

Course Design

Seoul Searching: Transitioning Basic Writers Within the Global Frontiers Project

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The course we describe here was designed especially for students enrolled in a collaborative program between Texas A&M University–Commerce and Konkuk University in South Korea. This course was created specifically for students who did not earn a qualifying score on a standardized placement exam required of all first-year students for enrollment into “college-level” English 1301. For this course, a team consisting of several graduate teaching assistants, instructors, a linguistic specialist, and the writing program administrator combined strategies for teaching basic writing and English as a second language (ESL) to create a pilot “sheltered instruction” program, one that provided additional support to all Korean students enrolled in basic writing courses. This support included an additional “lab” that each student was required to attend; their lab teacher was present in each English 1301 class, as well, to answer questions and support instruction. Every Konkuk student enrolled in the pilot program passed the course and enrolled in English 1302 along with their cohorts who were considered “college ready.”

Institutional Context

In the fall of 2012, our university commenced a program in collaboration with Konkuk University in Seoul and Chungjua, South Korea. According to the university’s English language website, Konkuk University is a private metropolitan research university with approximately 26,000 students. Conversely, Texas A&M University–Commerce is a public rural university in Commerce, Texas with approximately 12,000 students. According to the agreement between the two universities, students who enroll in the collaborative program titled The Global Frontiers Program complete one semester of intensive English language instruction at Konkuk University before coming to northeast Texas to earn Texas A&M University–Commerce bachelor’s degrees. During the first semester, 149 Konkuk students qualified and participated in the program. Students enrolled in this program major in everything from Spanish to physics and live on campus in a university dorm.

Once these students complete their intensive English language instruction, they are fully accepted into the university and therefore complete the same steps

required of all other students. In Texas, this means that students are required to take a placement exam that determines whether or not they are prepared for college-level reading, writing, and math. Students are required to attain a designated score, and those who do not take “basic” or “remedial” courses designed to, as administrators often say, make these students college ready. Of the 149 students enrolled in the Global Frontiers Program, 100 or 67% placed into the “basic” course and were involved with the program we describe here.

To explain the context of this course, we must preface this information with some history about our writing program. In previous years, students who were designated as not college ready were required to take English 100, a three-hour class that included a smaller, two-hour lab where students received more personalized attention and help with their writing assignments. Though the course carried no credit toward graduation, students were required to complete English 100 before moving on to English 1301.

The course was not efficient under this old model. We have come to understand basic writing and basic writing courses much like David Bartholomae, who famously writes that “basic writing programs have become expressions of our desire to produce basic writers, to maintain the course, the argument, and the slot in the university community; to maintain the distinction (basic/normal) we have learned to think through and by” (174). At our institution, basic writing did not fully serve our so-called basic writers. Failure rates were high and most students had to retake the course, only to follow the course up with English 1301, which resembled English 100 a great deal. Because Texas dictates through the Texas Success Initiative that students with low college entrance exam scores take a basic writing or remedial course, we could not simply eliminate the course and mainstream students as many universities choose to do. Instead, we adopted a “mainstream with support” model. English 100 was converted into a three-hour lab designed to support English 1301 for students with low entrance exam scores. Once students pass the course, they move on to English 1302 with their cohorts whose test scores did not require a remedial or basic course. We believe that this model has removed redundancy from an otherwise cohesive first-year curriculum, and the pass rate improved by an incredible 44%. When we learned that the Konkuk students would be coming to our program and individual students would have differing levels of English training, we decided to take advantage of the existing courses while creating programming that would help students both improve their English speaking and master the concepts of English 1301.

In the next section, we detail the theoretical rationale informing the four major concepts at work in this curriculum: writing about writing, basic writing instruction, sheltered instruction, and the cultural considerations we made for our Korean students.

Theoretical Rationales

Writing About Writing

Since 2011, our writing program has operated under the writing about writing approach. This approach, first introduced by Doug Downs and Elizabeth Wardle in a 2007 *CCC* article, “explores reading and writing: How does writing work? How do people use writing? What are problems related to writing and reading and how can they be solved?” (558). We liked this approach for several reasons. First, we wanted our students to learn about our discipline. We admired the model commonly seen in sciences, social sciences, and other subjects where students learn the basic methods, concepts, and theories that create a discipline. We see writing studies as a discipline that has its own methodologies, concepts, and theories, so we did not want to create a program where we had to “invent” content. Some examples of invented content might be assignments where students can research anything, or courses built around themes like paranormal activity, films, presidential campaigns, et cetera. We agree with Downs and Wardle’s argument that “when the course content is writing studies, writing instructors are concretely enabled to fill that expert-reader role” (559). If the invented content permits students to study anything, instructor expertise is more difficult to ensure. In our view, this expertise is important because, as Downs and Wardle argue, it is our responsibility as writing professionals to correct misconceptions about writing that are prevalent in society.

