

Chapter 14



Working with Students who have Basic Skills Needs in Transfer Courses: Completing the Building Part II

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Picture this: You've just received the first set of assignments for your transfer level class. Quickly, you skim them over. The first few make you smile – oh good, they got it! Then you look at the next. This student really missed the boat. You quickly thumb through the rest. Oh dear. Some students have done great work, but others seem not to have even addressed the assignment. Some of the writing is difficult to comprehend; you can't understand what some students are trying to say. The assignment is without structure and where, oh where, is the critical thinking? Or perhaps the student has misinterpreted or ignored data. Some of the mathematics, requiring elementary skills that students should have mastered before ever walking through the door of your classroom, is incorrect. You put the set of papers down on your desk with a sigh. What the heck is going on here?

This chapter is written by two faculty that teach transfer level courses. One of us teaches a course where assessment tests place students into the course or the students have passed up to two pre-requisite courses, the other has three pre-requisites before students can enter the course. In both cases, we have found that we have students with basic skills needs. In other general education classes, where there are no prerequisites or co-requisites for reading, English or mathematics, the percentage of students with basic skills needs is even higher.

Here are the facts from the Chancellor's Office's Report on Basic Skills:

- 1. 70-85%** of all California community college students assess into some sort of basic skills class when they first enter our institutions.
- 2. Only 27.3%** of them actually enroll in basic skill level classes.
- 3. Where are the rest of the students that assessed into a basic skills course?**

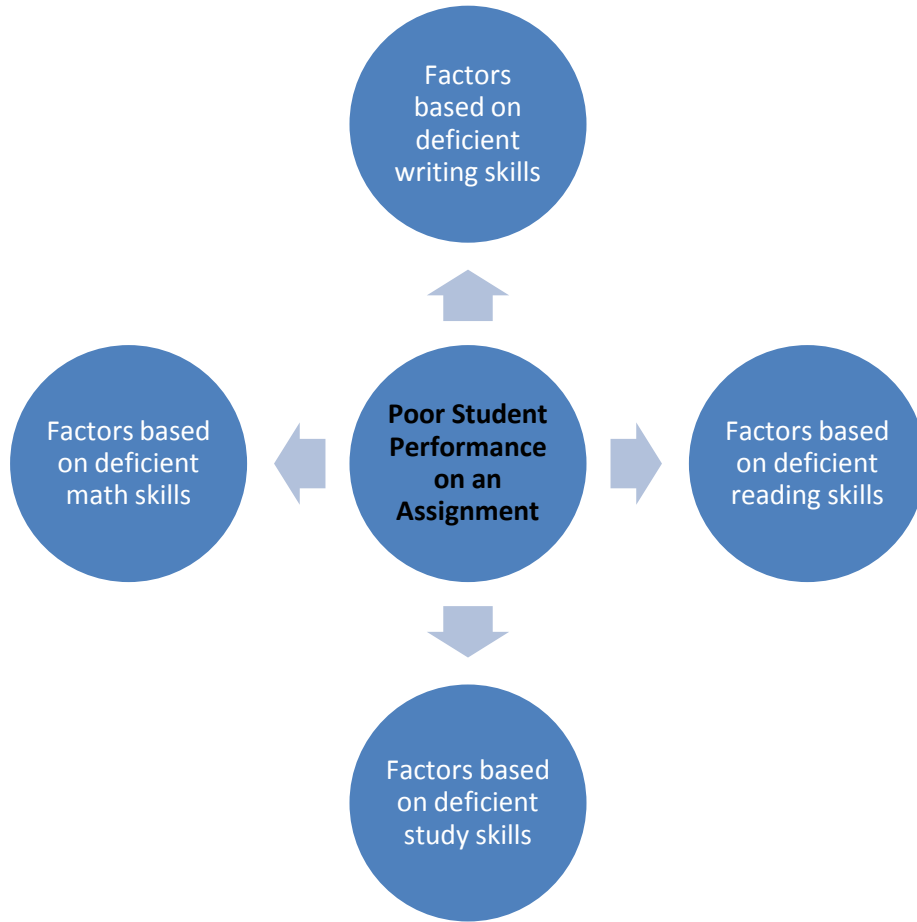
They are sitting in your classroom, wrestling with the transfer-level material that you teach and struggling mightily to succeed. They may or may not have been the students who completed the

assignments that you find so disturbing in your pile – the poorly written ones, the ones with misused vocabulary or incorrect basic mathematics. They may or may not be the students who seemed to completely misunderstand the task. How can you know whether they need help with basic skills issues or if they failed because they simply blew off the assignment? Most importantly, if they do need help, what can you do about it?

This chapter is written for transfer faculty who have students with basic skills needs in their classroom. Based on the statistics listed above, that's **ALL** of us. Though the carefully constructed pre-requisites for transfer courses should ensure that students with developmental needs get them met before encountering the complex material that you teach, we know that this is not always the case. Perhaps your class doesn't have any pre-requisites, or they are only advisory, and students ignore them. Or maybe your course only requires the most basic of reading and mathematics skills, yet to truly master its subject at college level, the student needs more. In this chapter you'll find some suggestions for easy early assessments that you can do in the first couple of weeks of the semester to discover who has learning needs. Better yet, the chapter also contains some techniques that you can use to help developmental students master the discipline that you teach. In fact, these techniques work well for **all** students and are simple enough that you can use them tomorrow in class if you like.

An important factor that will influence all of our students is the Fall 2009 implementation of the increased graduation requirements for California community colleges. The section of primary relevance to English and mathematics graduation requirements reads: "Effective for all students admitted to a community college for the Fall 2009 term or any term thereafter, competence in mathematics shall be demonstrated by obtaining a satisfactory grade in a mathematics course at the level of the course typically known as intermediate algebra (either intermediate algebra or another mathematics course at the same level, with the same rigor and with elementary algebra as a prerequisite, approved locally) or by completing an assessment conducted pursuant to subchapter 6 of this chapter (commencing with section 55500) and achieving a score determined to be comparable to satisfactory completion of the specified mathematics course" (Basic Skills Initiative Website). Further information specific to courses and Title 5 changes are available at <http://www.cccbsi.org/resources>.

So let's go back to the scenario that began the chapter, but this time let's make it real. Think back to a recent assignment in your own class. How did your students do? Did any perform poorly? Why? What do you think caused the weak performance? We do not want to oversimplify this; we know there will be a complexity of reasons. Can you list, from your experience, what they might be? Fill in the concept map on the next page with potential causes that may have led to why the majority of the students missed the mark on the assignment. You may add more circles with potential reasons if you need them.



Now, let's sort the factors out. List them again, but this time, divide them into two groups

1. The factors you or your institution have some potential to change or affect
2. The factors which are beyond your ability or the college's to shift

Factors that can be Addressed

Factors that are Impossible to Effect

If your list of the impossible is long, don't give up hope. We believe there may be information in this chapter that will help you to move some of them to the other list.

But First, Assessing Your Attitude

Before we dive into the specific solutions to this issue, it's important to know how you feel about it. Many transfer faculty are troubled by the increasing number of students with developmental needs in their courses and react in various ways to this challenging situation. In fact, we've found that Dr. Elizabeth Kübler-Ross' five stages of grief can be adapted to describe the range of faculty responses to student lack of preparedness.

For some reason, when we mention Kübler-Ross, people always laugh. But perhaps it's laughter at a truth that isn't always acknowledged. Things have changed in the community college system, and change often leads to grief. As transfer faculty who have worked hard on this issue, we've found that this grief has to be acknowledged before it can transform into something else.



So where are you at this moment? We know that your feelings may change from day to day, class to class, assignment to assignment. And there's no right way to respond, no feeling that you **should** have about all of this. Each of us has probably felt every specific stage at one moment or another. Read the sample thoughts below, some of which are exaggerated and written tongue-in-cheek to make the point. Circle the one group that best captures how you feel today.

Denial



I don't have any developmental students in my transfer classes. The pre-requisites take care of that, and the ones who aren't prepared simply fail. It's just not my problem. I became a higher education professor to teach college, not high school, so someone else needs to deal with this, All I want is for the problem to be fixed. Isn't that why we have basic skills specialists at my school, plus a reading and ESL department? It's their job and not mine.

Anger



What is wrong with students today? Why can't they do the work? I labor so hard for the class, and they don't respect my efforts. They don't even know the basics. What is wrong with the faculty teaching the pre-requisites courses? They must be doing a terrible job because too many of my students don't have the basics. How am I supposed to teach them more? And why haven't the English, ESL or basic skills mathematics classes prepared them? It makes me too furious to even talk about all the high schools aren't doing to prepare students for college! What has happened to education these days?

Bargaining



All right, so yes, I have some unprepared students. I want to work with them, but can't hold back the rest of the class. What small things can I do to help them? I recommend tutoring, going to the Writing Center or mathematics lab, but I just don't have the time to do much. What is the least I have to do to assist them so they can succeed?

Depression



I must be a terrible teacher. My students keep getting worse, no matter what I do. What used to work doesn't succeed anymore. I think I'll retire soon.

Acceptance



I know that I have many students with basic skills needs that affect their performance in my course. Some of this is due to the changing demographics of California which has resulted in many more students entering the community college system with low literacy skills. But many of my students just don't read and write at the level they should have completed in high school. Other adult students simply have very rusty or absent writing and study skills. For whatever reason, these students are in my transfer level courses. I want to help them achieve their academic dreams. Though solving this challenge is complex and will involve the efforts of a great many, I know there are concrete steps that I can take inside my classroom to help these students. I'm eager to learn what I can possibly do.

Attitude Adjustment



As two transfer faculty, we have run the gamut of the emotions listed above. It wasn't until we started working on the Basic Skills Initiative and learned the facts that we settled into acceptance on a permanent basis. Just understanding what was going on from a statewide perspective helped us get a handle on what was happening in our own courses. We also discovered wonderful tools to assist us in working with students with basic skills needs and, though we teach very different disciplines in the sciences and humanities, incorporating these tools into our classes has resulted in better success – for **all** of our students. Here are the five most important things we learned that shifted us from feeling discouraged to feeling empowered that we could affect a change. These things may not be news to you, but they were to us.

1. **Statistics support the fact that the majority of the students on our campuses have some basic skills needs.** We weren't crazy in observing that students were less prepared. Mind you, they weren't any less smart, eager or unwilling to try, but some of them had developmental needs, even in transfer classes. It was the simple truth. Chapter 1 of this handbook provides some background on the students in our classrooms today; have a look at what the data are telling us.
2. **We cannot assume that because a student has basic skills needs in one area, he or she is uniformly low in all areas of basic skills.** Some are and some are not. A student may be below college level in mathematics, yet have college level reading and writing skills or vice versa. We discovered that we could not treat the students in our courses as if they all had the same issues or learning needs.

