English 110 Faculty Development Workshop

Supporting Students
February 11, 2009

Goals

- To discuss strategies for making approved classroom accommodations to support students with learning disabilities
- To examine best practices for working with second language writers.
- To share approaches for supporting students who need more assistance than you think you can offer on your own.

Responding to Faculty Requests
This workshop’s topics stem from special requests made by ENG 110 faculty.

Approved Classroom Accommodations to Support Students with Learning Disabilities

- **Understanding Classroom Accommodations [From the Disabilities Services Website]**
  “Elon University is committed to the principle of equal opportunity. One of the ways we express that commitment is in our efforts to accommodate qualified students with disabilities as they face the challenges of university life. Faculty, staff, administrators and students work together to find approaches and accommodations that enable students to benefit from the wide variety of programs and activities on campus.”

- **Recommended Statement to Include on Syllabus and on Blackboard**
  “If you are a student with a documented disability who will require accommodations in this course, please register with Disabilities Services in the Duke Building, Room 108 (278-6500) for assistance in developing a plan to address your academic needs.”

- **Special Concerns for Possible Discussion**
  - Note Takers (See Susan Wise’s Recent Email)
  - Accommodations for Dysgraphia (inability to write words with appropriate syntax or physical difficulty with handwriting)
  - Accommodations for Asperger Syndrome
  - Others?

- **General Tips**
  - Give both oral and written instructions for assignments/activities;
  - At the beginning of class, briefly review the previous class session and outline or preview the current class session;
  - Summarize material at the end of class (or ask a student to);
  - Face the class when speaking;
  - Augment discussions with visual materials and handouts; and
  - Offer opportunities for students to ask questions.
  - You can find additional tips on the Learning Disabilities website ([http://www.elon.edu/e-web/academics/advising/disabilserv.xhtml](http://www.elon.edu/e-web/academics/advising/disabilserv.xhtml))
Best Practices for Working with Second Language Writers

- *Highlights from the CCCC Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers*
  - Many second language writers are highly literate in their first language. Others have never learned to write in their first language (although the first statement is much more representative of Elon’s second language writers).
  - Second language writers might be international students, refugees, or naturalized or native-born U.S. citizens.
  - Although linguistic differences might be most obvious, second language writers also are navigating cultural and educational differences.

- *Prioritize Feedback*
  - **Higher Order Concerns over Lower Order Concerns**
    Since second language writers are negotiating linguistic, cultural, and educational differences – in addition to learning to respond to rhetorical situations and developing their own sophisticated writing processes – they need feedback on higher order concerns (development, organization, integrating research, etc.), just like their native-speaking peers.
  - **One or Two Lower Order Concerns at a Time**
    If lower order concerns are distracting, prioritize your feedback (in the context of the student’s writing) rather than marking everything. What’s most distracting to readers or most interferes with intended meaning? Focus on that error for this assignment and save comments on other lower order concerns for the next assignment. It also often helps students if you reference specific sections or entries in a reliable handbook that they can refer to as they are reading your feedback and editing their future writing.

- *Talk with Jessie for additional ideas tailored to your student’s needs*
  Working with second language writers is my area of expertise. It’s what first drew me to English Studies, and I continue to work with colleagues on national and international, interdisciplinary projects in support of second language writers (and learning more about second language writing). I’m happy to visit with you about strategies specific to your class and students.

Supporting Writers who Need Additional Resources/Feedback

- *Understanding ENG 100: Introduction to College Writing and our placement practices*
  Students who place into ENG 100 take it concurrently with ENG 110 during the fall semester. ENG 100 offers students extensive one-on-one consultations with writing faculty and makes frequent use of conferences. While students might opt to work on ENG 110 projects within this context, they also have the opportunity to solicit feedback on writing they are doing for other classes. Students who place into ENG 100 are strongly encouraged to take it but not required to.
Making Time for Conferences
With the course’s focus on helping students develop sophisticated writing processes, it is appropriate and beneficial to build conferences into your semester schedule. These opportunities for one-one-one or small group feedback help you tailor instruction to each student’s strengths and needs.

Teaching Students Strategies for Asking for Feedback
Giving students opportunities to develop their own peer feedback questions – and modeling how to ask for helpful feedback – will help students transfer this part of the writing process to other contexts. What techniques do we use to help students acquire and hone this skill?

Writing Center
- Trained peer consultants can meet with students working on any kind of writing at any stage of the writing process.
- Recommending the Writing Center and teaching students strategies for asking for specific feedback can help students identify the Writing Center as a resource they can use anytime during their educational career. But please don’t require students to visit the Writing Center without first visiting with the Writing Center Director...

