of the assignment as a way of cutting down on time spent on feedback on each paper. Rojas instructs students in the writing process and has them hand in a number of drafts: a page of prewriting, a draft for content and organization, a draft for grammar and mechanics, and a final draft. He also encourages them to concurrently enroll in English 73A or B in the Writing Center. At the beginning of the semester, as some of the students feel disappointed with their previous portfolio recommendation, he makes a point of making his students aware that enrollment in English 87 is not negative but will prove to be beneficial in preparing them for what is expected in English 79.

Ludmila Buettner, an English instructor at Delta, also finds “the reading comprehension is very low and the vocabulary is very limited with 87 students.” To counter this, she uses frequent group work in class to build students’ skills in reading and vocabulary. Buettner supplements her textbook with newspaper and magazine articles that the students bring to class to share with their groups. If there is a high level of interest from a group, the instructor copies the article for class reading and discussion. For vocabulary work, she teaches the use of the dictionary and the thesaurus, but she prefers to focus on helping students hone their skills in
identifying contextual clues from the passage and also from the word itself. She asks the students, “What parts do you recognize?” as a way to get the students to identify common word endings, verb tense markers, prefixes, and suffixes. She tells her students, “There is information you already know in the word.” Through various vocabulary learning strategies, Buettner guides the students to make the word meaningful to them and then encourages them to use their new vocabulary. To add interest to the class, she constantly modifies the groups, switching group members and changing the activities, sometimes requiring groups to clarify for individual members or to compete against other groups. At times, groups present to the class, and other times representatives from each group do so. She believes “it’s not what you teach but how you teach that’s important. And how you present the information.”

Other English instructors have incorporated Computer Assisted Instruction in the form of an online grammar site as part of the schedule for developmental writing courses. For English 87, once a week, the class meets at a computer lab where the students access MyWritingLab, a site designed by Pearson Longman. The instructor can modify the site to utilize written assignments or grammar exercises. After taking a diagnostic exam, the students receive a listing of sentence-level areas that they have and have not mastered. The students then go through multiple sets of exercises focusing on a particular area, such as parallelism. The exercises test the students’ ability to identify and to use specific grammatical points correctly. Students are motivated to concentrate on the self-paced learning units since the final examination for the class is the post-diagnostic test from MyWritingLab. At the end of the semester, 86% of the English 87 students who responded in a survey stated that they liked working on grammar in MyWritingLab. The reasons stated included the immediate feedback, the ability to access the site at any time, and the explanation of grammatical terms and concepts.

At Ohlone College, Jennifer Hurley teaches English 151A, the equivalent of English 87. Finding relevant materials has been a challenge, so she creates her own and takes care to incorporate an international focus. By reading articles on Iraqi teens, students relate to the age group and gain a broader perspective on the world. Much of the semester is dedicated to writing and revising summaries and responses. With summary writing, the instructor weaves in lessons on avoiding plagiarism and expanding vocabulary. With the responses, the students are introduced to argument. After reading three articles on an issue such as health care, the students watch the film “Sicko” before writing their argumentative essay. Since concurrent enrollment in a reading course is required, students gain additional time and practice in developing careful reading skills. This developmental writing course also requires students to enroll in a writing
lab component, where the students receive individualized instruction, sometimes by the English 151A course instructor. Since she finds most of her students to be visually oriented learners, Jennifer Hurley utilizes the Internet and films such as “The Lost Boys of Sudan,” “Who Killed the Electric Car?” “An Inconvenient Truth,” and “Supersize Me.” In addition to teaching composition skills, she has a larger goal: she “wants the students to be more conscious of the world at large and how their choices connect to others. That is really more important.”

At Evergeen College, students in William Silver’s English 330, the equivalent of English 87, concentrate on developing rhetorical devices at the sentence and paragraph level, such as selecting and controlling a topic, before moving towards logically connected informal essays. Silver guides the students through various stages in the writing experience through frequent teacher-student conferences, which he has found to be effective. In addition to these meetings, students in the course are required to spend three hours per week in the writing lab. The Learning Outcomes for the course include the use of references, examples, and supporting commentary. Much of the supporting evidence and development is drawn from the students’ personal experiences, their observations, and their readings. English 330, one of three developmental writing courses, includes a departmental final examination, graded by English instructors. The ESL students follow a separate sequence of developmental writing courses to prepare for college-level composition.
ENG/087 Basic Writing Skills II

This course is designed to prepare the student for English 79: Preparatory English. Emphasis is placed on writing and editing of paragraphs and short essays based on readings. Units earned in this course do not count toward an associate degree. Changed challenge option from "Yes" to "No" and included academic rationale.

ENTRY SKILLS:

ADVISORIES:
NONE

CATALOG PREREQUISITES:
ENG-070 Basic Writing Skills I minimum grade of R  or
ENG-085 Advanced English as a Second Language (ESL) minimum grade of R

COREQUISITES:
NONE

LIMITATIONS ON ENROLLMENT:
NONE

LECTURE HOURS PER WEEK:
Min Units: 5.00  Max Units: 5.00

LAB HOURS PER WEEK:
Min Units: 0  Max Units: 0

COURSE REPEATABILITY: NO
REPEAT COUNT:
REPEAT UNITS:

RATIONALE:

GOALS:
General Goals: Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:
1. Read and comprehend essays.
2. Plan paragraphs and short essays.
3. Evaluate readings for differences in types of writing.
4. Write grammatically correct sentences.
5. Analyze the structure of an essay.
6. Develop and compose paragraphs and short essays.
7. Apply the writing process to original compositions.
8. Write summaries and responses to readings.
9. Use dictionaries.
10. Identify and use new vocabulary.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
Specific Objectives: Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:
1. Read and comprehend essays that use various methods of development, such as narration, description, illustration, process, definition, classification, comparison/contrast, argumentation, definition, and cause and effect.
2. Plan compositions by using pre-writing techniques, such as outlining, free-writing, brainstorming, and clustering.
3. Evaluate readings critically for differences in objective versus subjective writing, for distinctions between fact and opinion, for differences in general versus supporting sentences, and for methods of developing paragraphs and short essays.
4. Generate sentences using basic sentence patterns and commonly used methods of sentence combining. Construct grammatically correct sentences using the following sentence patterns: simple, compound, complex, complex/compound.
5. Analyze the structure and the parts of an essay with an introduction paragraph, multiple body paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph.
6. Given prompts on varied readings, write developed, multi-paragraph compositions that illustrate critical thinking through the use of rhetorical methods, such as narration, process, comparison/contrast, and argumentation.
7. Demonstrate the writing process by revising works through multiple drafts with concern for organization, development, transitions, and focus; proofread and edit final drafts for sentence-level errors, clarity, word usage, grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
8. Extract meaning from published essays, summarize these essays with a clear understanding of the content, and respond to the essays with comments based on specific questions or open-ended prompts.
9. Given a list of vocabulary words, demonstrate an understanding of how to use dictionaries to increase vocabulary and to clarify definitions of specific words.
10. Identify and practice the use of vocabulary found in a general context and in specific disciplines.
OUTLINE OF TOPICS:
The following topics are included in the framework of the course but are not intended as
limits on content. The order of presentation and relative emphasis will vary with instructors.

1. Reading as a Context for Writing
   a. Discussion of reading passage
   b. Eliciting related comments to passage
   c. Answering questions in written form
   d. Analytical reading skills

2. Writing for Fluency
   a. Journal writing. Reporting on daily events

3. Writing Paragraphs and Short Essays
   a. Pre-Writing Techniques
      i. Mapping
      ii. Listing
      iii. Clustering
      iv. Outlining
   b. Thesis Formulation
      i. Constructing a subject and a controlling idea
   c. Development of Topic Sentences
   d. Methods of Paragraph Development
      i. Narrative
      ii. Illustration
      iii. Description
      iv. Analysis
   e. Essay-Structure
      i. Introduction
      ii. Body
      iii. Conclusion

4. Word Choice and Vocabulary
   a. Formal/informal
   b. Context clues
   c. Dictionary skills

5. Transitional Devices
   a. Between sentences
   b. Between paragraphs

6. Rewriting, Editing, and Proofreading Processes
   a. Organization
   b. Focus
   c. Development
   d. Sentence Structures
   e. Word Usage
f. Spelling
g. Punctuation
7. Sentence Construction and Combining
   a. Simple
   b. Compound
   c. Complex
   d. Compound-complex
8. Grammar and Usage
   a. Homonyms
   b. Exact words

**SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS:**

**Reading:**
The student will read model paragraphs and short essays on a variety of topics. Readings should be Level II (ninth-twelfth grade level) on the Flesch-Kincaid Readability Scale. The student will be asked to complete assignments, such as the following:

1. Read essays in all rhetorical modes, including cause and effect.
2. Read and study various methods of developing introductory paragraphs, such as through anecdotes, through rhetorical questions, and through a general-to-specific format.
3. Read and study various methods of developing concluding paragraphs.
4. Read explanations of various methods of rhetorical development in body paragraphs.
5. Read and study model sentences using basic sentence patterns involving subordination and coordination.
6. Read essays in order to produce summaries and responses.
7. Read and study new vocabulary terms and develop a broader vocabulary base.
8. Read to identify differences in objective and subjective writing.

**Writing:**
The student will write a minimum of 5,000 words of expository prose divided among various assignments, such as the following:

1. Write in a journal to achieve fluency with the written word.
2. Write summaries of and responses to readings on different topics.
3. Write topic sentences and general sentences for paragraphs and essays.
4. Write supporting sentences using relevant examples, details, and specifics to develop points adequately.
5. Connect sentences and paragraphs with transitional words, phrases, and sentences.
6. Write organized and coherent essays using certain rhetorical methods of development, such as narration, process, comparison/contrast, and argument.
7. Write three-paragraph narrative essays.
8. Write four-paragraph process essays.
9. Write four-paragraph or five-paragraph comparison/contrast essays, stating similarities and differences on the subject.
10. Write five-paragraph argumentative essays, using reasons and examples.
11. Write reading-based compositions by writing in response to an earlier reading.

OTHER:

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:
Methods of instruction may include, but are not limited to, the following: (from methods of instruction data page).
1 Lecture

METHODS OF EVALUATION:
A student's grade will be based on a required final examination and multiple measures of performance including critical thinking. These methods may include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Course work: The student will complete course work, such as paragraphs, essays, rewrites, quizzes, mid-term(s), and a required final examination.

2. Portfolio as Comprehensive Final Examination: The student is required to complete a portfolio containing assignments, such as an objective summary of a published essay, a subjective response of the published essay, a three-paragraph narrative essay, a four-paragraph process essay, a five paragraph argumentative essay. The student's portfolio will include works of multiple drafts. The student's portfolio will reflect critical thinking used to revise compositions after the student receives input from the instructor on earlier drafts. The student's portfolio will be read and evaluated in a group reading by English 87 instructors. Passing of the portfolio will be necessary to pass the course.

3. A grade of C or better in the course automatically results in Level II Composition.

TEXT BOOKS:

**MANUALS** (information from data fields)

**PERIODICALS** (information from data fields)

*Delta Winds: A Magazine of Student Essays.* San Joaquin Delta College
*The Impact.* San Joaquin Delta College

**SUPPLIES:**

**COMPARABLE COURSES:**
*Community College Course*
Cerritos College

Board of Trustees Approval Date: 02/21/2006
**Learning Activities:**
This is a compilation of learning activities from various instructors.

Writing Sample Activity
During the first week, ask for a writing sample from the students. Tell them to introduce themselves to you, to write of an accomplishment, to tell you how they wish to be viewed in the class. This gives students a chance to say something to the teacher that they might not say aloud. In the past, students have notified the instructor of national origins, of beliefs, of values, and of ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. Students have also informed the instructor of mental illness, of disabilities, and of brain damage due to accidents and injury. A number of ESL students have also mentioned that their only daily exposure to English is in the classroom. Some students have mentioned a lack of funds to purchase the texts. The information from this activity is helpful for the instructor to recognize the student’s individual circumstances.

Introduction to Delta Activity
Instructors can use school catalogues, pamphlets, and handouts to inform students of various support services: the office of Vice President of Student Services, the Reading/Writing Learning Center, the Puente Program, the TRIO program, the AFFIRM program, the GED program, the Disability Support Programs and Services (DSPS), the various learning communities each semester, child care through the Child Development Center, Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS), Campus Police, various student publications, and student organizations and clubs. Students can also be introduced to school policies and student responsibilities.

Writing Activity:
Have students read a Hmong Fable, a Mexican folktale, or any other type of folklore narrative. Then, have the students write a similar folktale that they know from their childhood.

Reading Activity:
Have students read a passage. Then, make them distinguish between story and information. Ask the students to identify narrative and then ask them to identify examples, definitions, comparison/contrast, etc.

Sentence Combining Activity:
Introduce students to time markers, such as the following: first, then, after that, while, during, later, before, after, soon. Write simple sentences on the board in random order. Have the students put together a story that makes sense. After the story has been put together, go over subordination sentences that have time markers.
Grammar Activity:
Before a lesson on a particular rhetorical method of development, review the appropriate verb tenses or grammatical point. For the narrative essay, review past tense verbs. For the process essay, review the imperative form. For cause and effect, review “so” and coordination sentences. For comparison/contrast, review “but” and coordination. Also, review “although/though/even though” and review “while” and subordination. For argumentative essays, review “that clauses,” such as “I believe that…” or “It seems to me that….”

Writing Activity:
During a writing activity on a specific topic, have the students stop writing halfway through. Tell them to read the topic again to make sure they are writing on the topic requested. Check to make sure they address the specific topic.

Sentence Combining Activity:
Write two simple sentences as if writing an addition problem. Draw a line under the two sentences and then total them up, creating a longer sentence that has an appositive phrase. Write a simple sentence on the board describing a student, such as “Jasmine is a student in English 87.” Below this sentence write another sentence that states what the student plans to become, such as “Jasmine plans to become an engineer.” Only the first word of the second sentence should be directly under the first sentence. The rest of the second sentence should be separated from the first part with enough space. Put the addition mark on the side of the two sentences. Draw a line under the two sentences. “Add” the two sentences under the line: “Jasmine, a student in English 87, plans to become an engineer.” Have students interview each other and write similar sentences about their classmates. Expand the content when needed to allow for more variations. Emphasize the point that the student’s name has to be used. Try to use “to be” verbs followed by “a/an/the” in the first sentence and action verbs in the second sentence in order to produce a well-constructed sentence. The above activity can also be used with relative clauses.

| Jasmine is a student in English 87.                      |
| +  Jasmine plans to become an engineer.             |
| ____________________________________________________|
| Jasmine, a student in English 87, plans to become an engineer. |

Reading and Listening Activity:
Copy an essay from National Public Radio’s web site under “This I Believe.” After reading the essay with students and reviewing the vocabulary, take the students to a computer lab. Listen to the audio recording of the author who wrote the “This I Believe” essay. The site has numerous archived essays that are appropriate for the reading level of students in English 87 and that are fascinating to read and listen to.