Under this writing about writing framework, our two-course first-year writing sequence helps students learn about writing, research, and reading. In the first course, using Downs and Wardle’s textbook *Writing About Writing*, students study concepts like the Burkean Parlor, John Swales’ CARS (Creating a Research Space) model and discourse community concept, writing processes, and the relationship between reader and writer. In the second course, students build on the framework they developed in the first course and treat literacy, discourse communities, or literacy artifacts in context by completing small-scale literacy ethnographies (4). In these literacy ethnographies, students are required not only to report on their observation data but also to contextualize that data within the frame of other scholarship. We believe this course aligns with what Downs and Wardle had in mind when they wrote, “through primary research, students begin to learn that careful observation and empirical data-gathering techniques bolster their authority and reduce their reliance on other experts’ pronouncements” (563).

We piloted the writing about writing approach one semester before the Korean students arrived. We soon realized that this approach is challenging

because it asks students to interact with texts typically written for academics, but we also liked this curriculum *because* of the challenges it posed. In our program, we believe that students should be challenged with difficult content. We knew that this challenge might be especially difficult for our Korean students who were experiencing a new culture, curriculum, and teaching and learning style all in a language that is not their first. Because we wanted the Global Frontiers Program to be successful, we knew we would have to provide different forms of curricular support to our new students. We supplemented the curriculum in two ways: through the use of rhetorical dexterity and sheltered instruction, both of which are described below.

Rhetorical Dexterity

In her 2008 book *The Way Literacy Lives: Rhetorical Dexterity and Basic Writing Instruction*, Shannon Carter describes “a pedagogy of rhetorical dexterity” as “a pedagogical approach that develops in students the ability to read, understand, manipulate, and negotiate the cultural and linguistic codes of a new community of practice based on a relatively accurate assessment of another, more familiar one” (14). In this case, the “more familiar one” was the academic conventions these students of the highly selective, private Konkuk University had likely mastered in their home language. Instructors often encouraged our Korean students to write about the differences and similarities between the reading and writing they had done in their home country and the reading and writing they were studying in our program. We found this strategy to be a useful way to help students navigate the complex concepts inherent in the writing about writing approach. Students often talked about writing in high school, but also referenced, as Carter suggests, “vernacular literacies—video game literacies, Star Trek literacies, and comic book literacies, among other things” (13). An additional benefit of this approach was a cultural one: Korean students learned more about the American culture and academics for which they had traveled so far, and American students (and instructors) learned about Korean culture, education, popular culture, and people.

Sheltered Instruction

The final theoretical frame for this course is a pedagogical approach called sheltering. This model is most commonly utilized at the K–12 levels. According to David Freeman and Yvonne Freeman, this model, often abbreviated as SDAIE (Specifically Designed Academic Instruction in English), was developed specifically to help limited English-proficient (LEP) students “develop their cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP)—the kind of proficiency required to make sense of academic language in context-reduced

situations” (2). Freeman and Freeman list the following as typical sheltering activities:

Extralinguistic cues such as visuals, props, and body language; linguistic modifiers such as repetition and pauses during speech; interactive lectures with frequent comprehension checks; cooperative learning strategies; focus on central concepts rather than on details by using a thematic approach; development of reading strategies such as mapping and writing to develop thinking. (2)

Obviously, the fields of linguistics and language learning have made great strides in the twenty to thirty years that have elapsed since sheltered instruction was first employed to help non-native speakers of English, but this system is still used with good effect today in school systems with high numbers of non-native or non-proficient speakers of English, including the Dallas Independent School System here in northeast Texas.

