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My Search for the Meaning Behind my Teaching

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MY SEARCH FOR THE MEANING BEHIND MY TEACHING

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A Final Portfolio

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in the Field of English
with a specialization in Professional Writing and Rhetoric

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Professor Lucinda Hunter, first reader
Professor Kimberly Spallinger, second reader

Table of Contents

Analytical Narrative.....	3
Stand-Alone Textbooks and Courses for Technical Writing: Gaps and Solutions (Research and Analysis).....	9
Lessons Learned as a Writing Teacher.....	28
Research-Based Course Redesign of an Integrated Reading and Writing Course.....	35
Grammar Unit Plan.....	51

My Search for Meaning in My Teaching Practice

I began this master's program for two reasons. First, I believed it would make me more marketable when looking for a new job. Currently, I teach integrated reading and writing classes at a community college. However, my degree is a Master's in Education. I am teaching English classes, yet I do not have a Master's in English, and this has held me back from pursuing multiple positions. Second, I have always liked the idea of working as a professional writer or editor. I thought that this program would bridge these two interests. My current job is the longest period that I have remained in a certain position. I find myself getting bored, so I thought this program would provide me with greater options if I decided to change positions.

However, what this program actually did do is to make me reexamine many beliefs that I have held around teaching writing for the entire course of my 20-year career. It forced me to answer the question: what are the principles of theory and research behind what I do in the classroom? When the answer was "I don't know," or "I am teaching the way that I was taught," I then had to search for meaning in my teaching. Thankfully, this program exposed me to multiple theories on composition pedagogy that were based in research and best practice. I was able to choose the ones I felt would work best with my students and then redesign the structure and the foundation of my courses, so they do reflect theory, research, and best practice. I think the theme that emerged for me over this two-year journey and that is reflected in each of these four pieces is my search for the meaning behind my teaching.

My first piece, "What is Missing from Technical Writing Stand-Alone Textbooks and Courses," is my substantive research project. I worked on this in one of the first courses that I took when beginning this program. The course was English 6460: *Professional and Technical Communication and Rhetoric* with Dr. Heba. What I remember about this course, and several

other courses in the program, was that I began the course thinking I was really interested in the world of professional writing. However, when it came time to choose a topic for research, I continually returned to topics around the teaching of technical writing. One of the lessons that has emerged for me as I complete this program is that my interest lies in the areas around the teaching of writing. As a college professor, I have moved away from using textbooks. They are too expensive for students, and I have yet to find a textbook that presents information in the way that I want to teach it. I decided to research what types of technical writing textbooks were being used in undergraduate programs. This initial research led me to discover that many of these textbooks teach a one-size fits all model of technical writing that students find is not helpful once they move into the real-world work place. From here, I moved on to researching what types of models did work best in teaching students how to be professional and technical writers. The course of my research shifted from a focus on textbooks to a focus on general best practices.

When I returned to this piece over a year after writing it, I thought it had some issues. As a full-time working mother of five, I often rushed through my final projects each semester. This piece was no different. As I reread it, I found myself thinking it was boring, that I had droned on and on and included needless information to reach a certain page limit. I also struggled to see how I could repurpose this and offer it to the public for some sort of real-world use. However, what I found myself drawn to was my discussion on best practice of teaching technical writing. Again and again, I am drawn to innovative ways of teaching students to write for different audiences and in different contexts. This is the great value I have found in this master's program. It renewed my excitement to try new techniques in my classroom. It has invigorated me as an instructor. Rereading this piece also reaffirmed my belief to no longer use textbooks in my own classrooms. When revising, I took to heart Professor Hunter's suggestion to reframe the structure

of the essay so that my own ideas are backed up by the research. In my revised version, I reorganized the text so that after discussing a problem with a textbook, I followed it up with a best practice example to correct the problem. I also tried to add more of my own voice to the piece by adding more of my own examples that illustrated the research. Finally, I reworked most of the transitions between ideas to unite the different sections and make it clear how one is related to the other. This piece illustrates my theme of finding the meaning behind my teaching because it led me to affirm my desire to move away from using textbooks in my own classes and inspired me to search for innovative methods to redesign my own writing courses.

The second work I chose to include was a literary autobiography that I wrote for my *Teaching Multilingual Writers* course with Professor Hunter titled “Lessons Learned as a Writing Teacher.” This was the second time during my program that I had been asked to write a literary autobiography. Because I had to do it twice and found it to be such a valuable experience, I added a very similar assignment to my own class that I teach. I enjoyed writing this the first time around. Anytime I am assigned to write about myself, I find it a much less stressful experience than having to research, integrate, and analyze other sources. However, each time I do write about my own experiences, I find myself discovering new insights into both myself and the subject about which I am writing. The experience of taking this class was also affirming for me. When I began the class, I felt very inept in meeting the needs of my multilingual writers. However, by the end of the class, I realized that I was already doing some things correctly in the way I designed my lessons for these students, and I had many more ideas of how I could both modify my current lessons and create new ones to better serve my students.

This experience having my work peer reviewed by both other students and the professor has been very helpful to me. Again, it has impacted me as an instructor. Before starting this

program, I was not a fan of having my students peer edit. However, as a writer, I have appreciated the feedback so much. It has changed the way I approach my own writing. As a result of this, I modified the way I assign peer editing in my own classes, and I believe my students benefit from the practice, where in the past, I don't think they did. Having said this, after submitting my literacy autobiography, I did not think there was much I could do to change it. However, both Professor Hunter and my peer editors provided me with ideas that I had not considered before. Once again, in my revision, I restructured this essay to present it as less of my own chronology as a writer, and more of structuring it around lessons I have learned as a writer and as a teacher. As a result, I think the result is a more engaging and livelier piece than the original. In turn, this piece also illustrates my theme of finding the meaning behind my teaching as I detail lessons I have learned about teaching writing through both my own experiences as a student and my study of composition pedagogy.

The third piece that I chose was a course redesign for English 6200, *Teaching of Writing*, with Dr. Nickoson. This class, along with English 6020, *Composition Instructor's Workshop*, had the most significant impact on me as an instructor. After taking these two classes, I came to the horrible realization that I was not teaching based on any specific theory of composition instruction. Instead, I was teaching based on the way I had been taught, which was the extremely outdated method of teaching rhetorical modes. After taking these two courses, I did a complete overhaul of my entire curriculum. This piece, "Research-Based Course Redesign of an Integrated Reading and Writing Course," details this overhaul. The original piece was my final project for English 6200. In it, I discussed three compositional pedagogy theories that I wanted to use to restructure the current course I was teaching, a developmental integrated reading and writing course. I also discussed specific activities that I planned to use under each of the theories.

For the revision of this essay, Professor Hunter had some very helpful and specific suggestions. She urged me to restructure the essay so that it was not about what I wanted to do, but what I did do and the results of these changes. I tried to follow her suggestions and did exactly that. I talked about how I implemented the best practice approaches and if they worked or did not work for me. I think the result is a much more interesting essay that has actual information to offer to other teachers. Talking about what you want to do is not very useful. However, reading about what someone tried in the classroom and its outcome can prove very useful to practicing teachers. In the essay, I discuss how I want to expand the revision process for my own students, so they understand the importance of revising and spend more time doing it. The process of revising this essay reinforced for me that this is an important concept for students to both grasp and practice in their own writing. This piece more than any other clearly illustrates my theme of finding the meaning behind my teaching, and that meaning is structuring my class around solid pedagogical theories of composition instruction.

The final piece that I have included is a lesson plan unit that I created as a final project for English 6220, *Teaching Grammar in the Context of Writing*. This class completely changed my beliefs about how to teach grammar in the classroom. We read a great deal of research that stated teaching grammar prescriptively did not yield any positive result for the student. I had witnessed this in my own classes for years, but I was at a loss of how to approach grammar in any other way. What I learned in this class made it possible for me completely change the way I approach grammar in my classrooms. The project consists of a rationale for my unit plan and six detailed lessons that I plan to carry out. The instructor for the course had provided a template for the lesson plans, which I followed. It includes theory and research the lesson is based on, materials needed, detailed steps to follow in class, and how the lesson will be assessed. This

piece required the least amount of revision. Professor Hunter pointed out that I needed to clarify some things for a reader who had not taken this class with me. I added a paragraph stating that these lessons were outlines that I planned to flesh out at a later date. I also added a brief description to each lesson on what its purpose was and why I had included it. Finally, I edited the structure of some of the plans, so they would make more sense to a general reader. Once again, this project helped me to construct a solid rationale for the meaning behind my desire to teach grammar in context and not prescriptively, as I had been doing for so many years.

The end result of completing this master's program is not at all what I thought it would be when I began it almost two years ago. I thought it would lead me to a new career as a technical writer. However, what it did do was reaffirm my desire to teach writing, and it made me a much better teacher. This program has been both enlightening and extremely practical for me as an instructor. It changed beliefs I have about teaching writing. Each class I took offered me ideas that led me to immediately implement changes in my classes. Most importantly, it made me think through why I do what I do in the classroom and led me on a search for the meaning behind my teaching. I am grateful to say that I am ending the program with a very firm grasp on the meaning behind my teaching. If someone were to ask me, what is the pedagogical rationale behind what you do in the classroom, I could provide a detailed and clear explanation supported by research, facts, and examples of best practice. This would not have been true two years ago.

Stand-Alone Textbooks and Courses for Technical Writing: Gaps and Solutions

Technical writing is a central skill that students in virtually every discipline need to get a job and find success in the workplace. Yet it has had a troubled past in the context of its value and where it belongs in academic setting. As Elizabeth Tebeaux explains, in her own experience of teaching technical writing for 40 years, she has witnessed English departments undervaluing it as a discipline and dismissing it as not intellectual enough. Equivalently, in engineering and science-related fields, the ability to express oneself clearly in writing is an invaluable skill, yet many of these domains seemingly discount writing skills as a “soft” skill that is less important than the scientific practices and abilities they seek to impart to students.