Grammar/Pronunciation Activity:
Ask students to tell you what they did yesterday. As they tell you, listen for the past tense action verbs and write them under four categories: irregular, regular with a /d/ ending, regular with a /t/ ending, and regular with a /id/ ending. The –ed ending has three different ways of pronunciation, depending on the last sound before the –ed ending. A review of phonetics is helpful. All vowel sound endings fall under /d/, for example “played, tried, mowed, booed.” Also under this category are /b/ such as “grabbed,” /g/ such as “dragged,” /j/ such as “judged,” /v/ as in “shaved,” /dz/ as in “rouged,” /l/ as in “polled,” /m/ as in “drummed,” and /n/ as in “turned.” Under the /t/ category fall words ending with the final sound of /p/ as in “tapped,” /k/ as in “tacked,” /ch/ as in “reached,” /f/ as in “laughed,” and /sh/ as in “washed.” Under the /id/ ending are words that end with the final sound /t/ as in “waited” and /d/ as in “faded.” After the students have exhausted their reporting on the activities of the previous day, fill in the missing slots and go over the pronunciation of the –ed ending with the students. Have them state sentences aloud to practice the pronunciation. Many of the ESL students will already be familiar with this information, but it’s good to review, especially before an assignment using past tense verbs. The irregular verbs do not follow a pattern connected with the pronunciation of the –ed ending.

Paragraph Combining Activity:
To prepare for this activity, the teacher will need to find a suitable paragraph from a published source. Make a copy of the paragraph for later. Type the individual sentences on a page with each sentence beginning at the left margin. Cut out the individual sentences. Give each group of students a group of sentences. The students have to put the paragraph back together again. (This checks for identifying logical order.) When finished, each student has to write out the paragraph on a separate sheet of paper. The sheets should be checked for accuracy by each group member. Then, the groups exchange the papers and check for accuracy. (This checks for accuracy in copying the written word.) The instructor can show the original copy to the class. The groups could compete against each other to see which one recreates the paragraph accurately and which one is most precise in copying the paragraph. The activity could be modified so that each group has a separate paragraph from a
longer essay, and the students have to put the essay together from the individual paragraphs. The paragraph sentences could be color-coded to insure that the sentences from, for example, the blue paragraph stay with the blue paragraph group.

Question and Answer Activity:
First, let the students know that they will be called on to answer questions. If a particular student feels overwhelmed, then talk to the student during a break. To call on students in a random manner, make individual note-cards with the name of each student on each card. Shuffle the cards and call on the students in the order of the deck of cards. This method ensures that all students in the class will be called on.

Vocabulary Building Activity:
From a vocabulary list, have students choose ten words they do not know. The students can use a dictionary, but they have to write down the definition of the word, the part of speech, and a sentence using the word.

Email Activity
Give students extra credit for checking their email for reminders about assignments and course information.

Error Recognition Activity
Have students keep blue books with sample errors found in their writing. Have students identify the type of error, name the error, and give examples in columns on the pages.

Vocabulary Activity
With a three-minute time limit on the activity, each pair of students works on a vocabulary list. Student A tells Student B the word from the list. Student B has to create a sentence with the word and say it aloud. The students can also practice the spelling of these words and can give definitions.

Grammar Activity
Break the class into two groups: the students versus the instructor. Hand out paragraphs with mistakes, the same paragraph to everyone. First, the students find an error in one paragraph. Then, the instructor finds an error. This continues until no more errors can be found. The students try to Stump the Teacher. This activity can also be done in groups and in a type of competition.

Reading Comprehension Activity
After students have read an essay, ask them interpretive questions, such as “Who is most at fault in this essay?” “Which sentence in this paragraph
is the most important one?” Help students develop their metacognitive skills by asking them to highlight sentences they do not understand. Guide them in recognizing when and where their comprehension breaks down.

Reading Activity
Have students create questionnaires of the essays to ask each other. Involve the students in the reading and activity. Have students debate the issues based on the readings.

Vocabulary Activity
Have students make index cards of new vocabulary. They can create new sentences for each word.

Reading Comprehension Activity
Have students identify complex sentences that have references to previous points in an essay. Build up background references and cultural references in order to understand the content of the passage. Concentrate on a specific topic area to build a familiarity with the issues involved.

Reading Comprehension Activity
Help students see the structure in the readings by using visual aids, such as timelines, charts, cause and effect diagrams, etc.

Reading Comprehension Activity
On the left side of the page, have students write in their own words the main point of the paragraph. On the right side of the page, have the students write their reactions to the points made. Check to see if students comprehend the reading.

Reading Comprehension Activity
Have students work on metacognitive skills by identifying complex sentences that they do not understand. Have the students read an essay and write down any sentences that cause a gap in comprehension. Go over the sentence for meaning through context and discuss strategies to use in similar situations to help understand the sentences. Gaps can be caused by references to an earlier part of the essay or references to an assumed similar cultural background.
Responding to Student Writing 1: Navdeep Singh

Instructors choose to respond to student writing in a variety of ways: direct, indirect, and a hybrid of the two. Using a direct method, the instructor could make the editing changes for the student. With an indirect method, an instructor, using precise correction symbols, can indicate the location of the error or the type of error. Here is an example of one way to respond to a student's writing:

In the summer of 2007, my cousins from England decided to take a trip to Six Flags. Six Flags is a theme park that has many rides and animals to see. I had never been to Six Flags before. My older cousin Vick suggested that we should take my father’s Lincoln Navigator instead of my Honda. I agreed because it would be more comfortable. My cousins decided to go on Sunday. I was driving and my cousin Aman sat on the passenger seat. Jay and Vick sat on the back seat. We woke up at seven am and took a shower and got ready and left. We ate breakfast at Jack in the Box. It was an hour and thirty minute drive from Manteca to Vallejo. We arrived at the Six Flags by 10 am and we had plenty of time to see everything in the park.

We got our tickets from the ticket booth and entered the park. At first, we ran to go see the crocodile. Six Flags also has lions and even white tigers. It was a hot day, so we decided to go on a water ride. Even though the line was long, we decided to stay in line anyway until we got our turn. When we got off the ride, our clothes were really wet. It felt very cold wind was coming towards us. Aman wanted to go on the King Kong ride. He said, “It is going to make my clothes dry faster.” Once I saw the King Kong ride, I got little scared. The ride looked huge and had four loops and it would turn upside down four times. I didn’t want to tell
my cousins that I was scared, so I stood by them. In my mind I said thought of just walking away and make excuse later on.

The line was long and there was a sign that said, "From here 15 min." My heart was pounding faster and faster by the second. As we got closer to the ride, my hands were starting to sweat. I don't know if they were just wet from the previous ride or if I was insane. I had the courage to tell my older cousin Vick about not going on the ride and what was happening to me. Instead of helping me out, he went and told Aman about it. Aman said, "Don't be a baby," and started to laugh.

Vick said, "Hey! Look, Jay is going to ride on it and he is younger than you. He also had a grin on his face when he said that. Jay said to me that I can sit by him. The whole ride would have taken about a minute. Jay said, "It would be over before you know it." I knew if I didn't go on it, then they would tell everyone in our family about this. I took a deep breath and stood in a line by them.

I looked back and saw about twenty people were standing behind me in a line. I was thinking to myself that maybe it was not a good idea to come to Six Flags. The ride stopped in front of us and it was our turn to ride it next. I could hear my self breathing harder and harder. I sat in the forth row from the front. As I sat down, the park ranger came and put my safety belt on. There was a metal bar that Jay was holding on to. When I touched the metal bar, it felt very cold like an ice cube. I
grabbed that bar tight as I could. I could hear the park ranger starting to count
down. He said, FIVE..., FOUR..., THREE..., right before he could say two, I yelled
out loud, "Let me out, I don't wanna ride it." I could hear my cousins laughing in
front. The park ranger didn't finish the count down and came running toward me. They said, "What happen." I told them in a(mallow) voice that I am afraid of
heights. They open safety belt and let me out. I look around and saw everyone
was looking and at me and some of them were laughing. I really didn't care at
that time because I was just happy to get my feet on the ground.

I walked to the exit sign and waited for my cousins. When I saw them, they
were still laughing. I was so embarrassed at that time. I didn't go on any ride that I
just watched them go on rides. Then we went to go see a shark and two dolphin
shows. I saw a huge killer whale. It was around six o'clock and we decided to
head back home. We ate dinner on the way back home. Now when ever I see
my cousins, they still bring up the Six Flags story about me on the King Kong ride.

Excellent description!
Makes these changes
and it should be
ready for the portfolio.
In the above sample, Zack Prince, an English 87 instructor, combines direct corrections with comments. A number of the corrections concern verb tense, word usage, and word choice, which can be challenging areas for developmental writers. The instructor closes with a voice of support for the student’s work, encouraging final editing of the essay. How to respond to a student’s work can be discussed in many ways, but one means of determining the method’s effectiveness is by studying how the student responds in a later draft.

Here is the revised final draft of the student’s narrative essay:

Navdeep Singh  
English 87  
11/06/07  
Final Draft

“Trip to Six Flag”

In the summer of 2007, my cousins from England and I decided to take a trip to Six Flags. Six Flags is a theme park that has many rides and animals to see. I had never been to Six Flags before. My older cousin Vick suggested that we should take my father’s Lincoln Navigator instead of my Honda. I agreed because it would be more comfortable. My cousins decided to go on Sunday. We woke up at seven am and took shower and got ready and left. We ate breakfast at Jack in the Box. I was driving and my cousin Aman sat on the passenger seat. Jay and Vick sat on the back seat. It was an hour and a half drive from Manteca to Vallejo. We arrived at Six Flags before 10am and we had plenty of time to see everything in the park.

We got our ticket from the ticket booth and entered the park. At first we ran to go see the crocodiles. Six Flags also has lions and even white tigers. It was a hot day so we decided to go on a water ride. Even though the line was long, we decided to stay there until we got our turn. When we got off the ride, our clothes were really wet. It felt very cold with wind coming towards us. Aman wanted to go on the King Kong ride. He said, “It is going to make my clothes dry faster.” Once I saw the King Kong ride, I got a little scared. The ride looked huge and had four loops and it turned upside down four times. I didn’t want to to tell my cousins that I was scared, so I stood by them. In my mind I thought of just walking away and make excuse later on.

The line was long and there was a sign that said, “From here 15 min.” My heart was pounding faster and faster by the second. As we got
closer to the ride, my hands were starting to sweat. I don’t know if they were just wet from the previous ride or if I was insane. I had the courage to tell my older cousin Vick about not going on the ride and what was happening to me. Instead of helping me out, he went and told Aman about it. Aman said, “Don’t be a baby,” and started to laugh. Vick said, “Hey! Look, Jay is going to ride on it and he is younger than you.” He also had a grin on his face when he said that. Jay said that I could sit by him. Jay said, “The whole ride takes about a minute, it will be over before you know it.” I knew that if I didn’t go on it, they would tell everyone in our family about this. I took a deep breath and stood in a line by them.

I looked back and saw about twenty people were standing behind me in a line. I was thinking to myself that maybe it was not a good idea to have come to Six Flags. The ride stopped in front of us and it was our turn to get on it. I could hear myself breathing harder and harder. I sat in the fourth row from the front. As I sat down, the park ranger came and put my safety belt on. There was a metal bar that Jay was holding on to. When I touched the metal bar, it felt very cold like an ice cube. I grabbed that bar as tight as I could. I could hear the park ranger starting to count down. He said, FIVE..., FOUR..., THREE..., right before he could say two, I yelled out loud, “Let me out. I don’t wanna ride it.” I could hear my cousins laughing in front. The park rangers didn’t finish the count down and came running towards me. They said, “What happened?” I told them in a mellow voice that I was afraid of heights. They opened the safety belt and let me out. I looked around and saw everyone was looking at me and some of them were laughing. I really didn’t care at that time because I was just happy to get my feet on the ground.

I walked to the exit sign and waited for my cousins. When I saw them they were still laughing. I was so embarrassed at that time. I didn’t go on any rides after that. I just watched them go on the rides. Then we saw over ten different sharks and two dolphin shows. I saw a huge killer whale. It was around six o’clock and we decided to head back home. We ate dinner on the way back home. Now, whenever I see my cousins, they still bring up the Six Flags story about me on the King Kong ride.

The final product reads quite well as the student has made the corrections to an already fully developed and organized essay. Without criticizing or changing the content of the essay, the instructor has guided the student through some grammatical corrections, which have improved the essay significantly. From the evidence above, it appears the instructor’s method of responding to the student has been effective in helping the student create a cohesive and coherent final product, ready for the English 87 Portfolio.
Responding to Student Writing 2: Saleema Din

In another example of responding to student writing, Zack Prince takes a slightly different approach. Less effort is spent in direct corrections to the draft. Instead, the instructor gives some corrections to word usage and parallelism, but more marks indicate how to present the essay in a standard form. Directions in spacing between paragraphs and in indenting paragraphs give verbal clues to the student. Also, the instructor closes the essay with encouraging feedback requesting more development.

Saleema Din
11/14/07
English 87

Failing a Class

Inded, 8 spaces

I am writing to protest the failing grade I got in your class, English 87. I got the grade because I was not able to take the final exam. I was with my son in the emergency room that day. I was so upset for my son and the impossible test. It was so hard for me to come to school that day because I am a single mother and there was no one to stay with my son.

I handed in every assignment on time. My homework was always finished by class time. Even though I am a single mother of three children, I have been completed my homework on time. I am never absent from class. I have received good grades and never received lower than a C on any assignment.

On the day of the final examination my son became very ill. I rushed him to the Emergency room. He was admitted to the hospital and surgery that morning. As you can see, I have a huge reason for not being in school that morning. I couldn’t leave the hospital that day. I was very worried for my son.
Finding the balance in how to respond to student writing can be challenging for instructors, but many suggest that the state of the draft determines how to respond. If a paper has full development, organization, coherence, and clarity, then the global areas have been accounted for, and sentence-level corrections can be addressed. Zack Prince shows in
Here is the final draft of the student’s essay:

Saleema Din  
11/19/07  
English 87  
Final Draft  

“Failing a Class”

I am writing to protest the failing grade I got in your class, English 87. I got this grade because I was not able to take the final exam. During the exam, I was with my son in the emergency room. I was terribly upset for my son and for the test I was missing. It was impossible for me to come to school because I am a single mother and there was no one to stay with my son. After all, doesn’t a mother have to stay with her children in their time of need?