3. **For many students, previous educational experiences have not taught them the primary pre-requisite of having a learner identity** (Please read Chapter 6 of this handbook for an extended discussion about this important key to learning). We found that we could not assume that our students had study and time management skills and knew how to become fully engaged in the learning process, no matter what level of course they are taking. It was no good hoping someone else would take care of this. The reality was that that if we wanted to help them succeed, we had to find creative ways of teaching them how to be students. Where else could they learn this except in each and every class that they were taking right at that very moment, no matter the level?
4. **Research clearly shows that in order for the students to grasp our specific discipline content, each course must also include metacognition (learning about learning). Students must be given an opportunity to reflect on their learning process in order to absorb the facts and intricacies of any subject.** This was a shock – and an empowering moment. Metacognition is discussed in detail in Chapter 5 of this handbook, along with suggestions of exercises and techniques for fostering it.
5. **We had to stretch our ideas about teaching.** As discipline experts, we had received no training on how to teach students with basic skills needs. Hang on! To tell the truth, as discipline faculty, we'd received no training on how to teach at all. Perhaps we are old fogeys and graduate study is different now, but the effective practices associated with metacognition and pedagogy were not a part of our discipline-specific training. We had to learn this on our own.



And guess what? Learning all this has made for more exciting and successful classes for our students and for us as faculty.

So let's get started with a few important points.

We have all heard about writing and reading across the curriculum. But what is the basis for this and how important is it compared to discipline content?

What is expected of freshman level college students?

In Spring 2002, the Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates (ICAS) of the University of California, California State Universities and California Community Colleges created an important document that explored the present competencies of entering freshman in conjunction with an examination of the expectations of faculty in the areas of academic literacy, reading, writing, and thinking critically. These competencies can be found in Part II of the document at <http://www.asccc.org/Publications/Papers/AcademicLiteracy/statementCompetencies.pdf> Look at this list of competencies. This is the target list of skills for entering freshman.

ICAS STATEMENTS OF COMPETENCIES

2002 ICAS COMPETENCY STATEMENT	Comparable Reference in California Language Arts Content Standards	Comparable Reference in CERT Standards
Fostering Habits of Mind Essential for Success: Academic Literacy and Critical Thinking		
<p>Students entering colleges and universities will be expected to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ sustain and express intellectual curiosity ▶ experiment with new ideas ▶ generate hypotheses ▶ synthesize multiple ideas into a theory ▶ identify and use rhetorics of argumentation and interrogation in different disciplines, for different purposes, and for diverse audiences ▶ read skeptically ▶ prepare and ask provocative questions ▶ challenge their own beliefs ▶ engage in intellectual discussions ▶ manifest interest in and exhibit respect for others' diverse views ▶ postpone judgment and tolerate ambiguity ▶ respect principles as well as observations and experiences ▶ respect facts and information in situations where feelings and intuitions often prevail ▶ compare and contrast own ideas with others' ▶ interrogate own beliefs ▶ sustain and support arguments with evidence ▶ embrace the value of research to explore new ideas through reading and writing ▶ enjoy the exchange of ideas ▶ work collaboratively on reading and writing ▶ meet deadlines for assignments ▶ demonstrate initiative and develop ownership of their education ▶ exercise the stamina and persistence to pursue difficult subjects and tasks ▶ work collaboratively with others ▶ gain attention appropriately ▶ be attentive in class ▶ exercise civility ▶ engage in self-advocacy 	<p>[Not addressed in this Standards Statement]</p>	<p>[Not addressed in this Standards Statement]</p>

Making The Reading/Writing Connection	Cal LACS	CERT
Students entering colleges and universities are expected to		Reading for Information
‣ read texts of complexity without instruction and guidance	2.0	1
‣ summarize information		2.1
‣ relate prior knowledge and experience to new information		
‣ make connections to related topics or information		2.2, 2.3, 3.
‣ synthesize information in discussion and written assignments		
‣ synthesize information from reading and incorporate it into a writing assignment		1.1; (Interpret)1.5
‣ argue with the text		
‣ anticipate where an argument or narrative is heading		
‣ suspend information while searching for answers to self-generated questions		
Reading Competencies		
Students entering colleges and universities will be expected to	Reading Strategies	Reading for Inform/Under.
‣ read a variety of texts, including news articles, textbooks, essays, research of others, Internet resources	2.0	1. 2, 2.0
‣ read texts of complexity without instruction and guidance	2.0	1
‣ use vocabulary appropriate to college-level work and the discipline	1.0	1, 1.4
Students entering colleges and universities will be expected to demonstrate these features of reading:		
Comprehension and Retention		
‣ summarize information		2.1
‣ summarize reading		
‣ analyze information and argument	2.0, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5	1.2, 1.3
‣ retain the information read		
‣ identify the main idea of a text		1.2, 1.3
‣ determine major and subordinate ideas in passages		1.3; Writing to Learn 2.1.3, 2.2
‣ synthesize information from assigned reading		
‣ synthesize information from reading and incorporate it into a writing assignment		2.1.3,3; Writing to Learn 2.3.3; Finding 2.
‣ identify appeals made to reader	2.6	1.1 (Finding)
‣ use the title of the article/essay/text as an indication of what will come		
‣ predict the intention of the author from extratextual cues		
‣ understand "rules" of various genres		1
‣ retain versatility in reading various forms of organization—both essay and paragraph		
‣ read texts of complexity without instruction and guidance	2.0	1
‣ decipher the meaning of vocabulary from the context		1.4

› have strategies for reading convoluted sentences		
› reread (either parts or whole) for clarity		
Depth of Understanding		
› identify the evidence which supports, confutes, or contradicts a thesis	2.6	3
› argue with the text	2.4	3.1
› retain information while seeking answers to self-generated questions		
› understand separate ideas and then be able to see how these ideas form a whole		
Depth of Analysis and Interaction with the Text		
› read with awareness of self and others		
› anticipate the direction of an argument or narrative		
› suspend information while searching for answers to self-generated questions		
› relate prior knowledge and experience to new information		3.2
› make connections to related topics or information		2.2, 2.3; 1.1 (Interpret)
› identify appeals made to the reader [pathos, logos, ethos]	2.6	1.1 (Finding)
› have patience		
Writing Competencies	Cal LACS	CERT
Students entering colleges and universities will be expected to demonstrate these features of writing:	Writing Strategies	Writing to Learn and Communicate
Invention		
› generate ideas for writing by using texts in addition to past experience or observations	2.1.4	1
› duly consider audience, purpose	1.1	1
› participate in recursive prewriting process		
› develop main point or thesis		
Arrangement		
› develop thesis convincingly with well-chosen examples, reasons, and logic	1.0	1.1
› organize information		1
› structure writing so that it is clearly organized, logically developed, and coherent	1.3	1
› structure writing so that it moves beyond formulaic patterns that discourage critical examination of the topic and issues		
› use revision techniques to improve focus, support, and organization		1.1., 1.2, 1.4.
Style/Expression		
› vary sentence structures and word choice as appropriate for audience and purpose	Writing to Learn 1.9	1, 1.3, 2.1.2; Grammar 1.4
› edit or proofread to eliminate errors in grammar, mechanics, and spelling, using standard English conventions	2.0; (Written/Oral Conventions 1.1, 1.3)	Grammar: 1, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7

Students will be assigned writing tasks that require them to do the following:		
› write to discover and learn new ideas		
› critically analyze or evaluate the ideas or arguments of others	Writing Applications 2.2	Finding, Analyzing Info
› summarize ideas and/or information contained in a text		2.1.3, 2.3.5
› write well-organized, well-developed essays	1.0	1
› synthesize ideas from several sources		2; Interp Lit 1.5; Finding 2.1
› provide factual descriptions		2.1.3
› report facts or narrate events		2, 2.1.0-2.1.4
› prepare lab reports using conventions of the discipline		2.4
› produce informal writing in and out of class (e.g., journals, "quick-writes")		3
› provide short answer responses or essays		
› conduct college-level research to develop and support their own opinions and conclusions	1.6-1.8	
› use the library catalog and the Internet to locate relevant sources	1.6	Finding 2.3
› critically assess the authority and value of research materials that have been located		Finding 1.2-1.8
› correctly document research materials to avoid plagiarism		

Listening and Speaking Competencies in Academic Settings	Cal LACS	CERT
Students entering colleges and universities will be expected to demonstrate these strategies of	Listening/Speak	Speaking/Listening
Listening		
› listen and simultaneously take notes		
› identify key ideas of speakers in lectures or discussion, identifying the evidence which supports, confutes, or contradicts the thesis	1.0	1.2
› infer meaning of unfamiliar terms		
› identify digressions and illustrations		1.2
› identify emotional appeals	1.1, 1.2., 1.3., 1.6, 1.12	
› retain information		1.3, 1.5. 2.4. 2.5
› participate in class discussions		1.3
› produce comprehensible speech		
› use the vocabulary of the discipline	1.0 (Conven/ Oral)	2.1
› attend to and understand directions for assignments	1, 1.8	
Speaking		
› ask clearly framed and articulated questions		
› engage in intellectual discussions and the serious interrogation of diverse views		1.4, 1.6
› ask questions for clarification		1.6, 2.4, 2.5
› contribute to class discussions		1.4, 1.6, 2.7
› employ transitional language to show how various ideas are related		2.7

Additional Listening and Speaking Competencies Expected of Students Whose Home Language is Not English (See Appendix D)		
In addition to the other competencies noted, L2 Learners should be able to do the following:		Speaking/Oral Writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ comprehend English spoken by various speakers whose language styles include a variety of pitches, rates of speech, accents, and regional variations 		2.2, 2.6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ identify nuances of meaning indicated by shifts in vocal inflection and non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions or body language 		Speaking/List 2.4; Conventions 1.1, 2.6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ recognize the spoken form of vocabulary—including idiomatic expressions—previously encountered only in written form 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ demonstrate a full range of pronunciation skills including phonemic control, mastery of stress and intonation patterns of English 		2.2 2.5

Technology Competencies	Cal LACS	CERT
<p>Students entering college are expected to be able to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ type ▶ use word-processing software to cut, paste, and format text; spell-check; and save and move files ▶ navigate e-mail; compose, send, and receive e-mail; and post attachments ▶ employ e-mail etiquette ▶ navigate the Internet and the World Wide Web, recognizing the significance of domains (e.g., com, net, edu, org, gov) ▶ use search engines effectively ▶ evaluate material found on the Web, including the authenticity of the Website and the author, and the validity of the material ▶ know how to cite Internet sources ▶ know what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it when using the Internet <p>In addition, while not yet considered essential, the desirable competencies listed below will enable a student to pursue greater success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ submit drafts and papers electronically ▶ use electronic handbooks or references ▶ join a class listserv, a threaded discussion, or mailing list ▶ consult experts by e-mail ▶ present material in Web format or media such as PowerPoint ▶ use interactive lab-based software ▶ keep electronic logs or journals ▶ create multimedia documents; publish work on a Website ▶ use "chat rooms" ▶ use video conferencing 	<p>Writing Strat 1.8; Writing Appl 2.6; Speak Appl 2.4</p>	

Which of these skills do students need to succeed in your courses? Can students be successful in your course without these skills? If so, they will not be successful when they get to other courses that require these skills or in subsequent California State University (CSU) or University of California (UC) courses.

