

Revisiting the Approach to and Curriculum Design of English/LLD 100A:
A Report for the Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions
(AANAPISI) Project at San Jose State University

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Abstract

English/Linguistics and Language Development 100A: Writing Competency through Genres is a course at San José State University for students who have failed the Writing Skills Test at least once and need more coursework in reading and writing. SJSU has experienced and dedicated lecturers who teach the course, and the current curriculum has many strengths that help students become more confident and skilled writers. However, the required workload for the course, though needed, creates a stressful, if not chaotic, environment for both students and instructors that sacrifices quality of writing and thinking to quantity of work. Before this review, a systematic evaluation of 100A, its curriculum, and its exit standards had yet to be performed. Research had yet to be conducted on the effectiveness of the course design and materials in preparing students for 100W and upper division coursework, and the effects of the curriculum design on student and instructor attitude and performance. Therefore, this project provides an in-depth holistic analysis of the 100A context in order to increase understanding of 100A, its students and instructors, align the curriculum more realistically with the classroom environment and other campus writing courses and programs, and promote student and instructor satisfaction, motivation and engagement.

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I. Background of English/Linguistics and Language Development 100A

University writing standards are critical to continuing the credibility of universities, ensuring that universities remain competitive and provide a competent workforce to state, national, and international communities. Standard writing tests and developmental writing courses are gatekeeping mechanisms to students who are underprepared for the rigors of academia. Statistics indicate that anywhere from one third to one half of students nationwide enter the university requiring developmental coursework in writing, math, or both (Attewell et al., 2006; Bettinger and Long, 2005; Callahan and Chumney, 2009), an effect of creating a more equitable and accessible public university for students of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds over the last forty years (Ferris, 2009; Shin & Bruno, 2003). Although a number of studies have evaluated developmental writing programs and courses at colleges and universities (Attewell et al., 2006; Bettinger and Long, 2005; Callahan and Chumney, 2009; Garcia, 2009; Masters, 2010; Tubb, 1998), it is important to note that approaches that may work at one college or university will not work at another. For example, developmental writing programs in California, where 43% of its population speaks a language other than English at home (“United States Census Bureau”), should differ in their approach to similar programs from other states that do not have such a diverse ethnic and linguistic population. Even approaches to developmental writing at different campuses within the same state should differ depending on student demographics, current writing program structures, policies, and other factors.

San José State University (SJSU) is a metropolitan state university in downtown San José, California that serves about 30,000 students and is one of the most diverse universities in the nation, with 56% of the fall 2011 population reporting a minority ethnicity (“San José State University”). Last year, the SJSU Research Foundation was awarded a \$2 million federal grant to improve the writing skills of students. According to university data on the 2010 freshman class, the grant will support a large portion of current students:

... nearly half of all freshman at San José State were not proficient in English. About 70 percent of black students, 60 percent of Hispanic students, 50 percent of Asian-American students and 30 percent of white students in the class of 2014 needed to take remedial English courses. (Goll, 2011)

In recent years, SJSU has taken steps to accommodate students in need of developmental writing courses. English/Linguistics and Language Development (LLD) 100A: Writing Competency through Genres is an intensive three-unit course at SJSU that satisfies the university standard Writing Skills Test (WST) for students who fail the test at least once (Gabor, 2011). The WST serves as one of two components that satisfy the California State University standard Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) (Gabor, 2011). ENGL/LLD 100A was designed with the rationale that “students who fail the WST repeatedly need writing instruction; the test does not provide instruction, only assessment” (Gabor, 2011, p. 5). It began as an experimental course (called 96S) in Summer Session 2010, was not offered in fall 2010, and returned again as an experimental course in Spring 2011. From summer 2011 to the present fall 2013, it has run as a regular session course, ENGL/LLD 100A (Gabor, 2011). Therefore, 100A has only one full year as a non-experimental course at SJSU.

The current curriculum for 100A was designed by a subcommittee of the Writing Requirements Committee (WRC), consisting of members of the English and Linguistics and

Language Development (LLD) departments, among other departments in the College of Humanities and the Arts (Gabor, 2011). In AY 2010-2011, of the six members on this committee, only one of them taught 100A. As of 2013, the sub-committee now consists of two current 100A lecturers. The 100A curriculum takes “a genre-based approach to help students improve their writing and to develop students' awareness of the kinds of writing they will encounter in their professions” (“Academic English Program”). The curriculum also involves teaching rhetorical devices explicitly, integration of a full-length novel, and a requirement of 8,000 words of writing per student, the last of which is a requirement set by SJSU's Board of General Studies (BoGS) for all upper division writing courses.

The current 100A curriculum is intense and demanding on both students and instructors. Students who are deemed underprepared for upper division writing are required to write 8,000 words in 13 weeks (Masters, 2012). English 1A and 1B, SJSU's freshmen composition courses, requires the same 8,000-word requirement, but students receive a full 15-week semester to fulfill the requirement. To produce 8,000 words in 13 weeks as opposed to 15 weeks produces tremendous stress in students who have weak writing skills, leads to attitudes of resentment towards the instructor and course, and has impacted campus writing and tutoring centers. Many students complain that they cannot get an appointment at campus tutoring and writing centers because of the popularity of these centers.

Research indicates that “successful remedial programs set high standards, are focused on inquiry and problem-solving in a substantial curriculum, use a pedagogy that is supportive and interactive,” and much more (Rose, 2009; Roberts-Miller, n.d.; Kuh et al., 2010). The 100A curriculum currently provides this; however, with the current required workload, the grading burden on instructors is substantial, as they also are required to take students through a three-stage drafting process for all three papers in only 13 weeks: a peer review, a second draft commented on by instructors, and a graded, final draft. As well, instructors are encouraged to hold personal, one-on-one conferences with each student for each of the three papers. For an instructor who teaches three sections, this means she might hold up to 180 conferences in three months. One-on-one time with the instructor is important for students who have been quickly pushed along through writing courses their entire academic careers. It is a lot of work to hold these conferences, but they are an important part of these writers' development.

Lastly, grades for the entire course are based on students' final portfolio and a timed, written final exam. Prior points for work, tests, and participation gained prior to turning in the final portfolio are not weighted into the final grade. In the past, a miscellany of people have composed the 100A grading committee, including instructors, the coordinator, members of the Writing Requirements Committee, and faculty who do not teach the course, who read and grade all portfolios and final exams at the end of the semester. For spring 2012, each portfolio was graded twice: once by the instructor of the students and once by another instructor or committee member. Each final exam was also graded twice, but the instructor of the student was not one of the graders. Because of the complex and cumbersome grading system, the coordinator has changed the process every semester; the course is continuously seeking a stable and valid standard of grading, which has not yet been developed. Currently, students' final grades are not based on the points and grades that they receive on assignments throughout the semester. Instead, the entire final grade is based on an end-of-semester writing portfolio, which consists of three out-of-class essays that have been revised one last time by the student and a cover letter, and an

in-class final exam. The portfolio of revised student work is worth 70% of the final grade, and the in-class final exam is worth 30% of the grade.

ENGL/LLD 100A is a “high stakes” course. Students who fail the course do not graduate to upper-division coursework and must spend the following semester retaking 100A or retaking the WST. In essence, one semester taking the course and failing, followed by another semester either taking the course or the WST equates to one full year that the student has not been able to progress toward his or her degree. Students feel that they have wasted both their time and money, and instructors who have little influence on curriculum and grading policies become targets of student frustration. Documented cases of student harassment toward 100A instructors exist. Thus, it is of the utmost importance to revisit the curriculum and grading policies of 100A to design a more valid and effective model that has a less stressful impact on both instructors and students.