I have no idea why I had a dreadful grade, excluding the exam. I have handed in every assignment on time. I go to the library at least twice a week to get tutoring for the essays. Even though I’m a single mother, and rarely have time to do it, my homework is always completed by the start of class. Furthermore, I have never been absent from class. I have received good grades and have never gotten anything lower a C on any assignment.

On the day of the final examination my son was became extremely ill. I rushed Zeeshawn, my son, to the Lodi Memorial Hospital. He was admitted to the hospital in an hour and had surgery soon after. I sat in the waiting room, frantic for the results. After a couple of hours, I was allowed to see him but the doctors said that he would stay for a day or two just in case something might occur. As you can see, I had a huge reason for not being in school that morning. I simply couldn’t leave my son alone, especially because I was quite worried for him and probably would have gotten a bad grade anyways.

I would like to reschedule my final exam. I have studied for the test and could take it anytime. Would you please reschedule it for me? It is important for me to pass this class now because I have already learned
everything needed for English 79. I truly don’t want to spend another semester in the same class again.

I would happily appreciate your help in solving this problem. I feel that I deserve a chance to retake the exam after my ordeal. Because of all of the above, you should give me another chance to improve my grade. I would be very thankful.

By taking on the task of expanding the paragraphs with more details, the student made significant changes to the essay. The final draft indicates that the student understands how to view her own writing from a critical stance and, based on her own internal means, how to make self-determined improvements to the work. Each paragraph has been improved through precise wording and more descriptive and detailed sentence constructions. From these two samples, it seems that the instructor varies responses to the students’ writing depending on the state of the draft. When more revision is necessary, the instructor will call for it. When a draft is close to polished form, the instructor works as an editor, correcting the grammar and rewording some phrases. Determining whether or not to make process-oriented remarks or product-oriented corrections requires careful consideration on the part of the instructor.

The instructor’s marks altered somewhat in the two samples of student writing. In both samples, however, an encouraging tone in the instructor’s comments appears to have had a positive effect in how the students chose to revise and edit their work. Zack Prince’s students seem to appreciate the tone of his comments and the way he has not passed judgment on their beliefs, interests, behavior, and values. For developmental writers, this type of acceptance in the interaction between teacher and student may be of even greater importance than with writers with more advanced skills in composition. Many of the students in developmental writing seem to be at a vulnerable state in regards to their writing and hesitate sharing their creations with others for fear of criticism.

There is also the likelihood that in the past their message has been misunderstood and altered by instructors, some with the best of intentions. These communicative misunderstandings are commonplace in language learning, resulting in a situation that calls for special care and attention on the part of the teacher. The students know full well the difference between being evaluated for content and for grammar and some hold on tight to their intended expression. In a survey, English 87 students were asked, “What would you like the teacher to do to help you become a good writer?” One student wrote the following: “Correct my grammar, but not my ideas.”
Case Study 1: Rathany Sambath

One way to gain an understanding of the students in English 87 is to study their own writing. In the following case study of an English 87 student, instructors can follow the progress of an English 87 student over the course of the semester. On the first day of a late-starting class, the student was asked to introduce herself.

In the eighth week of the class, the students were assigned to write an in-class summary of an essay entitled “Hop on the Horse,” by Nina Peñalosa, published in Delta Winds in 2007. The summary was written within an eighty-minute timeframe. The students did not have the chance to revise their work in multiple drafts. Rathany wrote the following summary:

Rathany Sambath
10/29/07
Summary
“Hop on the Horse”

“Hop on the Horse” by Nina Penalosa
“I thought life is a carousel. It’s a ride that goes around in circles while taking its passengers on a journey enduring great highs and lows.” In the article “Hop on the Horse,” Nina Penalosa describes life as a carousel. How life are ups and downs. Sometimes in your journey, you’ll have to ride alone because in life, you can’t always depend on others. Nina writes about the struggles and her joyful times in life.

Nina realized that life is not perfect. Sometimes it would be great if she was a kid again and being care–free. Nina was at a mall in Sacramento looking over at a carousel. It reminded her of her childhood. Also, seeing the two young girls riding on it made her think back when she was a kid and having fun. “I found myself envious of them because they were still young, innocent and most likely full of wonder about the world around them.” Nina’s memories of riding on the carousel was when she was just a child. Her aunt Nelly led her to a horse and strapped her to safety. Nina’s aunt told her that she was going to behind, but she thought that her aunt was going to leave her. Nina was scared riding alone. Thinking back towards her past, Nina learned that in life you’ll have to face the world alone. “No one can stand by our side for the whole journey.”

Life is not perfect, there is always an obstacle you’ll have to go through. In fifth grade, Nina was offered to go to Italy. She was thrilled in wanting to go too a different country with her aunt and her older sister. She was overjoy with happiness that everyday at school, she would remind her friends that she was going to Italy. “That annoyed them greatly, but I didn’t care—I was going to have real Italian pizza for crying out loud!”

There are times in life where you just want to give up. A week before her birthday, Nina’s grandfather had passed away. “Sometimes our world spins out of control, like those little girls in the spinning booth.” Her father was in a nursing home for two years. Two days before her father was gone, she right beside him holding his hand, but she didn’t get the chance to say “I love you.” Nina also talks about when it comes to finals week, she is always stressing over the exams. “I started crying just because the stress drove me to the point where I wondered if I was still sane.”

On the carousel, you’ll have to “hop on the horse” and ride alone most of the time. You’ll experience ups and downs, whether it’s a joyful time or a hurtful time. “All rides must come to an end. I need to remember to enjoy the ride. If not, it will all be over before I know it and the only thing I’ll have to look back on is a blurred picture.”
The above summary has not been edited for errors.

In her well-developed summary, Rathany shows her ability to stay focused on the reading passage and to maintain an objective perspective in her writing. She incorporates direct quotes into her writing and comments directly on these quotes. The summary also reveals Rathany’s proficiency with varied sentence structures and an understanding of coordination and subordination.

In the ninth week of the course, students were asked to write a response to Latricia Tyson’s essay “My English Professor,” published in Delta Winds in 2007. Again, the students were not allowed any opportunity to revise the work over a period of time. The response was written in class, within an eighty-minute timeframe. The students had not seen the topic before the day of the assignment, but “My English Professor” had been read and discussed in class before the day of the assigned response. This assignment included the following written instructions:

Response Assignment:

You have eighty minutes to complete the following assignment.

In "My English Professor," Latricia Tyson explains how she views one of her instructors as a role model. She describes how Professor Slakey teaches his class and how he inspires her to a better writer. She also mentions how he has influenced his own children just as he has influenced his students. In your response, think of a person who has had an impact on you. Why do you consider this person a role model? Write a one-paragraph response in which you mention Latricia Tyson's essay, and then write about someone you view as a role model.

Rathany wrote the following response:

Rathany Sambath
Response
11/07/07
“My English Professor”

“My English Professor” by Latricia Tyson

In the article, “My English Professor,” by Latricia Tyson, the author writes about how wonderful her English professor Slakey is. “He has taught me to be a writer with a voice, and he has inspired me to become an educator with aspirations of begins as successful as he has been.” Latricia
describes how Professor Slakey teachers the class with excitement. Not only he is a great role model, but a father and a teacher. Professor Slakey has a foster child that loves him very much. Latricia understands why his foster child calls him daddy because she was a foster child herself. “Many people may not understand just how important that one word is to a foster child, but I do, as I was a foster child that never called my foster parents “Mother” or “Father.” When Professor Slakey teaches the class, he catches everyone’s attention and keeps them entertained. “Who would have ever taught that English could be so lively, so tantalizing, and so much fun?” My role models are my grandparents.

My grandpa is an intelligent, honest, and strong man. He grew up living a tough life, but yet, he still appreciates life. He was an orphan because when he was six years old, his mother past away. When he was fourteen, his father past away. All he had, was his older which is living today. As, he was growing up, he had his teacher to look up to. His teacher taught him how to make medications and mix them. So basically, he became a shaman. Then, when he was going to get married with my grandma, he had to work for her family at least a year, then he could be her.

My grandpa is today is seventy-eight and very healthy. My grandma is ten years younger than my grandma, but she past away in 2004. All that time when my grandma was sick, my grandpa was the one that always took care of her. He cooked, clean, etc for her. Most of her life, she was in a wheelchair because her left arm and left leg was paralyzed. She had gone into surgery to cut off her right leg. Not only that, my grandparents were living with aunt. That time she just had a baby and had to work. So my grandpa was the one that had taken care him. So he was taking care of my grandma and my little cousin.

My grandma, was everything to me. She had a great personality. Always smiling and always happy. But I know deep inside she was not happy. She was not happy because she always had to depend someone to do things for her because she was disable. I remember I had to always take a shower for her or take her to use the restroom. Everyday, she had a smile on her. Also, there was this one time when my uncle and his family was going to Six Flags. My grandparents had tickets, but we didn’t. Because my parents could not afford it for all of us. So my grandparents gave up their tickets and gave it to us. That time I was only in fifth grade. I am blessed to have wonderful grandparents.

The above response has not been edited for errors.
In her response to “My English Professor,” Rathany gives a clear synopsis of the essay in her first paragraph. At the end of the first paragraph, she makes a connection between the role model depicted in the essay and the role model in her own life. Finding a way to make a smooth transition at this point in the writing is an area that many students could work on, as stated by Dr. June Gillam in her interview in this instructor’s manual. Rathany stretches the topic to include not just one role model but two—her grandparents. She does so successfully by speaking of how they affected her life. Rathany organizes her response by starting with the grandfather, continuing with the grandmother, and then closing with the grandparents together. One of the strong points in this response is Rathany’s personal voice emerging, evidence of her understanding of the difference between an objective and a subjective piece of writing. The writer develops her writing with touching details that bring the role models to life for the reader.

In the twelfth week of class, the students handed in a multiple-paragraph narrative essay. Unlike the summary and the response, the narrative essay assignment was produced over a period of time. The students handed in three drafts of the essay. Given two topics, Rathany chose to write on the following:

Narrative Essay

In a three-paragraph essay, describe a journey that you took. Where did you start? When did you take this trip? The trip may have been short or long. It may have taken one day or a month. Focus on the specific events that occurred while you were traveling. What happened first? What happened next? Think of all of the new experiences you had. Use details to tell the story of your traveling adventure. What did you learn from the experience?

The following sample of Rathany’s writing is a third draft of a narrative essay:

Rathany Sambath
11/30/07
Narrative Essay
3rd Draft

The day we took our first family trip I was only about six years old. I still remember parts of it, but not every little detail. Our trip was from Stockton, California, to Lowell, Massachusetts. It was my parents, my two
brothers, and my two sisters that went. My brother was the oldest and he was probably about nine or ten years old. The youngest was my younger sister, who was about three years old. Instead of taking an airplane, we took our car. We were going to Lowell, to see my relatives on my mother’s side.

Even though I was only six years old, I still recall the raining nights when we had to sleep in our car, and the warm cozy nights sleeping in the hotels. We really didn’t stay that much in hotels because we had to save up for gas and food. Also, there were hot nights where my father was driving and he opened the moon roof so I could see the amazing stars sparkling. The feeling I had was nothing like I had ever felt about this world before. On our road trip, when I noticed the beautiful sunset behind the mountains, with colors of orange and red, I was stunned. I was just a child and still learning more about this world.

As we finally met our destination, I specifically remembered being stuck in traffic. The area was surrounded with trees and mountains. When that day took place, what came to mind was when a lady asked my father for directions, and he replied with a smile, “I’m sorry I am actually from California.” Everything was new to me, nature, how bright the stars were shining, and how beautiful the sunset was. I know I was definitely grateful about being given the chance to experience something like this. It may have taken us about a week to get to Lowell, but each day I cherished and was thankful that I got to experience this with my loved ones.

We finally arrived at my grandma’s apartment. It was weird to me because that apartment had eight bedrooms. The apartment back home only had two bedrooms. That was my first time meeting my grandparents on my mother’s side. I found out that I had way more aunts, uncles, and cousins! On my mother’s side she grew up with a big family, but as for my father’s side, he grew up with a small family. So back home, all I knew was my grandparents, my uncle, and my aunt. In Lowell, the whole time that we were there I met new relatives.

I remember when we went to this lake, where my aunt, who is only a year older than me, tried scaring me. She was saying that there was a monster in the lake and if I placed my foot in the water it would grab me. I was frightened and dare not to get near the water. The lake was huge and I had never seen anything like that. There was another time when I went grocery shopping with my grandmother; we had to bring our own bags to put the groceries in. I remember thinking that was weird because back in California, the stores were already stocked with plastic bags.
Our first family trip is something that I will always remember for the rest of my life. I got to experience nature, and I stayed in different states. Most importantly, I got to meet my relatives in Lowell. It was also my first time being at the beach, and I remember there were so many people just hanging out and having a good time. The last day in Lowell, I remember everyone feeling sad, especially my mother, because she was going to miss her family a whole lot. I think I was lucky to experience something like this, even though I was only six years old, and now I can only remember parts of it.

The above essay has not been edited for errors.

In her narrative essay, Rathany employs many skillful storytelling techniques, from introducing the characters and the setting early on in the narrative to returning repeatedly to the challenge of remembering particular events on a journey that shaped her view of the world. She weaves together precise details to solidify comments such as the following: “Everything was new to me, nature, how bright the stars were shining, and how beautiful the sunset was.” The narrative flows naturally, following the progression of the journey and keeping to the perspective of an adult narrator looking back on a childhood experience. Rathany's personal writing style includes a strong voice, transitional phrases, memorable details, and fluid sentence structures.

In the thirteenth week of the course, students handed in a multiple-paragraph essay in an argumentative rhetorical mode of development. Again, the students had time to work on the assignment in class and out of class, and the drafts received feedback in the way of comments and editing marks. The directions for the assignment were the following:

**Argumentative Essay**

In this assignment, use a five-paragraph essay structure. Your essay should have an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Be sure that you adequately develop each paragraph. Write an argumentative essay in response to the following prompt:

You received a failing grade in a course because you did not take the final examination. You feel that you should pass the course based on your work throughout the semester. You also believe that you have a good reason for missing the final examination. In an essay form, organize and present your reasons why you feel you should pass the course or why you should be given another chance to take the final examination.
“Education is the key to success,” this is what I have been told and truly believe. I am a hardworking student who puts a lot of effort into my work. The last thing I want to happen is to fail my classes. That is why before turning in an assignment I made sure that everything is correct. If I miss one day in class, I would either ask someone from class or just talk to the professor to see what I have missed. In English 87, I have received a failing grade because I did not take the final examination. For this semester, I have attend all of my classes, and done all of the assignments that I was assigned to, and passed all of the exams that I have taken. In English class, I’ve worked harder than any of my other classes. Professor, I disagree with the grade you have given me. I was always on time and all of my assignments were turned in. Also, I had a good reason for being absent on the day of the final examination.