Part of our task is to diagnose the gap between our students' performance and this level of competency. In order to do this diagnosis, we must take some vital signs and then describe where the students fall short of these competencies. You may already be doing this, but if not, here are a few ideas that we have learned from our colleagues.



Diagnosing Basic Skills Needs

Let's go back to that first set of assignments sitting on your desk. You've pushed your emotions aside and diligently noted which students didn't do so well. But what is the problem? Look at each one individually. Was his or her performance on the assignment weak because the student couldn't write? Could it be a reading problem? Are there ESL issues? Mathematics? Might the student have a learning disability? Or is it that the student hasn't learned yet how to be a student and employ college level study skills?

Here are some easy steps to help you diagnose the mystery.

Step 1: We are not basic skills experts, however, every campus has resources available to meet these needs. Become familiar with the resources on your campus. Most campuses have study skills classes that start at various points in the semester. Resources range from specific courses to tutoring labs (with DLAs- Directed Learning Activities for discrete needs) and programs such as Extended Opportunity Program and Services (EOPS). Many times students and sometimes faculty don't know about the resources available. Get educated! Consider adding information about the availability of these classes in your syllabus or handing out a flyer.

Step 2: Become proactive. Incorporate an early assessment that is integrated with your lessons and relevant to your content at the beginning of the semester. You don't have to administer a separate diagnostic or become a reading or learning disabilities expert and you are not determining reading grade level or mathematics proficiency. You are taking the students general vital signs regarding their ability to function in your course in terms of reading, mathematics, writing, or study skills. You can use something quick and easy, that's both active and enjoyable for students, in order to identify who may have learning issues. Actually, you probably already employ many of these assessments, but perhaps do not use them as an opportunity to investigate who may need extra help. Here are some quick examples. We know that you can invent many more. The key is to come up with something that doubles as a content learning activity as well.

Reading

- First, discover the reading grade level of your text book. Publishers may know this or your basic skills faculty or tutoring labs may have a simple program to figure this out.
- Have the students read a paragraph related to the course content. Ask them to summarize the main point and give supporting details.
- One biology faculty member gives a very simple safety quiz at the beginning of the second week of lab. She discovered that those who fail it usually have reading problems rather than a misunderstanding of the safety issues.
- Use an essay question from an old exam. Ask the students to describe what the topic of the question is and to list some bullet points that may be relevant.
- Give a few word problems or scenarios that are relevant to your class content. Mathematics faculty have told us that often times students who have problems interpreting mathematics word problems may not have trouble with mathematics, but rather reading.

Reading and Writing

- Have students read a short opinion piece relevant to your content. Ask them to write what the author's opinion was and whether they agree or not.
- Ask students to write a response to the syllabus (this doubles as a metacognitive exercise).

Writing and ESL Issues

- Ask students to complete an in-class writing within the first week of class.
- Ask students to describe their writing process or history with writing (this is also a metacognitive exercise).
- Do the above activity as a pair/share icebreaker and ask students to summarize their partner's information in writing.

Mathematics

- Provide students with data, such as reading graphs or tables, and ask them to write a simple interpretation of it. See Appendix 1 for some examples. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) always has a large variety of graphs and tables about many current day topics from infections, to daylight savings accidents, to death rates by age and ethnicity. Find this treasure chest of data at www.cdc.gov.
- Give students a problem to solve relevant to your course content that uses mathematic skills students should have mastered in previous courses.

Disabled Students Programs Services (DSPS)

- Use the quick diagnostic exercise found in Appendix 2 from Sierra College that specifically addresses Attention Deficit Disorder. Your DSPS office may have other simple diagnostics or even a list of hints to help you know when to refer a student to their services.

Step 3: Identify those students who may have a potential learning issue and talk to them. Research has shown that students who feel that a faculty member has an interest in them become more engaged in the learning process. If it is available, you may review their transcript or assessment scores online for further information. Then consider referring them for assessment or to the other learning resources on campus. The key is to:

- 1) Check this out soon and try to get an intervention. You may have an early alert program on your campus; become familiar with your options to send these students to experts who will help them succeed.
- 2) Develop a relationship that communicates that you care about the student's success.

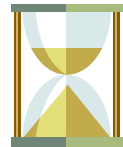
“But wait,” we hear you say. “I don’t have time to do this! I have to teach.”



True. But we believe that this **is** a part of teaching. Besides, where is the best investment of your precious and limited time?

Do you have time to wade through all the poorly written papers or misunderstood assignments later on? How about the students? Do they have time to sit in your class for a semester and receive a poor grade?

We repeat: **This doesn't need to take a long time.** You can easily create something that serves as a learning activity relevant to the content in your course AND is also a diagnostic.



Pedagogies that Address Basic Skills Needs

We discovered that you can also take a longer term approach to the needs of the developmental students in your classes. These activities will help them to better master the content of your courses by addressing the skill areas where they may be weak. To use the techniques, you may have to rethink how you introduce topics and/or get creative with embedding these into regular class activities. Oddly enough, we've found that these pedagogies also benefit the students who do not have basic skills needs. We've copied most everything listed here from previous chapters in this handbook, so you may want to read more about them in detail there.



We were surprised to learn in our own classes that reading is often the make or break issue for students with basic skills needs. You may want to read Chapter 10 in detail to appreciate just what a complex task we ask of students when we assign reading texts. When students don't have the skills to read or comprehend our content, they struggle greatly to succeed. Yet, some reading techniques turn out to be fairly easy to incorporate into classes across the disciplines. Since each subject area has its own vocabulary and viewpoint, we've found it valuable to spend time at the beginning of the semester teaching all students how to read the textbook using any of the methods listed below. This can be an active and engaging way to introduce students to the field and to preview the demands of the class.

1. Reading Toolbox

Developed by Joel Levine at Southwestern College, this handy page is jammed with techniques that you can use while students read a piece of discipline subject matter – something from the text book or other writing that they will encounter in your class. You can also use this as a diagnostic to discover who has reading issues. Give students a discipline-specific piece to read and ask them to complete any or all of the tools listed below. Please see Chapter 10 Appendix 1 for an example of the application of this tool box.

OUR READING TOOLBOX	Elements of Thinking
Paraphrasing Putting a sentence that you have read into your own words.	INFORMATION
Headline Created Creating a headline (title) that you think expresses the main idea of the reading.	PURPOSE
Significant Sentence Selected Selecting the one sentence you think is most important in the reading, and telling why you selected it.	INFORMATION
Vital Question Posed Stating a question to the author or someone in the reading that you would really like an answer to. ----- Identifying the main question at issue (problem) raised in the reading.	QUESTION & PROBLEM
Purpose Stating why you think this reading was written.	PURPOSE
SEEI Stating, <i>E</i> laborating, <i>E</i> xemplifying, and <i>I</i> llustrating certain words and concepts in the reading that you need to better understand.	CONCEPTS
Conclusion Identifying what you think is the most important conclusion the author comes to in the reading.	CONCLUSION
Assumptions Stating what you think the author is taking for granted in the reading.	ASSUMPTIONS
Implications & Consequences Stating what you think would happen if we follow, or do not follow what the author is suggesting we do.	IMPLICATIONS & CONSEQUENCES
Solution/Recommendation Stating what you think should be done to deal effectively with the issue or problem being presented in the reading.	INFERENCE
Speaking in the Author's Voice Stating ideas or answering questions about the reading as if you were the author herself or himself.	POINT OF VIEW

Source: Joel Levine, Southwestern College

2. **SQ3R**

The authors of the reading chapter (Chapter 10 of this handbook) report that this is the “granddaddy” of reading approaches and works well for all learning styles. It also makes for a good in-class activity.

Survey: Preview the text before reading to ascertain the main topics, organization, and to activate prior knowledge,

Question: Generate a list of questions to guide ones’ reading – read with a questioning mind.

Read: Actively read the text with the intention of looking for answers to questions, annotating important points and one’s reactions, and interacting with the text.

Recite: After reading, actively do something with what was read, for example write answers to questions, talk about the reading with someone, teach it to a classmate

Review: Review the section that was read to put it back into a coherent whole, review one’s notes and annotations, connect reading notes with lecture notes.

Some faculty use this technique by having students ask each other the questions they have generated in study groups. The faculty member collects the questions and then selects the best questions to use on the exam. This creates value in the exercise, and students feel as though they have an inside track on at least one or two questions that may be on the exam. When you review the questions that students write, you’ll find that the ones with reading problems cannot even produce a relevant question.

3. **KWL+**

This is another one that helps students to assimilate what they have read and doubles as a metacognitive technique. In this activity, students ask four questions about what is to be read or learned:

What do you **KNOW** about the subject? (Activates prior knowledge and stimulates commitment to learn.)

What do you **WANT** to know about the subject? (Creates intention and purpose for reading.)

What did you **LEARN** about the subject from the reading? (Provides review, comprehension check and opportunity for reflection on what was learned.)

What do you still want to **LEARN**? (Provides opportunity for deeper exploration.)

4. **PPPC**

This strategy combines both reading and note taking and annotation. One instructor we know teaches this on the first day of class and then creates a worksheet based on the questions. Those students who use it are allowed to use these notes when answering quiz questions. This provides a handy incentive for repeating the process throughout the semester.

Preview: Preview the selection looking at the topics, organization and to activate prior knowledge.

Predict: Predict what the reading will be about to set expectations, and begin to generate a questioning mind.