Although in these scientific fields, technical writing skills are most needed, many technical writing classes and textbooks ignore the type of documentation and style that writers in these fields use and require in their regular, day-to-day practices. That is, technical writing courses and textbooks may devote some attention to writing in the workplace and associated practices, but very few touch on the writing and practices done in engineering and science-related fields. Rather, these texts often present a one-size-fits-all business writing model that does not teach the actual writing skills that scientists need to master in their field. In parallel, many of the technical writing courses offered by universities teach a similar, one-size-fits-all model of workplace writing.

To address these issues, it is necessary to survey the gaps in existing technical writing textbooks, identify best practices for teaching the specific technical writing skills needed by science and engineering students, and then develop techniques and possibly write new textbooks to address both the gaps and the innovations for best practice. In particular, researchers have had success with several models of best practice, using techniques such as outcome-based

instruction, student-centered assessment, an assignment-based curriculum, intercultural communication, and a cognitive apprenticeship approach to structure their individual courses. I suggest some ways to implement these approaches in textbooks, an option that does not exist in the current market of available texts.

The gaps in existing textbooks are evident in the complaints of many engineering employers, which express substantial dissatisfaction with the communication skills of recent engineering graduates (Wolfe, 353). Because of this, the Accreditation Board of Engineering Technology is calling for engineering schools to provide more instruction in written communication (Wolfe, 352). However, there is debate on campuses as to how effective the stand-alone technical writing course, often housed and taught by members of the English department, is in teaching students how to write in engineering workplaces. Carter et al. argue that a one-size-fits-all, general technical writing course often does not serve the needs of its students, due to problematic assessment practices (102), regardless of whether that course follows a centralized model, such that it is housed within English departments, or a diffusion model, such that it is located within the individualized major. According to Wolfe, because these writing courses are often added to the curriculum in a way designed not to interfere with the “real” content courses, and they tend to be taught by non-engineering faculty, many engineering students and professors see the courses as “irrelevant to their work” (352). Thus, a centralized approach is problematic, because students struggle to transfer the principles of writing they have learned in this general situation to principles of writing required for their specific, workplace settings (Carter et al., 104). In addition, if the course is taught by English professors who do not have experience in technical fields, they may be unaware of the writing demands of the specific industry (Carter et al., 104). Although a diffusion model, such that the technical writing course is

part of the specific departmental (e.g., science, engineering) curriculum, might address some of these issues, it also raises the risk that students may miss out on larger discussions of genre and rhetorical technique and only be instructed to write in one, industry-specific way (Carter et al., 105). Here again, their ability to apply the lessons and writing principles across contexts might be limited.

In addition, Wolfe cites several researchers (Freedman and Artemeva) who have demonstrated that the writing engineering students produce in technical writing classes does not resemble the writing they will be asked to do in the workplace (352). To prove this point, Wolfe analyzes 12 popular technical communication textbooks, with the stated intention “to assess how well they prepare engineering students to negotiate the kinds of documents and rhetorical situations that communication research suggests are central to engineering” (352). She finds that in four areas, all 12 textbooks presented material in direct contrast to practices and values inherent in the engineering workplace. These conflicts include privileging the active voice over the passive, emphasizing the use of humanities citation practices over the citation practices preferred in the sciences, failing to present the most current research in data visualization, and failing to present the forms of argument and evidence that scientific fields prioritize and value (Wolfe, 353).

Perhaps most importantly, Wolfe argues that technical writing instruction must help students master the skills needed to interpret and report complex data, as are demanded by scientific careers. Yet the textbooks she analyzed did little to prepare students to do so (367). Wolfe suggests that textbooks should devote more space to teaching the IMRAD (introduction, method, results, discussion) format for report writing. By practicing writing in this format, students gain insights into how to present numerical values and mathematical concepts

rhetorically, as well as how to craft an argument based on scientific data for different audiences (370).

I analyzed two popular technical writing textbooks that Wolfe did not review and reached similar conclusions: In four main areas, these texts presented information and material that were in direct contrast with the practices and values required by engineering workplaces. In *The Essentials of Technical Communications, Second Edition*, by Elizabeth Tebeaux and Sam Dragga, the authors dedicate a chapter to “Characteristics of Writing at Work.” In this chapter, they cover the differences between writing at work versus writing at school. They touch on the importance of having an awareness of legal and security issues. For example, they describe the need to use language and visuals with precision, be aware of copyright law, and to respect the privacy of one’s audience. In addition, they discuss how the writing process functions in the work world and end the chapter with a discussion of the qualities of good technical writing (Tebeaux and Dragga, 3-8).

However, just as Wolfe found in her analysis, these authors prefer the use of the active voice. In four different spots in the book, the authors state that writers should “use active voice for clarity” (Tebeaux and Dragga, 57, 62, 287, 290). According to Wolfe, this preference of the active voice over the passive does a disservice to engineering students, because “passive voice ... dominates many engineering documents” (356). Wolfe goes on to cite three researchers who claim that the passive voice serves a clear and important purpose for engineers. Ding suggests that the passive voice can help “foster cooperation between writer and reader, both of whom presumably share a focus on objects” (Wolfe, 357). Wolfe also cites Couture and Sales who “provided evidence that passive voice is often a deliberate rhetorical choice for engineers who strive to present an ethos of scientific objectivity rather than personal authority in writing”

(Wolfe, 357). Despite all this evidence for the appropriateness of using passive voice in engineering documents, Tebeaux and Dragga still state, “Even in engineering writing, such as articles for academic journals, many editors want active voice sentences because of the increased clarity of the sentences” (58). I could not find any rationale for using the passive voice, nor even any mention that it might be appropriate in engineering documents, in this textbook, despite its evident popularity and acceptance in practice.

The other textbook I analyzed, *Technical Communication Today, Fourth Edition*, by Richard Johnson-Sheehan, acknowledges that passive voice does have a place in technical writing. Johnson-Sheehan states, “In some scientific fields, passive voice is the standard way of writing” (470). Yet this sole sentence represents the only explanation I found in the entire book regarding the use of passive voice in scientific writing.

Another way in which the textbooks I analyzed neglect engineering and the sciences in technical writing practices is by preferencing humanities documentation style over that of the sciences. In most humanities courses, instructors teach students to use one of the following documentation styles: Modern Language Association (MLA), American Psychological Association (APA), or the Chicago Manual of Style (CMS). According to Wolfe, the sciences tend to use the Council of Biology Editors (CBE) as their favored documentation style (358). In her research, Wolfe found that nine of the 12 technical writing textbooks she analyzed covered APA or MLA documentation style, and only one covered CBE. My analysis yielded the same results. In a discussion of unethical communication, Tebeaux and Dragga reference MLA, APA, and CMS (37). There is no mention, in either the textbook or its index, of CBE. This gap holds true for the Johnson-Sheehan text too. He covers MLA, APA, and CMS and then clearly (and

seemingly incorrectly) states, “The APA style is preferred in technical fields because it puts emphasis on the year of publication” (414). Again, there is no mention in this text of the CBE.

Also, like Wolfe, I found that the two textbooks I analyzed ignored important research in data visualization. According to Wolfe, the best-known leader in visual design is Edward Tufte (360). Although some of the textbooks in Wolfe’s study mention Tufte, she states, “It is surprising to see how often the most basic maxims of Tufte’s work are violated in these books” (360). While Tufte argues that “using three-dimensional graphs to display two-dimensional data confuses, distorts, and misrepresents,” all the textbooks that Wolfe analyzes advocate the use of three-dimensional bar graphs (360). Wolfe goes on to note that though pie charts are the most controversial ways to represent data, most of the textbooks in her study fail to mention this concern (360). Consistent with these findings, Tebeaux and Dragga advocate the use of three-dimensional graphs and spend time instructing students how to create and use them. In addition, the authors devote several pages to pie charts, without any mention of the widespread controversy surrounding their use (Tebeaux and Dragga, 105, 106, 281-283). Tufte is not mentioned in either of these two texts. Johnson-Sheehan also includes a section on pie charts, and though he does not indicate any controversy with their use, he acknowledges, “Pie charts are popular, but they should be used sparingly” (534). In both texts, I found a general discussion of why and when to use visual data, but not any sort of discussion of the best practices for ensuring effective data visualization elements.

Finally, my analysis concurred with Wolfe’s regarding the textbooks’ lack of focus on how to construct arguments using numbers and data. Wolfe cites several researchers who agree that one of the main goals of most engineering writing is to help people understand complex data and interpret tests results, which often are in numerical form (356). Although some of the

textbooks that Wolfe analyzed touched on this topic, none of them devoted significant text to explaining how to make such information clear in a rhetorical sense. Wolfe concludes that “Overall, our generalist technical communications textbooks show a troubling lack of regard for the data, results, and numbers that are central to engineering writing” (367). Tebeaux and Dragga include a chapter called “Technical Reports,” but it does not feature any discussion of how to report data and numbers. In the chapter “Analytical Reports,” Johnson-Sheehan briefly mentions numerical data: “If your study generated numerical data, you should use tables, graphs, and charts to present your data in this section. As discussed in Chapter 19, these graphics should support the written text, not replace it” (284). These two sentences constitute the only mention of writing about data, results, and numbers, so my analysis yielded the same results as did Wolfe’s in this area.

In my review, I have found that the issues even go beyond the concerns identified by Wolfe. Notably, popular technical communications textbooks often fail to address intercultural awareness sufficiently. Natalia Matveeva analyzed 15 technical writing textbooks published from 1993 to 2006. She analyzed these books to see how they handled theoretical discussions regarding the following topics: intercultural, cross-cultural, multicultural, globalization, multinational, and culture (Matveeva, 156). In addition, she looked at how the textbooks addressed cultural artifacts, intercultural tips, and exercises or projects involving intercultural awareness. One of the textbooks she analyzed was also analyzed in Wolfe’s study, namely, the Anderson (2003) text.