One reason why I should pass the class is because I have completed all of the assignments in the class. For every essay and assignment I have done, I have proofread it, and have tried to think of ways to make my writing better. I put a lot of effort into my writing. The exams I have taken, I passed with great scores. Usually when it came to assignments, I took my time and read them over and over again to check if the sentence is not a fragment or a run on sentence. I also checked for punctuation and fragment or a run on sentence. I also checked for punctuation and grammar and tried my best in correcting it. I deserve to pass, so I can take English 79 next semester. If possible, maybe I can make up for the final examination to prove that I am determined and serious about my education.

My second reason is attending class on time. I am always on time and ready to learn. Attending class and being on time is very important. One, you won’t miss anything the professor has to say, and two you won’t interfere when the professor is lecturing. There were a couple of times when I was absent even though I ended up making up the work I missed and completing the assignments. Also, I’ve tried my best to improve in
reading and writing. Almost every night I would read and write for about thirty minutes.

The main cause for missing my final examination was my loving grandfather was in a car accident. I was very close to him and he is like my second father. That morning when I found out from my parents, I had to go see if he was okay. I knew he would be glad to see me there. Being there for him and seeing if everything was okay made me less worried. I couldn’t really think about the final examination; my mind was too focused on my grandfather. I believe that education is extremely important. When it comes to a family member getting hurt, then there is no choice, but to be there for your loved ones.

I believe that all of the hard work I’ve done should at least get me a passing grade. Or all of that hard work just went to waste. I hope once you read this, you will reconsider passing me and hopefully understand that family is very important to me. Like I’ve said I am a hardworking student, and you can see that clearly by looking at my writings and seeing how I am so concentrated in doing my assignments. I make sure that everything I do is my best. I hope you understand that when someone you love is hurt and all you want to do is make sure they are okay and be there for them. I wouldn’t be writing this, if I didn’t think I deserved a passing grade. With all of the hard work I’ve accomplished, I believe I should pass the class.

The above essay has not been edited for errors.

The assignment calls for a specific audience to the work, and Rathany achieves this by writing directly to the instructor of the hypothetical class. In Rathany’s argumentative essay, she utilizes an introduction, body, and conclusion. The introduction identifies the objective of the writer and establishes the tone of her writing. Through the focused body paragraphs, she maintains a high level of controlled emotion, which is appropriate to the seriousness of the matter discussed. In her conclusion, she restates the purpose of her writing: her request for a passing grade in the course. While Rathany argues for her case with strong feeling, she states her points in a rational manner, not cluttering the argument with irrelevant issues. The writer is confident in the mutual recognition of hard work between the teacher and student, and how that hard work should account for something.

Students in English 87 have to pass a portfolio reading of their work. The above assignments comprised Rathany Sambath’s portfolio. English 87 instructors evaluated her work as passing for the course.
The above introduction was written by a student in English 87 on the first day of class in the fall 2007 semester.

Following is the summary of an essay entitled “Hop on the Horse,” by Nina Peñalosa, published in Delta Winds in 2007. The summary was written within an eighty-minute timeframe. The students did not have the chance to revise their work in multiple drafts. Gloria Soto wrote the following summary:

Gloria Soto  
10/31/07  
Summary  
“Hop on the Horse”

Summary of “Hop on The Horse” by Nina Peñalosa

In the essay “Hop on The Horse” by Nina Peñalosa, she tells about the likenesses that has a carousel with life. For Nina her life is like a carousel,
she has had ups and downs during her life. One day when she was in Sacramento, she looked a carousel and remembered her infancy. When Nina was a little girl, she went to Disneyland with her aunt. She was excited to be there, her aunt went directly to a carousel and chose a horse for Nina. She was ready to start her adventure in the carousel but her aunt needed a horse for herself. She looked for a horse rapidly but it was too far from Nina’s horse. So she started to entreat her aunt about stand by her side the whole ride. While her aunt was there with her, she was enjoying the ride with a big smile on her face. Life makes us experiment situations like in a carousel. For Nina one great experience was when her aunt took her in a travel. They went to Italy, it was when her horse went up and up. But suddenly her horse had to go down. When Nina’s grandfather died before her birthday, her horse went down. And for a moment she felt like her carousel stopped. After this she felt that her carousel was in circles only. All her emotions went into her head until she felt like. She had to go down from the horse and the carousel. But fortunately the carousel continued for her. Unfortunately, on a horse can go just one person and not more. For Nina all the carousels soon or late have to stop and the only thing that she can and has to do is to enjoy her rides in her carousel of life.

The above summary has not been edited for errors.

Gloria reveals her ability to summarize a reading by identifying the main theme in the essay and by supporting her general statement with specific instances from the essay. Remaining objective throughout the summary, Gloria discusses the carousel as a metaphor for life, having ups and downs, going in circles, and lasting a limited time. While some sentence errors occur, as a first draft, the writing shows Gloria’s ability to comprehend a reading and summarize the work in her own words. Gloria shows a strong understanding of coordination, subordination, and transitional elements to indicate temporal and causal relationships.

Following is Gloria’s response to Latricia Tyson’s essay “My English Professor,” published in Delta Winds in 2007. The response was written in class, within an eighty-minute timeframe.

Gloria Soto
11/7/07
Response
“My English Professor”

Response of “My English Professor” by Latricia Tyson
In the essay “My English Professor” by Latricia Tyson, she tells that her best role model for life is her teacher Mr. Slakey. He taught Latricia to believe in herself again and never stop dreaming. He is the best role model in her life because he is a charismatic teacher and father. I have also a role model. My role model is a person who always tries to do the best for her family and for herself. The great inspiration and my best role model in life is my mother. My mother is the best person I have known since I have memory. She tries to do not go down in life and be there when I need her. She has worked for her family with my dad. Before she got marry, she used to work with my grandfather in the fields picking up tomatoes, peppers, beans, potatoes and feeding the farm animals. She has been working in the fields since she was eight years old. And she still continues working in the fields. After she got married, she had to be ahead of everything in the house. Inside the house she had to be a housewife while outside she had to be a farmer. It was because my dad had to come to the U.S.A. and work hard. In the evening my mother used to take from half hour to an hour to teach my sister and I how to make tortillas, wash the clothes, sew, even milk a cow. While in the school teachers were teaching me how to read, write, math and the life of rich people who were important, my mother was teaching me the difficult life of being a person with medium social economics and a hard worker from sun to sun. She always told me the importance of education as the importance of a hard work. She always has told me “You have to choose a work in the fields of the tomatoes or a work in the fields of an office.” She always tells to my siblings and I how hard has been her life without knowledge. She has taught me the best things that any teacher has teach me. She has taught me to be respectful, kind, and to work for what I want, but above of all to be myself. It is why my best role model is my mother and she will be for long time.

The above response has not been edited for errors.

Within the first three sentences, Gloria has stated the name of the author, the title of the essay, and she has given a clear and concise summation of the essay’s content. Next, Gloria makes a smooth transition into a role model in her own life. While framing the description with a chronology of her mother’s life, Gloria discusses her mother’s character, her sense of optimism, her hard work ethic, her acceptance of responsibility, and her belief in education as a means for her children to live a more prosperous life. Gloria cites many examples of the lessons her mother has taught her children. The writer uses parallelism, transitional phrases, and direct speech in the response. She includes an insightful comment about the difference between what her teachers taught and
what her mother taught, and the implication that her mother's lesson had greater value.

The following sample of Gloria's writing is a third draft of a narrative essay:

Gloria Soto

Narrative Essay
3rd Draft

Impossible Love

This sad story started forty years ago when my uncle Juan met Angela. My uncle worked in the fields in a little town of Guanajuato, Mexico. He started a long walk to get to the fields every day. One day he was late so he decided to take another road. When he was walking, he saw a beautiful woman. She was walking out of her house and saw my uncle. Then she smiled at him and bent her head down. He smiled at her too and each one continued walking.

After that moment my uncle could not forget her eyes. Her eyes were like two gems. Neither could he forget her long dark hair. Everyday he took the same way hoping to see her one more time. Three weeks passed and he could not see her. But one day, she was out in the patio. My uncle walked carefully to where she was cutting flowers. He tried to catch her attention but her mother called her. She left a daisy on the ground and said aloud, “I am Angela.” My uncle ran to the flower and picked it up. After that moment she left a daisy for my uncle on the ground every day for one month. One day she left a margarita with a note that said, “I go to church Saturday and Sunday.” The next Saturday my uncle went to church. And there she was playing the drum with her friends. She finished it and she walked over to him. She sat near him and then he gave her a note and a little crystal cross. After that her mother called her angrily because she was sitting near my uncle. They continued giving each other little notes and presents for a long time. On February 14 my uncle received a small drum full of candles and he decided to go to Angela’s house and talk with her father. My grandfather and my uncle went to her house. When they were there, Angela’s mother received them. Her father was sitting in the leaving room with a table full of dishes. My grandfather and Angela’s father started to talk about everything. Sometime later Angela’s father asked what was the main reason for their visit. My grandfather started to say that he went because my uncle was in love with one of his daughters. After he heard this, he quickly jumped out of
the chair, and said that he was not going to let any of his daughters marry my uncle. My uncle asked him why, so Angela’s father said, “It is because you are poor and my daughter is not going to have a good future with you.” When Angela heard her father’s words, she ran to my uncle’s side and said, “I love him and I want to marry him.” After her father heard her words, he took her hair and pulled her into her room. He locked it and sent them out. When Angela’s father was alone he hit her because she wanted to marry my uncle. They tried to see each other but it was impossible. She spent days and nights crying locked in her room until she went crazy. One day my uncle decided to go to the U.S.A. and work hard to save money. The day after my uncle went back to Mexico, Angela’s father and mother took her and they went to my uncle’s house. They said, “Juan, you came back, we are glad that you came back.” Then my uncle said, “Thank you,” and he asked for Angela. Angela’s father said, “She is with her mother outside waiting for you.” So my uncle ran out and saw Angela but she was not the same. Her sight was lost, her beautiful hair was short and she was almost bald. He asked her what had happened to her but she could not answer. The only thing that she could say was, “I love him, I love him.” Next, Angela’s father said, “Look, she is still pretty. Don’t you want to marry her? We cannot afford her needs anymore. Now, you have a good-economic situation and you can afford her.” After that my uncle said, “No, I wanted to marry her before, but you did not let me. Now I can not. I am still in love with her but I cannot marry her. I want to but I can not. I am sorry.” After that day, Angela died.

This sad story teach me that we do not have to choose for others and that the truthful love can not be forgotten if is a real and true love.

The above essay has not been edited for errors.

In this tender love story, Gloria creates a memorable cast of characters through her skillful wording and through the dialogue used by the individuals. Gloria tells the story of her lovesick uncle and the woman he was kept from for many years. In this final draft, Gloria shows that through revising and editing, she can correct sentence level errors and can add to the development of her scenes with the same sensitive eye she used in previous assignments. She controls the story by revealing only necessary elements and allows a space between the events as they unfold. No mention is made of the type of work the uncle did, nor should there be in a love story such as this. The writer has chosen which events to include and which to omit, and she does so successfully, adding to the narrative’s quality.
Following is a third draft of an argumentative essay on the hypothetical topic of why the writer should be given another chance to take a final examination for a class she failed:

Gloria Soto  
11/28/07  
Argumentative Essay  
3\textsuperscript{rd} Draft

I should have another opportunity

Education is important for everyone but sometimes it is difficult to have everything done in the end. It includes the work, investigation, good behavior, and exams. I do not believe that my grade is a failing grade; I have been on time, done my work, and have had good conduct. I think that these things have the same or more importance than a final examination.

In the first place, I have been on time. I have been always on time during the whole semester while other students came half hour or an hour late. I think that being in class early or simply on time is a very important aspect that should count for the final grade. But in my case it is not like that; it is not enough to elevate my final grade to a better one.

In the second place, I have done my work. During the semester, I have done everything: my homework, projects, research, and my work in class. I do not know if my classmates have done this, too. But I know that I have. I have done my homework; maybe it is not well done but I have done every homework assignment of every day. My projects have been done in the same way as my homework. I have completed my projects and presented these to get a grade. The same thing happened inside the class. I worked hard on what I had to do and never cheated on any of my papers. While some of my classmates cheated, I did not. My work was made by myself and I tried to do the best that I could.

In the third place, I have good conduct. It may not count like the other two reasons that I mentioned above, but it is important, too. I have been a good student. I have not been in trouble with any of my classmates. I have never been in trouble inside the classroom; neither have I been outside of it.

I am not telling you that you should give me an A or B. I am just fighting for an opportunity to take my final examination. I did not take it because this semester was a difficult one for me. I could not organize my classes,
homework, work, and my work at home. So unfortunately I lost the opportunity to take my final exam, and the opportunity to pass this class and the semester. I will be thankful if you think about giving me a new opportunity.

The above essay has not been edited for errors.

In her argumentative essay, Gloria takes on the voice of a person asking an instructor for another chance. She informs the instructor of some areas—attendance, honesty, and conduct—that sometimes go unnoticed. Gloria organizes the essay well, uses clear transitional statements between paragraphs, and supports her topic sentences with relevant examples. In the conclusion, Gloria clarifies her argument and closes with strong language and a reasonable request. She shows the ability to compose a multi-paragraph piece of writing that a student could be faced with under real life circumstances.