Pre-read: Using skimming techniques read the first sentence of every paragraph because that is often where the main idea is in textbooks. It will give the reader a good context for reading the text in depth.

Code: Take notes, write reactions to the text, generate questions that still need answering etc. This is the way to review, record and test what has been learned. (See Appendix 4 for more detail on this technique and others.)



Writing

As Chapter 7 of this handbook explains, the best way for students to learn how to write is to do it often and to write at length. We're sorry to be the bearers of bad news but:

The most effective way for faculty to help students improve their writing is to require them to write in all disciplines.

Please, do not accept poorly written work. Make a percentage of the assignment's grade based on clarity, spelling and grammar – even if it's a small percentage. This will assist all students to realize that writing matters. If you don't expect them to write properly, students rationalize that the writing skills they learn are limited to their English classes. Help them to understand that writing counts even in science and mathematics courses. Aside from earning the undying respect and admiration of your English colleagues, you will be holding students to the ICAS standards and preparing them for transfer and/or the world of work. (See the SCANS skills listed in Chapter 13 of this handbook.)

Before you throw this chapter on the ground, protesting loudly -- “Just where do you expect me to find the time? How can I grade all of that?” -- we want to assure you that there are a few things that you can do to make this process easier on yourself.

First off, read Chapter 7 for a detailed discussion of effective practices in teaching writing. Use any of the techniques there that seem useful to you. Here is a list of the ones we have found most helpful.

1. Muddiest Point

Use this Cross and Angelo Classroom Assessment technique after going over a lecture or an out-of-class writing assignment. Ask students to anonymously write one sentence that describes the muddiest point or what most confuses them about the lecture or assignment.

2. Pre-writing

Make time in class for some pre-writing activities to help students brainstorm paper topics and/or a thesis for your writing assignment. Chapter 7 describes pre-writing strategies in detail.

3. Student Sample Papers

Show your classes examples of the assignment written by students from previous semesters. We've found that showing them an example of a mediocre paper and asking them to grade it or discuss how it succeeds and fails is a wonderful learning opportunity and results in better efforts on their behalf. If you are worrying about the time factor again, remember that taking the time in class to do this may save you hours of grading weak or unsuccessful papers later on.

4. Rubrics

Speaking of grading, one way to save yourself tons of time is to create a rubric that precisely defines what you are looking for in the assignment by describing an A through F paper. If you share this with students in advance, it helps them to know what to do. You can use it when looking at sample papers as suggested in number 2 above.

It also saves you time when actually grading, because the rubric has already spoken what you may have written in side or end comments.

One instructor we know includes rubrics for each writing assignment in her syllabus, asks students to grade their own work using the rubric before they turn it in to her, and then comments on the differences between their grade and her own. She says that students tend to under-grade themselves (giving themselves lower grades than she would). An added bonus is that this process has resulted in very few distraught students coming up after class to challenge their grades. They already know why they have gotten a B instead on an A.

If you've never written a rubric before, take a look at Appendix 3 in this chapter. It will take you step by step through the process. There are also many rubrics available online. A word of warning! Take the time to tweak any of the ones that you find elsewhere because the main point of a rubric is to accurately reflect how you actually grade.

5. Grading

Take to heart the important information relayed in Chapter 7 of this handbook. **You do not need to mark each and every error on a student's paper.** Research has shown that this does not actually help students improve because you are making the improvements for them. It's more helpful if you correct an error the first time and then mark the general area where it occurs again, asking the student to find and correct it.

6. Revision

Finally, in order to help students learn, consider allowing them to revise their papers. Give them the opportunity and incentive to find the errors you've indicated and make corrections. An English

teacher we know suggests that if you choose to do this, ask them to turn in both the previously graded version of the paper and their revision. This may allow you to quickly scan to see if they've made the corrections you've asked for instead of having to closely read the entire paper again.



ESL

When working with students who have second language issues, it's important to understand the scope of the task. The following information from Chapter 8 of this handbook may provide you with some important background.

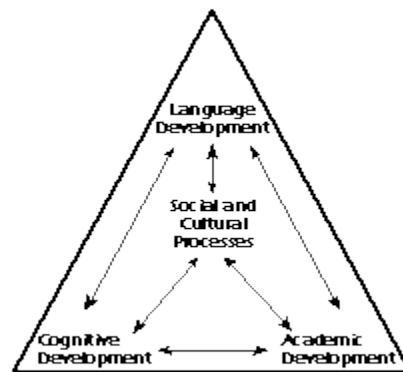
Acquiring a Second Language

The components involved in language acquisition- socio-cultural, linguistic, academic, and cognitive processes - are interdependent and complex. Research shows that

...cognitive and academic development in the first language has an extremely important and positive effect on second language schooling (e.g. Bialystok, 1991; Collier, 1989, 1992b; Garcia, 1994; Genesee, 1987, 1994; Thomas & Collier, 1995). Academic skills, literacy development, concept formation, subject knowledge, and learning strategies developed in the first language will all transfer to the second language. As students expand their vocabulary and their oral and written communication skills in the second language, they can increasingly demonstrate their knowledge base developed in the first language.

Furthermore, some studies indicate that if students do not reach a certain threshold in their first language, including literacy, they may experience cognitive difficulties in the second language (Collier, 1987; Collier & Thomas, 1989; Cummins, 1981, 1991; Thomas & Collier, 1995).

Language Acquisition for School



(Copyright, Virginia P. Collier, 1994.

Source: Collier, V.P. (1994). Language Acquisition for School.

<http://www.nclae.gwu.edu/pubs/directions/04.htm>

Research shows that it takes five to seven years to acquire academic proficiency in a second language. This kind of proficiency enables the learner to process information at a higher level of critical thinking, including finding relationships, making inferences, and drawing conclusions. As the

diagram above indicates, language acquisition for school involves a combination of interdependent factors that must all be addressed to ensure student success.

A special subgroup of English language learners is known as Generation 1.5. In the literature, a student is generation 1.5 if he or she arrived in the U.S. as a pre-teen school-age child (Oropesa and Landale, 1997, pp. 429-455). This is a critical age in language and academic development, and these students have not acquired full literacy in their first language, which leads to special difficulties in acquiring English as their second language (ESL). A particular problem for these students is that they have been exposed primarily to conversational language (for basic communication), and that is the kind of language the student, in turn, produces. For many of the ESL students, and Generation 1.5 students in particular, entering community colleges, the greatest challenge is to process and produce **language at a higher level of critical thinking** which will allow them to succeed in college-level work (Oropesa & Landale, 1997, pp. 429-455). As described in the research below, the effect of this basic English language need in Generation 1.5 is different than non-English speaking immigrants with ESL needs.

An increasing number of U.S. high school graduates enter college while still in the process of learning English. Referred to as generation 1.5 students because they share characteristics of both first- and second-generation immigrants (Rumbaut & Ima, 1988), they do not fit into any of the traditional categories of nonnative English speakers enrolled in college writing courses, nor have they been the focus of much research on students learning to write in English as a second language (Harklau, Losey, & Siegal, 1999). Familiar with U.S. culture and schooling, generation 1.5 students have different learning needs from other English language learners, such as immigrants with limited English proficiency and international students who travel to the United States for the express purpose of earning an American college degree.

It takes many years for literacy in a second language to develop fully. To be successful in college, generation 1.5 students may need to unlearn previous practices and learn new ways of approaching writing. To do this, they need access to instruction that recognizes that they are different from other English language learners. This instruction needs to make room for their diverse backgrounds and strengths and prepare them for life outside the classroom. (Harklau, 2003, ¶1)

Important Facts about Generation 1.5 Language Learners

Language Acquisition	Acquired through informal interaction with friends, family, classmates and coworkers, English dominant siblings and radio and TV
Oral/aural dominant	May not notice grammatical features; may use incorrect verb and word forms, confuse count and non count nouns, plurals, articles and prepositions (e.g. don't see the difference between "confident" vs. "confidence")
Use of Meta language	Generally lack language for grammatical terms to understand grammar errors (when teachers talk about progressive verbs or gerunds, they look blank).
In Speech and Writing	Rely heavily on context – use body language, intonation, facial expressions to make themselves understood. Writing is difficult because they lack these clues. When proofreading, can't identify mistakes.
Communication Skills	Highly proficient, but face difficulty in academic writing that demands a high level of grammatical accuracy.

As stated earlier, all faculty in the community colleges are dealing with Generation 1.5 students, plus other ESL students with more specific needs. What is it that we expect of them when they leave ESL and move on to other courses?

Academic Literacy: A Statement of Competencies

As referenced earlier in this chapter, ICAS competencies provide some standard expectations of entering freshman. (Again, these competencies can be found in Part II of the document at <http://www.asccc.org/Publications/Papers/AcademicLiteracy/statementCompetencies.pdf>.) But here we would like to highlight the additional competencies necessary for L2 learners in the chart below.

Additional Listening and Speaking Competencies Expected of Students Whose Home Language is Not English (See Appendix D)

In addition to the other competencies noted, L2 Learners should be able to do the following:

- ▶ comprehend English spoken by various speakers whose language styles include a variety of pitches, rates of speech, accents, and regional variations
- ▶ identify nuances of meaning indicated by shifts in vocal inflection and non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions or body language
- ▶ recognize the spoken form of vocabulary—including idiomatic expressions—previously encountered only in written form
- ▶ demonstrate a full range of pronunciation skills including
 - phonemic control
 - mastery of stress and
 - intonation patterns of English

You can reference Chapter 8 of this handbook for specific activities that are helpful for ESL learners and adapt them to your discipline if you determine this is a major concern for your course. You may also want to consider teaming up with an ESL faculty member and creating a learning community to address these issues if a large number of your students are L2 learners and particularly if you teach a lot of Generation 1.5 students. You should also consider consulting with any Puente instructors on your campus for additional help.



Mathematics

Look at Chapter 9 of this handbook for a variety of techniques used by mathematics faculty that might be converted to mathematics activities contextualized to your specific discipline needs. The following is a sample from the mathematics chapter that can be easily modified for any topic or discipline.



