English 110 Faculty Development Workshop

Sequencing Assignments and Tailoring Assignments to Course Objectives
November 14, 2007

Goals
• To share successful sequenced and objectives-linked assignments.
• To discuss benefits and characteristics of strategic sequencing.
• To examine strategies for designing assignments in support of course objectives.
• To highlight how recommended textbooks support a variety of ENG 110 assignments.
• To experiment with using backwards course design.

Supporting an Instructional Goal
An on-going instructional goal is to connect activities and assignments to the course objectives throughout the semester. By explicitly linking what we do to our common objectives, we help students understand how these varied projects all work in support of the English 110 Objectives. It’s easier to make these connections explicit when we have intentionally designed our assignments to support one or more of the objectives. By sequencing assignments, we have an opportunity to extend these connections by scaffolding student development towards meeting multiple objectives. Please see the examples below for an illustration of this correspondence.

Examples of Sequenced Assignments

1. Annotated Bibliography → Field Research Report → Proposal

   Connection to Obj. 1: This sequence prompts careful examination of the writing process by isolating planning/drafting activities associated with research. It also demonstrates the recursive nature of the writing process since students continue to return to previous steps (library and field research) to support later stages and must reexamine and repurpose their original work for a new composing context.

   Connection to Obj. 2: This sequence introduces students to three purposes for writing (summarizing existing research/scholarship, reporting on field research, and synthesizing research to support a proposed plan of action) and at least two audiences (peers or other readers with a shared interest in the research topic and stakeholders who could enact change).

   Connection to Obj. 3: By writing a proposal, students examine the potential impact their writing can have on the world around them. The extent that the sequence supports this objective can be modified by altering the nature and amount of interaction with the stakeholders in the proposal.
2. **Annotated Bibliography ➔ Synthesis Paper ➔ Academic Argument ➔ Proposal**

   Connection to Obj. 1: This sequence prompts careful examination of the writing process by isolating planning/drafting activities associated with research and synthesizing sources. As in example one, it also demonstrates the recursive nature of the writing process since students continue to return to previous steps to support later stages and must reexamine and repurpose their original work for a new composing context.

   Connection to Obj. 2: This sequence introduces students to four purposes for writing (creating a working bibliography, synthesizing existing research, presenting information to a disciplinary community, and proposing a course of action) and at least three audiences (self, readers with a shared interest in the research topic, an academic discourse community, and stakeholders who could enact change).

   Connection to Obj. 3: By investing time to create a selective working bibliography, students positively impact their future writing tasks. By writing a proposal, students examine the potential impact their writing can have on the world around them. The extent that the sequence supports this objective can be modified by altering the nature and amount of interaction with the stakeholders in the proposal.

3. **Profile ➔ Rhetorical Analysis ➔ Proposal**

   Connection to Obj. 1: Profiling the stakeholder and analyzing the stakeholder’s discourse conventions forefronts invention activities and teaches students strategies for conducting inquiry to learn about their audience.

   Connection to Obj. 2: By profiling a potential stakeholder in a proposal topic, students learn about their readers for the later assignment. The rhetorical analysis of the stakeholder’s discourse helps students understand their future readers’ expectations and help them understand how conventions vary. The proposal assignment then gives them an opportunity to write for a specific audience – one who might vary for each proposal drafted by class members.

4. **Other Sequences?**

**Objectives-Based Course Design**

1. **Backwards Course Design**

   Backwards Course Design helps faculty plan their course assignments and activities around the goals they are trying to achieve. As the attached worksheets suggest, faculty begin Backwards Course Design by identifying their objectives or desired student
learning outcomes. Faculty then determine what would serve as appropriate evidence that students have achieved the objectives; evidence could include successful completion of objectives-based assignments or the ability to apply previous ideas to a new task. Next, faculty plan relevant direct instruction and related student activities to support student learning.

This step-by-step strategy for course design helps faculty ensure that their classes support the course objectives and that they are scaffolding students’ progress towards meeting those objectives.

Additional course planning tools are included in the College Writing Faculty Handbook.

2. Sample Assignments Contributed by Colleagues

- Ashley Holmes’ Multigenre Research Project
  (http://org.elon.edu/catl/gallery/holmes/)
  "Frustrated with the constraints of the traditional research paper, I changed the final project in my College Writing course to a multigenre research paper in which students combined text and images to relay a rhetorical message on a researched topic."