Students in English 87 have to pass a portfolio reading of their work. The above assignments comprised Gloria Soto’s portfolio. English 87 instructors evaluated her work as passing for the course.
Sample Handout 1 (by Ludmila Buettner)

Checklist for Summary

Make sure your summary has the following:

1. The summary has a title.

2. The first sentence acknowledges the author and the title.

3. The first sentence or the first few sentences explain the main point of the essay.

4. The rest of the summary focuses on major supporting points of the essay.

5. Although there may be some details, the summary does not provide a lot of details, such as the dates, locations, etc.

6. The last sentence of the summary ties the summary together.

7. The summary does not contain personal opinions, evaluations, and interpretations.

8. The summary does not contain grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors.
Sample Handout 2 (by Martin Rojas)

Narrative Paragraph Format

I- Introduction:
   a. Have a clear topic sentence that states what the incident of your story is and include an adjective that explains how the incident made you feel or impacted you.
   *EXAMPLE: My parents’ divorce was the saddest time in my life.*

   b. In a sentence or two tell what your point is. What lesson did you learn, or what is the message that you are trying to get across to your reader?
   *EXAMPLE: Although it was a trying time, I learned that life continues taking us in many different directions.*

   c. Start your story. How did it all begin?
   *EXAMPLE: I will never forget the day it happened; I was only 12 years old...*
   *Note: a, b, and c should take no more than 3 sentences.*

II- Body:
   In about 7–8 sentences continue telling your story. Be sure to stay on topic and include transitions for each different moment in your story. Be sure to include details and description to make your reader feel what you were feeling. Also be sure that your story supports the adjective from your topic sentence.
   *Note: this should take no more than 8 sentences.*

III- Conclusion.
   a. Tell how the story ends, or how everything was resolved.
   b. End with the lesson that was learned and/or with a wise message to leave your reader with.
   *Note: a and b in your conclusion should take no more than 3 sentences.*
Sample Handout 3 (by Martin Rojas)

A Standard Format For a Five Body Paragraph Essay

I-Introduction:
   a) Open your introduction with a few sentences (2–3) that tell the reader what your topic is. (These sentences could be “what if” questions, an actual scenario, or just general sentences that give the reader the obvious idea of what your topic is).

   b) In about 2 sentences, show your reader that there are at least two sides to your topic. (Some people believe in this, and some people believe in that).

   c) In 1 sentence, state your side of the issue. Tell the reader what your belief or stand is. You must have 3 supporting reasons for your stand. (I am against this issue because of this, this, and that).

II-Body Paragraph 1:
   a) In about 2–3 sentences, discuss your first reason from your thesis (your first this). Be sure that you mention your first reason and explain why you believe in this.

   b) In about 3–4 sentences, have a very clear and specific example that supports your first reason. Your example must be specific and NOT general. (Note that this example can be about yourself, someone you know, something you have read, a movie that you saw, or something that you have witnessed).

   c) Have a closing sentence that allows you to seal off the paragraph.

III-Body Paragraph 2:
   a) Using a transitional phrase, discuss your second reason from your thesis (your 2\textsuperscript{nd} this). Be sure to explain why you believe in your reason and use 2–3 sentences to do so.

   b) In about 3–4 sentences, give another clear and specific example that supports your second reason. (Note that your example should be different than your 1\textsuperscript{st} body paragraph).

   c) Have a closing sentence that allows you to seal off your paragraph.
IV—Body Paragraph 3:
   a) Using another transitional phrase, discuss your third reason from your thesis (your third **that**).

   b) In about 3–4 sentences, give another clear and specific example that supports your third reason.

   c) Give a closing sentence.

V—Conclusion:
   a) In about 2 sentences and using different words, re-state your thesis.

   b) Briefly review all your specific examples from your body paragraphs. Note this should be done in about 3–4 sentences for all of them together.

   c) In a sentence or two, give a wise and thoughtful closing remark.
Sample Lesson Plan 1 (by Zack Prince)

Using Roundtable Brainstorming to Produce a Summary Paragraph

(Example for essay to use: Mosaics p. 188–190 “Coming Over” by Russell Freedman)

Explain to the students that they will be reading the essay two times. The first time, they will be reading for general comprehension or in order to get an overview of the essay. On the second reading, they will be looking for the main idea in each paragraph or section of the essay.

1. Divide students into groups of three or four.
2. Have students read the assigned essay in a group, one paragraph per student, going around the circle.
3. Take out one sheet of paper. Put a title of Summary of “article” at the top.
4. One student rereads the first paragraph of the essay and then the group discusses the main idea of this paragraph.
5. When the group has discussed the main idea of the essay’s first paragraph, the student writes down a one-sentence summary of the paragraph and passes the paper to the teammate on the left.
6. The next person then reads the article’s next paragraph, discusses with the group what they think is the main idea and writes down the next sentence.
7. Before adding the next sentence on the group’s single page of paper, each student should read the sentences coming before it.
8. At the end of the writing exercise, the instructor may discuss the topic sentence or “controlling idea” for the paragraph. Remember that the topic sentence should have the title of the essay, the author and the main (or controlling) idea for the paragraph.
9. Students discuss and then add a topic sentence at the beginning of the group essay.

The instructor may collect the papers or may have someone in each group read the results to the class.
Sample Lesson Plan 2 (by Ludmila Buettner)

Identify Main Idea Activity

Prepare for this activity by discussing main ideas in writing—what a main idea is and how to identify it. Give the students a list of clues and questions to use to help in identifying the main idea, such as the following: “Look at the title. Study the headings. What type of text is it? Is the main idea supported by every sentence?” Practice together with paragraphs and essays. The location of the main idea in a paragraph is not always the same and can move. Show the students different types of texts, from essays to mathematics.

Prepare for the activity by modeling for the students. With the class, look at a paragraph on an overhead projection. Model for the students by verbally thinking through the process. Say aloud, “I’m looking at this paragraph. Does it meet the steps on the handout? What is the title? What are the key words in the title? Let me focus on the last word in the title....”

Identify Main Idea Activity.

Hand out a school newspaper to each group with articles written by fellow students.

Provide oral and written instructions. Tell the students the directions for the activity, and also keep the written directions on the overhead projector for the duration of the activity.

The directions state the following:

1. Choose an article for your group.
2. Read the article.
3. Find the main idea.
4. Find how the author supports the idea.
5. Record the information.
6. Be ready to share your answers with the class.
Sample Writing Topics

Sample Response Assignment One:

You have eighty minutes to complete the following assignment:

In "Education in India," Ranvir Singh Khatkar discusses the advantages of a strict educational system. He describes how the students are disciplined by the instructors. He also comments on the benefits of required courses and the emphasis on not repeating educational material. Have you had an experience attending a school in another country? Have you gone to school in another state or in another city? Describe a school that you know from your own experiences. Write a one-paragraph response in which you mention Ranvir Singh Khatkar's essay, and then write about your own experiences.
Sample Response Assignment Two:

You have eighty minutes to complete the following assignment.

In "My English Professor," Latricia Tyson explains how she views one of her instructors as a role model. She describes how Professor Slakey teaches his class and how he inspires her to a better writer. She also mentions how he has influenced his own children just as he has influenced his students. In your response, think of a person who has had an impact on you. Why do you consider this person a role model? Write a one-paragraph response in which you mention Latricia Tyson's essay, and then write about someone you view as a role model.
Sample Response Assignment Three:

You have eighty minutes to complete the following assignment.

In "Divorce," Jasyona Burke describes how she and her son were affected by her divorce from her husband. In the first and second paragraphs, she discusses what caused her divorce, but the rest of the essay is about the effects of the divorce. Most of the essay is about what happened after the divorce. In your response, think of a relationship or incident that has had a dramatic effect on you. What happened to you after the relationship or incident? Write a one-paragraph response in which you mention Jasyona Burke’s essay, and then write about your own experiences.
Sample Response Assignment Four:

You have eighty minutes to complete the following assignment:

In "Loneliness," Sophana Uy describes how he felt isolated in the United States when he first immigrated to this country. He mentions how the loss of family and friends, the change in language, and the differences in behavior caused him to feel uncertain, frustrated, and lonely. Have you ever moved to a new place? Have you ever had a change in your environment? Have you ever changed schools? Think of a time when you experienced a change in your life. Discuss the feelings you had. Describe these feelings. Write a one-paragraph response in which you mention Sophana Uy's essay, and then write about your own experiences.
Sample Narrative Essay One:

Choose one topic below:

1. In a three-paragraph essay, recall a childhood experience that taught you a lesson. Think about something important that happened to you when you were a child. Think about the lesson you learned from the experience. Write an essay that contains the events and the main point of your story. Remember the specific events that happened on that day, and tell your story. Think about the lesson you learned from the experience. How did the event change your perspective?

2. Have you seen an interesting movie or read a good book lately? Choose one that is memorable to you. Remember that movies and books contain stories. Retell the story that you saw or read. Why is the story memorable? What is the main point of the story? In a three-paragraph essay, retell the story from a movie or from a book, and state the main purpose of the story.
Sample Narrative Essay Two:

Choose one topic below:

1. In a three-paragraph essay, describe a journey that you took. Where did you start? When did you take this trip? The trip may have been short or long. It may have taken one day or a month. Focus on the specific events that occurred while you were traveling. What happened first? What happened next? Think of all of the new experiences you had. Use details to tell the story of your traveling adventure. What did you learn from the experience?

2. Think of a story you heard as a child. The story could be a family story, involving your relatives. Or the story could be a folktale, involving some characters and events that did not really exist. Tell the story in your own words. Think of the main character and the series of events that occurred. Why is this story important to you? What lesson did the story teach you? Tell the story in a three-paragraph essay form.
Sample Argumentative Essay One:

In this assignment, use a five-paragraph essay structure. Your essay should have an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Be sure that you adequately develop each paragraph. Write an argumentative essay in response to one of the following prompts:

1. You received a failing grade in a course because you did not take the final examination. You feel that you should pass the course based on your work throughout the semester. You also believe that you have a good reason for missing the final examination. In an essay form, organize and present your reasons why you feel you should pass the course or why you should be given another chance to take the final examination.

1. You want your child to be accepted into a particular pre-school in your neighborhood. The public school can only accept a limited number of children, and your child was not chosen. Your child was assigned to a pre-school ten miles away from your house. Give the reasons why you think the school should accept your child into the program. Argue for your child’s acceptance into the pre-school program in your neighborhood.
Sample Argumentative Essay Two:

In this assignment, use a five-paragraph essay structure. Your essay should have an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Be sure that you adequately develop each paragraph. Write an argumentative essay in response to one of the following prompts:

1. You deserve a promotion at work. In this essay, first explain what kind of work you do, and then provide specific reasons why you should be promoted.

2. Your family should go on vacation to a specific place. First, state where your family should go, and then explain why your family would benefit from visiting such a place.

3. A specific course is very beneficial to students. First, explain which course is very beneficial, and then talk about its merits.
Sample Process Essay One:

In this assignment, use a four-paragraph essay structure. Your essay should have an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Be sure that you adequately develop each paragraph. Write a process essay in response to one of the following prompts:

1. How to raise responsible children. In this essay, first explain the importance of responsibility in households. Then, provide the specific steps needed to raise children who are responsible.

2. How to adjust to a new culture. First, explain the value of adjusting to new cultures. Then, provide the specific steps needed for individuals from one culture to adjust to a new culture.

3. How to be a successful student. First, briefly explain the role of education in society. Then, discuss specific steps that are necessary in order to succeed in education.
Sample Narrative Essay: Ceola Thomas

My Name is Ceola M. Thomas.
I am 57, I have 5 children
and one granddaughter. I work part
at Lane Bryant in Tracy, Ca. I also
live in Tracy. I am a continuing
student since the spring of 07. My
goal is to become a preschool
teacher and to receive my ECE
certificate and then possibly
continue to get my AA degree. I
am presently enrolled in my second
Course of Child Development.
Classes I have 2 more to complete
to receive my certificate. I know
that taking this English class will
help me to stay focus on my
learning habits and career.

I also received good grades. I hope
to fulfill my goal by the year 2010.

Sept. 10, 07
3pm-2pm

The above introduction was written on the first day of class by a student in English 87.
After writing many summaries and responses for the course, Ceola Thomas handed in a third draft of a narrative essay on the following topic:

In a three-paragraph essay, describe a journey that you took. Where did you start? When did you take this trip? The trip may have been short or long. It may have taken one day or a month. Focus on the specific events that occurred while you were traveling. What happened first? What happened next? Think of all of the new experiences you had. Use details to tell the story of your traveling adventure. What did you learn from the experience?

Ceola Thomas wrote the following third draft of a narrative essay:

Ceola Thomas
Narrative Essay
11/18/07
3rd Draft

The Journey to New Orleans by Ceola Thomas

When I was about twelve years old, I took a trip to New Orleans with my aunt and uncle. It was my second time visiting my parent’s hometown. I went by car from Oakland, Ca. to New Orleans, La.

I remember riding along in the back seat of my uncle’s Cadillac looking out the windows the whole time, seeing things I never knew existed before, like fields and fields of nothing, long going highways and lots of old dirty roads, and small towns, with only a few homes, and a grocery store.

I also remember arriving in New Orleans in mid-afternoon at my mother’s oldest sister Dorothy’s house. It was very homelike, but it wasn’t like the houses where I lived. I sat in the dirt-like road, surrounded by rocks and dried out grass. But nevertheless I was in New Orleans. That night my cousins invited me to go with them to the bar room I said “bar room! I’m only twelve. You have to be eighteen in California to go in the bar room.” They smiled and grinned and said, here in New Orleans anyone can go in the bar room, but the bartender can only serve minors pop, that night I also won a door prize, five dollars, and I met a boy name Q. And boy was he cute.

The rest of my trip was OK, routine stuff. My aunt and uncle had wanted me to visit with some of my other relatives in the different parishes. I stayed a night here, a night there, eventually winding up back at Aunt Dorothy’s house. A week had gone by really fast, but it was time to get back on the road and head home. California, here we come.
I had a wonderful time in New Orleans. And my future plans are to go back some day. I want to go back to visit my father’s gravesite, along with my grandmother and grandfather and a lot of my other relatives who are buried alongside my dad.

By now you may be wondering why I chose to go back and visit New Orleans, La. Because my dad’s there. We took him there to be with his family. It was one of his requests before he died, to be buried in New Orleans.

My mother chose to be in California with her children at Piedmont Cemetery, in Piedmont, CA. Upon her passing she left seven children and thirteen grandchildren. Love you Mom, love you Dad. I’m back in California after a wonderful time in New Orleans. La. Thanks a lot Auntie Barbara and Uncle Raymond. I had a great time.

The above essay has not been edited for errors.

In her narrative essay, Ceola Thomas recalls an adventure she experienced as a twelve-year-old. Ceola breaks up her story into paragraphs focusing on the journey to New Orleans, arriving in New Orleans, visiting with relatives in Louisiana, and finally, in the last three paragraphs, looking back on her memorable trip. The shift in voice and time frame causes a break from a consistently chronological order to a complex but clear method of structuring the piece. The writer expresses her narrative through different voices and to different audiences. She captures the wonder of a child seeing open space for the first time and the excitement of joining up with cousins in a faraway land. Near the end of the essay, she addresses the reader directly to explain her reasons for writing on this topic, and then she calls to her parents and her aunt and uncle. With her writing, Ceola takes creative risks, such as switching the audience, but she keeps to the task of describing a memorable journey and identifying the significance of the experience to her life. Her essay shows her ability to write thoughtful prose in a narrative form.
Sample Argumentative Essay: Nicholas Hoffer

The above introduction was written by an English 87 student on the first day of class.