II. A Review of the Literature on Students in Writing Programs

Not much literature exists on the complexity of developmental writing programs at the university level. Most literature focuses on second language learners (L2) and neglects or subordinates definitions and experiences of other students who take these courses, like students with disabilities, native-English speaking students from non-immigrant backgrounds, older returning students, and others. This is not to fault past research: the majority of students who take developmental writing courses are second language learners, and their needs are legitimate and demanding. However, to ignore other students who take this course is a disservice to those students, whose needs take a backseat to those of L2 students, and is also a disservice to lecturers who can benefit from research that helps them better understand and work with their diverse classrooms. This review aims to define the students who take developmental writing courses in an attempt to show the variety of different students, student needs and goals, and student obstacles that one lecturer in one classroom has to attempt to work with.

Second language (L2) students of English

Since L2 students typically make up the majority of developmental writing courses, and because the terminology to describe L2 students is complex, I will begin with the definitions and experiences of these students, then move on to describe students with disabilities and other students in these courses. Ferris (2009) provides structured definitions of the complexity of the term “second language learner,” which I provide on page 8. Complicating these definitions is a number of other “categories” of students who do not completely fit one category or the other. For example, “early-arriving resident” does not necessarily define the student who is born in the U.S., lives here for a few years (possibly even attending a year or two of elementary school), returns to his/her parents’ home country for several years (attending some school in this country and language), then later returns to the U.S. for a few years of middle school or high school. Another example that complicates both the “late-arriving” and “early-arriving” definitions is

what Ferris (2009) refers to as “resident immigrants,” like “refugees from war-torn Southeast Asian countries and others seeking economic opportunity or religious or political asylum” (p. 5).

Term	Definition
Second language (L2) student	Students whose first language (the language to which they were exposed in the home as young children) is not English
International student	L2 students born, raised, and educated in another country who come temporarily to the U.S. on a foreign student visa for a short-term educational or training program <i>with the stated intent to return to the home country when the program is completed.</i>
Late-arriving resident student	L2 students who intend to reside permanently in the U.S. and who arrived after age 10 and/or who have been in the U.S. fewer than eight years.
Early-arriving resident student	L2 resident students who were born in the U.S. to immigrant parents, who arrived in the U.S. prior to age 10, or who have been in the U.S. eight years or longer

Table 1: Definitions of types of L2 learners as described by Ferris (2009, p. 4)

International students are temporary residents on student visas, with the largest sending nations as India, China, Republic of Korea, Japan, Canada, and Taiwan (Ferris, 2009). California is the largest receiving state of international students (Ferris, 2009). According to Reid (1997; 1998/2006b), since it is costly and difficult to study in a foreign country, many international students hail from advantaged economic origins. Generally speaking, international students are hardworking, bright, and motivated...[but]...[t]heir desire to assimilate or integrate with U.S. culture may be non-existent or limited, and they may socialize only with other international students, particularly those from the same language and cultural background” (Ferris, 2009, p. 13-14). Thus, although they are educationally motivated and intelligent, they are doing themselves a disservice by limiting their social spheres to only students who speak their same language.

Late-arriving L2 students, unlike international students often study little to no English prior to coming to the United States, so these students, hoping to continue education in the U.S., will begin at community colleges, “...which are relatively inexpensive, tend to have extensive ESL and/or remedial English offerings, and offer open admissions and the opportunity to transfer later to a four-year public university” (Ferris, 2009, p. 17). Further dividing this terms, Ferris (2009) continues that late-arriving students are categorized as either *voluntary immigrants* or *refugees*, or those fleeing oppression or persecution. Some are financially stable, while others struggle financially, and “many work long hours at multiple jobs to survive and support their families...” (p. 18). They can be distracted or hindered by familial obligations, which can delay

their academic and language-learning progress. As for their language learning, late-arriving resident students better understand the long-term benefits of improving their L2 reading, writing, and speaking skills because, unlike international students, they intend assimilate to their new country and stay in the U.S. (Hartman & Tarone, 1999; Raimes, 1991). Ferris (2009) concludes that immigrant students "...might be more receptive to ...learning...the target...language. For them, the L2 is not just a means to a short-term end but rather a key to their future success and that of their children" (Ferris, 2009, p. 19).

Early-arriving students were raised and often born in the U.S., and California's K-12 and community college systems have been impacted substantially by this group (Ferris, 2009). Typically the children of first-generation immigrants, they often come from homes where parents work long hours at low-paying jobs and attend economically disadvantaged schools, and quite often, "they look and act like any other American teenager or young adult" (Ferris, 2009, p. 21). The linguistic and cultural makeup of these students is complex:

When asked what their 'first' language is, they may reply with their parents' L1, with English, or with confusion, not exactly sure what is meant by 'first'In terms of cultural and linguistic identity, they are truly 'in-between,' as implied when the Generation 1.5 label is used to describe them. (Ferris, 2009, p. 21)

Rumbaut and Ima (1988), who studied Southeast Asian refugee children in the 1970s and 1980s, are credited with bringing the term "Generation 1.5" into educational studies. Sometimes Generation 1.5 students speak their parents' language at home and English at school (Magrath, 2008), and often times teachers and administrators assume this is the case for all these students, even though a student may speak much English in the home. In some contexts, their first language may be their stronger language, while in other contexts, English may be their stronger language. Harklau (2000) presents a longitudinal, ethnographic study of three generation 1.5 high school students transitioning to community college. The students were placed into the English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) track after taking the college's placement exams, although they had tested out of ESOL in their later high school years. In community college, they had to take courses with recent immigrants and international students, learning about the U.S. culture and expectations that they had been exposed to for many years. As a consequence, the students "became ambivalent about the ESL instruction, which appeared to question their ability to function...in college or in the United States" (Harklau, 2000, p. 54). The once motivated students stopped participating and writing mundane assignments, becoming bored, resentful, and unmotivated (Harklau, 2000).

Complicating these definitions and these kinds of classes further is that developmental writing programs at university do not just serve L2 students (and the three distinct, diverse audiences that make up the term "L2"). Students with disabilities (physical, mental, and psychological), older students (veterans of the armed forces, students who worked after high school for several years, and others), and native English-speaking students are three more different populations in need of reading, writing, and critical thinking development. Lecturers, then, must not only be aware of the fluidity of the skills and experiences of L2 students, but also

have experience and knowledge pertaining to the just-as-complex term “disability,” as well as older and native-English speaking students.

Students with disabilities and native English-speaking students

Students with disabilities, diagnosed and undiagnosed, self-reported or unreported, take English 100A to learn skills that will help them better process and work through assignments. Just like the term “L2” is a vast term that does not specifically define the various kinds of students whose second language is English, the term “disability” cannot define the many students who work to overcome physical, psychological, and learning disabilities to be successful at university. I want to take a moment here to place my own experience with 100A and disability into perspective. Finishing only three years of teaching at SJSU this fall semester 2014, I have had as few as two and as many as six students with disabilities each semester in my 100A classrooms. As an English 1A lecturer, also, I have not once had a student registered with the Disability Resource Center (now Accessible Education Center). This is significant in showing that students with disabilities are a part of the 100A experience. In only three years of teaching 100A, I have had students with Asperger Syndrome, Tourette Syndrome, bipolar disorder, dyslexia, cerebral palsy, social anxiety disorder, and many more psychological, physical, and learning disabilities. Unlike my extensive education and experience with L2 students, I lack significant knowledge on how to work with these several kinds of disabilities.