Three by fives by Joan Córdova

- At the beginning of the semester my students are asked to add 3x5 cards to their list of school supplies. Virtually every class session they are asked to use the 3x5 cards in a variety of classroom assessment exercises. The exercises vary depending on what is needed including Muddiest Point, Minute Papers, and sample problems.
- Often the class will start with a 3x5 question on the board that assesses the topic of the previous lesson. It takes a few minutes for the students to work and less than a minute to read through the cards to see how well the class understood the lesson.
- The cards are then shuffled and used to call on students throughout the class session. The cards keep me from unknown biases I may have when calling on students. Maybe I only call on the kids with pony tails or something. With the cards it allows me to call on them by name. They know their card is in the stack so they have a possibility of being called on. By the end of the class I try to have made it all the way through the stack.
- To help with the stress of being called on I use the “Who Wants to be a Millionaire” model. When a student is called on they have an opportunity for a life line or to poll the audience. What is interesting is that once they know they have an option, they will try the problem first. They are more willing to offer answers and opinions. This was a very interesting unexpected outcome. It also gives me an opportunity to ask “Is that your final answer” which gets them reviewing what they said.

Examples:

- The first class after discussing addition of fractions with different denominators the 3 x 5 card at the beginning of class might ask: When adding fractions, what is the first thing you need to know? *Are the denominators the same?* is the correct response but the actual responses provide valuable insight.
- When working on word problems the 3 x 5 card at the beginning of class might ask them to identify the steps taken to work a word problem. Or perhaps ask the students what the first step in solving a word problem could be. The answers may vary but what would be acceptable would be *Read the problem* or something along the lines of *Identify what the problem is asking*.

Minute Paper

(Angelo and Cross, 1993, p 120)

Description: No other technique has been used more often or by more college teachers than the *Minute Paper*. This technique -- also known as the *One-Minute Paper* and the *Half-Sheet Response* -- provides a quick and extremely simple way to collect written feedback on student learning. To use the *Minute Paper*, an instructor stops class two or three minutes early and asks students to respond briefly to some variation on the following two questions: "What was the most important thing you learned during this class?" and "What important question remains unanswered?" Students write their responses on index cards or half-sheets of scrap paper and hand them in.

Variations:

- What was the most important point of the section?
- What was the most surprising idea or concept?
- What question remains unanswered in your mind?
- What question from this class might appear on the next quiz/test?
- What was the muddiest point of the class?
- What was the main concept illustrated in class?

Step-by-Step Procedure:

1. Decide first what you want to focus on and, as a consequence, when to administer the *Minute Paper*. If you want to focus on students' understanding of a lecture, the last few minutes of class may be the best time. If your focus is on a prior homework assignment, however, the first few minutes may be more appropriate.
2. Using the two basic questions from the "Description" above as starting points, write *Minute Paper* prompts that fit your course and students. Try out your *Minute Paper* on a colleague or teaching assistant before using it in class.
3. Plan to set aside five to ten minutes of your next class to use the technique, as well as time later to discuss the results.
4. Before class, write one or, at the most, two *Minute Paper* questions on the chalkboard or prepare an overhead transparency.
5. At a convenient time, hand out index cards or half-sheets of scrap paper.
6. Unless there is a very good reason to know who wrote what, direct students to leave their names off the papers or cards.
7. Let the students know how much time they will have (two to five minutes per question is usually enough), what kinds of answers you want (words, phrases, or short sentences), and when they can expect your feedback.

Finally, if you have not visited FLAG Field-Tested Learning Assessment Guide at <http://www.flaguide.org/> You should explore these easily downloadable resources for many different disciplines.

The FLAG offers broadly applicable, self-contained modular [classroom assessment techniques](#) (CATs) and discipline-specific [tools](#) for Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) instructors interested in new approaches to evaluating student learning, attitudes and performance. Each has been developed, tested and refined in real colleges and universities classrooms. The FLAG also contains an assessment [primer](#), a section to help you select the most appropriate assessment technique(s) for your course [goals](#), and other [resources](#).

Another invaluable tool is a simple but terrific book on pedagogical techniques backed by research data called *Scientific Teaching* by Handelsman, Miller and Pfund, C. (2007). It takes about two hours to read but will reorient the way you run your course.



Metacognition

As we admitted earlier in the chapter, we were shocked to learn that students needed to reflect on their learning experience in order to absorb discipline content. Chapter 5 of this handbook contains valuable information about metacognition and the neuroscience behind it. We urge you to examine that material carefully because it will give rise to many ideas about how to incorporate metacognitive activities into your classes. Here are a few of our favorites.

Student Self-Assessment

Chapter 5 contains many sample self-assessments that you can use to have students look at what kinds of learning skills they possess at the moment and the skills needed to be a successful student. The Appendix of Chapter 5 includes several Student Study Checklists that you may want to borrow or tweak to fit your specific discipline. In addition to informing students about what is needed to succeed in your field, it also provides them with an opportunity to assess themselves, one of the keys to incorporating that invaluable “learner identity” lacking in so many students with basic skills needs (Again, see Chapter 6 for a discussion about this).

Learning Styles Assessments

You can easily turn a quick learning styles assessment into a class activity. Chapter 5 lists several that are free and available online. Best of all, they don’t take long to complete. Research has shown that students who are aware of their learning styles and the types of activities that help them to learn often have better success than those who do not. You can talk about specific techniques that students with differing learning styles can use to absorb the content of your discipline or create activities that provide opportunities to explore those techniques. Why would you want to take the time to do this during class? Because it may help you avoid the stack of woeful assignments you imagined at the beginning of this chapter.

Some faculty have turned this metacognitive exploration into an extended activity. In an attempt to teach students argumentation and research, one English teacher we know asks students to assess their own learning style, research its particulars and then argue whether or not they agree with their categorization. Certainly those in the social sciences can also use this as an opportunity to allow students to think critically about this topic while learning some techniques that may help them to study.

Exam Postmortem

This activity, detailed in the Appendix to Chapter 5, has proven very helpful for those instructors who give major exams. Using the form shown in the Appendix, student are asked to assess their preparation and performance on an exam. Faculty report that they sometimes see a light bulb go on when students take a hard look at how they prepared and what they plan to do differently next time. It has even been known to improve their performance on the next test.

Quick Takes

There are lots of other ways to embed metacognitive moments into a class. Simply asking students to tell you what they learned from a major assignment (perhaps in the middle of doing it and also after it is done) allows them to reflect on their learning. Many Angelo and Cross Classroom Assessment Techniques are metacognitive in nature. In discussion-oriented courses, you can ask students to reflect on what they said and what they held back during a debate. Looking at why they spoke can be revealing. Likewise, asking them to give advice to next semester's students provides them with an opportunity to reflect on what they've learned. Remember that each time you do this, you are helping students to assume a learner identity, learn about how they best learn and absorb the content you are teaching.

More about Time

We imagine that many of you have been reading this chapter while shaking your heads. “These authors are nuts! I don't have the time to do this. There's so much I have to cover to prepare students for the next level in my field or to transfer. I can't get through all the information now. How can I set aside time in class for all this other fancy stuff?”



We know that no matter how lengthy your quarter or semester is, it just never seems long enough. We agree. That's true, especially in the sciences. But this is also true – no matter at what breakneck pace you teach, you truly can't get through all of a subject in one class. Microbiology? It changes every day. Computer Sciences? New developments make what you've been teaching obsolete very quickly. American History to 1865? Surely you are not able to teach the full complexity of two hundred years in sixteen weeks. Latin American Literature? Let's get real. There's just too much to cover. So you have to select. What are the most important things that students need to learn and know how to do to succeed at the next level?

We want to remind you that you are already making those choices. The question you need to answer is: How can you best prepare students to succeed? We believe that spending a little time assessing the difficulties that students are having in learning your field and providing them with tools and the opportunity to reflect on their knowledge may prepare them better than if you “covered” all of your content without including this. We know that many faculty love to debate the differences between teaching in depth versus teaching for breadth. We're proposing to add another ingredient to the controversy: teaching about learning.

Set up a Research Study

While you're debating, why not set up a research study to explore if any of these methods really work. Of course, you'll want to assess the student learning outcomes for your course and discover if using any of these methodologies improve student success. You may also be interested in forming a Faculty Inquiry Group (FIG) to gather other faculty who would also like to investigate these techniques. FIGs are explained in detail in Chapter 20 of this handbook, as part of the discussion of professional development. Other suggestions there may prove fruitful for you as well.

Prerequisites: Recognizing Student’s Basic Skills Needs and Guiding them to Success

Perhaps one of the most important issues that needs to be discussed in this chapter and considered by faculty that teach transfer courses revolves around assessment and pre-requisites. If we know we have more and more students in our colleges with basic skills needs in reading, writing or math, how do they pass our college level general education courses? How can a student pass a transfer –level history course if they read at an eighth grade level? How do they pass a transfer-level economics course if they can not understand graphs and have basic mathematics skills? How do they pass a college-level philosophy course if they can not write at college level?

The truth is, many do not pass. Many drop out of the courses and others struggle to the end and fail. A quick look at the statewide success rates for basic skills students who take general education courses, compared to students without basic needs that take the same courses, reveals a meaningful disparity.

TABLE 1 State-wide Student Success in Basic Skills and Non-Basic Skills Courses

State-wide Success Rate Spring 2007 All Disciplines				
Note: The State-wide figures represent 112 reported out of total of 117 reporting entities state-wide				
Program Type	Basic Skills Status	Total	Succeeded	Success
		Enrollments		Rate (%)
Business and Management (05)	Basic Skills	1,510	579	38.34%
Business and Management (05)	Non-Basic-skills	232,185	149,364	64.33%
Education (08)	Basic Skills	1620	971	59.94%
Education (08)	Non-Basic-skills	325,413	238,497	73.29%
Fine and Applied Arts (10)	Basic Skills	232	114	49.14%
Fine and Applied Arts (10)	Non-Basic-skills	311,417	219,782	70.57%
Foreign Language (11)	Basic Skills	242	9	45.00%
Foreign Language (11)	Non-Basic-skills	97,539	65,324	66.97%
Humanities (Letters) (15)	Basic Skills	35,878	19,833	55.28%
Humanities (Letters) (15)	Non-Basic-skills	417,808	272,946	65.33
Social Sciences (22)	Basic Skills	14	6	42.86
Social Sciences (22)	Non-Basic-skills	437,291	274,886	62.86

These data are from the California Community College Chancellor’s Office Datamart at <http://www.cccco.edu/SystemOffice/Divisions/TechResearchInfo/MIS/DataMartandReports/tabid/282/Default.aspx>. The table reports the student success of sample discipline courses by basic skills versus non-basic skills courses, representing the latest state-wide data for duplicated head count retrieved March 1, 2008.