The final assignment for the course was to write an argumentative essay on a choice of two topics. Nicholas Hoffer wrote on the following topic:

You received a failing grade in a course because you did not take the final examination. You feel that you should pass the course based on your work throughout the semester. You also believe that you have a good reason for missing the final examination. In an essay form, organize and present your reasons why you feel you should pass the course or why you should be given another chance to take the final examination.
Imagine yourself getting ready for the most important English class of the semester and as you are putting on your shoes you get that silly thought that runs through the back of your mind, “What if my car doesn’t start?” Even though the car you own is older than yourself, you laugh it off with the reply “BAH. It couldn’t happen to me.” Sure enough when you came outside to leave for class your car did not start. Has that ever happened to you? It happened to me. It was my first semester at Delta College, and I was not aware of the student–teacher e-mail system.

I was taking a class similar to English 87. When the 2nd to last class came, I had to compile all my work and put it into a portfolio for the other teachers to observe and decide if I was ready for the next level. When that day came I struggled to get my car started. With the do-or-die mentality I ran to the bus stop which is at least a mile away in hopes that the 9:50 AM bus hadn’t come by already. I sat there for what seemed to be 4 hours, but in actuality it was only 45 minutes. When I arrived at Delta’s campus, it was too late. The doors were already locked with the lights dimmed inside. The following class was a pot-luck and that is where the teacher tells you whether you made it to English 87 or not. In my case I did not make it because I did not get the opportunity to even make my portfolio. Instead, since I missed the previous class, the teacher threw all my work away.

I feel I should have made it to English 87 even though I missed the last class. I had near perfect attendance and was late to class once. I thought I had demonstrated to her that I wanted to be there to succeed. I never once disrupted class or ever once argued with her until the last day of class. I could possibly see it her way if I was the exact opposite of who I am. I am a responsible young adult with high expectations for myself. I can remember students in her class talking on their cell phone while she was trying to speak to the class. Or not even paying attention to her in class because they assumed they knew it all already. So those select few do not listen or even show up. Of course you always have that one student who doesn’t care about their grade. This person usually is always the last person to show up and is always the first to leave, and when the
I also feel I should have passed the class because I belong in English 79. I understand that this does not give me any special privileges. But I feel the teacher should have recognized that I am a good student and she should have given me a little bit of slack. I was never once behind with any work or even absent when an essay was due. We only had one midterm and I received an A on it. Two weeks prior to the deadline she called us up to discuss our grades privately. When it came time for my name to be called she wasn’t private at all. I can remember her saying, “You are golden.” She moved to the next name down the list. I knew my grade was in the mid to high nineties. Due to these facts I had hoped she knew I was a good student and would accept that my car wouldn’t start.

In the end she did not pass me to English 79 or even English 87. The only thing she did for me was to give me credit for the class so I could fulfill my financial aid requirements. I feel there could have been other solutions to this problem. Maybe she could have put my portfolio together. It is not like it takes 20 minutes to put together. It takes only about 30 seconds, you take 3 of my best essays and staple it together. That is it. She is a Teacher. She is supposed to help us out. In my case she didn’t help me at all. She wasted a semester of class when I feel I shouldn’t have been stuck in that class in the first place. I hold nothing against that teacher because it was my fault for missing that important day. With saying all this I feel I need to look at the big picture; we all make mistakes but it is how you can bounce back and learn from them so in the future you can make the right decision. I have learned a couple of things such as us my Delta College e-mail. If I would have e-mailed her, then maybe she could have made my portfolio for me. It is great that most the teachers use it frequently but that was something I was unfamiliar with last year. The second thing I learned is that if I know my car is acting up I could possibly tell the teacher about it prior to the incident. So if it does happen to not start I could call or e-mail them so it would not be new news.

The above essay was not corrected for errors.

In his argumentative essay, Nick makes his case for passing his English class and advancing to the next level. The author uses various techniques to make his point—from an attention-grabbing introduction to a deliberate and detailed account in which he includes counter arguments to his claims. He also makes it clear that he had intended to be on time on the day of the final examination, but circumstances were out of his
control. Throughout these paragraphs, he includes relevant supplementary information. In his closing paragraph, Nick describes what he expects of a teacher, and he also takes a step back to identify the lessons learned from the experience. He makes an effective argument and displays his skills in the argumentative form of expository writing.
Sample Syllabus

English 87: Basic Writing Skills II
San Joaquin Delta College, Fall 2007

Instructor: Zack Prince
Dates: Feb. 4 – May 21, 2008
Voicemail: 954-5886 Box 4504
Class Time: MW 6:30-9:30 pm
Location: Holt 407
Course # 75949

Prerequisites: Completion of English 70 or English 85 with a grade “C” or better. Reading Level II.

Catalog Description: This course is designed to prepare the student for English 79: Preparatory English. Emphasis is placed on writing and editing of paragraphs and short essays based on readings. Units earned in this course do not count toward an associate degree.

Required Texts:
The Prentice Hall Grammar Workbook by Jeanette Adkins (2nd edition)

Supplementary Texts: A college dictionary (included in book bundle) and thesaurus.

Periodicals: Delta Winds: A Magazine of Student Essays. San Joaquin Delta College
The Record.

Supplies: Students will need a three-ring binder or organizer with dividers and paper, pens.

Course Goals:
Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to
1. Read and comprehend essays.
2. Plan paragraphs and short essays.
3. Evaluate readings for differences in types of writing.
4. Write grammatically correct sentences.
5. Analyze the structure of an essay.
6. Develop and compose paragraphs and short essays.
7. Apply the writing process to original compositions.
8. Write summaries and responses to readings.
9. Use dictionaries.
10. Identify and use new vocabulary.

Course Objectives:
Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to
1. Read and comprehend essays that use various methods of development, such as narration, description, illustration, process, definition, classification, comparison/contrast, argumentation, definition, and cause and effect.
2. Plan compositions by using pre-writing techniques, such as outlining, free-writing, brainstorming, and clustering.
3. Evaluate readings critically for differences in objective versus subjective writing, for distinctions between fact and opinion, for differences in general versus supporting sentences, and for methods of developing paragraphs and short essays.

4. Generate sentences using basic sentence patterns and commonly used methods of sentence combining. Construct grammatically correct sentences using the following sentence patterns: simple, compound, complex, complex/compound.

5. Analyze the structure and the parts of an essay with an introduction paragraph, multiple body paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph.

6. Given prompts on varied readings, write developed, multi-paragraph compositions that illustrate critical thinking through the use of rhetorical methods, such as narration, process, and argumentation.

7. Demonstrate the writing process by revising works through multiple drafts with concern for organization, development, transitions, and focus; proofread and edit final drafts for sentence-level errors, clarity, word usage, grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

8. Extract meaning from published essays, summarize these essays with a clear understanding of the content, and respond to the essays with comments based on specific questions or open-ended prompts.

9. Given a list of vocabulary words, demonstrate an understanding of how to use dictionaries to increase vocabulary and to clarify definitions of specific words.

10. Identify and practice the use of vocabulary found in a general context and in specific disciplines.

Homework: All of the out-of-class assignments are expected to be on typed and double spaced (font 12) on white paper. Type your name, the date turned in, the name of the class, and assignment designation in the upper left hand corner of the first page. If you submit the paper as “rough draft,” these words must appear in the upper left hand corner. If you submit a “final draft,” it must also appear in the upper left hand corner. Assignments without a name, date, or title will not be graded.

In-Class Assignments: If the submission is a writing done during class “In-class assignment” must be written in the upper left hand corner. In-class assignments must be written in ink on lined white (8 1/2 by 11 inches) paper. Keep all assignments because some may be rewritten for completion of later assignments.

Method of Evaluation: Multiple measures of assessment will be used. The student will complete course work, such as diagnostic assessments, paragraphs, essays, rewrites, quizzes, presentations, summaries/responses, journal, error analysis, the final exam, etc., and submit a portfolio. Passing of the portfolio will be necessary to pass the course. In-class activities and homework assignments will receive points. All of the assignments have to be turned in on the due date.

The final grade will be based on the percentage of the total number of points:

- 90-100% = A
- 80-89% = B
- 70-79% = C
- 60-69% = D
- 59% and below = F

Student Requirements:
1. Attendance is a must. Don’t be late!
2. Completion of all reading and writing assignments. You should come to class prepared. Students are expected to do their reading and written assignments before class.
3. Participation in all class discussions, group work, and exercises.
4. Writing materials, binder, and textbook are required materials for class.

**Course Content:** Lecture and discussion of readings, extensive writing, group work, presentations, quizzes, and the final exam. Students will write paragraphs, essays, rewrites, and summaries/responses; they will also write in a journal, complete error analysis, various writing exercises and submit a portfolio.

Students will also do grammar and spelling quizzes.

If students come to class late and miss a quiz, they will not be allowed to take it later. So be in class on time! When we have writing workshops, you will get credit only if you participate. Grammar will be continuously reviewed throughout the course.

**Participation:** For every time when you come to class and participate in class discussions and activities, you will earn 1 point. This point is given on the basis of you actually being in class and engaging in discussions and activities. Since this is a participation point, you will not get it if you are not in class. If you are absent and want to receive a participation point, you will need to do the make-up work (please talk to me). You will not receive a participation point for a specific day if you sleep in class, are off the assigned task, or come to class late.

**Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory. If you miss a class, please get the missing work from a classmate and talk to me about it (before your absence if possible). If you have an emergency and cannot attend, leave a message on my voicemail number: 954-5886 Box 4504. A student may be dropped for excessive absences. A grade must be issued after the official drop date. The following San Joaquin Delta policy for attendance will be used:

**Board Policy Abstract:** - 5150 Absence From Class – “A faculty member shall mandatorily drop a student from a class when the student's absences, prior to the end of the fourth week of the semester, exceed two weeks of class time (i.e., 2 x the number of times the class meets per week throughout the semester) … No drops are allowed after 75% of a credit class has been completed; a grade must be issued.”

**College Policy 5150 also states:** “Any student who fails to attend a class session during the first three sessions of class at the beginning of the semester may be dropped, unless the student has advised and obtained an absence approval from the instructor.”

Experience has shown that students with excessive absences often fail the class. Such students usually do poorly on grammar and spelling quizzes, paragraphs, essays, portfolio, etc.

**There is no such thing as an excused absence!** Students should avoid unnecessary absences early in the semester because those plus legitimate absences usually result in excessive absence, leading to being dropped or class failure.

To clarify: if you are absent one of the first three days of class, you may be dropped. During the first six weeks of class, you should not miss the class for more than four (4) days. During the whole semester, you should not miss the class for more than six (6) days. You should keep the following information in mind: If you stop coming to class, it is your responsibility to drop the class. **Three tardies are equivalent to one absence.** If you leave the class early, you will be counted tardy.

**Other Classroom Policies:** You may not leave the classroom without permission for any purpose, even a restroom break. The instructor will announce the restroom break and the duration of the break. If you take a longer break, you will be counted as tardy because you are not in class when you are supposed to be. I count on you being in the classroom during instruction.
All students are expected to give their full attention to lessons and activities and behave in a manner appropriate to the college classroom. All students are expected to behave in a respectful manner to the instructor and other students. Disrespect and/or defiance will not be tolerated in any form. Examples of disruptive behavior include using the ringing, answering, or video messaging of cellular phones, talking to other students in class during instruction (for example, when the teacher explains the material), making loud noises, leaving the classroom during a teacher directed lesson, or talking out of turn.

Use of a walkman is not permitted in class whether radio, tape, or CD. No student is to wear earphones whether or not they are plugged into any electronic device. Pagers and cell phones must be off during class. In addition, friends or children are not allowed in the classroom.

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. See the definition of academic dishonesty in AP 5500A. Some examples of academic dishonesty include

a) cheating - disseminating or receiving answers data, or other information by any means other than those expressly permitted by the instructor as part of any academic exercise. Some examples are copying answers, data, or other information during an examination, quiz, or any academic exercise in which the student is not expressly permitted to work jointly with others; assuming another individual’s identity; or using any device or other form of study aid during an examination, quiz, or any academic exercise without the faculty member’s permission.

b) plagiarism - presenting work, words, ideas, theories, etc., derived in whole or in part from a source external to the student as though they are the student’s own efforts. Three or more words directly quoted from another source is plagiarism! Plagiarism includes failing to use proper citations.

c) other academic misconduct - falsifying or fabricating data, records, or any information relevant to the student’s participation in any course or academic exercise, or tampering with such information as collected or distributed by the faculty member. Examples are falsifying attendance records, graded exercises or any information and document; inventing or fabricating data; and knowingly furnishing false information.

Any student found involved in academic dishonesty will be given a warning when the first offense occurs. If the offense repeats, the student will be referred to the Vice President of Student Services and may be expelled from college. After the final drop date, the student will be issued a failing grade for the course.

If a student is asked to leave for any inappropriate/unacceptable conduct, that class will be counted as an absence for attendance purposes. A second such incident will result in a referral to administration for disciplinary action, which could include dismissal (drop) from the class or expulsion from the college. By law, an instructor may suspend a student from class for two days pending disciplinary action; such suspension will count as absences for attendance purposes, whether or not the student is readmitted to class.

Writing Assistance: Students interested in assistance with their assignments for this course are encouraged to visit the Tutor Center in Holt 201. At the Center, students may get help in planning, organizing, developing, and refining the expression of their ideas. However, remember that the ultimate responsibility for the quality of the writing remains with the writer; the lab is not a proofreading or editing service.
Student Computer Lab: The Academic Computing Lab, located in Cunningham 220: (209) 954-5350, contains a variety of computers available to student use. Students must provide their student ID number at the check-in station. NO EXCEPTIONS! Students need to provide their own flash drive or disk to save their work for future computer work. Campus lab computers erase any work left on the hard drive at the end of the day.

Important Dates, Spring 2008

Feb. 12 Last Date to Receive Refund
Mar. 5 Last Drop Date without a W
Mar. 17 & 19 No Class – Spring Break
Mar. 31 No Class – Cesar Chavez Day
Apr. 4 Last Drop Date with a W

ENG 87: Schedule of Readings and Assignments, Spring 2008

In addition to this schedule below, students will be assigned grammar homework not included in the syllabus. Many assignments will be announced in class. Some examples of in-class work have been included below. Similar exercises from Mosaics and the Prentice Hall grammar workbook will continue throughout the remainder of the class.

Please note: This schedule is subject to change at instructor’s discretion.

Feb. 4
Introduction to the course and discussion of the syllabus
Interviews and Introductions
Essay written in class: “All About Myself”

Feb. 6
Mosaics: Read pp. 2-9. Write “Practice 1, Practice 2 & Practice 3” on a separate piece of paper to turn in.
Write two journal entries.