The literature on students with disabilities in writing classrooms is sparse and tends to focus on students in the K-12 setting, not adults. However, research does describe the extra effort that educators must make to accommodate the needs of students, which is a difficult and time-consuming task that differs from the preparation lecturers must make for L2 students:

...depending on the disability itself and other factors affecting their ability to succeed academically, students may need modifications such as advance and graphic organizers, instructional scaffolding, additional practice and time to complete assignments, and/or alternative media (e.g., large-print materials, audiotapes, or electronic materials). Without specific modifications, the standard curricular materials can be inadequate for these students, and too frequently they can find themselves blocked from access to essential aspects of the curriculum. Teachers must adjust the materials or their presentation to break down the barriers and assist these students in learning.” (“Teaching Writing Skills,” 1999)

A thorough search for research turned up a handful of studies on students with learning disabilities in college-level writing programs, and even fewer studies that specifically focused on students with psychological obstacles like anxiety or mental disorders. Bardine (1997) describes common struggles with adults with disabilities in college writing classrooms, including “... frustration; poor study/note taking skills; test anxiety; lack of social skills; a difficult time following oral directions; trouble keeping up with group conversations; hard time with the act of handwriting; and reading, spelling, and remembering problems. LD students write less than normally achieving students and have great difficulty organizing their ideas” (1). To assist learners through material, Bardine (1997) recommends approaches that 100A is currently using,

particularly a whole language class that works with reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities. Pardes and Rich (1996) also support the current structure of 100A in assisting students with disabilities, promoting a curriculum of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and evaluation to teach students with disabilities to self-regulate their learning. Interrelating these skills build students as active participants in the classroom, which affects their motivation for writing and stimulates their noticing of connections (Bardine, 1997).

Because access to support for disabilities depends on students' reaching out to disability resources on campus, often disability goes undiagnosed. In many cultures, stigmas on disability keep students from seeking help if they think they might need, and research abounds on the topic of cultural stigma on physical, mental, and psychological disability (Biswas & Bhaumik, 2003; Katchergin, 2012; O'Hara, 2003). Even if culture does not play a role in particular students' seeking help, many students do not know that they have a disability. They may have been struggling for years undiagnosed, unfortunately attributing their poor performance in school to their intelligence. As well, educators not knowledgeable in disability may not know that a student is struggling with a disability, and might pass off a student's struggle as laziness, procrastination, or poor attitude. Bennett-Kastor (2004), after analyzing spelling abilities of university students in developmental writing courses, suggested that spelling and other errors possibly indicate that some students in writing programs may have undiagnosed learning disabilities. Of particular concern to Bennett-Kastor are the students who "actually attend [class], do assignments, and even succeed at mastering patterns of organization and development, yet consistently produce sentence fragments, run-ons, usage errors, mechanical mistakes, and poor word choices, indicating that attempts at bringing them up to college-level standards have failed" (2004, p. 68). The errors to an untrained eye may seem like "trivial lapses of attention" on the part of the student (p. 68); however, these errors coincide with research that has demonstrated that "some language learning disabilities manifest themselves in poor spelling skills..." (Bennett-Kastor, 2004, p. 70). Thus, it is difficult for lecturers, especially those not trained to help students with disabilities, to know how to help students who do not seem to grasp the basic spelling and grammar skills reviewed in class. Both lecturers and students may not see that a disability underlies the problems they are having in the classroom.

Older Returning Students

While some native-English speaking and L2 students have diagnosed or undiagnosed disabilities, other native English speakers are older students returning to school after working for several years or younger students who went to economically disadvantaged high schools. Because not much literature exists that documents the experiences of older students in university settings, I take an unorthodox approach by turning to personal experience for one moment to highlight some of my former students' backgrounds and exemplify the complexity of my students' experiences. I have had students who must bring their children to the classroom on occasion when they cannot find childcare that day. I have had students who work night shifts, then come straight to my class afterwards, not having any sleep. Other students take multiple buses or trains to get to campus each day. One particular student grew up in the East Bay and took a bus, then a train, and then another bus to make it to campus each day. Born and raised in

the U.S. to parents who were born and raised in the U.S., the student attended a high school that was so violent that the administration divided hallways and classrooms into sections for different members of different gangs so as to avoid conflict. According to the student, students who did not belong to a gang were separated by race. This segregation and violence obviously was a distraction to this student, who was unable to attain the necessary academic skills to succeed in college. This student is one of many examples of students who, born and raised in the U.S., require academic skills because of where they grew up in America. Apartheid schools are disturbing a reality in the U.S., where geography plays a huge role in the success of young people, and where today the average white student goes to a school with 77% white enrollment and the average black and Latino student goes to a school where 75% of the enrollment is made up of blacks and Latinos (Orfield, 2007). These students also add to 100A lecturers' responsibilities, as lecturers also teach life skills and study habits that are important to success in writing and in all classes and future jobs, such as planning one's life with the use of a daily planner, learning how to use the various resources on campus like tutoring or the library, and learning appropriate classroom and email etiquette.

These divisions and sub-divisions of students who take writing courses like 100A show the complex and difficult job that writing skills lecturers have. They must meet the varying needs of very different populations of students, while at the same time developing a balance between empathy and discipline that many students need to be successful. While lecturers require patience to work with students who are single mothers trying to go back to school, or who are recent immigrants who work all night before coming to class, they still must uphold the rules of the classroom and values of the university, stressing to these students the importance of completing assignments on time and in a meaningful manner. Thus, 100A remains rigorous and demanding, and students must rise to its bar, despite their diverse and often difficult backgrounds. A shortened, 13-week semester leaves no room for either student or lecturer to fall behind. Lessons on rhetoric, organization, style, tone, grammar, and mechanics are given in an attempt to foster improvement in reading, writing, and critical thinking skills. The class is so fast paced that students who miss more than two courses a semester are lost upon returning to class. These different students with different needs provide an important background to understanding the stresses involved with the current 100A curriculum. In order to evaluate that curriculum and how it aligns with student needs, I undertook the methodology of action research, a methodology that allows both students and lecturers an outlet to voice their positive and negative experiences and opinions on the current course structure.

III. Methodology

The purpose of my inquiry into the 100A environment was to gain a better understanding of how this class is taught and to "improve the conditions, efficiency, and ease of learning" (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 216), all elements of the practice of action research. I wanted to collect the concerns, suggestions, pattern recognitions, stress levels, and negative and positive experiences of students and lecturers of 100A into formal data in order to point to the course's strengths and weaknesses, as well as make meaningful and effective change. My approach was

grounded in critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970/2000; Giroux, 1988; Kincheloe, 2004), not only a theory and philosophy of education, but also a praxis-oriented social movement. The notion of critical pedagogy is “the concern with transforming oppressive relations of power in a variety of domains that lead to human oppression” (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 45). This notion is based on a social and educational vision of justice and equality that explores what human beings are capable of achieving; the role of the social, cultural, and political in shaping human identity; ways that power operates to create purposes for schooling that are not necessarily in the best interests of students; the ways schooling affects the lives of students from marginalized groups; and the organization of schooling and the relationship between teachers and learners (Kincheloe, 2004). I aimed to focus on democracy, justice, and quality in the 100A classroom, as – in my opinion – I feel that the pace and structure of this course oppress students and lecturers alike.