To start, Matveeva found that attention to intercultural awareness has increased in the ten-year period that she examined. Textbooks increased the number of pages dedicated to this topic, from 4.8 pages to 16 pages during this ten-year interval (Matveeva, 157). However,

Matveeva also found that the textbooks largely did not incorporate exercises or activities that elicited true critical thinking from students or that led to actual student learning regarding intercultural communication. She stated that the lack of extensive examples of cultural artifacts in textbooks does a disservice to students: “If textbook writers want students to be able to write, create, or revise for people from other cultures, they need to discuss these approaches in detail and provide some basic principles for students to use” (Matveeva, 160). That is, her analysis implies that even as textbooks devote more space to discussions of intercultural awareness, they continue to fail to provide practical exercises or activities to help students learn what such awareness means and how to apply it in any practical way in their writing. Matveeva states, “The goal of the intercultural component in a service technical writing course in light of this dialogic understanding would be for undergraduate students to develop the ability to negotiate meaning and establish cultural dialogues with representatives of other cultures and countries in an oral and written form in various workplace contexts, rather than emphasizing information acquisition” (162). What she found was the 15 textbooks she analyzed provided information but did not help students develop or apply any skills in intercultural awareness.

After reading Matveeva, I went back to the two textbooks I originally looked at to see how they fared in the intercultural component. Tebeaux and Dragga refer to some form of “culture” on nine different pages of the text. Most of these are directives to be aware of the culture of the audience. For example, the authors state: “When people from different cultures collaborate, the need for sensitivity to cultural difference is critical” (Tebeaux and Dragga, 190). However, I did not find one exercise, activity, or project described that would help students develop and apply skills in communicating with other cultures effectively.

Richard Johnson-Sheehan's text gives the topic of intercultural awareness much greater attention. It is referenced on 25 different pages. Johnson-Sheehan discusses at length the different communication expectations of different cultures, and he provides examples of these expectations. For example, he defines high-context culture and low-context culture and provides examples of business letters written for each one (Johnson-Sheehan, 448-451). One project in his textbook relates explicitly to intercultural competence. Johnson-Sheehan states: "Write a white paper to your class that studies the persuasion strategies of a culture other than your own. For example, you might explore persuasion strategies in China or France. What would typical people from these cultures find persuasive? And what would be the most effective way to persuade them without offending them?" (382). Although it represents an attempt to address intercultural awareness, this assignment is limited. It does not require students to demonstrate critical thinking skills or apply what they may have learned about other cultures. It simply asks them to speculate on what strategies may or may not be persuasive. Therefore, my analysis is consistent with Matveeva's: Technical writing textbooks may be mentioning or addressing the idea of cultural competence in passing, but they fail to provide students with meaningful ways to learn the skills they need to negotiate cultural differences in their writing in any useful way.

In an effort to suggest remedies for some of these collected issues, Carter et al. seek a best method for teaching technical writing. They advise using an outcome-based assessment model to construct the curriculum. To do so, three critical areas and their related actors must work together: instructors and students in the English department, instructors and students in the departments and colleges where students are earning technical degrees, and advisory board participants who can share information about what skills employers in these fields are looking for in recent hires (Carter et al., 106). Outcome-based assessment programs seek to define the

essential skills and knowledge that a graduate of the program should possess, find ways to assess if the graduates can demonstrate these skills, and improve the program to better teach these essential skills and knowledge (Carter et al., 107). Carter et al. believe that if technical writing programs are constructed through outcome-based assessment, many of the disadvantages of the centralized model or the diffusion model will disappear, and students will be more prepared to make the leap from academic writing to workplace writing, which is a standard goal of most technical writing programs. For example, an outcome-based assessment for a technical writing course could be to design a technical document for a specific purpose and have potential users of the document assess its readability, clarity, and ease of use.

Another promising example of preparing technical writing students, particularly in the science and engineering fields, to transition successfully to workplace writing is one of student-centered assessment. Yu argues that if instructors want to better teach workplace writing, they should assess student writing in a manner similar to the way workplace writing is assessed using student-centered workplace instruments (265). There exists much research to support the idea that simulated, context-rich writing assignments prove more effective than traditional classroom essays in teaching workplace writing (Yu, 269). However, Yu argues that technical writing instructors should build off this successful practice and expand the emphasis on contextuality to include the assessment of these simulated, context-rich writing assignments (271). To find ways to do so, Yu looked at how workplace writing is assessed and tried to model this practice in the classroom. What he found is that in the absence of specific requirements for a workplace writing assignments, employees attempt “to gain contextualized understandings of tasks through informal channels” (Yu, 274).

Noting this evidence, Yu designed a project in which students, working with subject matter experts (SME) in the field, created their own assessments. In this project, students chose a topic within their disciplinary field and researched it with the help of their SME. Once the research was complete, students worked on developing the assessment instrument that would be used to grade their final report. They could not use generic statements but had to write statements that directly applied to the report they were planning to write. To generate this assessment tool, students relied on discipline related standards, content knowledge of their discipline, input from the SME, and input from the instructor. Only after the student had completed the assessment instrument and had it approved by both the instructor and the SME did the student begin to write the report. When their completed final drafts were turned in, the instructor used each student's individual assessment instrument to grade his or her report (Yu, 277). This activity proved very successful to student learning of workplace writing. According to Yu, "By actively identifying and applying contextualized requirements, students gain rhetorical knowledge and skills more transferable than exercising conventional genre rules conveyed by generic writing criteria" (278).

Using outcome-based assessment and student-generated assessments represent two best practice options that are explicitly designed to help bridge the divide between learning technical writing in the classroom and knowing how to apply these skills to workplace writing. Another best practice example for teaching technical writing instead focuses more on enabling students to transition successfully to workplace writing in the science fields. Glaser conducted a research project to test how well an assignment-based curriculum could function to teach scientific writing and peer review. In a 14-week seminar, "Scientific Writing in Chemistry," students learn the skills needed to research, write, and peer review a research paper for a scientific journal. The assignment is an authentic writing assignment; it is a realistic task that scientists must perform on

a regular basis. The process is scaffolded. Students begin by learning about researching, outlining, and organization of ideas. Each week's lesson builds on the lesson from the previous week. As the level of complexity of the tasks the students are required to complete increases, so too does the students' autonomy regarding the choices they are making with the project (Glaser). Students learn how to work with data and sources. They learn how to present their data in compelling visual charts. Finally, they are tasked with writing an article based on the research they have conducted.

Throughout the project, students work in groups of two. While students are working on their own writing and research, they are simultaneously learning to develop their peer review skills. Over the course of the semester, "the peer review tasks evolve from assessments of the writer's technical and formal proficiencies...all the way to an assessment of the writer's capacities for excellence in topic selection, for logical organization and sequencing, for the logical construction of arguments and their clear presentation, and for sound judgements in the formulation of conclusions" (Glaser). The project results in a completed manuscript that is peer reviewed by several class members and followed by a chance to revise and submit a second draft. Final grades are a combination of peer review scores and instructor scores. The skills that students learn in this class can be directly transferred and applied to workplace writing. The experience also allows students to understand what level of skill is required to publish in their field as well as to participate in meaningful communication regarding real workplace tasks and issues.

While Matveeva has shown that textbooks are lacking when it comes to teaching students intercultural awareness, Wang provides an excellent example of how instructors can provide students with a real-life example of how to negotiate cultural conflict in the workplace. His

example is very much in line with the sort of in-depth, critical thinking exercises that Matveeva said were missing in the current technical communications textbooks. Wang came up with the following activity for students in a business and technical communications class. First, he presented students with a case study. He detailed an office where people from different cultures are employed. The office has a microwave, and workers use the microwave to heat up food. Some people become offended by the smell of fish in the microwave. Others are offended by the smell of beef. The conflict originates from cultural differences regarding food choices (Wang, 289).

Students are divided into teams and tasked with performing an inventory on all possible actions or policies regarding how to use the microwave to address the cultural conflict regarding food smells. Students then wrote a memo detailing what course of action they were recommending. This acted as the pretest. Next, he taught them Bennett's (1998) DMIS model that presents a continuum of the six stages of intercultural sensitivity (Wang, 289). Students then analyzed each action and matched it with a stage on the DMIS. Once they chose the course of action that they felt was best and would most minimize the cultural conflict based on the DMIS scale, they wrote a memo detailing the action (Wang, 289). Wang analyzed the memos that students wrote before they learned about the DMIS and the memos that they wrote after learning it. Wang states, "I have noticed significant improvements in terms of the effectiveness of dealing with the specific cultural conflict" (290). According to Wang, this is an example of an active learning exercise that links cultural learning to communication strategies that helps learners learn and apply practical skills that they can utilize in diverse workplaces (292). This is exactly the sort of class exercise that was missing from the many textbooks that Matveeva analyzed.

A final promising method to prepare students to write successfully in engineering workplaces is a genre analysis-cognitive apprenticeship model. Angela Beck discusses how engineering students at her institution were having difficulty mastering the lab report, even after having completed a semester-long technical writing course (389). To remedy this issue, Beck developed a linked course between a technical writing instructor and an engineering instructor. The institution took the Materials Lab course, which was a three-hour lecture/three-hour lab course required for all electrical and aerospace engineering students, and added a one-hour Writing for Materials Lab course to it.

The two instructors designed the Writing for Materials Lab course to be “part instructional lecture (genre analysis), part tutorial (cognitive apprenticeship), and part writing workshop (working towards completion of an authentic task)” (Beck, 394). The engineering instructor provided the cognitive apprenticeship by talking through his process for composing a lab report: “The instructor would spend roughly five to ten minutes of class time composing aloud; each time he made a certain rhetorical or linguistic choice, he would be certain to state why” (Beck, 394). The genre analysis was provided by the writing instructor: “Each class was dedicated to a single move of the lab report, analyzing the organization, grammar, and word choices associated with it. We began with introductions, moved to theory, instruments and procedures, results, and conclusions/discussions, and ended with abstracts and appendices” (Beck, 394). The focus of the Writing for Materials Lab course was to help students to create the five required lab reports over the course of the semester. This class proved to be successful based on student feedback and pre- and post-course writing samples. According to Beck, by the end of the semester, students “displayed greater familiarity and ease with the conventions of lab reports and a greater understanding of the values and assumptions of their discipline” (396). Providing

students with authentic assignments that mirror workplace tasks while having experts in the field model how to approach these tasks seems to be key in helping students develop and apply the types of skills they need to succeed in the real world of work. This leads to the development of critical thinking skills that are so necessary to be able to adapt and survive in the corporate work world.