Feb. 11
Prepare for summary of article
1. Read “Eleven” by Sandra Cisneros p. 123-125
2. Study “A & B” words on p. 662-663. Define 15 new words and use them in a sentence
Prepare for spelling quiz.

Feb. 13

Feb. 18 No Class – President’s Day

Feb. 20

Feb. 25
1. Write two journal entries.
2. Grammar Workbook. Read and do all exercises in Chapter 4 (p. 52-59)
3. Study “C, D, E” words p. 664 for spelling test. Define 15 of these words and use them in a sentence.

Feb. 27
Write two journal entries.

Mar. 3
Due: Descriptive Paragraph (final copy)
In-Class Work: Chapter 6: Describing. Do all exercise on pp. 78-84.

Mar. 5
In-class assignment: Write a Summary of assigned article
Start a Narrative Essay (three paragraphs)
Mosaics in-class assignment: Rewrite Student’s Narration Paragraph Example, p. 113.

Mar. 12
Draft of the Essay of Narration
Read “Coming Over” by Russell Freedman p. 187-190
Due: Summary of article – in-class assignment (Part 1 of Portfolio)

Mar. 17 & 19
No Class – Spring Break Delta College

Mar. 24
Read & Study “Easily Confused Words” part 1: p. 646-649. Do Practice 1, 2 & 3 (p. 648-649) to turn in.
Worksheet Packet from Mosaics, Ch. 22 & 23

Mar. 26
Due: Final copy of Essay of Narration --Typed (Part 3 of Portfolio)

Write “Easily Confused Words, Part II. Practice 4, 5, 6” (p. 651-52)

Mar. 31 – No Class, Cesar Chavez Day

Apr. 2
Prepare article response.
Read and study Chapter 7: Narrating p. 106-108. Do exercises #1-4 on p. 109

Apr. 7
For the paragraph, you only need to write the sentences you fix.
Apr. 9  
**Due:** Article Response (in-class essay) (**Part 2 of Portfolio**)  
Mosaics. Do Practices 10 & 11 (p. 438), 13 & 14 (p. 439) and Review Practice 1 (p. 440)

Apr. 14  
*Prepare argumentative essay*  
Mosaics. Review Practice 1: 1-10 (p. 440-41), Do Practice 1, 2 (p. 444-45), 4, 5 (p. 449).

Apr. 16  
*Start an argumentative essay (five paragraphs)*  
Write on separate piece of paper.

Mosaics. Easily Confused Words Practice 7, 8, 9 (p. 753-754).

Apr. 21  
On a separate piece of paper, write out 7B, 8, and Review Practice 1 (Commonly misspelled words, p. 667-668)  
**Due:** Rough Draft of the argumentative essay – typed

Apr. 23  
*Prepare for summary*  
**Due:** Summary of Article.

Apr. 28  
In-class assignments

Apr. 30  
Article Response.  
**Due:** Final copy of argumentative essay (**Part 4 of Portfolio**)  
*Prepare article response.*

May 5  
**Due:** complete set of papers for portfolio.  
To pass ENG 87, all four final papers for your portfolio must be in your portfolio. NO EXCEPTIONS  
These four **required** papers include:  
1) an objective summary of a published essay  
2) a subjective response of the same essay  
3) a three paragraph narrative essay  
4) a five paragraph argumentative essay.

May 7  
Review for Final Exam

May 12  
**Results from portfolio submission**

May 14  
Review for Final Exam

May 19  
Review for Final Exam

May 21  
**FINAL EXAM Wed. May 21 6-7:50 pm**
Sample Course Packet

SYLLABUS

Course: English 87: Basic Writing Skills II, Fall 2007
Instructor: Robert Bini
Class Meeting: Monday and Wednesday, 12:00—2:30, Tracy Learning Center 121
Course Code: 18871


Office: Tracy Learning Center Monday and Wednesday 2:30—3:30; Stockton Campus Cunningham 425 Tuesday and Thursday 11:00—12:00, and by appointment. Friday online office hours: 9:00 am – 10:00 am.
Email address: rbini@deltacollege.edu
Phone: 954–5395

Attendance: According to school policy, a student may be dropped for missing one of the first three class sessions. A student may also be dropped when absences become excessive. The last day for withdrawing from this class with a "W" is Tuesday, November 20. A student who does not pass this course and who has not dropped this course before this date will receive an "F." It is the student's responsibility to complete the paperwork to drop the course by the above deadline. It is not the teacher's responsibility.

Course Prerequisites:
ENG-070 Basic Writing Skills I minimum grade or
ENG-085 Advanced English as a Second Language

Goals:
Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:
1. Read and comprehend essays.
2. Plan paragraphs and short essays.
3. Evaluate readings for differences in types of writing.
4. Write grammatically correct sentences.
5. Analyze the structure of an essay.
6. Develop and compose paragraphs and short essays.
7. Apply the writing process to original compositions.
8. Write summaries and responses to readings.
9. Use dictionaries.
10. Identify and use new vocabulary.
Writing:
1. Write in a journal to achieve fluency with the written word.
2. Write summaries of and responses to readings on different topics.
3. Write topic sentences and general sentences for paragraphs and essays.
4. Write supporting sentences using relevant examples, details, and specifics to develop points adequately.
5. Connect sentences and paragraphs with transitional words, phrases, and sentences.
6. Write organized and coherent essays using certain rhetorical methods of development, such as narration, process, comparison/contrast, and argument.
7. Write three-paragraph narrative essays.
8. Write four-paragraph process essays.
9. Write four-paragraph or five-paragraph comparison/contrast essays, stating similarities and differences on the subject.
10. Write five-paragraph argumentative essays, using reasons and examples.
11. Write reading-based compositions by writing in response to an earlier reading.

Methods of Evaluation:

1. Course work: The student will complete course work, such as paragraphs, essays, rewrites, midterms, and a required final examination.

2. Portfolio as Comprehensive Final Examination: The student is required to complete a portfolio containing assignments, such as an objective summary of a published essay, a subjective response of the published essay, a three-paragraph narrative essay, a four-paragraph process essay, a five paragraph argumentative essay. The student's portfolio will include works of multiple drafts. The student's portfolio will reflect critical thinking used to revise compositions after the student receives input from the instructor on earlier drafts. The student's portfolio will be read and evaluated in a group reading by English 87 instructors. Passing of the portfolio will be necessary to pass the course.

3. A grade of C or better in the course automatically results in Level II Composition.
Final Examination:
   Friday, December 21, 12:00-1:50

Participation  10%
In-class Summaries  5%
In-class Responses  5%
Out-of-class Summaries  10%
Essays  40%
Midterms  20%
Final Examination  10%

NOTE: This is extremely important. The above method of evaluation will be used only for students who pass the portfolio. The above method of evaluation will not be used for students who do not pass the portfolio. Students who do not pass the portfolio will not pass the course. Even if you have 700 points in the course, you may not pass the course if you do not pass the portfolio. The results of the Portfolio Reading will not be known until finals week.

Catalog Statement:
This course is designed to prepare the student for English 79: Preparatory English. Emphasis is placed on writing and editing of paragraphs and short essays based on readings. Units earned in this course do not count toward an associate degree.
COURSE DESCRIPTION

To pass English 87, students must pass the portfolio reading and must accumulate enough points for completing work in the following course components:

Participation
Participation is worth 10% of your grade. Students earn points for participation by attending class and preparing for each class by completing the readings and homework assigned.

In-class Summaries
In-class summaries make up 5% of your grade. Five one-paragraph objective summaries are due this semester, based on assigned Delta Winds essays. Each summary is worth 10 points. One of these will be included in the portfolio. The work should be a first draft of an objective summary and should demonstrate reading comprehension.

In-class Responses
In-class responses count for 5% of your grade. Five one-paragraph subjective responses are due this semester, based on assigned Delta Winds essays. Each response is worth 10 points. One of these will be included in the portfolio. The work should be a first draft of a subjective response and should demonstrate an ability to respond appropriately to reading material and to a writing prompt.

Out-of-class Summaries
Out-of-class summaries comprise 10% of your grade. These writings do not have to be in an essay format, but they do have to be in sentences and paragraphs. For the summaries, choose from the list of English 87 Delta Winds Readings. You can access the online site for Delta Winds. Writing summaries is a good way to improve both writing and reading skills. After completing a summary of a Delta Winds essay, you may add a personal response. But this is optional. You can write on as many different essays as you want. Complete the total number of pages required to get the total number of points. By handwriting fifty full pages of single-spaced work, you can earn 100 points. No extra spacing! The due date for the out-of-class summaries is listed in the schedule. Do not hand in your individual summaries separately. The summaries will be collected one time during the semester.

Essays
The essays are worth 40% of your grade. Four essays will be due this semester. The essays will be on certain topics. The essays will require you
to use narration, process, and argumentation. The essays will have multiple drafts. You can work on these in class and out of class. Your revision should include corrections made based on the instructor’s comments. Two of these essays will be included in the portfolio.

There will be four essays; each essay is worth a maximum of 100 points. You will have a limited amount of time—two hours—to write the first drafts to these essays. Two of the essays will require two rewrites of a first draft. Do not rewrite your essay until you have read the comments on your first draft. The rewrites are to be completed after your first draft has been read and has received comments.

You can also use dictionaries for your writing, but I would not recommend using them until you are finished writing a complete essay. If you have finished the main writing of your essay and you still have more time, then take out your dictionary and check for words you have in question. In general, spelling points are not as critical as development of ideas and organization.

These essays will consist of two parts—the first draft and the rewrites. For these essays, you will receive 0 points for completing the first draft. You will, however, receive from 64 to 100 points for completing the rewrites of the first draft. Naturally, you must complete the first draft in order to even start on the rewrite.

After you have completed the first drafts, I will read them and provide some comments for feedback. Be sure to read these comments before you begin rewriting your first draft. Highlight any words and sentences that you add in the rewrite. This way it will be very easy for you and me to notice the changes you make in your revising.

Make changes in the organization, in the development of your ideas, in your transitions, in your sentence variety, and in your word choice. After you receive comments, you will have one week to work on the paper, so you have time to make it look the way you want. Good writing usually takes much time and effort. Be prepared to spend considerable time revising your essay.

Some of you may be unclear about the meaning of revising. First of all, if you just copy the draft and do not change it, you are not revising your work. That would just be copying. Second, you may think revising means adding a new paragraph to the end of the essay. This is also not revising.

Revising involves making many changes throughout the essay, not just at the end. Revising requires taking a step away from your own creation to
look at it critically. Try to be objective. Remember that even though an idea is clear in your own mind, it may not be clear in the reader’s mind, so check every little point for clarity. And develop every point with more information than you think is necessary. In general, the more details you provide the better. When you are nearly completed with the revisions, check to be sure that you have revised the areas mentioned in the comments to your first draft. Also, edit your essays carefully for verb tenses, subject–verb agreement, and prepositions. Your final draft should have a minimum of grammar errors.

Midterms
The midterms are worth 20% of your grade. They will be based on material covered from our textbook.

Final Examination
The Final Examination is worth 10% of your grade. For the final exam, you will take the set of post–diagnostic tests from My Writing Lab.

Explanation of Grading Criteria:

Scoring of Assignments
There are 1000 points possible in the course. This chart shows the number of points received for an assignment:

For Participation—100 points possible:
A=100 points
A-=93 points
B+=87 points
B=85 points
B-=83 points
C+=77 points
C=75 points
C-=73 points
D+=67 points
D=65 points
D-=63 points
F=50 points

For in–class summaries—50 points possible:
5 summaries @ 10 points/summaries
A=10
A-=9
B=8
C=7
D=6
F=5

For in-class responses—50 points possible:
5 responses @ 10 points/response
A=10
A-=9
B=8
C=7
D=6
F=5

For Out-of-Class Summaries—100 points possible:
50 full pages single-spaced=100 points
40 full pages single-spaced=86 points
30 full pages single-spaced=66 points
20 full pages single-spaced=50 points

For essays—400 points possible:
4 essays @ 100 points/essay
A=100
A-=94
B+=88
B=86
B-=84
C+=78
C=76
C-=74
D+=68
D=66
D-=64

For Midterms—200 points possible:
2 midterms @ 100 points/midterm
A=100
A-=94
B+=88
B=86
B-=84
C+=78
C=76
C-=74
D+=68
D=66
D-=64
For Final Exam—100 points possible:
A=100
A-=94
B+=88
B=86
B-=84
C+=78
C=76
C-=74
D+=68
D=66
D-=64

Explanation of Procedures:
Completing all of the work before the portfolio reading is essential. You will not be able to make up work after the portfolio reading.
SCHEDULE:

8/20—8/22  Orientation
8/27—8/29  Summaries/Sentences
9/3        Holiday
9/5        Summaries/Verbs
9/10—9/12  Summaries/Verbs
9/17—9/19  Summaries/Pronouns
9/24—9/26  Midterm 1/Responses/Opinion versus Fact/Modifiers
10/1—10/3  Responses/General and Supporting Sentences
10/8—10/10 Narrative Essays/Effective Sentences
10/15—10/17 Out-of-Class Summaries Due/Narrative Essays
10/22—10/24 Midterm 2/Process Essays
10/29—10/31 Process Essays
11/5—11/7  Argumentative Essays
11/12      Holiday
11/14      Argumentative Essays
11/19—11/21 Argumentative Essays
11/26—11/28 Argumentative Essays
12/3       In-class Response
12/5       Class cancelled
12/10—12/12 Review

Final Examination Times:
Friday, December 21 12:00 – 1:50
Results of Portfolio Reading
RUBRIC

Participation
10% of total grade. 100 points possible.
For all levels, comments are expected to be considerate of others and appropriate to the course.

A Level=90–100 points
—The student has excellent attendance (0–1 absences)
—The student consistently prepares for class by reading and studying the reading selections and completing exercises from the text.
—The student interacts regularly with fellow students in group work.
—Responses show careful thought and attention to the readings.

B Level=80–89 points
—The student has very good attendance (2–4 absences)
—The student frequently prepares for class by reading and studying the reading selections and completing exercises from the text.
—The student interacts with fellow students in group work.
—Responses show considerable thought and attention to the readings.

C Level=70–79 points
—The student has fair attendance (5–7 absences)
—The student sometimes prepares for class by reading and studying the reading selections and completing exercises from the text.
—The student interacts with fellow students in group work.
—Responses show thought and attention to the readings.

D Level=60–69 points
—The student has poor attendance (more than 8 absences)
—The student rarely prepares for discussion by reading and studying the reading selections and the discussion topics from the text.
—The student seldom interacts with fellow students in group work.
—Responses do not show thought and attention to the readings.
—Responses do not indicate an understanding of the readings and lecture of the unit.

In-class Summaries
5% of total grade. 50 points possible.