- Tim Peeples’ “On Writing Well” Wikispaces Project
  (http://onwritingwell.wikispaces.com/Seeing+Writing+Well)
  Students investigated writing processes and rhetorical strategies for different rhetorical situations.

- Jean Schwind’s “Gender Roles and the Media” Field Research Project
  (See attached guidelines and peer response form.)
  Students conduct field research to investigate how the media presents gender roles; they present and analyze their findings in a written report.

Recommended Textbooks – Supporting Objectives-Related Assignments

1. A Meeting of Minds

- Synthesis – Chapter 7, “Synthesizing the Perspectives of Others”
- Academic Argument – Chapter 8, “Taking a Position: The Academic Argument”
- Rhetorical Analysis – Chapter 4, “Analyzing”
- Process Strategies – Chapter 2, “Reading and Writing Strategically;” Chapter 11, “Revising;” & Chapter 12, “Editing”
2. **Work in Progress**
   - Rhetorical Analysis – Part Two, “Rhetorical Situations”
   - Academic Argument – Part Four, “Analyzing and Writing Academic Arguments”

3. **Everything’s an Argument**
   - Rhetorical Analysis – Chapter 5, “Thinking Rhetorically”
   - Academic Argument – Most of the Book!
   - Proposals – Chapter 11, “Proposals”
   - Process Strategies – Chapter 6, “Structuring Arguments”

4. **The Brief Thomson Handbook**
   - Academic Argument – Chapter 7, “Writing Arguments”
   - Research Strategies – Section 3, “Conducting Research”

**Resources**

Blackboard Resources:
- Sample Assignments Section
- Workshop Materials Section

**Upcoming Faculty Development Opportunities – Mark Your Calendars**

- **Nov 28th, 12:10 – 1:10 PM, College Writing Reading Group (Alamance 101)**
  Bring your lunch and join us for the final meeting of the College Writing Reading Group. We will discuss “What is Backward Design” by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe. Copies are available in the department mailroom.

- **Spring Faculty Development Workshops**
  - February 13, 12:10 – 1:10 PM
  - March 12, 12:10 – 1:10 PM
  - April 9, 12:10 – 1:10 PM
Gender Roles and the Media
(Contributed by Jean Schwind)

Introduction
While the "facts" that you interpret and evaluate in humanities classes are usually in print and nonprint texts (literary, philosophical, and religious works; paintings; musical compositions; theatrical performances, etc.), the "facts" studied by social scientists are often empirical. That is, they are derived from the direct observation of people and social institutions in field research. The aim of this paper is to give you some experience in conducting the kind of field research that is a central means of gathering information in sociology, psychology, political science, economics, anthropology, journalism, and other disciplines.

An area of social science research that interests psychologists, sociologists, and educators is gender socialization, the process by which we form a masculine or feminine identity. A gender role is a set of cultural expectations that prescribes how females and males should act, think, and feel. Many cultural institutions contribute to our definitions of gender roles: the family, schools, popular media, religious groups, legislatures and courts, literature, etc.

Adolescence is a particularly crucial period in the formation of gender identity. Theorists and researchers believe that gender-role training becomes more intense at puberty as adolescents become increasingly aware of gender expectations. According to the gender intensification hypothesis, "psychological and behavioral differences between boys and girls become greater during early adolescence because of increased socialization pressures to conform to traditional masculine and feminine gender roles" (Santrock, 2005, p. 220). In other words, as boys and girls develop into adults physically, they are encouraged (by parents, teachers, and friends) to behave in more stereotypically masculine and feminine ways. (For example, I was admonished to "Sit like a lady!")

Responding to this new pressure to conform to gender roles, adolescents develop heightened sensitivity to all the information our culture provides about what it means to be a man or woman. The media (TV, films, music, Internet, magazines, newspapers, electronic games, etc.) are a major source of this information. Sociologists have determined that “the average 8-to 18-year-old in the United States spends more than 7 hours a day—more than 49 hours a week—using media” (Santrock, p. 485). Mass media present models of masculinity and femininity that influence adolescents' gender attitudes and behavior.

Assignment:
Design a mini field research project that will help you to answer an interesting or important question about the gender role models presented to American adolescents by the mass media. Conduct your research, and then write a research report that presents and analyzes your findings.

There are three major field research methods: interviews, observations, and questionnaires or surveys. Use observation or a simple survey for this assignment.