In addition to the success this program has enjoyed, there are several incentives to employ a program like the one we describe here. As linguist David Crystal shows, of the two billion English users in the world, 1.6 billion are non-native speakers, which means there are far more non-native speakers of English in the world than native speakers. This population creates an enormous opportunity for English educators. And recent surveys by The Institute of International Education indicate that more and more, these non-native speakers are choosing to study in the United States. In their November 2012 “Open Doors Report on International Education Exchange,” the institute reported a 6.5% increase in international students studying in the United States from the 2010–2011 academic year—this adds up to 764,495 international students in the United States for the 2011–2012 academic year. Students included in these numbers originate from many different countries, but the highest numbers of students come first from China, then India, and finally South Korea, who sent 72,295 students to study in the United States during the 2011–2012 academic year. Of the over 700,000 international students studying in the United States, 28%, or 219,853, are undergraduates who may have the opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs like the one we describe here. Of course, in recent composition scholarship, there have been several academic movements aimed at addressing this growing population, including multilingualism (Horner, NeCamp, and Donahue; Lu and Horner), translanguaging (Horner, et. al), World Englishes and English as a lingua franca (Canagarajah), multiliteracies (The New London Group), and responses from organizations like the CCCC.

A second incentive for adoption of this model is a financial one—though we want to acknowledge our discomfort with the concept of recruiting students for financial gain. Universities are often motivated by business models or formula funding, and thus we cannot ignore the tremendous financial benefit of increased international student populations for campuses like Texas A&M University–Commerce. The 149 South Korean students involved in the Global Frontiers Program in the Spring 2012 semester, as residents of South Korea, paid out-of-state tuition here in Texas. This program led to an additional three million dollars in tuition revenue for the university in that semester alone. Obviously, in times of budget cuts and financial uncertainty, there is an immense (if troubling) impetus for this program to be successful and to lead to additional student participation. This situation, paired with the fact that the writing program was the only program on campus that made special preparations for our Global Frontiers students, put the writing program in a unique leadership position on campus.

Finally, another benefit of this course design is that it keeps actual remedial course hours at a minimum. In our model, students only take three hours of remedial courses—the lab—while they are concurrently enrolled in three hours of “college-level” first-year writing. Administrators at Texas A&M University–Commerce like this model because students do not have to “sit out” a semester in remedial course work before moving on to their college-level courses. In a time when funds for so-called developmental education are disappearing, this model may be a viable option for others as well. For example, in the state of Texas, developmental education courses are supposed to be phased out or outsourced to community colleges, according to the coordinating board’s current plan, by the year 2020. Creating a non-course laboratory or even tutoring that follows this model may be one way to continue providing support to basic writers or English newcomers like the students enrolled in the Global Frontiers program while they complete their college-level course work.

Critical Reflection

As we discussed earlier, we employed Carter’s model of rhetorical dexterity, sheltering, ESL/EFL instruction, and writing about writing to address this unique student demographic, thus constructing a new model for basic writing instruction. This model trains writers to effectively read, understand, manipulate, and negotiate the cultural and linguistic codes of a new community of practice based on a relatively accurate assessment of another, more recognizable one, which then allows basic writers the rhetorical dexterity to adapt to literacy expectations of the new community. As the student body at universities in the United States becomes more diverse, this methodology provides a template for working with any ESL group. In addition, we found

that we had to address unexpected cultural variations in beliefs about writing. Upon completion of our project we were able to form conclusions concerning the curriculum and support found within our program as well as access unexpected outcomes.

Curriculum

Writing about writing is a flexible pedagogy that allows students to reflect on their own writing methodology without the distraction of external components that would detract them from internalizing and exploring their individual writing styles and goals. Konkuk students were more comfortable working with empirical evidence and external sources, resisting assignments that required a reflective or autobiographical component. We suspect this resistance was culturally reinforced as they claimed they were unfamiliar with projects that were introspective or exploratory. Thus the flexible pedagogy allowed Konkuk students to more clearly analyze their own choices about writing and organization by focusing their writing on an intrinsically familiar forum—their own writing processes.

In keeping with the philosophy of a flexible pedagogy, we felt offering students various essay models from the text for each unit allowed them the security of a format, without encouraging conformity to any one model. This reflects Carter's theories about a form of rhetorical dexterity that exposes students to the expectations of the "new" community as they transition from their former community. We found, however, that we had to provide extra support for textbook essays that contained specialized jargon less accessible to ESL students and content focused on cultural references and analogies with which they were not familiar. To address these issues, in-class exercises allowed us to introduce Americanized ideas and concepts in context. Groups analyzed American versus Korean flash mob content, for instance, which encouraged students to compare performance art through the lens of both cultures. Predictably, Korean students, like most students, were most comfortable writing about concepts and ideas centered on their native culture. We also encouraged students to access self-reflective, complex issues involving identity, class, and gender in the writing about writing approach by viewing these topics through their own interests in fashion, sports, films, video games, or so-called online "affinity spaces" (Gee).