The method I used to obtain the data was action research, which involved observation of four 100A courses throughout one academic semester, questionnaires given to the students in those four courses and in my own two courses, interviews to 100A instructors, interviews to five past 100A students, and questionnaires to writing tutors for two different campus resources. Action research is research initiated to solve an immediate problem led by individuals working with others as part of a "community of practice" to improve the way they work through issues and solve problems (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Action research involves actively participating in a situation while conducting research with the aim of improving their strategies, practices and knowledge of the environments within which they practice. The researcher works with others to propose a new course of action to help their community improve its work practices (Mackey & Gass, 2005). As a current 100A lecturer, I taught two 100A courses, while concurrently conducting research on 100A.

As the study commenced, I began to see patterns emerge from student, tutor, and instructor opinions of and experiences with the course that pushed me to investigate how the curriculum could be shifted to address the realities of the classroom, as well as how the grading and exit requirements of the class can also be adjusted. I also investigated how other college resources could better support 100A instructors and students, and how 100A instructors could better communicate with these resources. The following questions guided my research:

- Who are the students, instructors, and tutors who work with 100A?
- What kinds of skills and knowledge does the current curriculum promote?
- How does the current curriculum design and grading policy affect the instructors' ability to effectively and meaningfully prepare for and teach 100A?
- How does the current curriculum design and grading policy affect student and instructor interest, motivation, and understanding?
- How well do students achieve the objectives set forth in the curriculum?

My study is holistic in that I aimed to learn about the 100A course through not only looking at the whole of the classroom, but also larger spaces outside the classroom that may influence the environment of the classroom, such as administrative constraints, current curriculum design, campus resources that students use, and more. The theory behind this approach is that all parts of a system have unity and are connected (Diesling, 1971), which

means that contexts do not exist in and of themselves, but are continuously influenced and reshaped by surrounding contexts. I introduce the experiences and ideas of the instructors, students, and tutors who are involved in this course in order to understand how they define and understand 100A. Since instructors are directly affected by the choices of the institution for which they work, and students are directly affected by instructors' pedagogical choices, their feelings and opinions about their environment are crucial to understanding why they make the choices that they do.

Description of the Setting

In recent years, SJSU has taken steps to accommodate students in need of more writing and critical thinking coursework. As discussed in the background section of this report, English/Linguistics and Language Development (LLD) 100A: Writing Competency through Genres is an intensive three-unit course at SJSU that satisfies the university standard Writing Skills Test (WST) for students who fail the test at least once (Gabor, 2011). The WST serves as one of two components that satisfy the California State University standard Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) (Gabor, 2011). ENGL/LLD 100A was designed with the rationale that "students who fail the WST repeatedly need writing instruction; the test does not provide instruction, only assessment" (Gabor, 2011, p. 5). It began as an experimental course (called 96S) in Summer Session 2010, was not offered in fall 2010, and returned again as an experimental course in spring 2011. From summer 2011 to the present, it has run as a regular session course, ENGL/LLD 100A (Gabor, 2011). Therefore, 100A has now been a successful course for three years, as of fall 2014.

The development of ENGL/LLD 100A is based on a similar writing course, English 109, at California State University, Sacramento. The framework that 100A now uses was originally developed by Drs. Fiona Glade and Julian Heather of the CSUS English Department. Because SJSU's GWAR standards and student demographics differ from those of CSUS, SJSU's ENGL.LLD 100A curriculum differs in several ways. Each semester, with input from 100A lecturers, the course shifts in curriculum design and grading policy. Three years still signifies a relatively new course, and lecturers are still grappling with how to realistically align the curriculum with the needs of their diverse student population.

I received approval from the SJSU IRB for this study, and the IRB protocol number is #F1302004. I e-mailed the coordinator and all ten English and LLD 100A instructors to inform them of the study and to ask for their participation. The study was met with positivity and approval, with all lecturers indicating interest to participate in some way. After working on my research design, I followed up with another email to several lecturers who taught at different times than I did to see if I could observe their courses for the spring 2013 semester. My hope was to obtain permission from four instructors. Because of time constraints and instructor stress and workload, eight of ten lecturers found time for an interview or to fill out a questionnaire, and three lecturers responded affirmatively to my observation request, with one allowing me to follow two separate sections of her 100A course. Thus, I observed four separate sections: two from one instructor and one each from two other instructors. From there, the instructors allowed me to introduce myself to the class, participate sometimes in class discussion, and hand out

questionnaires to students at the end of the semester. My two 100A sections were also given a questionnaire at the end of the semester. All students were given the option whether or not they would like to participate, and all questionnaires remained anonymous. A total of 101 students participated in the questionnaire.

Data Collection

Observations

I used the suggested methods for case studies to develop classroom observations (Strauss, 1987). I intended to observe four lecturers' classrooms and emailed lecturers whose course times fit into my own schedule to observe. Three lecturers responded with affirmation. To protect identity of the lecturers, I will not indicate the department for which each works. I observed two courses of one lecturer and one course each of the other two lecturers for a total of four observed courses. To obtain a rounded view of the classrooms, I observed and took field notes for each course three times: once about a month into the course (near the end of the first essay requirement), once around the middle of the course, and once at the end of the course. My hope was to observe any changes in student or teacher interest, motivation, and stress throughout the semester. I was able to examine and at times engage in interactions with the lecturers and students in their normal learning environment. During these observations, I wrote extensive notes, theories about what I was witnessing, and patterns of particular note (Carsprecken, 1996). My notes consisted of instructor-student and student-student interactions, perception of student understanding and interest in the lectures and assignments, instructor's pedagogical choices, and students' habits and preparedness.

Questionnaires

Surveying participants is "one of the most common methods of collecting data on attitudes and opinions from a large group of participants" (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 92). I generated questionnaires for the 100A students enrolled in the four sections of the courses that I observed, as well as for my own two courses. These questionnaires were given during the last observation period at the end of the semester, so students could comment upon their 100A experience as a whole. I included my own two classes to obtain a larger pool of data. The number of student questionnaires turned in number 101. The questionnaires given to my students asked students to not give their names and emails, so as to keep their identities anonymous to me. This way, they would feel more comfortable giving their true opinions about the course. The questionnaires asked students demographical information, their educational history, and their opinions, in scale format, of each of the out-of-class essays, the required book, and the class. Students also had space on the form to express anything else that they would like to about the class. (See Appendix A).

Questionnaires were also given to two campus support centers that see 100A students, the Writing Center and Peer Connections, both of which give writing tutoring. Peer Connections also provides mentoring and other resources. These questionnaires were also given at the end of the semester in hopes that tutors and mentors could reflect on the semester and assignments as a whole. Six tutors from the Writing Center and two mentors from Peer Connections completed

the questionnaire. This questionnaire asked tutors and mentors their educational background and demographic information, how many 100A students they work with per week, and struggles, concerns, and feedback that they could give about their experiences working with 100A students (See Appendix B).

Lastly, instructors who could not meet with me for a personal interview also were provided a questionnaire. This questionnaire involved the exact questions that I asked in the interview, as I wanted to obtain the same information from all instructors. Two instructors participated in the full questionnaire, and one instructor got halfway through an interview with me before she had to run to her next class, so she opted to answer the other half of the questions by questionnaire. These questions were intensive, asking for demographic and educational background information, opinions on the curriculum, assignments, structure, literature, students, and grading process of the class (See Appendix C).