As an instructor, for years I searched for the perfect textbook to use in my class. Finally, I gave up. The textbooks were extremely expensive for students, and I could never find one that met all my needs. I ended up building a set of resources for my students that they could access through our online course management system. Although that solution works in the short term and for students who are not necessarily pursuing an engineering or science degree, it is not sufficient to resolve the problem overall. Rather, publishers and technical writing researchers should undertake efforts to design and devise more subject matter–specific textbooks to ensure students in scientific fields have the writing skills they need to succeed. For example, a technical writing text for engineers should cover writing reports and proposals specific to science and engineering fields, how to create charts and visuals that are supported by the most current research in this field, a discussion of when to use the passive voice instead of the active voice, how to document and cite sources in the method preferred in science and engineering fields, and effective intercultural communication.

I really do wonder when so much research on best practice exists, why more of it has not found its way into the textbooks on the market today. Although there is much discussion about how to best prepare students in the field of technical writing for the workplace, especially in science and engineering fields, practicing researchers and teachers still need help identifying and implementing assessments and activities that will supply students with the knowledge and skills

they need to successfully transition from academic writing to professional writing. It is my hope that the practices I have described here find their way into the most popular technical writing textbooks to benefit students in this field and facilitate their future success. The responsibility ultimately lies with us as teachers, to continue to research and demand best practices in our field, so we can adapt what we are doing in the classroom to better serve our students.

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Lessons Learned as a Writing Teacher

A love of language and a positive educational experience are two themes that have been present in my life for as long as I can remember, which is why it makes sense that I became an English teacher. During my graduate school experience, I have studied composition theory and educational theory. In the course of my study, it has become clear why I enjoyed school when so many of my students do not. I grew up in a discourse community that was very much in line with the academic discourse community, so school was easy for me. I understood and spoke the language of school. It has taken me years to understand why this is not true for so many of my students. Once I gained this understanding, I changed the way that I taught. Three experiences have equally influenced how I teach the way I do today. One was my relationship with my high school English teacher. The second was my graduate school focus on culturally competent teaching and the inequity inherent in our educational system. The third element was the study of composition theories that I began in English 6020 last year.

One of the greatest influences on me professionally was my high school English and journalism teacher, Mrs. Candy Perkins. I met Mrs. Perkins my sophomore year. She was my English teacher and the advisor of the student newspaper. We quickly realized that we loved reading the same genre of books: magical realism. We formed a life-long connection over our shared love of the writer, Alice Hoffman. Ms. Perkins had been a journalism major. She loved the written word. Throughout the year, her constructive criticism as well as overwhelming support of my academic writing set me on the course my professional life was to take. She taught me how to write well, and she gave me confidence in my writing abilities. The next year, I took her journalism course, and then I began working with her on the high school paper.

When I ask myself- what shaped me the most as a writer- the answer is Mrs. Perkins, and the reason is because she loved writing; through her teaching, she passed that love on to me. From Mrs. Perkins' example, I share my love of the written word with my own students. I am passionate about the books we read in class. I also have adopted her example of commenting on student papers. I try to point out several positive things the writer accomplished before giving several specific points they can fine tune. However, the greatest lesson I learned from her regarding teaching was to form human, interpersonal connections with students. By sharing something from my own life- a struggle, an accomplishment, or a story from my past- students see me as a person. By asking them questions and showing a real interest in their lives and who they are, students see me as someone who is invested in their success, which in turns makes them want to come to class and make an effort.

Learning about discourse communities and the inequality inherent in our educational system has greatly influenced how I teach. Over the course of my teaching career, many times I have asked myself, why did reading and writing seem easy to me. How did I start college and figure everything out on my own successfully? How did I learn how to study? Last semester, when I read Bizzell's article about discourse communities, I began to find some answers to these questions. It became clear to me that the academic discourse communities of the schools I attended were very similar to the discourse community in which I grew up. There were overlaps between the two, and they complimented each other. Learning language and using language was easy for me in these contexts. However, many of my students grew up in discourse communities that are different from the mainstream, culturally dominant discourse community of the American school system. I want to share this concept with my students. I want them to fully understand it, see the value in their own discourse community, and know that they can choose to

join the academic discourse community, or they can reject it. I want them to believe they do have a choice and help them develop the agency to make that choice. Before I read this article, I was a big believer that students needed to learn how to express themselves in writing in a grammatically correct way to compete in the world. I believed it was my job to teach them that anything they wrote for school or work had to be flawless, but now I am rethinking this. Before when I graded, I valued correctness over voice and creativity. I think this was a mistake on my part. Thinking about Mrs. Perkins again, maybe this is one way that I was killing my students' love of writing instead of nurturing it. After taking English 6020, I have scaled back my focus on grammar and the importance of turning in a "flawless" paper.

However, this is an idea with which I still struggle. I want my students' original voices to come through in their writing. I want them to feel that there is value in their own discourse community, even if these communities are very different from the academic discourse community. However, I also want my students to be able to succeed in the workplace. I don't want them to be held back because they cannot express themselves in writing in a way that the workplace demands. To negotiate these two ideas, I do several things in my classroom. First, I no longer teach grammar prescriptively. I only teach it in context. What that means is if many of my students are writing in run-ons or fragments, I do a mini-lesson on these concepts, and I instruct them to correct their mistakes in their own essays and show me the corrections. Second, I spend time teaching how to use technological grammar and spelling tools in word processing programs and others available on the Internet, such as Grammarly. Finally, in the rubrics that I use to grade their essays, I value organization, structure, and content over grammar and sentence structure. I hope that by teaching the idea of discourse communities and saying if you want to join the academic discourse community, which will help you succeed in the workplace, I will

help you develop the tools that you need to successfully participate in this community, that I am adequately addressing this issue, but I honestly don't know.

The work I have done in my graduate program has also influenced how I teach. Studying different theories of composition pedagogy has led to my realization that I thought I valued process over product, but I was not structuring my classroom as if I did. After reading Anson's discussion of process pedagogy, I realized that I fully embraced this theory, but in practice, my classroom was much more in the vein of the "current-traditional paradigm" (215). I was teaching modes. I provided examples of the modes, and then I modeled the process of outlining, drafting, and revising. As a result, my students submitted very prescriptive final essays that I had walked them through writing step-by-step. This process did not insist that my students think critically or that they express any sort of creativity. I came to this practice because I believed my students needed a starting point. They seemed at such a loss as to where to begin writing that I believed I was doing them a favor by providing step-by-step instruction on how to complete the assignment that I was giving. But I was not actually teaching them how to write. I was teaching them how to follow instructions.

Based on my reading of these theorists, I recently revised two of the courses that I teach to make them more process-oriented and to follow a critical literacy framework. I have tried to revise my assignments to elicit more authentic writing because I want my students to write about subjects they care about. One way I have enacted this in the classroom is by beginning with a biographical object essay, where students write about themselves, their own identity, and an object that represents this identity. I no longer frame my assignments by teaching rhetoric modes. Instead, we have a course theme based on the reading we are doing, and all writing assignments focus on that theme. In addition, I spend much more class time having students

participate in the writing process. They draft, peer-edit, and revise in class with my assistance. Once I realized that I believed in the process theory to teach writing but was not using it, I redesigned my classes to reflect this pedagogy. The result is that students are more engaged in the writing process and are having greater success when they move on to a college-level writing course.

Finally, studying composition theory has helped with struggles I have faced in the past to serve the needs of my L2 students. English 6800 is the first course that I have taken on multilingual writers. I have had multilingual writers in my classes for years, but I have never received any formal training on how best to serve them. My own experience teaching L2 writers seems to align with some of the research discussed in Casanave when she states that some rhetorical difficulties faced by L2 writers can be attributed to normal developmental problems that beginning writers have when writing in a first language (35). Because of this, I spend more time working on invention strategies with my L2 students. I also help them with outlining to organize their thoughts before beginning their drafts. I do spend more time on grammar instruction with my L2 students for several reasons. First, most of them have the fundamental knowledge of English grammar rules, so they understand the nature of the error and appreciate having the tools to correct it. Second, they are usually very motivated to correct grammar mistakes, so they will take the time to sit with me and go over individual errors where my native speaking students don't seem to have a great interest in doing this. The strategy I use most often with my L2 students is to work one-on-one with them reading their multiple drafts and asking questions about what they wanted to say and helping them to determine if they are getting this message across in their writing.

One of the struggles I have faced throughout my teaching career is to marry theory with practice. The research and classwork that I have completed over the last two years have helped me to do this much more successfully than I did as a beginning teacher. Upon reflection, I see that my own experiences as a student and as a writer have impacted my teaching equally as much as what I have studied and learned about composition theory and culturally competent teaching. Two of the greatest lessons I have learned throughout my career as a teacher and as a student are the importance of being able to support my teaching practice with research on best practice and the importance of trying new techniques in the classroom. Three ideas I have recently added to my curriculum include teaching students about different discourse communities, moving from teaching rhetoric modes to teaching writing as a process, and creating more authentic writing assignments that inspire students to engage in the process of writing. As a reflexive practitioner, I will continue to experiment with new practices in my classrooms and consider what works and what does not.