Other ideas?

Brief Report on Fall Assessments

- We’re covering research and citation conventions (faculty and students agree), but our direct assessment suggests that students are not meeting our information literacy expectations as consistently as we would like. In part, we might be encountering a developmental threshold. Yet how might we reconsider how we teach, and facilitate practice in, integrating research? (Focus of March Workshop)
- We have strong coverage of the writing process, but actually drafting texts gets less attention than invention, revising, and editing.
- Our perspective of what we do in the course of a semester is fairly similar to our students’, although our median is a bit higher on the scale.

Upcoming English 110 Events – Mark Your Calendars
- Remaining Spring Lunch Workshops – March 11th and April 8th
- Spring College Writing Showcase Proposals Due – March 31st
- College Writing Showcase – April 27th
- Direct Assessment Packets due to Jessie – May 22nd
Taking, Posting, and Responding to Class Minutes
(Contributed by Prudence Layne)

The Class Minutes serve several functions:

1. the creation of a discussion board forum for us to continue stimulating conversation generated in class
2. a reminder for everyone of the daily class events
3. an opportunity for absentees to respond to the discussion issues of the day
4. a chance for me to see what the class learned (sometimes the message gets lost in the translation). The Minutes give me a chance to respond to and clarify items.
5. a “built-in” participation credit for you

TAKING MINUTES:

When it is your turn to take Minutes, treat the duty as if you were taking notes for a friend who missed class. This does not mean you need to record every detail. Record the significant items, such as instructor announcements, syllabus changes, colleague news, and engaging topics, statements, and questions that emerge from class discussions.

At the end of taking minutes, you should reflect on the day’s activities within the larger context of the class. For example, you might address the question of how the day’s activities and discussions help to clarify or complicate some of the issues we are discussing in the course.

POSTING MINUTES:

Compose your minutes in Microsoft word and send them to me at playne@elon.edu as an attachment only before noon on the day after class. I will check the minutes for clarity and accuracy before posting them to the Blackboard site. Minutes received in a timely manner will be posted before the next class meeting. Late and improperly formatted minutes not following the above guidelines are penalized.

ACCESSING MINUTES:

Go to the “course documents” section of the site. In the class minutes folder, look for the dated thread to access the course minutes. Any student may respond to the minute taker’s reflections, and may pose questions and comments to that person as they wish.
Instructor's *SAMPLE* Class Minutes

Name of Minute Taker
Course Number and Section
Date Minutes Taken

IN CLASS WORK SUMMARY:
The instructor began class with an introduction to the text, its organization, guiding principles, goals, and philosophies. Although we ran out of time, we will continue the discussion along that same vein during the coming week. However, a copy of the lecture/text summary may be downloaded from the lecture notes folder on Blackboard (BB) under the "course documents" section. The class began to address the issue of feminism. Using the text’s general and very broad definition of the term, students talked about some of the issues women faced in both personal and broader terms. One of the goals of this semester is for each student to derive his/her own definition based on individual cultural and social contexts. What became clear from the discussions was that we all hold varied and diverse beliefs about women's roles in local and global communities. The challenge, therefore, seems to be finding common ground and ways of working together for women's liberation and fighting against the various oppressions women face.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS:
- Only the feminist reader anthology is required for the class. If there are any other texts in the bookstore under our class section, please do not purchase them. If you have already bought them, please return immediately.
- A list of persons taking class minutes and dates of presentations will be made available via the course website after the last day to add/drop.
- Students are expected to bring their textbooks to each class meeting.

HOMEWORK FOR MONDAY:
On Monday, each student is to bring one or two items to class that she believes speak to the oppression and/liberation in her own life as a woman or in the lives of women they know. The item may consist of an article of clothing such as a bra or corset, a piece of legislation, an article from a newspaper or magazine, or a photograph. There is no limit on what you can bring. Simply, be prepared to discuss your selection in class and the way you see it operating in the world of women.

REFLECTIONS:
Before the class, several female students admitted that they never felt “oppressed” because of gender. The male students questioned whether it was possible for men to operate or live from a feminist viewpoint. Given the nature of the readings and the diverse viewpoints initially expressed, it is highly unlikely that we will be able to reach a consensus as a class about whether feminism is relevant, or if we can find a single, homogenous way of approaching the challenges that confront us. Please feel free to share your own thoughts and comments about anything I have said.