Support Components

This program required concentrated coordination between classroom and lab instructors, writing center tutors, the director of first-year writing, and the department linguistic specialist. Weekly meetings between Meyer (the Konkuk Coordinator) and instructors addressed classroom strategies, both

successful and failed, and synchronized assignments and expectations. These meetings provided us opportunities to gather various data about the Konkuk students' capabilities and strengths as well as their limitations, both as ESL students and as basic writers. Data from these meetings were subsequently relayed to the director and linguistic specialist for additional transparency and recording purposes.

Student conferences were also a critical component of our pedagogical practice as students were reluctant to seek clarity or support in class. The collective nature of their culture, compounded by students' limited English skills, fostered their in-class reticence. However, individual conferences allowed students to express concerns and seek assistance. These conferences also allowed instructors to measure linguistic comprehension on a personalized level and thus construct perimeters while adjusting expectations. Expanded English comprehension meant that more nuanced and complex concepts could be introduced into the classroom and revised benchmarks could be established. Individuals needing extra clarification and support could be identified. Stronger students, who began to serve as interpreters, were also revealed through these conferences.

Konkuk students, unlike many basic writers, were accustomed to receiving high grades at their own university, and as a result, these students were willing to work very hard through multiple revisions to improve their grades. They also became anxious if they did not receive very precise rubrics and writing prompts. They took advantage of office hours and conferences to secure their understanding of what was expected of them for upcoming assignments and to clarify instructors' expectations. Many basic writers, often unfamiliar with support systems available in a university system, have minimal involvement with instructors or tutors outside of the classroom. Conversely, our Konkuk students wanted full access to our university support systems. We found they appreciated the opportunity for multiple revisions, brainstorming sessions, and student conferences. They also appreciated detailed, focused revision instruction, and very explicit, weighted rubrics.

There were three main components utilized to assist students' progress: visual aids, two-hour labs, and writing center assistance. For ESL basic writers, we found that all course content must be visually accessible and permanently available in order to provide the highest level of impact. Class lectures, writing heuristics, essay rubrics, and writing guides were posted on the classroom website. All materials, including lecture notes, were displayed on the classroom video screen during class lectures. As part of the sheltering component of our project, Korean terms were often displayed alongside their English translations for a more comprehensive understanding of course material. We heeded the advice of scholars like Yu Ren Dong who calls on teachers of non-native

speakers to “diversify teaching strategies when dealing with diverse students” (378). She also illustrates another point we carefully considered:

[C]omposition instructors need information about students’ native literacy learning in order to tailor their instruction. In getting to know students and their home literacy backgrounds, teachers send the message that ESL students’ home literacy backgrounds are acknowledged and valued rather than dismissed or ignored. (378)

In addition, getting to know students on a personal level through conferences, in-class discussion, and their writing helped instructors implement the strategies based on Carter’s theory of rhetorical dexterity. Learning about students’ interests and hobbies helped us develop examples that would interest the students and illustrate complex concepts.

Konkuk students also benefited substantially from basic grammar instruction. Although most basic writers need or want grammatical training, we did not expect the need to implement such explicit instruction with this group as they had transferred from a high-performing university and had passed their TESOL exams. We responded by incorporating this component into lab sessions through lectures, writing exercises, and PowerPoint presentations. The students relied heavily on their lab sessions for continuous revision, often focused on grammar. As these lab sessions were smaller, students could receive more personalized and concentrated assistance. This face-to-face writing instruction was a critical component of our approach, and, although the practice is often discounted today, we feel it was critical to our success.

Overall, instructors, including lab instructors and writing center tutors, became familiar with these students’ Korean academic expectations, their writing and research training and traditions, and their cultural views about learning and education. These dedicated instructors for the Konkuk project were also aware of the students’ particular ESL-related struggles, the expectations of their classroom instructors, and the specifics of the course content. Students seemed to respond to and appreciate the instructors’ efforts by utilizing all the resources available to them; the students regularly met with instructors during office hours, created study groups, and made good use of the Writing Center. This extra effort and commitment from instructors and students alike was a critical contributor to the success of the project.