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Research-Based Course Redesign of an Integrated Reading and Writing Course

I have taught developmental writing at Triton College for the past six years. Located fourteen miles outside of downtown Chicago, Triton has a very diverse student population. Our total enrollment exceeds 10,000 students. Fifteen percent of Triton students identify as African American, 40 percent as Latino, 35 percent as Caucasian, and three percent as Asian. The average student age is 29.5 years, and 48% of our first-time, full-time students in 2015 qualified for a Pell grant (Office of Research). Triton serves a predominantly working-class population. Many of my students attended Chicago public schools. Many of them come to my classroom without having experienced much academic success in the K-12 system. Students take the Accuplacer writing skills and reading tests when they enroll at Triton. Their scores on this test place them into my courses.

When I began teaching at Triton six years ago, I was situated within the English department. Within a year, I was moved to a College Readiness Department. In this department, we have reading, writing, and math instructors. We teach the pre-college courses to prepare students to engage in college-level work. Two years ago, we redesigned our curriculum to integrate our developmental reading and writing courses. I now teach a five-credit hour integrated reading and writing course, called Rhetoric 099. After taking this course, students must take an exit exam to be able to register in the credit level Rhetoric 101.

After my first year in the Professional Writing and Rhetoric graduate program at Bowling Green State University, I realized that I had to make some changes to my curriculum. Up until this point, the structure of my classroom came about because it was the structure of the class before I joined the department. I continued to follow this structure and added in some practices based on the way that I had learned to write. I had been teaching as I was taught. Six years ago, I

had no background in composition theory and no knowledge of research that had been done in the teaching of writing. Once I was exposed to composition theory and research regarding writing instruction, I came to believe that my current model was not serving the needs of my students well. Therefore, the questions that drove the redesign of my curriculum included: How can I empower my students? How can I engage them in a cultural critique and make them believe they themselves can make a change towards a more equitable society? How can I empower my students to believe they can write well and encourage them to want to engage in the process of making meaning through texts? How can I teach my students strategies for rhetorical and ideological analysis that they can apply to texts they will need to comprehend across the curriculum to enable them to succeed in an academic culture? My struggle was to reconcile answering these questions while still meeting the learning outcomes of my current course outline.

The first change that I made to this course involved using critical composition theory to restructure the curriculum. I have always believed in the theory of promoting social justice in the classroom; however, as I read about critical theory, I realized my class was not set up in a way that promotes equity and social justice. According to George, “Traditional critical pedagogies engage students in analyses of the unequal power relations that produce and are produced by cultural practices and institutions (including schools), and they hope to enable students to challenge this inequality” (77). I believe that teaching students about the unequal power structure that has influenced their entire lives is the first step in empowering them to feel and exercise their own agency. My students come from working class backgrounds. I do not want to perpetuate what Ira Shor describes when he states community colleges were developed to create a warehouse of surplus workers. Shor argues that community colleges “simultaneously feed off

and short-circuit the American dream by building a large pool of skilled workers for a shrinking number of increasingly deskilled jobs” (George, 77). I want to make sure I am not contributing to this, and the way that I can counter this is to teach my students what forces are operating against them. I believe that knowledge about how power structures affect individual lives is more valuable to my students than knowing what pronoun-antecedent agreement means.

The first large scale change I made was to employ Ira Shor’s use of grading contracts. Based on his example, I planned to “negotiate grading contracts with students to construct the classroom as a public sphere for the democratic arts” (Shor, 7). Shor believes that making teacher expectations “clear and hospitable” in turn “improves student-teacher relations and strengthens student writing” (Shor, 7) Shor’s grading contracts explicitly spell out what students need to do to earn a specific grade in the course: one absence for an A, two for a B, certain page requirements on papers for an A, B, or C, and no late papers for an A, one for a B, two for a C, etc. in addition to meeting the specific content related objectives of the class (Shor, 8). At the start of the semester, he distributes a proposed grading plan and encourages students to negotiate the grading plan as well as the larger syllabus. This creates a more participatory and democratic classroom atmosphere. I decided to try to utilize Shor’s use of grading contracts, his idea of “co-authoring” the syllabus with students, and his after-class group (Shor, 14). This after-class group consists of a group of volunteer students who meet with the instructor at the end of every class to evaluate the class that has just ended. According to Shor, this group “provides immediate feedback on my teaching, and holds me, the institutional authority, accountable to students every week” (18). George also describes utilizing the after-class group in her writing classroom and found it “pushed me and their classmates to raise the level of discussion and expand their options for writing and learning- and convinced me that an after-class group created the opportunity for

students and instructors to tackle *together* the difficulties inherent in classrooms” (81). I wanted to use the after-class group, so students would feel they had agency in the class, and so that I was held accountable to my students. I also thought it would encourage me to be a more reflective practitioner. Students would provide immediate feedback on my teaching and the content of the class, and I would then modify what I was doing to better serve students.

When I did implement this grading contract in my classes, it did not go as I expected. I tried it in each of my classes over the course of two different semesters. Out of six classes, I had one class that actively participated in a class conversation about how many absences and tardies they should be able to have before having their grades drop. This class seemed excited and empowered on the day that we had this initial conversation. However, I did not see that this grading contract had any real impact on the number of days they missed or the number of times they came in late. Most of my classes did not choose to have input in the original conversation. I don't know if this was due to shyness or a lack of trust in me. However, I did not have active participation in this activity.

I also found that the after-class group did not work well for me, either. First, no one wanted to stay after class, even if it was for extra credit. Our classes are usually two-hours and fifteen minutes. I don't know if they could no longer concentrate, or if they had to run to a class that met immediately after my class, but I did not have students volunteer for this. In addition, once we get to the midway mark in the semester, I often had students leaving the class at different times. By this point in the semester, my classroom was structured as a writing workshop. Students were often working with me or working on their drafts of essays. Because students were leaving the classroom at different times, it was difficult for me to find a good time for the after-class discussion to occur. Although both attempts at these practices failed, I did

assign a new essay at the end of the semester where I asked students to write a self-reflection on how they have changed as a writer throughout the course of the semester. In addition, I asked them to comment on what they liked about the class and what they did not like. These essays have given me insight on what techniques work and do not work for students, and I have made significant changes to my teaching and curriculum because of them. Reading these essays has helped me to continue to be a reflexive practitioner. Although Ira Shor's specific techniques did not work for me, the idea of student input into my teaching has made a difference in my classes.

In addition to engaging students in the democratic process, I decided that I wanted my classrooms to “serve as sites of engaged diversity, sites where concern is focused on both the act and process of engaging diversity in an intentional manner” (Lee, 200). My classes are very diverse in a variety of ways. I believe it is important for students to learn how to engage with other students who may come from different backgrounds, and I want my classes to promote intercultural competence. Based on research conducted by Amy Lee, Rhiannon Williams, and Rusudan Kilaberia, certain class activities can promote intercultural awareness (200). One of these activities is the biographical object assignment. For this assignment, students select an object that reflects an aspect of their identity, experience, or values. Students then produce both written and oral text where they evoke a mental image of the object and explain its significance to their cultural identity. When students were asked to reflect on this assignment, they “reported that the assignment helped facilitate interaction among peers because it gave them an opportunity to narrate an aspect of their identity or experience and to build connections to or knowledge about on another on the basis of those narratives” (Lee et al, 206). The overall response to this assignment by students was it helped to promote intercultural awareness and made students more

comfortable in overall interactions with peers. Based on this research, I added a similar assignment in my redesigned course.

Unlike the grading contracts and after-class groups, adding the biographical assignment essay was a great success. This was the first essay I assigned for the semester. It worked well for several reasons. One, students felt more comfortable writing about themselves. It did not require outside research, and they could easily come up with details since it was about their own experiences. In addition, it did promote both intercultural awareness as well as a feeling that their backgrounds and the knowledge they brought with them into the course had value. Before this, my assignments were structured around a rhetorical mode model. First, I taught the narrative essay. Then I taught the compare-contrast essay. Students did not care about these essays, which made it very hard for me as a reader to make it through a class-set. However, they did care about their identity, and this care made them take the assignment more seriously with a much better result. Finally, reading these essays gave me great insight into my students as individuals. It created a more immediate connection between me and them, which before took several weeks to achieve. Adding the biographical object assignment to my syllabus has proven to be beneficial to both me and to my students.

My next guiding question for my redesign was how could I empower my students to believe they could write well and encourage them to want to engage in the process of making meaning through texts. I decided that to do this, I needed to restructure my course, so the focus is on the process of writing and not the product. According to Anson, there are several key elements to process theory that include “the text of the course should be the student’s own text; the student finds his or her own subject and language; multiple drafts are allowed to encourage the act of discovery; mechanics are relegated to the end of the process; students need plenty of

time to refine their papers; and there are no rules or absolutes” (217). To do this, I moved from teaching rhetorical modes to teaching the process of writing.

While I already devoted a good deal of class time to practicing invention strategies and drafting in class, I needed to redesign my peer editing and revision processes. Cunningham et al. provide a specific example of how this can be done. They provide a plan for incorporating writing workshops and a portfolio project where “rather than look to the instructor for authority (and grades), students learn the value of looking to each other as a knowledge community” (Cunningham et al., 381). The project consists of four two to three-page essays developed and revised over the course of the semester through consensus-based writing workshops. Each workshop “involves peer review, class-generated evaluation criteria and criteria for an ‘A’ that can be adduced to all student work for a particular paper and subsequent revisions” (Cunningham et al., 383). The writing workshops include whole group discussion as well as small group discussion. The instructor reads aloud two student papers, and students break into small groups to discuss the papers using guiding questions. The class then reunites and discusses the papers together. Each paper is collectively provided feedback, and the class creates consensus-based criteria on what qualifies as an “A” grade for this assignment. A significant amount of class-time is spent on workshopping- about 15 percent overall throughout the semester. According to Cunningham et al., students accomplish three important things through the course of these workshops: “They understand that writing is communication meant for others, and not for one instructor; they work to build consensus and accountability as to what count as criteria for revision; and they allow us, as instructors, to act as facilitators and model how to offer constructive feedback” (384). I planned to use this workshop plan as well as the portfolio project in my course redesign.

