

**KELLS
ENGL 537
FALL 2006**

A WAC-ENHANCED ENGL 101 SEQUENCE PROTOCOL:

**A WRITING ACROSS COMMUNITIES APPROACH TO
FIRST YEAR COMPOSITION**

First Year Composition provides new college students with an introduction to formal writing conventions, practices, and habits of mind. In the teaching of writing, we have rich opportunities to facilitate the civic, academic, and professional access of our students.

Writing represents a study of relationships: an author, an audience, a text, and a context. The following sequence protocol provides a framework for imagining ENGL 101 from a Writing Across Communities approach. It is thematically organized around metaphors of “ecology” as a way to foreground the multiple relationships writers invoke when they communicate across audiences.

A WAC approach to college writing instruction invites students to consider how an understanding of the dimensions of literacy enhances their ability to write and communicate:

Values

Appropriately (with an awareness of different conventions).
Productively (to achieve their desired aims).
Ethically (to remain attuned to the communities they serve).
Critically (to learn to engage in inquiry and discovery).
Responsively (to negotiate the tensions in our circles of belonging).

Outcomes

Usage, Voice, & Conventions
Process & Revision
Integrity & Credibility
Active Reading & Analysis
Awareness & Responsibility

Dimensions of Literacy

Literacy represents the diverse ways of reading (interpreting) and responding (writing) to the world around us. The practice of literacy is an act of mapping the universe. Literacy in this sense is a uniquely human act of communication helping us to negotiate our social and environmental spheres. Whereas oral production of language is primary, literacy is a secondary communicative trait. While oral language is acquired (unconsciously), written language must be learned (deliberately and consciously). We want to cultivate conditions in the ENGL 101 classroom to enhance the conscious process of learning to write.

Literacy practice is always embedded in ever-shifting sets of economic, political, social, cultural, and linguistic factors. Because these variables are always changing with every new rhetorical situation, we need to help novice writers cultivate a rich and varied communicative repertoire. We also need to help them develop awareness of the range of resources and choices available to them. To map these complex factors, Writing Across Communities (WAC) approach to ENGL 101 coalesces the dimensions of literacy into three components:

- **Civic/Community Literacy** (bridging where are students coming from and which communities they belong to);
- **Academic Literacy** (inviting students into the academic discourse of the disciplines they seek access to);
- **Professional Literacy** (facilitating entrée into the work place literacies that they seek to learn and the professional communities they will join after graduation).

Designing a Writing Sequence

As a new teacher of ENGL 101, you will implement current approaches to teaching writing according to the policies and practices of our Rhetoric and Writing program as well as have the opportunity to develop your own lesson plans or “sequences.” To provide you with all the guidance and resources you will need in your role as teacher, we will be designing ENGL 101 sequences together as teams in our ENGL 537 Teaching Practicum.

A sequence represents a unit of study and practice aligning clusters of concepts and learning objectives toward an integrative writing experience. Other definitions of a "sequence" include: "repetition with a difference," "patterned learning," and "scaffolding assignments" that build on one another. We provide continuity and structure to a writing sequence by planning assignments that are thematically linked and outcomes-based.

The follow assignments offer a framework for organizing a series of low stake exploratory writing exercises along side high stakes scholarly assignments that challenge novice writers to take risks, stretch intellectually, and think critically about a broad range of issues relevant to them and their world. We can't really teach "original thinking," but we can create conditions in our classrooms and assignments that cultivate opportunities that move our students toward analysis and synthesis (making something new). There isn't one way to parse up the world or to organize an assignment. We hope, however, that Composition teachers frame productive assignments that move students closer to the academic communities (disciplines and professions) they seek to join and help them to achieve authority in writing.

Mulvaney and Jolliffe offer a useful way to think about the distinguishing features of college-level writing assignments vs. high school level projects.

Perhaps the most useful way of looking at the difference between assignments and projects at the college level is to consider that college-level projects anticipate a far greater level of personal scholarly involvement--that is, they demand an engagement that includes original, personal analysis. Simply put, professors want [students] to process and then create, not regurgitate.¹

Assignment Variables

To make an assignment engaging and challenging, we can shift features within and across sequences to stretch and promote experimentation and practice. Altering the combination of variables encourages meta-discourse and reflection about the conditions that shape students' literacy practices. The following are features of assignments that can be varied to promote discussion, serve as prompts, pre-writing exercises, and productive springboards into writing.

Text Features

Media: Print, digital, visual, oral (e.g. radio, speeches, music).

Venue: Newspaper, journals, magazine, web-based venues.

Genre: Essay, song lyrics, editorial, letter, memo, report, case study, proposal.

Audience Features

Peers, disciplinary field, civic authorities, the uninformed, decision-makers, insiders, outsiders, experts (specialists), non-experts (generalists).