Interviews

Conducting interviews is “the best method for finding out people’s beliefs, attitudes, values, in-depth knowledge of a topic or any other subjective orientation” (Watson-Gegeo & Larrabee, n.d.). I conducted nonstandardized, nonscheduled, semi-structured interviews with the nine instructors and also five former students of mine from 100A. These approaches to the interview process gave the interviews more freedom to take questions in different directions and speak from their personal experiences. My goal of the instructor interview process was not primarily to compare responses, in which case structured, standardized interviews would be more appropriate; my goal was to gain an understanding of what about the class was important to the students and instructors and to establish patterns of opinions, concerns, and suggestions that might guide the shifting of the curriculum for future semesters (See again Appendix C).

My intentions of the former student interview process were to highlight the incredible diversity of students who take 100A in order to prove the difficulties of teaching to this student population, as well as to learn about their experiences after 100A in their upper division courses and 100W. I was curious about their performances in those classes, as well as if they found 100A beneficial to their success in upper-division coursework. I asked five of my own former students and not former students of other instructors because of my knowledge of their performance as writers, as well as their backgrounds in education, language, and culture based on what they wrote about in my courses. This knowledge allowed me to seek out these five students, each representing one of five categories: 1) a late-arriving international student from an economically strong nation, 2) a late-arriving international student from an economically weak nation, 3) a student who falls under the umbrella term “generation 1.5,” 4) a U.S. born, native-English speaking student, and 5) a student with a disability (See Appendix D).

The reason why I wanted to interview a student each from an “economically strong” and “economically weak” nation is because such students arrive to the United States with completely different skill levels, educationally and socially. I used these terms because the term “cultural capital” (Bourdieu, 1977) is so complex and does not show that a student from an economically weak nation might have strong cultural capital in some ways (i.e. in ability to navigate through

conflict), while a student from an economically strong nation may have received a strong education, but may have weak cultural capital in some ways (i.e. ability to socialize with people outside of their linguistic group). Bourdieu (1977) describes cultural capital as the language, art, music, and other forms of education that families invest in for their children's futures. For example, if students in the United States are not exposed to the white, middle-class cultural capital in the home, then the chances of their succeeding on standardized tests drops significantly because the structure of and questions on the test mimic the culture of white, middle-class society (Bachman & Cohen, 1998). Cultural capital is more complex than having an education, though. Depending on a number of factors, including family support and guidance, character traits like curiosity and initiative, location of home and schools, and much more, people can have many different social and cultural capitals, some that might assist them in reaching their goals, and some that might inhibit them. There is not one type of cultural capital. Because this term is so complex, I felt that using "economically strong" and "economically weak" instead sheds light on these students' very different social backgrounds and educations, while still respecting that both parties may possess strong cultural capital in different ways.

Data Analysis

In essence, I collected data on the following: 1) the approach to and curriculum design of 100A, 2) instructor teaching methods, 3) instructor opinions, concerns, attitudes, and ideas, 4) tutor and mentor opinions, concerns, attitudes, and ideas, and 5) student opinions, concerns, attitudes, and ideas. I analyzed questionnaires for patterns in demographic data, as well as opinions on assignments, readings, and course structure.

After I conducted interviews, I transcribed and coded them. All questionnaire input was categorized in Microsoft Excel. By doing so, I was able to see patterns of thought about the classroom context, which assisted me later in order to pull samples for my analysis. Coding allowed me to see what kinds of issues overlapped among participants and what issues were talked about the most and least, which assisted me in determining what kinds of issues were important to the participants and needed to be addressed the most.

IV. Findings

Analyzing the data, I found a multitude of interconnected patterns: a multicultural, multilingual group of students with a wide variation in reading and writing proficiency levels. Many students' writing and thinking skills are strong, causing me to wonder why they did not pass the WST. Other students' writing and thinking skills are in need of development, while a small number of students' skills are very low, and one wonders how they were able to move so far through the educational system without receiving the attention they needed to develop such skills earlier on. The analysis of my findings is based on my initial research questions and is compared and contrasted to the prevalent theme of the review of literature: the incredibly diverse make-up of students in these writing programs and the very real, difficult, and stressful task of

bringing these students' reading and writing skills to the college level. The findings section is organized by research question.

Who are the students, instructors, and tutors who work with 100A?

Students

From teaching this course for several semesters, instructors have a strong sense of who their students are. From their responses on the questionnaire and in interviews, they generalize that the majority of their students are second-language learners; that many of them are working on degrees in areas like business, accounting, engineering, and art; and that some have disabilities, diagnosed or not. The student questionnaires provide a more accurate understanding who our students are. The data from these surveys was retrieved from only six of the sixteen courses offered during the spring 2013 semester, so more countries, languages, majors, and other data are surely represented in the whole of 100A that are not represented below.

Country of birth

English/LLD 100A brings together students from around the entire globe. Twenty countries are represented in the student survey. Of 101 students who filled out the questionnaire, 70% were born outside of the U.S. A total of 57% were born in the continent of Asia. Of those students, 42% were born in Vietnam. Broken down by the actual numbers, 24 were born in Vietnam, 10 were born in China, 6 were born in India, and 5 were born in Hong Kong. The other Asian and Southeast Asian countries represented with four or fewer students are Japan, South Korea, Myanmar, the Philippines, Russia, Taiwan, and Thailand. The next largest group represented is those born in North America, primarily the United States. Aside from one student born in Canada, 26 students (25.7%) stated that they have lived their entire lives in the U.S. As the linguistic data will show, though, a majority of those students speak a language other than English at home or as their primary language, indicating a “generation 1.5” status or familial influence from other countries. Small numbers of students hailed from other regions: four from the Middle East (Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Palestine) and two from Africa (Egypt and Ethiopia). Chart 1 below presents this data by country of birth. Chart 2 on page 19 separates data by region of birth.