Incorporating peer-review based on the plan that Cunningham et al laid out worked very well in my classes. Before implementing this plan, peer review was a dismal failure. Students hated it and stated they did not find it useful at all. However, when I followed the structure set out by Cunningham, my students experienced the process in a much more positive way. My peer-editing process is very structured. Students all bring three copies of their completed rough draft to class. I have already asked for volunteers to submit their drafts to use in the modeling process. I remove the student's name from the draft and make copies for each student in the class. I begin the class by handing out the copies along with copies of guiding questions. Then, I use a camera to project the sample draft on to the smart board. I read the essay out loud and write comments on it that students can see on the smart board. I do this to model the editing process. Then, after reading the essay, we answer the guiding questions together as a group about the essay I just read out loud.

Next, I break students into groups of four. I hand out another sample essay that they read together in groups and answer the guiding questions. After each group has done this individually, we discuss the sample essay again as a whole group. Students do two sample essays with me before they exchange their own drafts with their group members. Then, students complete the same process on their own and peer edit the essays of their group members. This has proven to be successful for several reasons. First, students are receiving quality feedback on their writing from their peers. Second, students are seeing how other people chose to structure an essay of the same topic as the one they have been working on. It gives them ideas on how to improve their own essays. Finally, students hear me talking about the strengths and weaknesses of the sample essays, so they have a better grasp of how I will be grading their essays. I cannot

emphasize enough how this new method of peer-editing has improved both the process and the product for my students.

In addition to restructuring how I handle peer-editing in my classroom, I decided that I needed to incorporate a plan for teaching students how to engage in revision. According to Nancy Sommers, “A more efficient way of teaching revision might be by teaching students to first rely on their own internalized sense of good writing and to see their writing with their own eyes” (173). Sommers also discusses the importance of providing students with examples of how professional writers write and revise. Her study demonstrated that many student writers have an unrealistic view of how professional writers compose: “The students have romantic conceptions of writers writing perfect first drafts and thus feel that composers are divided into only two groups: those whose words flow from pen to paper and those (like themselves) whose every word must be wrenched out” (Sommers, 172). Finally, Sommers discusses revision as a recursive process. It is not something that is done once. It must be done again and again over a period. Based on Sommers’ suggestions, I planned to have my students read several first-person narratives about writers engaging in the writing process. I also planned to show two TED talks about writers engaging in the writing process- one by Amy Tan and one by Elizabeth Gilberts. Next, I wanted to build into the syllabus dedicated class time for revision. I planned to provide students with some guiding questions to help them begin this process; however, dedicating time in class for students to undertake this activity sends a message as to its importance. I also planned to set-aside several periods of time throughout the weeks before the assignment is due, so that students can see that revision is an ongoing process.

I did not accomplish as much as I had planned in the area of engaging my students in the revision process. While I talked to them a great deal about revision, as the semester progressed, I

found that I did not have the class time to dedicate to this that I originally wanted to. Also, I found it to be a double-edged sword. If I don't provide time in-class for them to revise and rewrite, they do not do it at home. However, when I did leave significant portions of the class time for this activity, at least three-fourths of my class said they did do it, and left early, when in fact, they did not. I did have students read essays by professional writers about the importance of revision. One example is "Shitty First Drafts," by Anne Lamott. However, I did not show them the Ted Talks by Amy Tan and Elizabeth Gilberts. This is an area that I need to continue to work to improve in my teaching because I do believe the revision process is so important to the writing process.

My third guiding question was related to composition and literature theory. Since the course I teach is an integrated reading and writing course, I was already incorporating both literature and other nonfiction writing. However, based on current theory in this area, I realized there was more that I can add. I wanted to use this question to guide this section of my curriculum: How can I teach my students strategies for rhetorical and ideological analysis that they can apply to texts they will need to comprehend across the curriculum to enable them to succeed in an academic culture?

Bartholomae and Petrosky argue that students need to learn "how to do interesting and increasingly complicated things in their writing with the ideas that they read" (Farris, 167). It is impossible for students to do this without reading a wide variety of both fictional and non-fictional texts. Robert Sholes shares a similar goal with Bartholomae and Petrasky, "to have students work with literature- to teach reading (narrative, metaphor) along with writing as a 'craft.'" (George, 168). Students can not improve as writers without having immense exposure to quality writing. They need the exposure to the vocabulary and use of language equally as much

as the exposure to the rhetorical devices. My students tell me that they were not expected to read or write to any great extent during their time in K-12 public schools. One semester, I had a student tell me after the class finished reading *Silver Linings Playbook* that this was the first book she had ever read in its entirety. I also strongly believe that teaching students intertextuality will help them to succeed in courses across the curriculum. Students must learn how to interact and engage with texts in every field.

Across the curriculum, they must also learn how to show through writing what they know and understand about specific fields. The study of literature can also help to “demystify academic discourse” according to Graff, Bartholomae, Scholes, and Harris, which leads to the argument that writing in terms of literary texts can be part of something transferable as well as disciplinary (Farris, 169). Even before reading this research, I believed strongly in the importance of teaching reading and writing in an integrated manner. However, I still struggle with which type of text serves students best- fiction or non-fiction. I think that they need more experience engaging with non-fiction texts, as this is what they will be reading in other disciplines throughout their college career. However, I also think that fiction is often more interesting to students, so they spend more time reading it, and therefore gain exposure to the different ways a writer can use language. One way I have attempted to navigate this is to use a work of fiction one semester and a work of nonfiction the next.

After reading this research, I chose a non-fiction book to teach in the fall semester of 2018- Bryan Stevenson’s *Just Mercy*. It is a nonfictional account of the work the author does representing innocent people who are on death row. One of the reasons that I chose this book was because I thought students would have a strong reaction about its topic, and hopefully would use this reaction to inspire writing topics and activities, some that may be authentic such as

writing letters of support for one of the men we meet in the text. I also planned to use the book as background information that would lead to a student-generated research topic. Finally, I planned to have students read other articles about the criminal justice system related to the book.

I have used *Just Mercy* for the past year and a half, and it has proven to be a very engaging text for my students. I wanted my students to read something that incited in them a reason to write and a desire to write, and I believe that *Just Mercy* does do this. In addition to reading this, we watch the documentary *13th*, directed by Ava DuVernay. The theme of our class is criminal justice reform. All supplementary readings during the semester are somehow related to this theme. The first writing assignment of the semester, the biographical object essay, is not related to this topic, but all the other essays are. These books worked well for several reasons. First, it is a non-fiction, college-level text. To comprehend it, they must use strategies that they can utilize in other college classes. Second, it is a social justice theme that is both interesting and engaging on an emotional level for students. Because they feel something about what they have read, they want to write something about it. I have found the student writing that comes out of reading this text is more interesting for me as a reader and for my students as writers.

The final step in my course redesign was determining how to assess its effectiveness. My institution assesses student progress in reading and writing in two ways at the end of Rhetoric 099. Students retake the Accuplacer reading test at the end of the course, and students take a writing exit exam, where they write a four to five paragraph argument essay in response to a prompt. One way that I planned to assess the effectiveness of the redesign was by comparing the scores of my students pre and post redesign. In addition, I required students in this class to complete a portfolio project. I did have students complete portfolios in two Rhetoric 099 classes that I taught in the spring of 2018. I planned to compare the essays in the portfolio assignments

from my spring classes to the ones in my fall classes. I planned to design a rubric to determine if the student writing seems stronger after taking my redesigned course. I realized that I really wanted to assess if I was able to answer the questions that guided the development of this redesign. To do this, I planned to develop a questionnaire that I would ask students to fill out at the end of my class to determine if they did feel empowered to make changes in their own lives regarding their education. Do they understand discourse communities and feel they can make a choice as to which ones they would like to belong? Do they believe they can write well and want to write more after taking this class? Can they name rhetorical and ideological strategies that they can apply to texts across the curriculum? Do they feel better able to participate successfully in an academic culture? I planned to assess the effectiveness of my course redesign based on how my students answered these questions as well as how they performed on exit exams and in their portfolios.

I did not end up implementing many of these assessment techniques that I planned to implement when I originally wrote this paper. However, the scores on my students Accuplacer tests did go up post-redesign. On average, my students were scoring around 450 on the combined reading and writing Accuplacer. Post-redesign, my average class score for one semester was 500. In addition, I have had an increased number of students who pass my class since I have implemented both the redesign and the portfolio assessment. While I have included a new essay assignment at the end of the semester where students reflect on the course as well as on how they have changed as a writer over the course of the semester, I have not directly asked them to answer my guiding questions. This is something I will try to implement with my classes in future semesters.

Without doubt, studying composition theory and researching best practice in this area has made me a much better instructor. For many years, without even knowing the name for what I was doing, I taught writing by teaching rhetorical modes because this is how I had been taught to write. Besides being extremely outdated, this method is not supported by either research or best practice. After studying different theories regarding how students best learn how to write, I chose to redesign my integrated reading and writing course and restructure it using critical theory, process theory, and literature and composition theory. After researching how other instructors had successfully incorporated teaching practices supported by these theories into their own courses, I attempted to incorporate some of these best practices into my own course, including: instituting grading contracts and after-class groups with students, adding a biographical object essay as one of my main essay assignments, redesigning my peer-editing procedures and practices, adding more time and focus on essay revision, moving to using a nonfiction text in my writing class, and organizing all assignments around a theme based on this text. Out of these seven changes, two failed miserably, four were extremely successful, and one needs more focus and work on my part. As instructor, I came away from this experience learning two important lessons. First, it is so important to try new ways of approaching the teaching of your content area. Second, it is equally important for you to be able to justify what you are doing in your classroom.