Directions:
1) Brainstorm to come up with a list of research questions about gender role modeling in the media that you might investigate. Be careful to limit your field of research (i.e., one teen magazine or one TV show with a predominantly adolescent viewing audience) and to keep your research question narrow (i.e., "What subjects dominate the advice columns of Seventeen?" or "According to Grey's Anatomy, what do men want?"). Some other examples:

- Survey: Whose photograph will be correctly identified by more college women—Sandra Day O'Connor or Lindsay Lohan? Condoleezza Rice or Beyoncé?
- Whose photograph will be correctly identified by more college males—Clarence Thomas or Chris Rock? Dick Cheney or Peyton Manning?
- Do the ads in Maxim and Vogue present men as “success objects”? (Callaghan, 2007, p. 401)
- How do the current “Top Favorite” videos on YouTube model male or female gender roles?
- How do the Cover Girl (or Levi's or Gap or Jockey) models in 1987 and 2007 issues of Seventeen or Sports Illustrated compare and contrast? Are "ideal" women growing stronger? More assertive? More "serious" looking (i.e., in business suits rather than flimsy dresses)? Do men look sweet and approachable? Fierce and “don't mess with me”?
- What are the major concerns of the female characters on Gossip Girls or The Hills?
• What are the major concerns of the male characters in The Simpsons?
• How does Kayne West’s Graduation define male or female gender roles? (Track 8, “Drunk and Hot Girls” looks promising.)
• What do Tiger Woods and Maria Sharapova (Teen Choice Male and Female Athletes of the Year for 2007) reveal about gender difference in ideals of athleticism?
• What does “The Way I Are” suggest about the difference between a “lame” guy and a real man?
• Is Ms. Pac-Man a feminist?
• Do ads for identical or similar products (i.e., body wash, cars, Coke) significantly differ in Cosmo and GQ? Do these differences reflect gender norms?

2) Decide on the question you'd most like to answer through field research. It must be a question that interests you. Then determine your research method: What TV show, video, website, electronic game, CD, etc. will you observe—and why? What exactly will you be looking for? How will you tabulate your observations? If you're doing a simple survey, how will you frame your survey question(s)? How will you select your respondents? How many responses will you solicit? What will you tell your respondents about the purpose of your survey? What will “count” for a right answer? (Is “that black guy running for president” good enough for “Barack Obama”?) Be sure your project is narrowly defined and doable within 1 1/2 weeks.

3) Conduct your field research. Keep your eyes open for significant and unexpected details. Take careful notes on what you see and hear. If you're examining ads or other print media, reproduce two or three of the best as illustrations for your report. (Do not take pages out of library periodicals.) Copy full URLs if you're using Web sites.

4) Write your research report. Assume that your audience is a professor in an introductory sociology or psychology class. Your report should include these four parts (and use these subheadings):

a) Introduction: clearly poses the question that you hoped to answer through field research, explains why this question is important, and presents a preliminary hypothesis;

b) Methodology: carefully describes how you designed and conducted your research (see section 2, above);

c) Data: presents your findings (a chart or graph is often the best way to do this);

d) Discussion: interprets your data by explaining the significance of your findings and showing how these findings confirm or contradict your hypothesis.

5) Your final report should be about 3 pages. Title your report and use the more "objective" style preferred for scientific research reports. (Avoid the first person.) If you cite any secondary sources, use the APA method of documentation. That is the preferred documentation style in the social sciences, and is modeled in this handout. See Callaghan (pp. 533-550) for details.

6) Papers will be evaluated according to these criteria:

- Does the paper include all four parts described in section 4 (above)?
- Are all parts of the research report clearly and fully presented?
- Are the writer's findings reliable? Persuasively presented?
- Is the report well written in the scientific research report style?

7) Drafts of this paper (plus group copies) are due Tuesday, October 9. (There are serious penalties for failing to attend drafting conference: see the course syllabus.) Revisions are due Thursday, October 18. (This is a revised date.)

References


Draft conference, paper 3: Gender Roles and the Media  
October 9, 2007

Respondent: ____________    Paper's author: ____________

1) Follow along as the writer reads the paper aloud. Then record your first impression: What is your initial reaction to this paper? Is the draft complete? Interesting? Reread the paper after recording your first impression. Make marginal notes on the draft and answer questions 2-6.