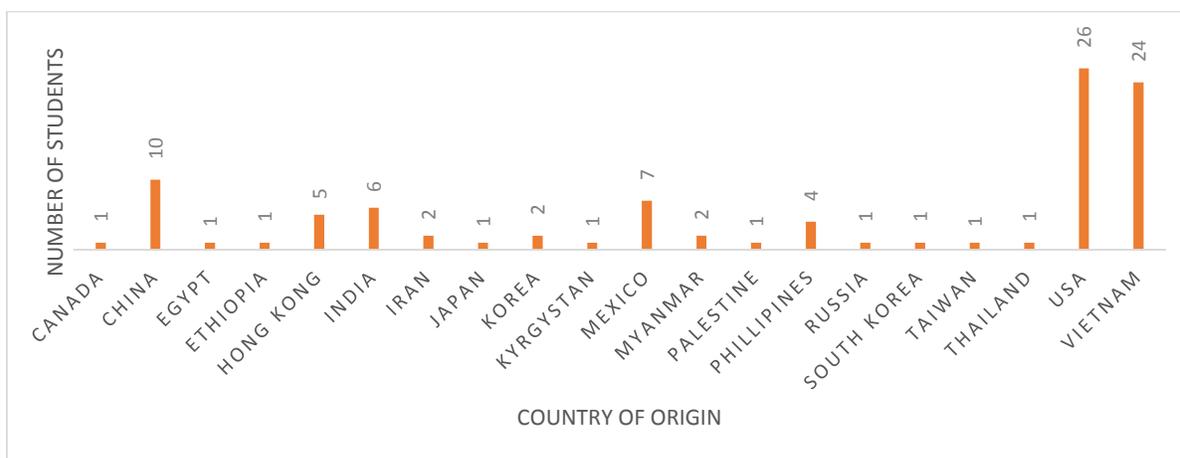


Chart 1: Country of birth

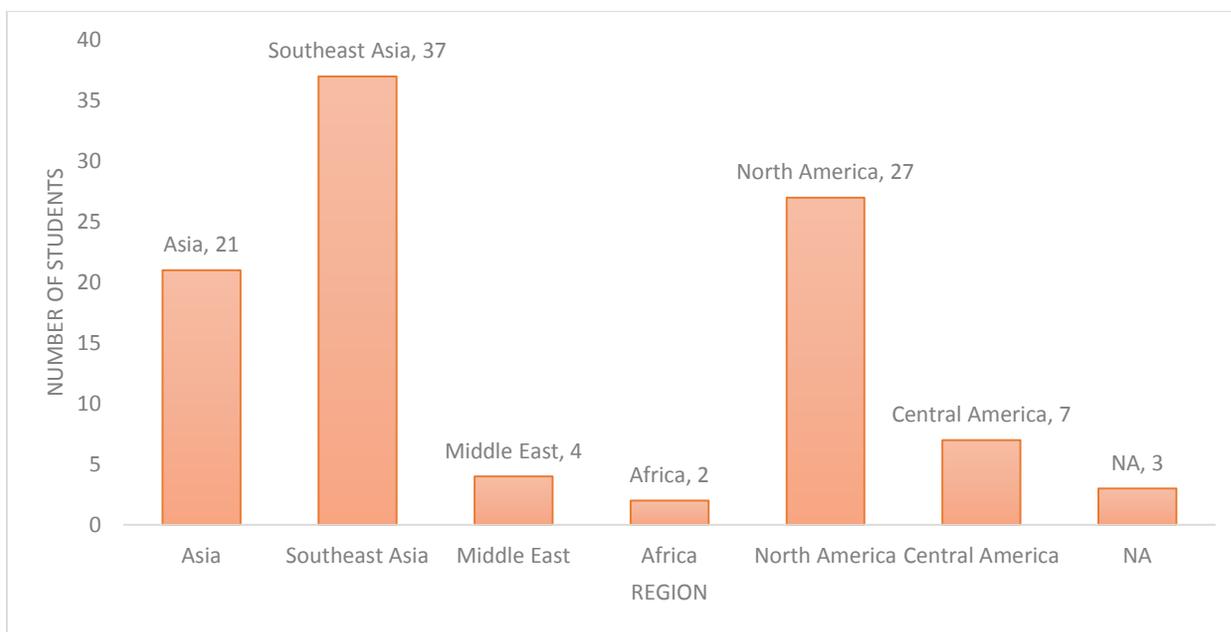


Chart 2: Region of birth

This data shows that an overwhelming majority of the students who participated in the questionnaire, 57%, originate from Asia, with a substantial 42% of those students coming from Vietnam. The second largest group, 26%, are born in the U.S.; however, as the linguistic data will show, a majority of the 26% are from immigrant families and speak other languages at home. Overall, 70% of students surveyed were born in a foreign country.

Languages spoken

The languages spoken by students give interesting insight into how many second language learners take the course and how many students, although born in the United States, may be either “generation 1.5” or influenced in some way by a language other than English. The question on the survey asked students what languages they spoke at home and to write them in order from most used to least used. The answers give insight into languages spoken at home, the most common languages spoken outside of English, and the number of students who speak English at home. The data further shows in what capacity English is used (whether as a primary or secondary language). Twenty-one languages are represented by the 101 students surveyed. This data is represented in Chart 3 on page 20.

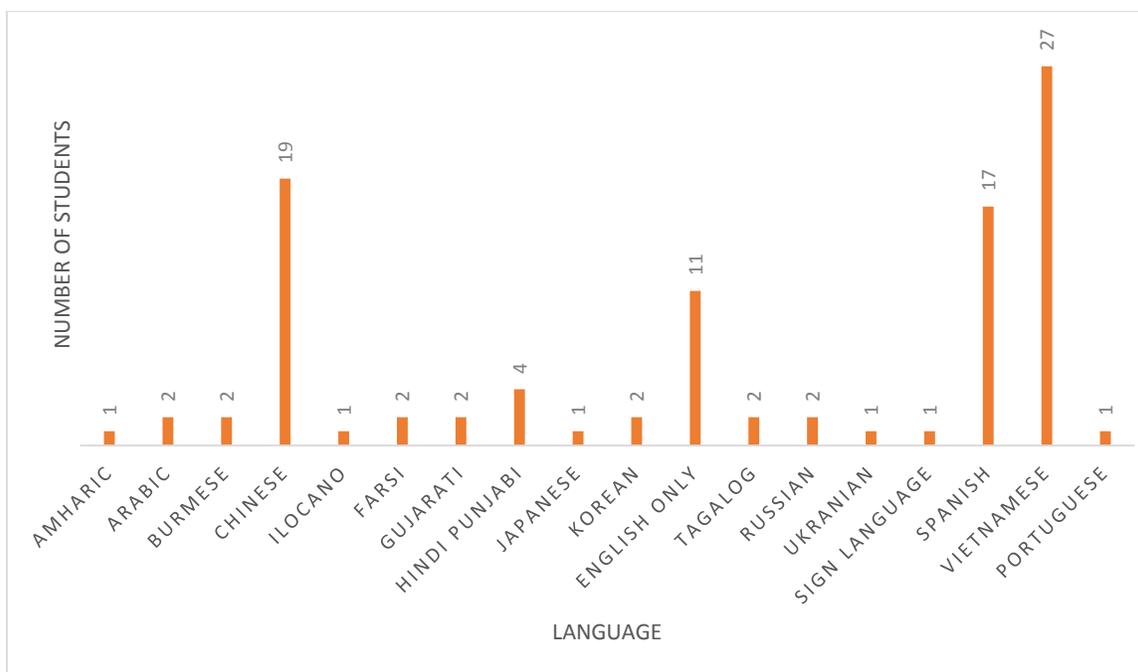


Chart 3: Languages spoken

Although 24 students were born in Vietnam, 30 students speak Vietnamese at home: 20 speak only Vietnamese, 7 speak Vietnamese primarily and also English, and 3 speak English primarily and also Vietnamese. The second largest language spoken by students is English at 42 total using it at home, 11 of those indicating they only speak English, 11 indicating that English is their primary language, but that they also speak another language at home, and 20 indicating that they speak another language at home, but use English as a secondary language at home. The third largest language group represented is Chinese, with 19 students indicating use of a Chinese dialect in the home: Chinese (10), Cantonese (7), and Mandarin (2). Of these 19 students, 4 indicate that English is a secondary language in the home, and zero indicate that English is primary over their Chinese dialect. The final large linguistic group represented is Spanish, with 17 students indicating Spanish use in the home. Of these, 8 use only Spanish, 4 use Spanish primarily and English secondarily, and 5 use Spanish as a secondary language in the home. Other languages represented by three or fewer students are Amharic, Arabic, Burmese, Farsi, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Japanese, Korean, Tagalog, Russian, Ukrainian, and Sign Language. Chart 4 displays the three most common languages other than English spoken at home, and Chart 5 displays students who indicate they speak English at home. These are located on page 21.