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Grammar Unit Plan

Rationale:

My beliefs about grammar instruction have fluctuated significantly over the course of my 20-year teaching career. When I was in graduate school in the late 1990's, I read Constance Weaver's theory of teaching grammar in context, and I believed it. However, my first semester of teaching high school, I taught a class called Fundamentals of English. It was 16 weeks of straight grammar instruction. It went against all the theory I had been taught in school, theories that my senior peer teachers scoffed at. After this experience, I became a firm believer in teaching the rules of grammar. Students must learn the rules before they could break them. Students need to be able to present themselves well in the work place, or else they will never be able to keep a job. I held firmly to these beliefs. However, my experience in the classroom showed me that no matter how many rules I taught or worksheets I handed out, students were not learning basic grammar rules or usage. In my developmental writing classes at the community college, I gave my students the same 50 question grammar test three times each semester- at the beginning, the middle, and the end. The scores remained the same on all three tests for most of the semester. I was completely ineffective at teaching grammar.

I started to reexamine my beliefs about teaching grammar in the spring of 2018 when I was enrolled in English 6200, Teaching Grammar in the Context of Writing. I started to return to my original belief that teaching grammar in context made much more sense pedagogically than teaching grammar rules. The readings in English 6220 have completely changed my beliefs on what works and what doesn't regarding teaching grammar. I must admit, I was very skeptical of Henry Noden's work when I first read it. I could not see how teaching "grammar in the artist's studio" could ever produce real results(Noden, xv). But I have completely changed how I look at the idea of teaching grammar now.

After taking this class, I have rejected the teaching of “traditional school grammar” that Crovitz and Devereaux describe as well as teaching prescriptive grammar (8). Instead, I believe in the idea of teaching rhetorical grammar. When defining rhetorical grammar, Kolln and Gray state that one must understand “the grammatical choices available to you when you write and the rhetorical effects those choices will have on your reader” (3). They talk about knowledge of grammar functioning as a “writer’s toolkit” (3). When I read this, I remember thinking, “I like this approach.” It gives a concrete purpose that I can provide to students when they ask why grammar is important. This idea that the purpose of understanding grammar is to enhance one’s writing is also found in the writing of Weaver. Weaver states that she believes teachers should focus on writing, and in the process, guide students in using whatever grammatical options and features will make their writing more interesting and more appreciated by the audience”(3). Since I have experienced first hand that teaching grammar rules to students did not in any way make their writing better, I am ready to throw out my old way of teaching grammar and begin approaching it from an entirely new angle- as a tool students can use to make their writing better. In addition to teaching rhetorical grammar, I have utilized Weaver’s framework for teaching grammar throughout the writing process in the grammar unit that I have designed (62-64).

One element of Noden and Weaver’s practice that really appeals to me is the use of professional writing as an example for students. In my classes now, I have my students read a lot of articles and essays by professional writers, but the purpose is for research, or it is content related. I have not spent any time talking to my students about what good writing looks like or how writers use language to get a message across or make the reader feel a certain way. I lament on what bad writers my students are, and it is often painful for me to get through a class-set of essays, but until I took this class, I was totally unaware of how much of this responsibility lies

with me as their teacher. I was so focused on the form, the structure, and the content that I completely ignored the language and the structure of the language that my students were using. I begin to rectify that with this grammar unit.

What I envision doing with the following lesson plans is to intersperse them throughout my semester. What that means is the first lesson on code-switching will happen at the start of the semester. Each week I will introduce a topic on the code-switching checklist and provide a minilesson on the specific formal versus informal pattern. Students will continue to refer to this checklist before and after every essay they write. I will introduce Noden's brush strokes early in the semester, also. I will ask students to focus on incorporating certain brush strokes in their writing of each essay. The revision lesson plan will be repeated during the writing process for each essay assigned.

Key Elements of My Curriculum:

I teach an integrated reading and writing course at a community college. It is a five-credit hour class that meets two times a week for 16 weeks. If students do not place into Rhetoric 101 based on the score of their placement test, they are required to take and pass this class before enrolling in 101. The class does have an exit exam that students must pass to be eligible to enroll in 101. The exit exam is a timed, four-paragraph essay. Correct grammar and usage on this test are factored into the final score. This summer, based on my work in English 6200, I revised my curriculum to reflect a critical and process pedagogy framework. I would like to take this revised curriculum and add to it this grammar unit based on Weaver and Noden's work.

What follows is a series of lesson plans that I have outlined based on both the Noden and Weaver texts. I plan to incorporate the following grammar lessons into my curriculum to

replace the previous, prescriptive method that I have been using. The order that the lessons appear in is the order in which I will teach them throughout the semester. I have chosen six specific topics covered in Noden and Weaver that reflect what I feel are the most important grammar concepts my students need to understand and practice in order to improve their writing. Each lesson includes a brief explanation on why I chose it and what I hope to accomplish with my students.

Lesson Plan Name: Introduction to Code-Switching

The introduction to code switching lesson introduces students to the idea of discourse communities. It reinforces the idea that all discourse communities have value and illustrates that being an active participant in an academic discourse community will help them succeed in school and work.

Lesson Preparation

Grade level: College

Supporting Theory/Theorist:

Weaver, Constance. *Grammar to Enrich and Enhance Writing*. Portsmouth, Heinemann, 2008

Lesson Plan

Materials and Technology Needed:

Access to the Internet. I will have all the materials posted to the class Blackboard shell. There will be links posted to *Their Eyes Were Watching God* Chapter One and *Flossie and the Fox*.

Student Objectives

- Students will read several examples of dialectally diverse literature.
- Students will understand the differences between formal and informal English.
- Student will compare examples of formal versus informal English patterns.
- Student will practice using the code-switching shopping list for differentiated instruction.

The number of class sessions needed: 1 to start but ongoing minilessons on informal versus formal grammar patterns throughout the semester.

Length of class session: 2 hours

Descriptions of activities for each class period:

Class Session # 1:

1. After I hand back the first batch of graded student essays, I will talk about formal versus informal English.
2. I will put on the board some examples from the essay of informal subject-verb agreement patterns and the informal use of showing past time.
3. I will create a T-chart with the informal student example on the left-side and the formal version on the right side.
4. I will have a discussion with students regarding how formal English equals power in the United States and why it is important to learn to use formal English when writing for school or work.

5. I will also discuss the merits of vernacular English.
6. Students will read the chapter from *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and *Flossie and the Fox*.
7. In groups, students will try to pick out examples of informal English in these two works and discuss the effect that use has on the reader.
8. I will explain how going forward I will use the code-switching shopping list and how students will use it during the revision phase of subsequent essays.

Class Session #2:

1. Each week, I will go over two elements of the code-switching shopping list for student editing. I will use minilessons to explain the formal pattern versus the informal pattern of the following: showing past time, a form of BE understood, making negatives, plural usage, possessive usage, and a versus an (Weaver, 254).
2. Each time students write a paper, I will record on the code-switching shopping list, and students will use their own lists during the editing process before turning in a final draft.

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Assessment strategies:

Type(s) of assessment:

Summative

Tool(s) used for assessment:

I will use the Code-Switching Shopping List for Student Editing (Weaver) to record students' progress on code-switching throughout the semester.

Lesson Plan Name: Introducing the Five Basic Brush Strokes

The lesson introduces students to participle phrases, adjectives, and active verbs. It demonstrates how adding these words to one's writing makes the writing stronger and more appealing to the reader.

Lesson Preparation

Grade level: College

Supporting Theory/Theorist:

Noden, Harry, R. *Image Grammar: Teaching Grammar as Part of the Writing Process*.
Portsmouth, Heinemann, 2011.

Lesson Plan

Materials and Technology Needed:

Access to the Internet. I will have all the materials posted to the class Blackboard shell.

Student Objectives:

- Students will read several examples of professional writing to see how writers paint a picture with their words.
- Students will learn the definition of the five brush strokes.
- Student will find examples of the brush strokes in professional writing.
- Student will practice creating each of the five brush strokes.
- Students will choose one of the brush strokes to include in their current writing assignment.

The number of class sessions needed: 4

Length of class session: 2 hours

Descriptions of activities for each class period:

Class Session # 1:

9. Have students read "The Veldt," by Ray Bradbury. Ask students to underline words and phrases that help to paint a picture in their mind of the scene.
10. Define the participle. Show students the quoted example paragraphs from *Image Grammar* that illustrate this technique.
11. Have students look back at "The Veldt," and try to identify participles in this passage.
12. In pairs, have students write a paragraph about the first day of class. After they have written it, I will ask them to go back and add several participial phrases to this paragraph. When students have finished, I will ask several groups to read their

- original paragraph and their revised with participle paragraph out loud and ask students to talk about their feelings about each paragraph.
13. I will repeat steps 1-4 for painting with absolutes and then again for painting with appositives.

Class Session #2:

3. Have students read “A Clean, Well-Lighted Place,” by Ernest Hemingway
4. Repeat steps 2-4 with students for painting with adjectives shifted out of order and painting with action verbs.

Class Session #3:

1. I will use Noden’s Strategy 3 in Chapter 1 of *Image Grammar*, “Examine the Art of Sue Grafton.”
2. I will divide students into groups of four and hand out a passage from *H is for Homicide* by Sue Grafton.
3. After reading the passage, students will need to identify as many brush strokes as possible.
4. Students from each group will write several examples of the brush strokes on the board.
5. As a class, we will discuss the effects these brush strokes have on the reader.

Class session #4

1. Students will take the current essay they are working on.
2. Using three of the brush strokes, they will add two to each paragraph of their essay.
3. After doing this, students will exchange their essay with a peer editor, who will comment on the effect of the brush stroke.

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Assessment strategies

Type(s) of assessment:

I will assess students understanding of the five brush strokes by how they incorporate them into their own writing.

Tool(s) used for assessment:

Rubric for adding brush strokes

In the rubric I use to grade the essay, I will add a section that assesses students’ use of brush strokes.

Lesson Plan Name: How to Zoom and Layer

This lesson introduces students to nouns, appositives, and prepositional phrases. It demonstrates to students that using these can add description and dimension to their writing.

Lesson Preparation

Grade level: College

Supporting Theory/Theorist:

Noden, Harry, R. *Image Grammar: Teaching Grammar as Part of the Writing Process*.
Portsmouth, Heinemann, 2011.

Lesson Plan

Materials and Technology Needed:

Internet and access to Backboard Shell where I will post the professional writing passages that Noden references in Chapter 2 of *Image Grammar*.