Title 5 requirements make applying prerequisites outside of a discipline a difficult task involving statistical analysis of student success, content review, and multiple options to meet the prerequisite requirements. “Prerequisites are an essential tool in the construction of curriculum for courses in

which student success is highly dependent on previously acquired knowledge or skills. However, effective use of prerequisites requires a balance of several countervailing factors (ASCCC, 1997).”

Title 5 §55002(a)(2)(D) "determines, based on a review of the course outline of record, that a student would be highly unlikely to receive a satisfactory grade unless the student has knowledge or skills not taught in the course, then the course shall require prerequisites or corequisites...."

A Case Study

At Bakersfield College, faculty analyzed student success in the science general education courses and found that students reading below college level were likely to fail those courses. Some administrators were reticent to apply a prerequisite of college level reading, fearing that enrollment in the courses would drop. However, the textbooks used in the courses were analyzed and found to be 17th grade-level reading. A review of the course content revealed that success in the class involved reading the textbook, lab manuals, online materials and outside research materials. Interestingly, additional studies found that English 1A was a better predictor of student success. But to establish a prerequisite, Title 5 requires a content review. In other words, the prerequisite must provide skills and content that enable a student to succeed in the target course. While success in English 1A equated with probable success in biology, there was not adequate agreement that writing assignments were robust enough to validate the writing prerequisite. The content in the English 1 A class did not match up with required entry skills. There were probably other factors that made it predict student success, such as student study and work skills, but it did not relate to course content.

After a thorough discussion and analysis a prerequisite of college level reading was applied to all general education science courses. There was a slight dip in the number of students taking the courses the first year. But no measureable effect for the last 5 years. The courses have strong attendance and, in the biology courses, this translated into both retention and success rates for that exceeded statewide success and retention rates.

Here are other data samples from research on Psychology and Sociology general educations courses. Translated these data indicate that a student is 20% less likely to succeed in Sociology if they do not have college level reading skills and that they have less than a 50/50 chance of passing without those skills.

Table 2 Reading Prerequisite Analysis for Sociology 1 Sociology B1A Students from Fall 2001 to Summer 2003				
	Met the PreReq *			
	Yes (1)		No (0)	
SOCI B1 Course Success - Yes (1)	421	63.2%	216	43.1%
SOCI B1 Course Success - No (0)	245	36.8%	285	56.9%
Total	666	100.0%	501	100.0%
Grand Total All	1167			
* To Meet the Prerequisite, a student must have:				

1) Tested at College-Level Reading or above, and/or				
2) Completed Coursework - Reading 50 (ACDVB50) with a C or Better				
Success is equal to a grade of C or better				

The data on the Psychology class reveals that students without college level reading skills is 24% less likely to succeed and has just over a 50/50 chance of passing the course.

Table 3- Psychology B1A PreReq Study				
Pysch B1A Students from Fall 2001 to Summer 2003				
Reading Prerequisite Analysis				
	Met the PreReq *			
	Yes (1)		No (0)	
Psych B1A Course Success - Yes (1)	1091	75.2%	547	51.0%
Psych B1A Course Success - No (0)	360	24.8%	525	49.0%
Total	1451	100.0%	1072	100.0%
Grand Total All	2523			
* To Meet the Prerequisite, a student must have:				
1) Tested at College-Level Reading or above, and/or				
2) Completed Coursework - Reading 50 (ACDVB50) with a C or Better				
Success is equal to a grade of C or better				

What do these kinds of data tell us about applying prerequisites? What message are we sending to students if we do not have prerequisites on courses and allow them to fail, and then repeat and fail the course again? Is this effective use of the student’s time, the faculty members’ efforts and the funding to support this process? Our UC and CSU transfer institutions do not generally have basic skills prerequisites on general education courses because they select for students with high GPA’s and standardized test scores. They require specific level of high school course completion and assume students have reached college level skills. Should we be concerned that some students without college level reading can pass college-level transfer courses? Should our transfer partners be concerned?

These are the important questions faculty who teach transfer level courses must consider in light of our large numbers of students with basic skills needs. What do you know about your success rates and the number of students with basic skills needs in your courses?

Chapter 14



Working with Students who have Basic Skills Needs in Transfer Courses: Completing the Building Part II

Appendix 1: Graphs to Determine Mathematics Abilities

Appendix 2: Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) Checklist

Appendix 3: Cabrillo College Directions for Writing a Rubric

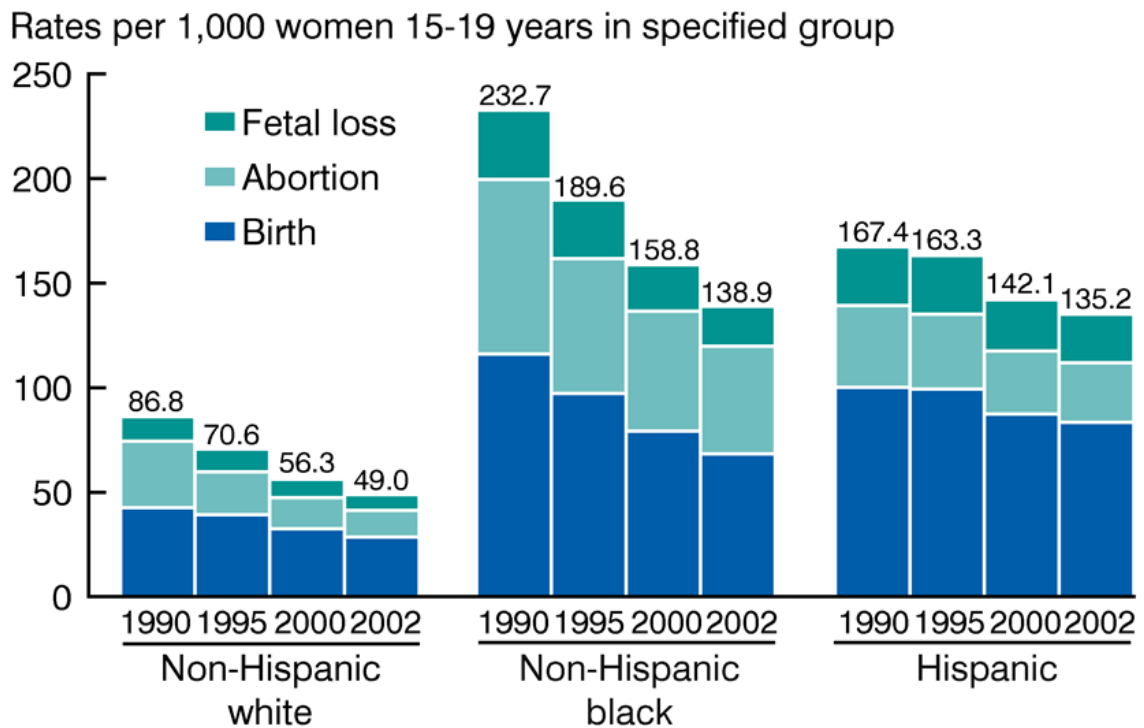
Appendix 4: Sample Rubrics

Appendix 5: Resources for Chapter 14

Appendix 1 Graphs to Determine Mathematics Abilities

Look at the following graph and write a paragraph about the main points or conclusions this graph allows us to make. Do these data raise any further questions in your mind?

Figure 4. Pregnancy, birth, abortion, and fetal loss rates for teenagers 15-19 years, by race and Hispanic origin: 1990, 1995, 2000, and 2002



SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, Division of Vital Statistics, Published reports.

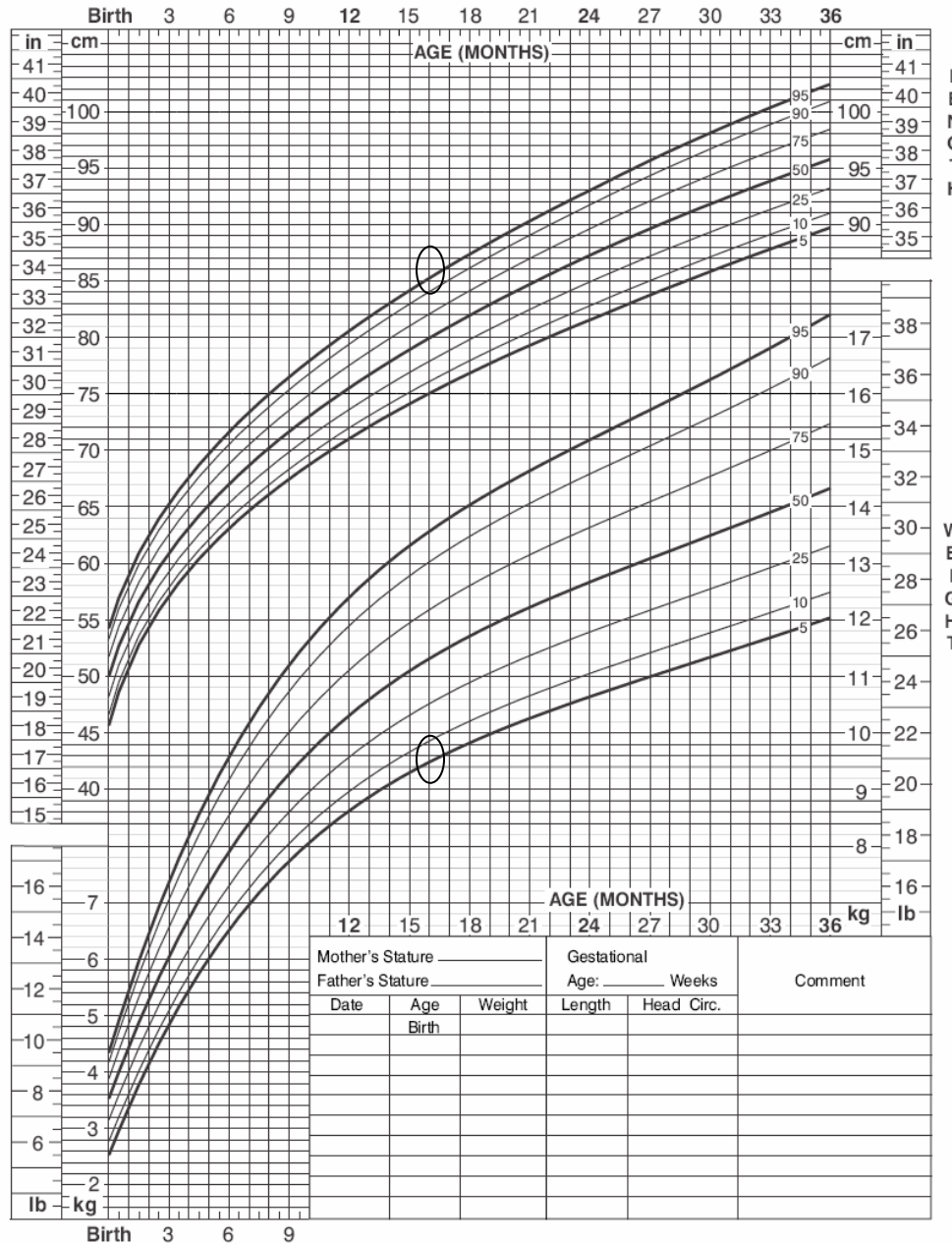
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/pubs/pubd/hestats/teenpreg1990-2002/Figure4.png>

This is a typical graph used on a patient's chart to represent growth. At Jason's last check up the nurse circled two points on the graph. What does this tell us about Jason's age, height and weight? How does he compare to other children his age?