2) What question about gender roles presented to adolescents by the media is the writer attempting to answer through field research? Is it clearly and narrowly defined? How is the importance of this research question explained? Does the writer present a tentative hypothesis?

3) Is the research methodology adequately explained? How might the methodology description be improved?

4) Is the data gathered through field research clearly presented? Would a chart or table be better than a narrative presentation of data? Has adequate data been gathered?

5) What conclusion(s) does the writer derive from the research data? Are these conclusions valid and clearly supported by the data? Does the writer explain the significance of his/her findings? Explain.

6) Is the paper well written? Documented in APA style? Does it use the “objective” style favored for scientific research reports? Is the lead effective?
## Designing Your Course: Desired Results

All sections of College Writing aim to achieve the following results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives: Students develop a/an…</th>
<th>Sophisticated writing process—including invention, peer responding, revising, and editing—that results in a clear, effective, well edited public piece</th>
<th>Sophisticated understanding of the relationship of purpose, audience, and voice, and an awareness that writing expectations and conventions vary across rhetorical situations</th>
<th>Appreciation for the capacity of writing to change oneself and the world</th>
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<tr>
<td>Experiences: Students will…</td>
<td>Write to persuade by analyzing, interpreting, researching, synthesizing, and evaluating a wide variety of sources</td>
<td>Write to academic audience, to non-academic audiences, and for one’s own purposes</td>
<td>Write on the spot (determining the audience and purpose of given writing situations)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consistency: Students can expect that…</td>
<td>The majority of writing in English 110 is argumentative/persuasive</td>
<td>Credit for process is no more than one-third of a student’s grade</td>
<td>Courses addressing a single theme or topic are preapproved exceptions, rather than the norm</td>
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### Designing Your Course: Determine Acceptable Evidence

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Shared Objective</strong></th>
<th>Sophisticated writing process—including invention, peer responding, revising, and editing—that results in a clear, effective, well edited public piece</th>
<th>Sophisticated understanding of the relationship of purpose, audience, and voice, and an awareness that writing expectations and conventions vary across rhetorical situations</th>
<th>Appreciation for the capacity of writing to change oneself and the world</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acceptable Evidence (Assignments, Projects, Graded Activities, etc.)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Brainstorm as many options as possible</td>
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<td>• Consider sequencing related assignments across objectives</td>
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<td>• Identify possible assignments that also support the ENG 110 shared experiences</td>
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Designing Your Course: Determine Acceptable Evidence – Meeting Objectives & Experiences

How could your objective-linked assignment facilitate offering students the identified shared experiences?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shared Experiences</th>
<th>Objective 1 Assignment:</th>
<th>Objective 2 Assignment:</th>
<th>Objective 3 Assignment:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing to persuade by analyzing, interpreting, researching, synthesizing, and evaluating a wide variety of sources</td>
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<td>Writing to academic audiences, to non-academic audiences, and for one’s one purposes</td>
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<td>Writing on the spot</td>
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<td>Presenting work/writing orally</td>
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## Designing Your Course: Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction

<table>
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<th>Objective 1 Assignment:</th>
<th>Objective 2 Assignment:</th>
<th>Objective 3 Assignment:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Relevant Direct Instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Related In-Class and Out-of-Class Activities to Support Student Learning &amp; Completion of the Assignment</td>
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Designing Your Course: Experience Checklist

Will my course design ensure that students receive instruction in and have opportunities to practice…?

- Analyzing Rhetorical Situations
  - Audience & Purpose Analysis
  - Convention Analysis
  - Rhetoric Terminology

- Writing for Varied Audiences and Purposes
  - Writing to Academic Audiences
  - Writing to Non-Academic Audiences
  - Writing for One’s Own Purpose

- Developing a Successful and Individualized Writing Process
  - Invention (freewriting brainstorming, clustering, etc.)
  - Planning & Drafting (controlling purpose/thesis, workable plan, etc.)
  - Peer Response
  - Self-Assessment of Writing
  - Revision
  - Editing
  - Independently Planning & Managing the Writing Process

- Writing Academic Arguments

- Developing and Refining Research Questions

- Identifying and Evaluating Print and Electronic Sources

- Integrating Research
  - Summarizing and Synthesizing Sources
  - Using Source Material as Evidence
  - Meeting Conventions for Citing Sources

- Presenting Work/Writing Orally

- Managing Several of the Above Strategies/Practices At Once?