Student Objectives:

- Students will read and analyze several passages of professional writing to see how professional writers paint with specific details.
- Students will learn and practice how to add specific nouns and appositives to their writing.
- Students will practice adding specific action verbs to their writing.
- Students will practice adding details by employing adjectives and prepositional phrases.
- Students will learn and practice the “zoom and layer” technique.

The number of class sessions needed: 2

Descriptions of activities for each class period:

Class Session # 1:

1. Have students read the two passages by Linsey Davis from the Noden website. Have them discuss which passage they like better and why.
2. Review notes on appositives from the previous class. Students will choose a paragraph from a previous writing assignment and revise it adding specific nouns and appositives.
3. Students will share two paragraphs with a partner and discuss which is the stronger example of writing and why.
4. We will discuss action verbs as a class. Students will each do Natalie Goldberg’s (Noden) activity where they fold a piece of paper in half. They will make two

- separate lists. On the left side of the paper, the student will write down ten nouns. On the right side, without looking at the left side, the student will create a list of 10 verbs that describe actions of people in a selected occupation. Next, the student unfolds the lists and writes sentences combining the nouns and verbs.
5. Student will then take the paragraph that they revised earlier in the class and revise it again focusing on adding strong action verbs.
 6. I will briefly review the definition of adjectives and prepositional phrases. In groups, students will brainstorm adjectives and prepositional phrases.
 7. Student will take the paragraph they have been revising and add three adjectives and three prepositional phrases.
 8. Students will turn in this revised paragraph, and I will assess their understanding of these topics with a rubric.

Class Session #2:

1. Hand out a copy of Donald Murray's example of layering in *My Twice Lived Life* on pages 36-38 of Noden's *Image Grammar*.
2. Have students read this example. Explain the zoom and layer technique.
3. Have student choose one to two paragraphs from a previously written essay. They will use the zoom and layer technique to revise for specific nouns and verbs, participles, absolutes, out of order adjectives, appositives, and prepositional phrases.
4. After students have had significant time to do this, they will exchange original and revised drafts with a class mate.
5. The classmate will provide written feedback on the revised draft, commenting on what works and what is still unclear.
6. Students will hand in revised drafts that I will assess with the rubric for zooming and layering.

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Assessment strategies

Type(s) of assessment:

Formative

Tool(s) used for assessment:

- Rubric for adding brush strokes (Noden)
- Rubric for zooming and layering (Noden)

Lesson Plan Name: Parallel Structure

This lesson introduces students to the idea of parallel structure. It demonstrates how the use of parallel structure throughout a piece of writing can make the writing stronger as well as highlight specific ideas for the reader.

Lesson Preparation

Grade level: College

Supporting Theory/Theorist:

Noden, Harry, R. *Image Grammar: Teaching Grammar as Part of the Writing Process*.
Portsmouth, Heinemann, 2011.

Lesson Plan

Materials and Technology Needed:

Internet and access to Backboard Shell where I will post the professional writing passages that Noden references in Chapter 3 of *Image Grammar*.

Student Objectives:

- Students will read and analyze several passages of professional writing to see how professional writers paint use parallel structure.
- Students will identify parallel structure in professional writing.
- Students will practice creating parallel structure in a text.
- Students will practice adding parallel structure to their writing.

The number of class sessions needed: 2

Length of each class: 2 hours

Descriptions of activities for each class period:

Class Session # 1:

1. Divide students into groups of four. Hand out examples of rhythm and parallel structure from Chapter 3 of Noden's *Image Grammar* that are posted on the website that goes along with the book. I will give different examples to each group.
2. In groups, students will discuss what they notice about the writing. Students from each group will write an example from their selection on the board and explain how it shows a sort of rhythm.
3. I will write the definition of parallel structure on the board and point out how these examples demonstrate the use of parallel structure.
4. Write on the board the four categories in which rhythm occurs:

- a. Rhythms connected with conjunctions (coordinating and correlative)
 - b. Rhythms created with phrases (infinitive, participle, gerund, prepositional)
 - c. Rhythms highlighted with clauses (dependent, independent, relative)
 - d. Rhythms constructed from single words (usually parts of speech) (Noden, 62).
5. In their groups, I will have them go back through their examples that were handed out in the beginning of class and try to find a professional example of each category.
 6. We will share the examples by each group writing theirs on the board.
 7. I will hand out Martin Luther King Jr.'s *I Have a Dream* speech.
 8. In their groups, students will analyze how King utilizes parallel structure. Each group will write up a paragraph of their analysis and hand in.

Class Session #2:

1. Students will practice creating parallel structures with two of Noden's strategies from Chapter 3: Strategy 4 and Strategy 6.
2. I will pass out a copy of "Writing Parallel Images" (Noden, 75).
3. In groups of four, students will work on filling out the parallel image blanks.
4. Each group will pick the one they like best and share with class.
5. Students will select a piece of their own writing. They will try to incorporate parallel structure into their writing by choosing three of the following six ways:
 - a. Use prepositional phrases
 - b. Use who clauses
 - c. Use infinitive phrases
 - d. Use clauses
 - e. _____ing, _____ing, _____ing, the....
 - f. Try the same structure in e, but with two complete phrases (Noden, 73-74).

Students will add parallel structure to three paragraphs of their essay.

6. Students will hand in their piece of revised writing along with the original draft.

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Assessment strategies

Type(s) of assessment:

Formative

Tool(s) used for assessment:

Rubric for adding parallel structure (Noden)

Lesson Plan Name: Grammatical Chunks

This lesson illustrates how combining the use of different grammatical constructions can make writing livelier and more vibrant for the reader.

Lesson Preparation

Grade level: College

Supporting Theory/Theorist:

Noden, Harry, R. *Image Grammar: Teaching Grammar as Part of the Writing Process*.
Portsmouth, Heinemann, 2011.

Lesson Plan

Materials and Technology Needed:

Internet and access to Blackboard Shell where I will post the professional writing passages that Noden references in Chapter 5 of *Image Grammar*.

Link to chapter one of *Intruder in the Dust* by William Faulkner

Student Objectives:

- Students will read and analyze several passages of professional writing to see how professional writers paint use brush stroke combinations, brush stroke variations, and brush strokes in a series.
- Students will practice brush stroke combinations, brush stroke combinations, and brush strokes in a series.
- Students will practice adding brush stroke combinations to their writing.

The number of class sessions needed: 2

Length of each class: 2 hours

Descriptions of activities for each class period:

Class Session # 1:

1. Hand out chapter 1 on Faulkner's *Intruder in the Dust*. Have students read.
2. In groups of four, have students look for the following:
 - a. An absolute/participle combo
 - b. An appositive/absolute combo
 - c. An absolute/adjective out of order combo
 - d. An adjective out of order/participle combo
 - e. A past participle phrase
 - f. A series of participles

- g. A series of absolutes
 - h. A series of appositives
3. Once students have identified one or more of these, they will discuss in groups the effects the brush stroke has on the writing.
 4. Each group will share one example that they found with the whole class.

Class Session #2:

1. I will print out pages 119-117 of Image Grammar where Noden explains how to create the different brush strokes combinations that students searched for in the last class.
2. In the groups from the previous class, students will practice writing one of each of the chunks.
3. Each group will share with the class the brush stroke combinations that they created.
4. I will ask students to take a previous piece that they have written and add one of the brush stroke combinations to it (Chunk 6), one of the triple combinations, (Chunk 7), a brush stroke variation (Chunk 8), and one of the brush strokes in a series (Chunk 9). Students will need to add one of the chunks to each paragraph of their essay.
5. Students will hand in the original essay and the revised essay.

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Assessment strategies

Type(s) of assessment:

Formative

Tool(s) used for assessment:

Additional section to original rubric used to grade essay

Lesson Plan Name: Revision

This lesson illustrates the importance of revision in the writing process. It allows students to practice peer-revision.

Lesson Preparation

Grade level: College

Supporting Theory/Theorist:

Noden, Harry, R. *Image Grammar: Teaching Grammar as Part of the Writing Process*.
Portsmouth, Heinemann, 2011.

Weaver, Constance. *Grammar to Enrich and Enhance Writing*. Portsmouth, Heinemann,
2008.

Lesson Plan

Materials and Technology Needed:

- Copies of student writing
- Combined Revision Checklists
- Code-Switching Shopping List for Student Editing

Student Objectives:

- Students will practice utilizing the combined revision checklist class and in small groups.
- Students will use the combined revision checklist to edit other student essays.
- Students will use the code-switching shopping list to check for formal usage in their own essay.
- Students will revise their own essays based on feedback from their peers.

The number of class sessions needed: 3

Length of each class: 2 hours

Descriptions of activities for each class period:

Class Session # 1:

1. Hand out an example of a student essay of the current writing assignment the class is working on. The essay will not have a name on it. Each student will receive a copy.
2. Handout a version of Noden's "Combined Revision Checklist" to each student.
3. Read the essay out loud to the class.

4. As a whole class, work through the checklist out loud together for the essay I have just read.
5. Hand out another example student essay.
6. Divide class into groups of 4.
7. Have students read this essay together in groups and go through the checklist again.
8. Have each group report out on what they found, including strengths of the essay and suggestions for improvement.

Class Session #2:

1. Divide students into groups of three.
2. Hand out three copies of the “Combined Revision Checklist.”
3. Have students read the essays of each student in their group using the checklist.
4. Each student should leave the group with two copies of the checklist for feedback.

Class Session #3

1. Students should use their checklists to revise their essays.
2. Students should go through their own essay with the code-switching shopping list for student editing to check for and revise informal English patterns.
3. The instructor is available to work individually with students if they need help adding one of the brush strokes, reorganizing content of the essay, or switching something from informal to formal English.
4. After essays are revised, students will type and hand in a final draft.

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Assessment strategies

Type(s) of assessment:

Summative

Tool(s) used for assessment:

Additional section to original rubric used to grade essay

Works Cited

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- Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.
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