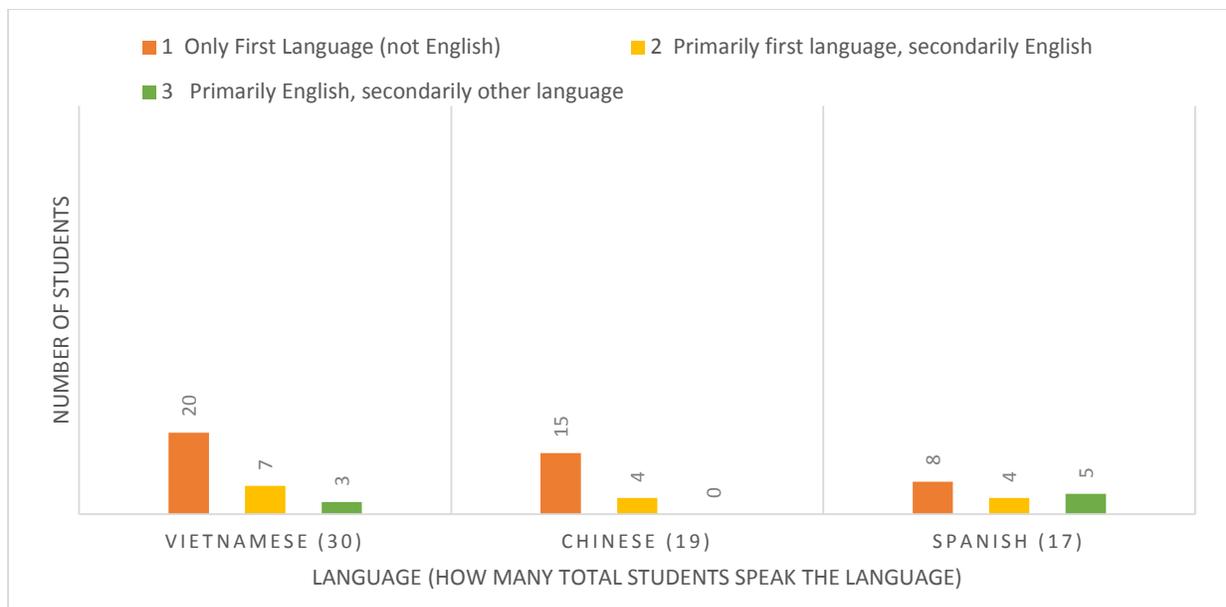


Chart 4: Top three foreign languages spoken at home

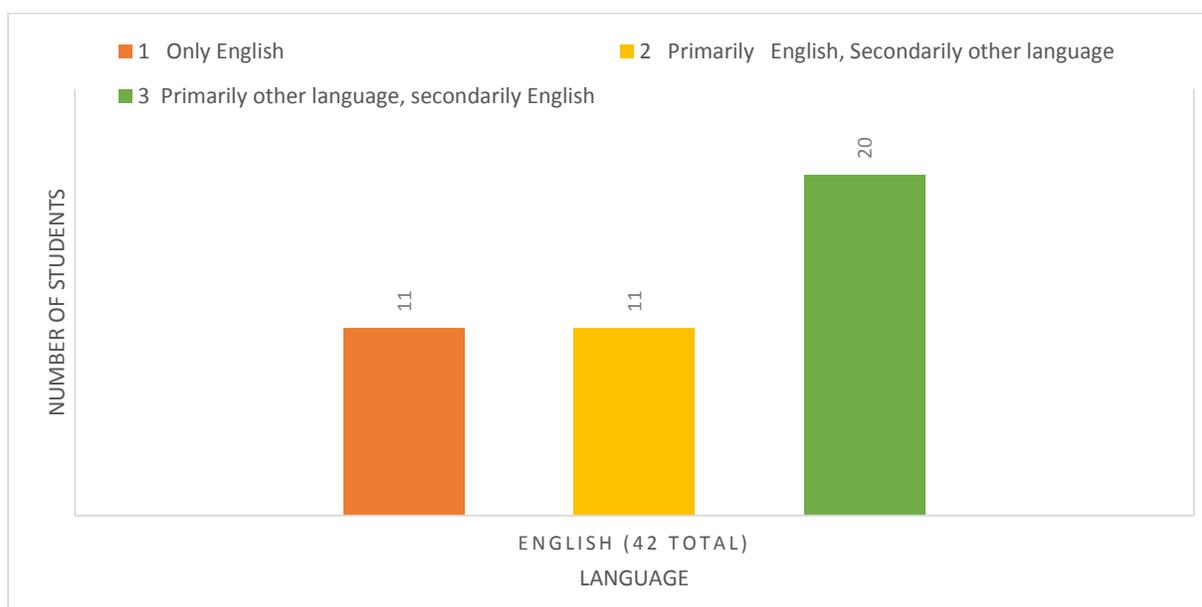


Chart 5: Number of students who speak English at home

The linguistic data indicate that Vietnamese is by far the largest language spoken at home, with 20 of 30 of its speakers stating it as the only language spoken at home. This may show that a large foreign student or late-arriving immigrant population tends to originate from Vietnam. On the other hand, speakers of a Chinese dialect show that almost all, 15 of 19, speak Chinese at home, with only 4 indicating that they speak some English, and zero indicating that they speak English more than Chinese at home. This might indicate that most if not all students who speak a Chinese dialect are foreign students. On the other hand, speakers of the third largest

language spoken (excluding English), Spanish, show a different pattern. Of 17 Spanish speakers, 8 of 17 indicate that they only speak Spanish at home, while 9 of 17 indicate that they speak both English and Spanish at home. This data may show that these students are of Generation 1.5 status or even early-arriving immigrant status. Thus, looking at 100A students' ethnicity and language spoken in the home can give insight into whether they are international students, late- or early-arriving immigrants, or generation 1.5 students.

Age of arrival

Of the 101 students, 25 were born in the U.S., with one indicating movement back and forth as a child from another country and the U.S. One did not answer the question. The remaining 75 students were born in other countries. Five students arrived from age 0-5; 7 arrived from age 5-9; 9 arrived from age 10-13; 19 arrived from age 14-18; 20 arrived from age 19-24; 11 arrived from age 25-29; and 4 arrived at age 30 or older.

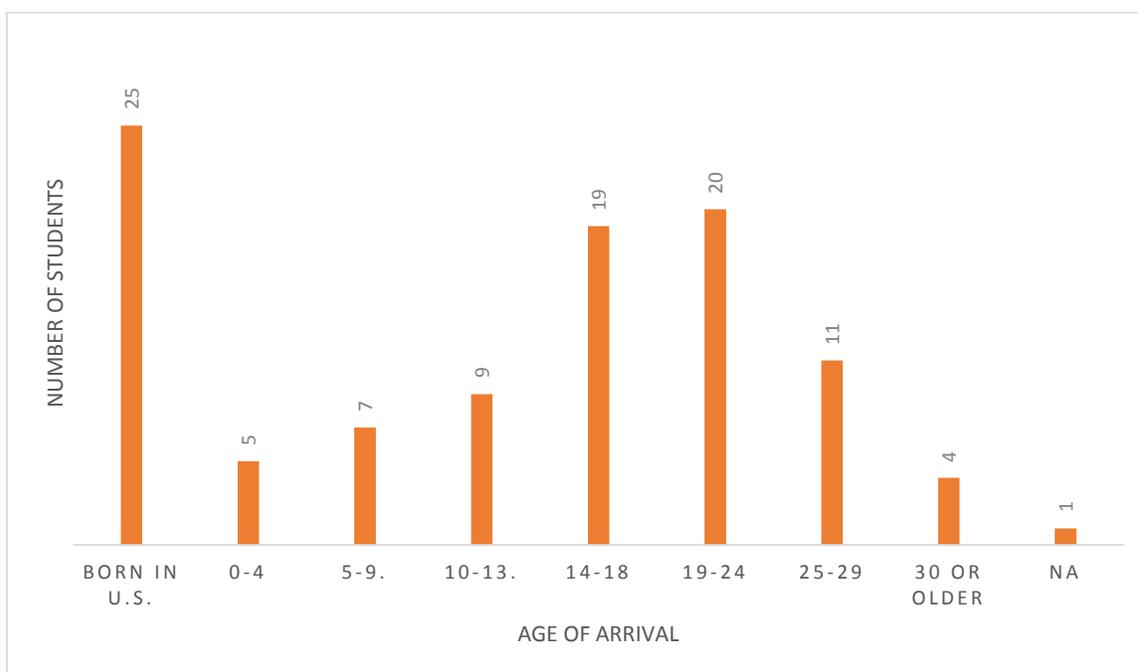


Chart 6: Age of arrival

This data show that a significant number of students, 39%, arrived to the U.S. as high school students or adults, while 25% of the students surveyed were born in the U.S.