Students depended significantly on the writing center for revision instruction. We found we could communicate much of our expectations through the writing center director, who conveyed those expectations to her staff. All of the writing center tutors had experience tutoring non-native speakers and many had read Muriel Harris and Tony Silva’s article, “Tutoring ESL Students: Issues and

Options,” as well as other articles about strategies for teaching English to non-native speakers. One-on-one attention to a student’s unique issues by trained staff, familiar with the course content, provided a third level of reinforcement as well as practice with their verbal skills. These tutoring sessions became much more productive as the semester progressed. The Konkuk students generally provided well-developed first drafts and fully participated in the process of peer review. As a result, they were noticeably more detail-oriented and frank in their comments to their peers in lab sessions. Students also benefited from the extra grammatical and organizational practices included in the process.

Response

In our ongoing assessment of and reflection on this program, we noticed that as students became more familiar with the English language, along with the cultural and academic mores of their adopted academic home, their writing skills strengthened at differing rates and levels. This led to a widening gap in the student work produced in this course. This is a common trend among many basic writers as they begin to engage with ever-more-complicated writing concepts. Nevertheless, this trend frustrated attempts to collectively teach the Konkuk students. At this point, they began to resemble more mainstream writers with more defined levels of competence and strength. We then challenged advanced writers to write more complex final essays with longer lengths, more consulted sources, and more elaborate arguments. Some of these advanced students began to tutor their peers outside of class, a development we rarely see in mainstream basic writing courses.

We also kept individual student status check sheets that were revised weekly. One instructor, Allyson Jones, developed a system by which we could cross-reference students across coursework, lab work, and attendance, allowing us to see trends, both incidental in nature—such as increased absences in their labs or classrooms or missed work—and systemic—such as declining grade point averages due to an inability to comprehend instruction. The results of these reports were sent to the linguistic specialist who coordinated with a representative from the International Affairs Office.

Evaluation

Ultimately, the final course evaluation grades posed an unusual situation and dilemma. Halfway through the term, instructors felt that the students would not be proficient enough to advance to English 1302. We devised alternative strategies to increase student mastery. One constant challenge was the Konkuk students’ insularity. They largely did not interact with English speakers as suggested, and as a result their English verbal skills did not improve as quickly as their writing skills. Instructors had to determine how their stu-

dents' progress should be evaluated holistically, incorporating their progress with English language comprehension, writing organizational skills, and reading comprehension and application. These latter components are considered general standards for evaluating basic writers' progress in most programs, but the ESL component required us to rethink our standards. Instructors decided that they must evaluate students' progress based on these components as they appeared in the students' final drafts, using their final product as a guide.

One particularly challenging component of our course was the students' final project, a "Showcase Piece" designed to allow them to demonstrate an application of their understanding of writing about writing in a unique manner. According to the syllabus, this assignment instructs students to

create a showcase piece to highlight what you've learned about "Writing About Writing." The medium you select is your choice – you could do a video, a song, a poem, a short story, or a painting... about what writing means to you. You might consider how to represent your initial views of writing and your current views... You should include a typed reflection essay, 4–6 pages discussing the significance of your showcase piece. Analyze what this piece represents to you about writing, and connect your showcase to the issues we've discussed in the course.

Thus, the project required creative, critical thinking from our students as well as a creative application of their writing assignments—often reconstructed in a different medium. Student response was strong and demonstrated scholastic and linguistic agility at levels we had not anticipated. The assignment also required a narration of these projects, requiring students to demonstrate verbal skills at an advanced level. During their presentations, students concluded their lectures with a command of the English language comparable to native speaking students. Their presentations reflected their writing process evolution in creative genres, such as elaborate video clips, PowerPoint presentations, and original musical performances. We felt that this complex task validated our efforts as it provided such tangible evidence that students were able to not only organize their thoughts in a productive manner but also convey them clearly.

Final Reflection

This modified basic writing sheltering program proved successful for 100% of the students enrolled during the pilot semester, and they went on to enroll in 1302 and perform well. The program was also a success for the university since it effectively incorporated a large group of high achieving but contextu-

ally at-risk students. Finally, for the first-year writing program at Texas A&M University–Commerce, this program provided a flexible template to be used for future projects, particularly as the university explores options concerning international university exchanges.