A Level=50 points
—The student summarizes the assigned essays.
—The summaries indicate a mastery of verb forms and verb tenses.
—The summaries are extremely clear.
—The summaries show an understanding of the reading passage and of the use of objective writing.

B Level=45 points
—The student summarizes the assigned essays.
—The summaries indicate a strong understanding of verb forms and verb tenses.
—The summaries are very clear.
—The summaries show an understanding of the reading passage and of the use of objective writing.

C Level=35 points
—The student summarizes the assigned essays.
—The summaries indicate an understanding of verb forms and verb tenses.
—The summaries are clear.
—The summaries show an understanding of the reading passage and of the use of objective writing.

D Level=30 points
—The student summarizes the assigned essays.
—The summaries indicate some understanding of verb forms and verb tenses.
—The summaries are not clear.
—The summaries do not show an understanding of the reading passage and of the use of objective writing.

In-class Responses
5% of total grade. 50 points possible.

A Level=50 points
—The student responds to the assigned essays.
—The responses indicate a mastery of verb forms and verb tenses.
—The responses are extremely clear.
—The responses show an understanding of the reading passage and of the use of subjective writing.

B Level=45 points
—The student responds to the assigned essays.
—The responses indicate a strong understanding of verb forms and verb tenses.
—The responses are very clear.
—The responses show an understanding of the reading passage and of the use of subjective writing.
C Level=35 points
—The student responds to the assigned essays.
—The responses indicate an understanding of verb forms and verb tenses.
—The responses are clear.
—The responses show an understanding of the reading passage and of the use of subjective writing.

D Level=30 points
—The student responds to the assigned essays.
—The responses indicate some understanding of verb forms and verb tenses.
—The responses are not clear.
—The responses do not show an understanding of the reading passage and of the use of subjective writing.

Out-of-Class Summaries
10% of total grade. 100 points possible.
For all levels, summaries are expected to be appropriate to the course.

A Level=100 points
—The student summarizes Delta Winds essays.
—Total of 50 full pages, single-spaced, handwritten.
—100% of the required number of single-spaced pages is completed.
—The writing shows use of sentences and paragraphs.
—The work is completed by the due date.

B Level=85 points
—The student summarizes Delta Winds essays.
—Total of 40 full pages, single-spaced, handwritten.
—85% of the required number of single-spaced pages are completed.
—The writing shows use of sentences and paragraphs.
—The work is completed by the due date.

C Level=70 points
—The student summarizes Delta Winds essays.
—Total of 30 full pages, single-spaced, handwritten.
—75% of the required number of single-spaced pages are completed.
—The writing shows use of sentences and paragraphs.
—The work is completed by the due date.

D Level=25 points
—The student summarizes Delta Winds essays.
—Total of 20 full pages, single-spaced, handwritten.
65% of the required number of single-spaced pages are completed.
The writing shows use of sentences and paragraphs.
The work is completed by the due date.

Essays
40% of total grade. 400 points possible.
For all levels, essays are expected to be appropriate to the course. There are four essays worth a total of 400 points. Each essay is worth a maximum of 100 points.

A Level=90-100 points
—The essay is well-organized and focused on one main idea. The essay uses separate paragraphs.
—The essay is extremely clear. Varied logical transitions are used to make connections between ideas.
—The essay is developed. The main ideas are supported with considerable length. The supporting sentences contain vivid details and examples.
—The essay reveals a mastery of verb tenses and a mastery of subject/verb agreement.
—The essay uses sentence variety. The sentences show a mastery of various, complex sentence patterns. The sentences are complete and not fragmented or run on.
—The essay addresses the writing topic. The essay shows a thorough understanding of the topic and any related reading prompt and directions.
—The essay may, but most likely does not, contain minimal errors in grammar, mechanics, and word order.

B Level=80-89 points
—The essay is well-organized and focused on one main idea. The essay uses separate paragraphs.
—The essay is clear. Varied logical transitions are used to make connections between ideas.
—The essay is developed. The main ideas are supported with considerable length. The supporting sentences contain vivid details and examples.
—The essay reveals a strong understanding of verb tenses and of subject/verb agreement.
—The essay uses sentence variety. The sentences show a strong understanding of various sentence patterns. The sentences are complete and not fragmented or run on.
—The essay addresses the writing topic. The essay shows a clear understanding of the topic and any related reading prompt and directions.
—The essay contains minimal errors in grammar, mechanics, and word order.
C Level=70–79 points
— The essay is organized and focused on one main idea. The essay uses separate paragraphs.
— The essay is clear. A minimal number of logical transitions are used to make connections between ideas.
— The essay is developed. The main ideas are supported with sufficient length. The supporting sentences contain details and examples.
— The essay reveals an understanding of verb tenses and of subject/verb agreement.
— The essay uses sentence variety. The sentences show a control of various sentence patterns. The sentences are almost always complete and not fragmented or run on.
— The essay addresses the writing topic. The essay shows an understanding of the topic and any related reading prompt and directions.
— The essay may contain some errors in grammar, mechanics, and word order.

D Level=60–69 points
— The essay is not organized and focused on one main idea. The essay uses separate paragraphs.
— The essay is not clear. Logical transitions are not used sufficiently to make connections between ideas. Word usage is not understandable.
— The essay is not adequately developed. The main ideas are not supported with sufficient length. The supporting sentences do not contain details and examples.
— The essay reveals a lack of understanding of verb tenses and of subject/verb agreement.
— The essay does not use sentence variety. The sentences do not show a control of various sentence patterns. The sentences are not complete and are fragmented or run on.
— The essay does not address the writing topic. The essay does not show a clear understanding of the topic and any related reading prompt and directions.
— The essay contains considerable errors in grammar, mechanics, and word order.

Midterms
20% of total grade. 200 points possible.

Final Exam
10% of total grade. 100 points possible.
Multiple-choice exam on grammar in the post-diagnostic tests in My Writing Lab.
Bibliography

Copies of these articles and excerpts are available in the English Language Arts Division office in a binder for English 87 instructors.


The author discusses Generation 1.5, a term used to describe young immigrants or children of immigrants who have attended secondary schools in the United States. She speaks of these students as having fossilized language skills, and as having difficulty being placed since they are not true ESL students or international students. The 1.5 students also do not fit in well with traditional basic/remedial courses since the programs are designed for students not in need of language development. The author makes the distinction between functional and critical literacy, with functionally literate readers able to “decode text” and critically literate readers unable to decode the text. The reader, then, skims over the surface of the text without making connections to it. They do not become involved in the text and see how they factor into the reading. The author suggests that teachers “must create opportunities for [these students] to interact with texts.” The students should be taught how to view reading as a dialogue and to learn that the reader should be able to accurately voice the writer’s points.


Boylan’s research on best practices in developmental education forms the basis for a chapter on thirteen instructional practices: 1. Develop Learning Communities. 2. Accommodate Diversity Through Varied Instructional Methods. 3. Use Supplemental Instruction. 4. Provide Frequent Testing Opportunities. 5. Use Technology with Moderation. 6. Provide Frequent and Timely Feedback. 7. Use Mastery Learning. 8. Link Developmental Course Content to College-Level Requirements. 9. Share Instructional Strategies. 10. Teach Critical Thinking. 11. Teach Learning Strategies. 12. Use Active Learning Techniques. 13. Use Classroom Assessment Techniques. Boylan promotes as many teaching methods as possible with at least three teaching modes per class. Most developmental students prefer visual-oriented activities and tactile learning. Frequent testing includes quizzes, question-and-answer sessions, group projects, and
presentations. See if the students are ready to take the test before taking it. Most effective feedback is immediate and specific. Mastery learning can be done through computer instruction or through sequenced and organized activities that students must prove mastery in before advancing to the next unit. Exit and entrance skills should be lined up in sequential courses to prepare for college-level work. Critical thinking skills require time to develop and should be systematically taught from course to course. Many developmental students cannot distinguish between types of structure and require study of the steps involved in problem solving. Learning strategies are necessary to understand breakdowns in comprehension and to recognize these occurrences. Students need to learn how to become aware of their own learning. Get students out of the chairs and active in the classroom to become more involved with their learning. A one-minute paper at the end of a class session can be enough to assess what was learned and not learned on that day.


Boynton provides numerous pre-conference, conference, and post-conference strategies and activities to make writing conferences between teacher and student more efficient and effective. Before a conference, the teacher hands out information on what the students should expect from what could be a new type of experience. Boynton uses folders, carbon paper, tracking sheets to keep the interaction focused and clear. She asks to identify the main point of each paragraph and write it into the margin, and then in conference goes over with the student if the sentences follow the main point. In conferences, she states teachers need to listen first and use what the student says to identify the intent of the student’s work. Boynton uses read aloud in conferences, so students can hear and correct errors in syntax. She also follows a list of priorities as high or low. The practical suggestions can help to create an order and focus on a writing conference within a limited timeframe.


Cornelius discusses the anxiety she felt before teaching a class and finds ways to use this anxious feeling towards a more open and enthusiastic teaching method. She comes to this realization by comparing her fears with the experiences of her cousin, a middle-aged reentry student at a community college, who pours his best efforts into the challenges of a basic skills class. She sees his transformation as he “writes his way into
the world, makes room for himself in a society that has most often left him on the fringes.”


Giberson states that teachers tend to appropriate the writing of the students without considering the impact on the students. Instead of repairing the writing, instructors should engage in the response process as a collaborative effort that would involve negotiation and dialogue. Teachers should not abuse their power in the situation. Think of the appropriateness of the response, and the type of genuine feedback that would be helpful rather than canned responses lacking meaning. Giberson uses much group discussion in which the instructor takes a part in a group to listen to the students speak about their writing and field questions about the writing. Give input during the writing process, rather than after.


Using as a case study a student who did not pass the holistic assessment of a developmental writing course, the authors analyze how they evaluate writing and the limitations involved by the assessment procedure and their own perspectives. They find “our criteria fail to recognize the current controversies over the role of personal voice in academic writing and argument. They also privilege linear forms of organization.” The student of the case study, an African American nineteen-year-old, uses a complex structure that the evaluators at first did not notice. The writing includes “shifts from direct to indirect discourse.” The writing also reflects Black English Vernacular with the omission of certain tense markers and “to be” verb forms. The authors point out the use of details and storytelling techniques and the “use of repetition, alliterative word play, and a striking and sustained use of metaphor.” The evaluators realize “personal anecdotes are acceptable in academic discourse only when framed by generalizations.” In revising their portfolio requirements, the authors plan for “a more intertextual reading of the portfolios, an assessment practice that views the essays in a portfolio as interrelated and recursive.”

Kasper, Loretta Frances. “ESL Writing and the Principle of Nonjudgmental Awareness: Rationale and Implementation.” Teaching Developmental
The author argues that ESL teachers should adopt a process-oriented student-centered approach to writing rather than a product-oriented approach. Students primary needs are “fluency and clarity of expression,” and these can be achieved with better results through a nonjudgmental approach to responding to student writing. Techniques include task-oriented questions asking for more specifics and development, using peer evaluation with a guided questionnaire, and having students vocalize their intentions in their writing. This nonjudgmental approach leads to better results in writing and to a student’s understanding of the importance of revision.


Kessler makes the case for Writing Centers to function as an integral component of an English Department. Located near English course classrooms, the Writing Center is introduced to all students in developmental courses as instructors bring their students to the Center in the first week of the semester. Developmental English courses have clearly paired co-requisite courses in the Center. All syllabi for developmental writing courses include notifications to students that they are expected to use the Center and are required to complete certain Writing Center activities that complement assignments in the English classroom. The English 87 equivalent course requires three hours per week in the Center. English faculty members are required to spend 4.5 hours per week in the Center. Mandatory attendance is required of all developmental writers. The Center is staffed at all times by a manager, an English faculty member, trained tutors, and lab assistants.


In this condensed and informative book, Raimes argues, among other things, for five basic principles in responding to student writing: 1. Refrain from reaching for a pen when you first read a student’s work. Read the student’s work first before responding in written form. 2. Point out strengths in the writing to the student. 3. Familiarize the students with any editing symbols you use. Give the students opportunities to use the symbols. 4. Plan a strategy for responding to the students’ writing and inform the students of the strategy. If you plan to only address errors of a certain type, or only errors on grammatical points that have been
covered in class. Decide if you will correct the errors or only show the
location of the errors. Prioritize the types of errors and discuss this with
the students. 5. Do not judge the quality of the writing. Identify what
needs to be done to help the student with the next step to improve the
paper.

English Students with Active Learning Strategies.” Teaching

Remler argues in favor of active learning in the composition classroom
and gives some suggestions on how to switch roles with the students in
order to put the students into the more active roles of question-
generators, discussion-leaders, and quiz-makers. She assigns groups to
particular grammatical areas and has them present the information to the
class while she asks relevant questions to the presenters about the use of
the grammatical point. She believes that more active learning encourages
students to take ownership of their learning, to develop leadership skills,
and to become enthusiastic about learning in general as they become
involved in the material, the lesson, and the evaluation.

Valentino, Marilyn. “Responding When a Life Depends on It: What to Write
in the Margins When Students Self-Disclose.” Teaching English in the Two-

After establishing the contrary views towards self-disclosure in student
writing, Valentino suggests that instructors work with mental health
counselors on how to respond to students who disclose by forming
guidelines, such as the following: 1. Do not make assumptions. Be clear
before attempting to save the student. 2. Do not hide the information.
Discuss it with a mental health counselor or supervisor. 3. Maintain a
professional distance but provide information on relevant support
services. Do not reveal own experiences. “[S]tudents need to see
instructors as empathetic but also as in control of the situation. To
expose one’s personal trauma is to make oneself the victim, not the
sounding board and referral source.” 4. Keep to an agreement about the
schoolwork and the student’s responsibilities. 5. Respond with reflective
comments, not on the structure of the writing. Give suggestions and ask
questions.

Weaver, Constance. “Teaching Style through Sentence Combining and
Sentence Generating.” Teaching Developmental Writing: Background
Readings. Ed. Susan Naomi Bernstein. New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s,
The author states the importance of guided sentence level exercises to ensure development of writing skills. She gives lesson plans to introduce participial phrases, present participle phrases, and absolute constructions to students by following the types of exercises promoted by Francis Christensen in the 1970s. She discusses the placement of modifying phrases in a sentence (usually present participle at the end of the sentence) and the information typically provided by such phrases. Absolutes and past participle phrases can add more description and present participle phrases add narrative detail. The examples show the use of these phrases in poetry and in prose. The sample handout shows the core sentence in capitals and the sentences to be modified in lower case and in the proper placement to the core sentence. These visual clues could help students in understanding what needs to be changed and where the change needs to occur. Through such sentence combining activities, students learn to develop a personal writing style.