Birth to 36 months: Boys
Length-for-age and Weight-for-age percentiles

NAME _____

RECORD # _____



Published May 30, 2000 (modified 4/20/01).
 SOURCE: Developed by the National Center for Health Statistics in collaboration with the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (2000).
<http://www.cdc.gov/growthcharts>



Appendix 2
Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) Checklist

Answer Yes or No to the following questions:

	Yes	No
1. Are you easily distracted?		
2. Are you quickly bored?		
3. Do get impatient or easily frustrated?		
4. Are you disorganized?		
5. Do you often forget or lose things?		
6. Do you have poor listening skills?		
7. Do other people think you engage in high risk behaviors?		
8. Are you impulsive?		
9. Do you have difficulty delaying gratification?		
10. Do you have difficulty following through on assignments, projects or completing tasks?		
11. Do you have temper outbursts?		
12. Do other people consider you to be hyperactive or very talkative?		

If you answered YES to more than three of these questions, you may have Attention Deficit Disorder. Please contact the Learning Opportunity Center (781-0553) for more information.

Revised 1/30/2009-Martine Shelley, Sierra College

Appendix 3

Rubric Writing Workbook

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Some materials in this workbook have been taken from the Cabrillo
College SLO web site, written by the author

Overview

How can you tell if students in your course have achieved mastery of your assignments? That's easy. You simply grade them. But if you choose to use classroom assignments as a way to assess student learning outcomes, you may need to grade a bit differently.. Using classroom assignments as an assessment tool is called **course embedded assessment**; it is a legitimate and useful way to measure student learning, whether for individual courses or, when approached as a sampling methodology, for both programs and institutional student learning outcomes. Besides, it also can improve the regular work you do everyday in your classroom. This approach to teaching and assessment believes that students will perform better if they understand how they will be graded **in advance**. They need to know the precise standards and criteria that make up an A, B or C grade.

"But, my students know that already," you perhaps protest. "We talk about it on the first day of class. The percentages that make up their final grade are right in my syllabus. And I use a grading sheet when I return work."

I've worked with many excellent faculty across California who are certain that they are perfectly clear with students about grading. Sure, they have had some complaints over the years, but that is to be expected. Yet, when asked if they tell their classes exactly what elements compose an A paper, project or major assignment, most admit that they have not gone into it in that kind of detail. The good news is that once they did, through developing a **grading rubric**, they have found that students were much less confused. Students seemed to have a better grasp of what they needed to do to successfully complete an assignment. More importantly, once the assignments were graded using the rubric, students understood the marks they earned. Complaints about grades were greatly reduced!

A **rubric** translates the standards and criteria that make up grading into some sort of chart or description. Rubrics can be used to score many kinds of written assignments or exams, papers, projects, speeches or portfolios. They are not useful, however, as a grading mechanism for multiple choice or short answer tests. However, you can analyze those kinds of assessments by looking at groups of questions to also determine how well students are mastering your outcomes.

A rubric answers the question, "What precisely is an A on a particular assignment or project? How is it different from a B or C?" While this is information that many of us carry inside our heads, in order to clearly assess student learning outcomes, it must be articulated in writing. However, it is up to you – the expert in your classroom – to define these standards and criteria and how they will be applied to the class work that you assign. Your rubric will be as individual as your grading style and pedagogy.

Sample Rubrics

A rubric is an individual as an instructor, the assignment or the course. They can be organized and presented in many different ways. Before designing your own, it's helpful to look at rubrics developed by other teachers in different disciplines. The following rubrics were created faculty across the state and have been used successfully by their instructors. Take a look at all the different ways you can organize and present your grading criteria to students.

Note the sample grading sheet on the last page that is tied to an English 1A rubric. Students receive both the rubric and grading sheet before attempting the assignment. The sheet is used to summarize how well the students did on each aspect of the grading rubric. It also articulates what they need to do to improve their grade in the future.

Here's the bonus: some faculty who used rubrics combined with grading sheets for the first time reported that they spent less overall time grading.

Sample Rubrics

Short Essay Rubric

(Used in a Human Genetics course.)

Score	Content	Organization	Development	Use of Language
5	Answer is appropriate to the question. Content is factually correct.	Clear sense of order. Begins with a thesis or topic sentence. Supporting points are presented in a logical progression.	Develops each point with may specific details. Answers question completely.	Uses technical or scientific terminology appropriately and correctly. No major grammatical or spelling errors.
4	Answer is appropriate to the question. Content may have one or two factual errors.	May lack a thesis sentence, but points are presented in a logical progression.	Each point supported with some details and evidence. All important points included.	Accurate word choice. No more than 2 major errors and a few minor errors.
3	Content relates peripherally to the question; contains significant factual errors.	Logic of argument is minimally perceivable. Points presented in a seemingly random fashion, but all support argument.	Sparse details or evidence. Question only partially answered.	Ordinary word choice; use of scientific terminology avoided. Some serious errors (but they don't impair communication).
2	Content unrelated to question.	Lacks clear organizational plan. Reader is confused.	Statements are unsupported by any detail or explanation. Repetitious, incoherent, illogical development.	Limited vocabulary; errors impair communication.

Developed by Denise Lim, Biology.

Sample Rubric for Assessing Photographs

1. Concept, idea, visualization:

- 10 pts Shows coherency of the concept with a high degree of originality and sophistication. The idea is well stated with visual elements and cues.
- 9 pts Shows coherency of the concept with some originality and sophistication. The idea is stated with visual elements and cues but needs to be more clear or more strongly evident.
- 8 pts Shows some coherency of the concept with commonly used, cliché or stereotyped imagery. The idea is obtuse, and requires greater clarity through the use of visual elements and cues.
- 7 pts Lacks general coherency of the concept. Many of the visual elements and cues do not lead the viewer to the intended idea.
- 6 pts Lacks any coherency of the concept. Visual elements and cues do not lead the viewer to the intended idea.
- 0 pts The work was not presented to me.

2. Composition & design:

- 10 pts Shows strong internal integrity of the visual elements. Nothing needs to be added or removed – framing is superb.
- 9 pts Shows internal integrity of the visual elements. A visual element needs to be added, moved or removed – framing needs some slight adjustment.
- 8 pts Shows obvious weaknesses in the internal integrity of the visual elements. Many visual elements need to be added, moved or removed – framing needs definite adjustments.
- 7 pts Image is breaking apart – there is very little internal integrity of the visual elements. Most visual elements need to be rethought – framing needs major readjustment.
- 6 pts Visual integrity is nonexistent and image has broken apart. All of the visual elements need to be rethought – framing needs a complete overhaul.
- 0 pts The work was not presented to me.

3. Technical:

- 10 pts Shows master in the use of photographic equipment and techniques to attain the assignment parameters.
- 9 pts Shows a good command of the use of photographic equipment and techniques to attain most of the assignment parameters.
- 8 pts Shows some command of the use of photographic equipment and techniques to attain some of the assignment parameters.
- 7 pts Shows limited command of the use of photographic equipment and techniques to attain a few of the assignment parameters.
- 6 pts Shows little or no command of the use of photographic equipment and techniques to attain a few or none of the assignment parameters.
- 0 pts The work was not presented to me.

Developed by Susan Hoisington, Photography.

Sample Rubric for Oceanography 10 Lab Project

Bathymetric Map and Cross Section (Lab #2) Grading Criteria

An “A” grade (9 or 10 out of 10):

- The contour lines are extremely smooth and evenly spaced with none of them touching each other.
- Every water depth # has the appropriate contour line next to it and the entire map is “contoured”.
- The overall presentation is excellent.
- The cross section is accurate and complete and the bottoms of the canyons and top of the ridge are not flat.
- The ends of the cross section are complete and the paper shows the vertical exaggeration.

A “B” grade (8 out of 10):

- The contour lines are neat and smooth and appropriately spaced and some are touching, but very few.
- Nearly all the water depth #'s are contoured, some may be missing, but very few.
- The overall presentation is good and very few “shadows” are showing.
- The cross section is accurate, but some information is missing, particularly on the ends.
- Vertical exaggeration may or may not be shown.

A “C” grade (6 or 7 out of 10):

- The contour lines are a little wide and show fringes, some may have double ends and some of them are obviously touching each other.
- Some of the water depth #'s may not be contoured and the contour lines are all not evenly or properly spaced. There may be shadows on the map and the overall presentation is slightly sloppy.
- The cross section is mostly accurate, but some information is off line and missing, particularly on the ends.
- Vertical exaggeration may not be shown.

A “D” and “F” grade (5 or less out of 10):

- The contour lines are sloppy and inaccurate and some or many are touching each other.
- Several of the water depth #'s are not accurately contoured and the map is not complete.
- The overall presentation is below or far below average.
- The cross section is inaccurate, and much information is off line and missing.
- Vertical exaggeration may be shown.

Developed by Dave Schwartz, Geology.

English1A Essay Rubric

WOW!!! (90-100 Points - Grade A)

- Begins with an introduction that shows your understanding of the issues, grabs your readers' attention, and presents a strong and insightful thesis or point of view.
- Engages the topic in a thoughtful and individual way, showing originality, elegance and clear thinking.
- Develops the topic using a strong detail, quotes from other sources, and a unique synthesis of ideas.
- Utilizes library research and quotes from outside sources, always properly citing them using the MLA format.
- Possesses a fully explained and logical progression of ideas that indicates the writer's sensitivity to different ways of looking at the topic with an awareness of key counter arguments and a consideration of how those alternate positions shape your understanding of the topic.
- Ends with a strong conclusion that clarifies the significance of the paper's lessons
- Chooses words aptly and sometimes inventively.
- Demonstrates mastery of most of the grammar and usage conventions of Standard English.
- Uses phrasing, tone, and expression that reflects a unique personal voice.