Acknowledgement

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Syllabus

ENG 1301: College Reading and Writing

Course Description

This course introduces students to writing as an extended, complex, and recursive process and prepares students for English 1302, which more rigorously examines the forms and structures of argument and means to approaching multiple audiences. In 1301 students will write weekly and will work on essay organization and development. The course will emphasize close reading, summarizing, and analysis of expository texts, including student writing.

Course Texts:

Writing About Writing: A College Reader. Elizabeth Wardle and Doug Downs. Bedford St. Martins, 2011. ISBN# 978-0-312-53493-6

Writing at Texas A&M University–Commerce. Tabetha Adkins. Fountainhead, 2011. ISBN #978-59871-474-6

Assessment Criteria Grading Breakdown

Assignments	100% total
How Do I Write?	15%
How Do You Define a Good Academic Argument?	15%
Self-Portrait of a Reader and Writer	15%

Assignments	100% total
Letter to a Literacy Sponsor	15%
Final Project/ Showcase Piece	30%
Participation	10%

Calendar

Key:

Writing About Writing: A College Reader = WAW

Writing at Texas A&M University–Commerce = Guide

Week	Reading Due	Writing Due
1	Adkins, “Plagiarism” (<i>Guide</i>) Garbriel, “Plagiarism Lines Blur in Digital Age” article (<i>The New York Times</i>)	
2	Swales, “‘Create a Research Space’: (CARS) Model of Research Introductions” (WAW) Greene, “Argument as Conversation: The Role of Inquiry in Writing a Researched Argument” (WAW) Kleine, “What Is It We Do When We Write Articles Like This One—And How Do We Get Students To Join Us?” (WAW)	
3	Porter, “Intertextuality and the Discourse Community” (WAW) Swales, “The Concept of Discourse Community” (WAW) Kantz, “Helping Students Use Textual Sources Persuasively” (WAW)	Draft of How Do I Write? essay
4	Williams, “The Phenomenology of Error” (WAW) Murray, “All Writing is Autobiography” (WAW)	How Do I Write? Essay due
5	Goodman, “Calming the Inner Critic and Getting to Work” (WAW) King, “What Writing Is” (WAW)	

Week	Reading Due	Writing Due
6	Hyland, "Disciplinary Discourses: Social Interactions in Academic Writing" (WAW) Revision v. Editing chapter (Guide)	Draft of How Do You Define a Good Academic Argument? essay
7	Lamott, "Shitty First Drafts" (WAW) Wilbur, "The Writer" Perl, "The Composing Processes of Unskilled College Writers" (WAW)	How Do You Define a Good Academic Argument? essay due
8	Berkenkotter, "Decisions and Revisions: The Planning Strategies of a Published Writer" and Murray's response (WAW) Tomlinson, "Tuning, Tying, and Training Texts: Metaphors for Revision" (WAW) Sontag, "Directions: Write, Read, Rewrite. Repeat Steps 2 and 3 as Needed" (WAW) Díaz, "Becoming a Writer" (WAW)	
9	Watch <i>The Social Network</i> in class	
10	Tierney & Pearson, "Toward a Composing Model of Reading" (WAW) Malcolm X, "Learning to Read" (WAW)	Draft of Self-Portrait of a Reader and Writer essay
11	Alexie, "The Joy of Reading and Writing: Superman and Me" (WAW) Textual analysis chapter (Guide) Devoss, et.al. "The Future of Literacy" (WAW) Brandt, "Sponsors of Literacy" (WAW)	Self-Portrait of a Reader and Writer essay due
12	Wardle, "Identity, Authority, and Learning to Write in New Workplaces" (WAW) Mirabelli, "Learning to Serve: The Language and Literacy of Food Service Workers" (WAW)	Draft of Letter to a Literacy Sponsor
13	Branick, "Coaches Can Read, Too: An Ethnographic Study of a Football Coaching Discourse Community" (WAW)	Letter to a Literacy Sponsor Due
14	Showcase Piece Presentations	
15		

Instruction and Evaluation Criteria For Writing Assignments

1. How Do I Write?

Instructions

Using the model essay found in *Writing About Writing* (pages 292–97), analyze your own writing process or processes. To complete this analysis, you will need to employ one of the strategies or techniques described by the scholars you read in unit one. For example, the sample essay uses Swales’ CARS model. In this essay, be explicit about the methodology or analysis tool you’re using, and use a lot of examples. The more thorough your analysis, the stronger your essay will be.