Demographics: Region, socio-economic class, education-level, culture/ethnicity, gender.

Writer Features

Voice

Tone

Stance/Point of View, Position (Insider/Outsider)

Purpose (Exigence--motivating issues and concerns)

Agency (Resources and knowledge)

Context Features

Rhetorical Situation (local and global)
Obstacles/Constraints
Political Influences
Economic Factors (resource scarcity vs. abundance)
Religious/Ideological Systems
Regional/Environmental Influences (geographic position; rural; urban)
Cultural/Linguistic Context (heterogeneous; homogeneous ethnolinguistic settings)

WAC ENGL 101 Sequence Protocol

Sequence 1: “Writing as Cultural Ecology” (A Study of Civic/Community Literacies)

- Framing Question: Where do I come from? (region, community, high school, culture, etc).
- Writing Projects: Reader Response Journals
Metaphors of Writing
Letter to Raise Awareness or Concern
Literacy Narrative
- Support Materials:
A Field Guide to Writing, Richard Bullock²
Part 1 “Rhetorical Situation”
Part 2 “Genres: Literacy Narrative.”
Part 3 “Strategies: Narrating, Describing, Dialogue”

A Writer’s Resource, Elaine Maimon³
Part 1 “Learning Across the Curriculum”
Part 2 “Writing and Designing Papers”
Part 3 “Common Assignments Across the Curriculum”

Metaphors We Live By, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson⁴

The Transition to College Writing, Keith Hjortshoj⁵
Chapter 1: “Some Basic Differences between High School and College”
Chapter 2: “What is Good Writing”

Sequence 2: “Writing as Intellectual Ecology” (A Study of Academic Literacies)

- Framing Question: Where am I now? (university, major, job, community, etc.)
- Writing Projects: Field Notes
Class Observation Report
Case Study
Collaborative Writing Project
Metaphors Across the Curriculum (Information Report)
- Support Materials:
A Field Guide to Writing, Richard Bullock
Part 2: “Genres: Analyzing a Text, Reporting Information, Arguing a Position.”
Part 3: “Processes: Collaborating, Generating Ideas & Text, Assessing Your Own Writing.”
Part 4: “Reading Strategies, Guiding Your Reader”

Part 5: “Research: Quoting, Paraphrasing & Summarizing; Acknowledging Sources, Avoiding Plagiarism”

A Writer’s Resource

Part 3 “Case Studies, Coauthored Projects”

Part 4 “Writing Beyond College” (Service Learning & Community-Service Writing)

Part 5 “Discipline-Specific Resources,” “Finding & Managing Print & Online Sources.”

Part 6 “Documentation”

Part 10 “Editing for Grammar Conventions,” “Editing for Correctness.”

Sequence 3: “Writing as Information Ecology” (A Study of Professional Literacies)

- Framing Question: Where am I going?
- Writing Projects: Key Word Search (Key words of the field)
 Poster Session
 “Fact Checking” Analysis
 Exploratory Essay
 Exploration Research Project (Field Study)
 Research Reflection Essay
- Support Materials:
 Field Guide to Writing
 Part 2: “Genres: Proposals, Reflections, Arguing a Position, Reviews of Scholarly Literature, Writing to Get a Job”
 Part 3: “Processes: Compiling a Portfolio.”
 Part 5: “Research: Developing a Research Plan, Finding Sources, Evaluating Sources”
 Part 6: “Media/Design: Print Text, Spoken Text, Electronic Text.”

A Writer’s Resource

Part 4: “Writing to Get and Keep a Job.”

Part 5: “Research: Understanding Research; Doing Research in the Archive, Field, & Lab”
 Evaluating Sources; Evaluating a Sources Argument, Questioning Internet Sources.

Inquiry and Genre, David Jolliffe⁶

Chapter 8: “Exploration: Raising Questions and Resisting Closure.”

Chapter 9: “The Exploration Project and the Exploratory Essay.”

Chapter 10: “Writing to Make a Difference;”

¹ *Academic Writing: Genres, Samples, and Resources*. Mary Kay Mulvaney and David A. Jolliffe. New York: Pearson, Longman, 2005: 17.

² *The Norton Field Guide to Writing*. Richard Bullock. W.W. Norton, 2006.

³ *A Writer’s Resource: A Handbook for Writing and Research*. Elaine Maimon. 2nd Ed. McGraw Hill, 2007.

⁴ *Metaphors We Live By*. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. 2nd ed. University of Chicago Press, 2003.

⁵ *The Transition to College Writing*. Keith Hjortshoj. Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2001.

⁶ *Inquiry & Genre: Writing to Learn in College*. David A. Jolliffe. Allyn & Bacon, 1999.