Good! Almost There (80-89 Points - Grade B)

- Begins with an introduction that shows some understanding of the issues, gives some background and has an adequate thesis or point of view.
- Presents a thoughtful response to the topic, using appropriate reasoning and a partially realized analysis that is accurate.
- Develops the topic showing appropriate details, a sense of orderly progress between ideas, and use of references that reveal a familiarity with the topic.
- Uses words precisely if not creatively.
- Varies sentence structure enough to read smoothly.
- Utilizes library research and quotes from outside sources, usually properly citing them using the MLA format.
- Uses competently the conventions of written English, containing few, if any, errors in sentence structure, punctuation and capitalization or usage.
- Uses mostly consistent phrasing, tone and expression that reflects a personal world view and style.

Developed by Marcy Alan Craig, English. Note grading sheet at the end.

Getting there (70-79 Points - Grade C)

- Presents an adequate response to the topic, using superficial analysis and weak point of view.
- Uses logical reasoning, but the supporting evidence is general and imprecise with few examples. There may be some small factual errors.
- Uses a less precise vocabulary and may contain awkwardness of expression.
- Utilizes library research and quotes from outside sources, with fairly consistent use of the MLA citation format. May make some errors.
- Contains minor errors in mechanics and usage, and perhaps one or two more distracting errors in sentence structure.
- Uses fairly consistent phrasing, tone and expression that reflect a personal world view and style with occasional inconsistencies.

Try Again (60-69 Points - Grade D)

- Responds to the topic illogically, without a coherent structure or focus.
- Has no point of view, uses mostly summary and lacks evidence and support.
- Makes several large, factual errors.
- Makes enough errors in usage and sentence structure to cause a reader serious, if occasional, distraction.
- Improperly uses the MLA format for citations. Makes major errors in quoting and uses few sources.
- Uses frequently inconsistent phrasing, tone and expression, often formulaic and imitative; lacks evidence of a personal worldview and style.

Let's not even go there (50-59 Points - Grade F)

- Doesn't attempt the task or distorts it
- Lacks organization or detail.
- Contains many distracting errors in sentence structure, simplistic or inaccurate word choice, many repeated errors in grammar and usage.
- Not enough is written to get a sense of personal worldview and style.

English 1A Grading Sheet

Paper #1-7 Grading Sheet

Name: _____ Total Grade: _____

This paper is one of the pieces of evidence for Outcomes #3 and 4:

- Use your unique voice to write papers that analyze the ecological, anthropological, historical and literary aspects of the Monterey Bay region.
- Use the library to find information in books, magazines, electronic databases and on-line sources. Incorporate those sources in your writing, acknowledging them using MLA documentation style

Based on the grading scale listed under Grading Requirements, your grade is divided into the elements listed in the chart below.

Elements of Grade	Wow!	Good	Getting There	Try Again	Let's Not Go There
<u>Introduction</u>					
<u>Thesis or Claim</u>					
<u>Response to Topic</u>					
<u>Evidence to support thesis</u>					
<u>MLA citation and documentation</u>					
<u>Awareness of counter arguments</u>					
<u>Flow and order of Ideas</u>					
<u>Conclusion</u>					
<u>Word Choice</u>					
<u>Grammar and Punctuation</u>					
<u>Personal Voice</u>					

Comments:

Creating Rubrics Worksheet 1

Course Name and Number	
Core Competency or Course SLO	
Assessment Tool/Assignment	
Assignment Components	
1.	2.
3.	4.
5.	6.
7.	8.

Creating Rubrics Worksheet 2

Articulate your standards for each component

Score: A	Write a sentence that describes the component at this level. Be as specific as possible.
Component 1:	
Component 2:	
Component 3:	
Component 4:	
Component 5:	
Component 6:	
Component 7:	
Component 8:	

Creating Rubrics Worksheet 2

Articulate your standards for each component

Score: B	Write a sentence that describes the component at this level. Be as specific as possible.
Component 1:	
Component 2:	
Component 3:	
Component 4:	
Component 5:	
Component 6:	
Component 7:	
Component 8:	

Creating Rubrics Worksheet 2

Articulate your standards for each component

Score: C	Write a sentence that describes the component at this level. Be as specific as possible.
Component 1:	
Component 2:	
Component 3:	
Component 4:	
Component 5:	
Component 6:	
Component 7:	
Component 8:	

Creating Rubrics Worksheet 2

Articulate your standards for each component

Score: D	Write a sentence that describes the component at this level. Be as specific as possible.
Component 1:	
Component 2:	
Component 3:	
Component 4:	
Component 5:	
Component 6:	
Component 7:	
Component 8:	

Creating Rubrics Worksheet 2

Articulate your standards for each component

Score: F	Write a sentence that describes the component at this level. Be as specific as possible.
Component 1:	
Component 2:	
Component 3:	
Component 4:	
Component 5:	
Component 6:	
Component 7:	
Component 8:	

Appendix 4 Sample Rubrics

Sierra College ESL Departmental Writing Exam/Portfolio Scoring Rubric

0 (below 500): Demonstrates no or almost no writing competency

- May include no response, copying of some text from prompt and nothing else, strings of words, memorized chunks or short response in native language
- Provides no development of ideas
- Uses very few English words
- Lacks all control over grammar
- May make errors in letter shape, size and spacing and/or use native language for spelling

1 (500): Demonstrates limited writing competency at the novice-mid level

- Has limited writing skills characterized by strings of words or short sentences
- Exhibits little development of ideas
- Uses a limited vocabulary with word choice and form errors
- Attempts sentences but with no control over most aspects of grammar
- May rely on native language spelling or show little awareness of sound/letter correspondence and mechanics

2 (510): Demonstrates emerging writing competence at the novice-high level

- Has emerging writing skills characterized by brief text
- Produces paragraph-like writing that addresses the prompt at least marginally
- Exhibits some evidence of development of ideas
- Uses some common vocabulary with errors in word choice or form that interfere with meaning
- Produces simple sentence structure with grammar errors that interfere with meaning
- Employs some capitalization and punctuation but probably has extensive spelling errors

3 (520): Demonstrates developing writing competence at the intermediate-low level

- Has moderately comprehensible text characterized by emerging paragraphing
- Produces multiple paragraphs or one long paragraph that addresses aspects of the prompt
- Develops paragraphs with topic sentences and some support although it may be general or with 1 limited example
- Uses common vocabulary with some errors in word choice or form that may interfere with meaning
- Produces a limited range of sentence structures with some grammar errors that may interfere with meaning
- Shows some control of sentence boundaries, indenting, margins, spelling and mechanics

4 (530): Demonstrates basic writing competence at the intermediate-mid level

- Has generally comprehensible text characterized by multiple paragraphs
- Produces essay-like writing with basic organizational structure, including topic sentences, that addresses the topic but may lose focus at points
- Demonstrates aspects of development with examples and details although specific details may be lacking or limited
- Uses a greater range of vocabulary although some errors in word choice or form may interfere with meaning
- Uses simple, compound and complex sentence structures with occasional grammar errors that may interfere with meaning
- Shows general control over sentence boundaries and essay format with some errors in spelling and/or mechanics

5 (540): Demonstrates basic competence and control over many aspects of academic writing at the intermediate-high level

- Has consistently comprehensible text characterized by essay format
- Produces a short, possibly formulaic, essay with an introduction, body and conclusion that maintains focus on the topic
- Demonstrates knowledge of how to expand upon a central idea with supporting ideas and specific details although development may be uneven or thin
- Has a good command of vocabulary with word choice or form errors occasionally interfering with meaning
- Uses a range of sentence and grammatical structures with some errors that rarely interfere with meaning
- Shows control over sentence boundaries and essay format with occasional errors in spelling or mechanics

6 (30): Demonstrates competence and control over most aspects of the academic writing process at an advanced-low level

- Has text with some depth and complexity
- Demonstrates good command of essay structure, including a thesis, and the ability to focus on the topic with minimal drifting
- Produces clearly organized and fully developed paragraphs with specific details and mostly relevant examples, possibly including the use of ideas from others
- Attempts higher-level vocabulary with occasionally distracting errors in word choice or form that do not interfere with meaning
- Controls a range of sentence and grammatical structures with occasional errors that do not interfere with meaning
- Has command of sentence structure and essay format with marginal errors in spelling or mechanics

7 (40): Demonstrates competence and control over most aspects of the academic writing process at the college level

- Has text with depth and complexity

- Demonstrates strong control over essay structure with effective and consistent focus on the topic
- Uses relevant examples and convincing details, probably including the use of ideas from others
- Uses higher-level vocabulary with only occasional errors that do not interfere with effective communication
- Controls a range of sentence structures for stylistic purposes using more complex grammatical structures with occasional errors that do not interfere with effective communication
- Has command of sentence boundaries and essay format with marginal errors in spelling or mechanics

8: (1B) Demonstrates college-level competence and control over the academic writing process

- Has rhetorically effective text
- Demonstrates a strong command of rhetorically effective and varied organizational strategies with clear and effective focus on the topic
- Uses relevant examples and precise details as support appropriately integrating source material
- Uses sophisticated vocabulary with minimal errors
- Employs a range of sentence structures and stylistic devices to achieve an effect and has near native-like command of grammar with few or no errors
- Has strong command of sentence boundaries, essay format, spelling and mechanics

Reading and Writing Rubric

Main Idea, Gives Supporting Details and Inferences Rubric

Category	4	3	2	1
Identifies Main Ideas in Reading	Attempts to identify the main idea(s); however, the main idea may be stated incorrectly or may be missing	Identifies the main idea(s), and includes some supporting details.	Identifies the main idea(s) correctly, and includes many supporting details.	Clearly and accurately identifies the main idea(s), and includes most of the relevant supporting details
Expresses Main Ideas and supporting details	May contain few, incorrect or irrelevant details	Much of the response is copied directly from the text. May contain major inaccuracies	Response is written mostly in the student's own words. May contain minor inaccuracies	Response is written in the student's own words.
Makes and supports inferences appropriately	Fails to make an inference, or makes an inference which is illogical or irrelevant	Makes a general inference about character(s) and/or event(s) with few/no supporting details or uses irrelevant details	Makes a general inference about character(s) and/or events(s) with some supporting details, or uses irrelevant details.	Makes logical and relevant inferences about character(s) and/or event(s). Details from the reading support the inferences made.

Dianne McKay
Mission College
9/25/2007

Appendix 5 Resources for Chapter 14

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