Evaluation Criteria

- Essay is clearly modeled after one of the model essays found in *Writing About Writing* (pages 292–97).
- Draft clearly demonstrates a specific writing process.
- The writing process is described in detail.
- Experience is presented effectively, using appropriate narrative techniques.
- Experience is reflected on, not merely presented/related.
- Material is organized logically.
- Sentences are clear, complete, and relatively error free.

2. How Do You Define Good Academic Argument?

Instructions

Now that you’ve read about academic writing in unit one and different ideas about what makes writing “good” in unit two, it’s time to synthesize those two concepts to create your theory of how you personally define a good academic argument. Your theory will be informed by all the texts you have read so far. You might, for example, use these texts to help explain your theory, quote sections of texts that help illustrate your theory, or even point to elements of the texts with which you disagree.

Evaluation Criteria

- Draft clearly describes a specific writing process that demonstrates a personal theory of effective argument.
- Essay includes elements from the model essays found in *Writing About Writing*.
- Experience is presented effectively, using appropriate narrative techniques.
- Material is organized logically.

- Sentences are clear, complete, and relatively error free.

3. *Self-Portrait of a Reader and Writer*

Instructions

The prompt titled “Assignment Option 2. Portrait of a Writer” on page 325 in *Writing About Writing* asks you to “consider the story you have to tell about yourself as a writer.” For this assignment, you will expand that description and “consider the story you have to tell about yourself as a writer” *and* as a reader. How are these two identities if at all, connected for you? What are some positive experiences you have had with reading and writing? When, what, and where do you like to read and write? Use the questions in the prompt (pages 325–27) to help you get started, but be sure to connect your own experiences to the readings from unit three—you’ll want to quote from those texts to show the connections between your experiences and the authors’ experiences and/or claims.

Evaluation Criteria

- Draft is clearly connected to the readings in unit three found in *Writing About Writing* (Berkenkotter, Sontag, and/or Malcolm X).
- Essay includes a personal narrative describing author’s experience as a writer and as a reader.
- Essay includes specific examples of positive experiences related to writing.
- Essay is presented effectively, using appropriate narrative techniques.
- Material is organized logically.
- Sentences are clear, complete, and relatively error free.

4. *Letter to a Literacy Sponsor*

Instructions

Using Brandt’s definition of a literacy sponsor, identify someone who has been a literacy sponsor to you. Using the model essay on pages 271–77 in *Writing About Writing*, compose a letter to the literacy sponsor you’ve identified, using at least five texts you’ve read in this course (six counting Brandt) to discuss how their sponsorship has affected you as a reader and/or writer. One objective of this letter is certainly to illustrate that you understand the concept of the literacy sponsor, but another objective is to demonstrate that you can synthesize all the concepts and texts from the course.

Evaluation Criteria

- Draft is clearly connected to the readings in unit three found in *Writing About Writing* regarding literacy sponsors.

- Essay includes a personal narrative describing writer's experience with literary sponsor.
- Essay includes specific examples demonstrating impact of literacy sponsor.
- Essay is presented effectively, using appropriate narrative techniques.
- Material is organized logically.
- Sentences are clear, complete, and relatively error free.

Final Project—Showcase Piece

Instructions

You will create a showcase piece to highlight what you've learned about writing about writing. The medium you select is your choice – you could do a video, a song, a poem, a short story, a painting...there are many possibilities. If you are considering an option not mentioned above, you must discuss your idea with me.

This showcase piece takes effort, time, and, especially, planning and critical thinking about what writing means to you. You might consider how to represent your initial views of writing and your current views. You might consider how to represent your view of writing and reading versus how others see those activities. You might consider representing what forms of writing and reading are valuable in your life. These are just some ideas to help you get started. Remember, you are flexing your creative muscles to think critically about writing, so be imaginative!

You should include a four- to six-page typed reflection essay discussing the significance of your showcase piece. Analyze what this piece represents to you about writing and connect your showcase to the issues we've discussed in the course. To make these connections, you'll quote from the readings, your essays, your reading responses, and maybe even class discussions. This essay should be cited using MLA style.

Evaluation Criteria

Entire project (presentation and essay) is based on a literacy model or based on the idea of a written work.

- The message of your literacy model is clearly conveyed to your audience in both the presentation and the essay, in whatever medium you choose.
- Presentation includes evidence or a physical text/song/poem/essay/video/painting component that represents the idea you want to convey in a clear way.
- Essay includes details about the presentation, explanation of how it represents literacy, and some reflection on the actual presentation.