Age now

Twenty-two of the students surveyed did not give their age on the questionnaire. Of the 79 students who did, 44 were age 20-24, 19 were age 25-29, 10 were age 30-34, 1 was age 35-39, and 5 were age 40 and older. The oldest student surveyed was 72 years old. See chart on page 23.

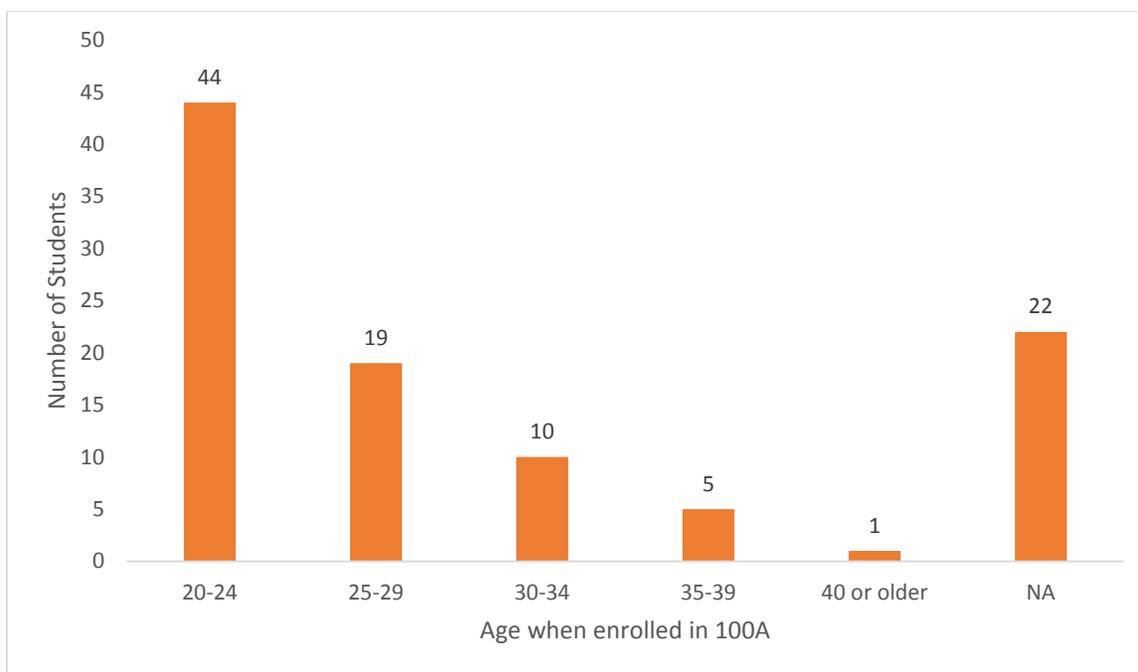


Chart 7: Age now

It is unfortunate that so many students omitted an answer to their age, as this data is important. Many lecturers have observed a high number of older students in their classes. Though a majority of students, 55%, fall into the typical age range for college students, 20-24, the other 45% are older students, and this number is still much larger than the typical make-up of a typical university course.

Transfers from Community College

Of 101 students, only 11 took English 1A at SJSU and only 12 took English 1B at SJSU. The rest, or 89%, of English 100A students surveyed, transferred from community college, usually colleges within the county. Of the 11 students who took English 1A at SJSU, one indicated receiving a final grade of “A”, 5 indicated a “B-range” grade, and four received a “C.” One student did not give a grade. Of the 12 students who took 1B, one received an “A-“, two received a “B-range” grade, and eight received a “C-range” grade. One student indicated that the class was “in progress,” which is surprising since students who have not taken English 1B are not allowed to register for English 100A. Transfer students indicated the following numbers about their grades in 1A and 1B. For English 1A, 32 reported receiving an “A,” 40 reported receiving a “B,” and 17 reported receiving a “C.” For English 1B, 27 reported receiving an “A,” 33 received a “B,” and 27 received a “C,” with one reporting that he or she never took English 1B. Charts 8 and 9 on page 20 display this data visually. Charts 8 and 9 on page 24 represent the data visually.

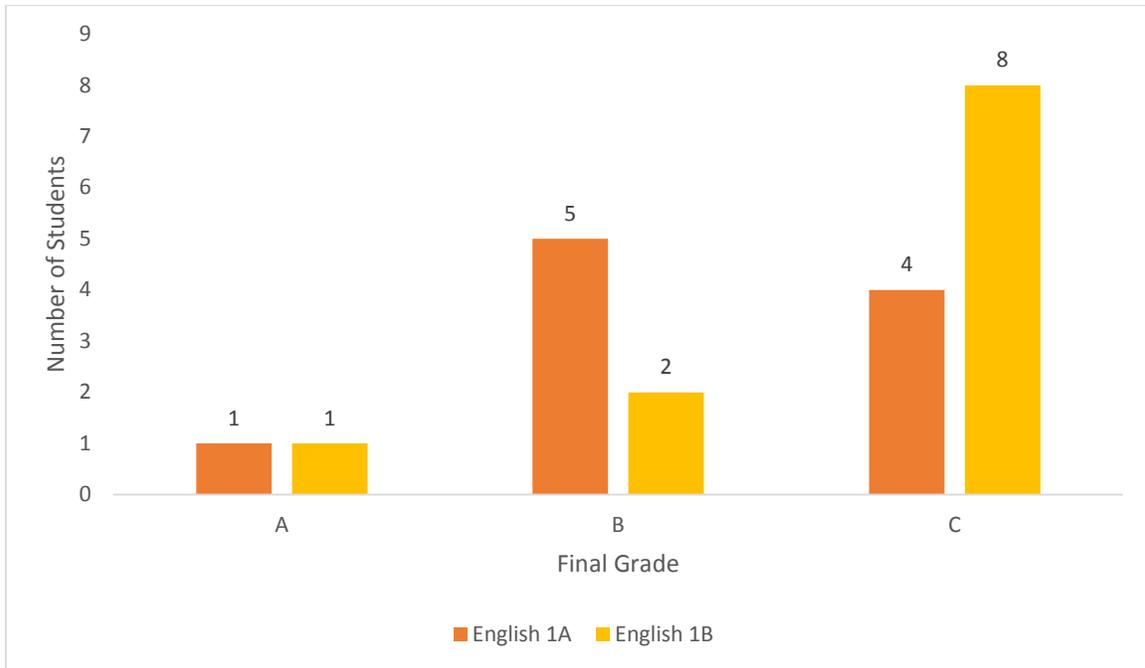


Chart 8: Final grades in English 1A and 1B of students who took those courses at SJSU

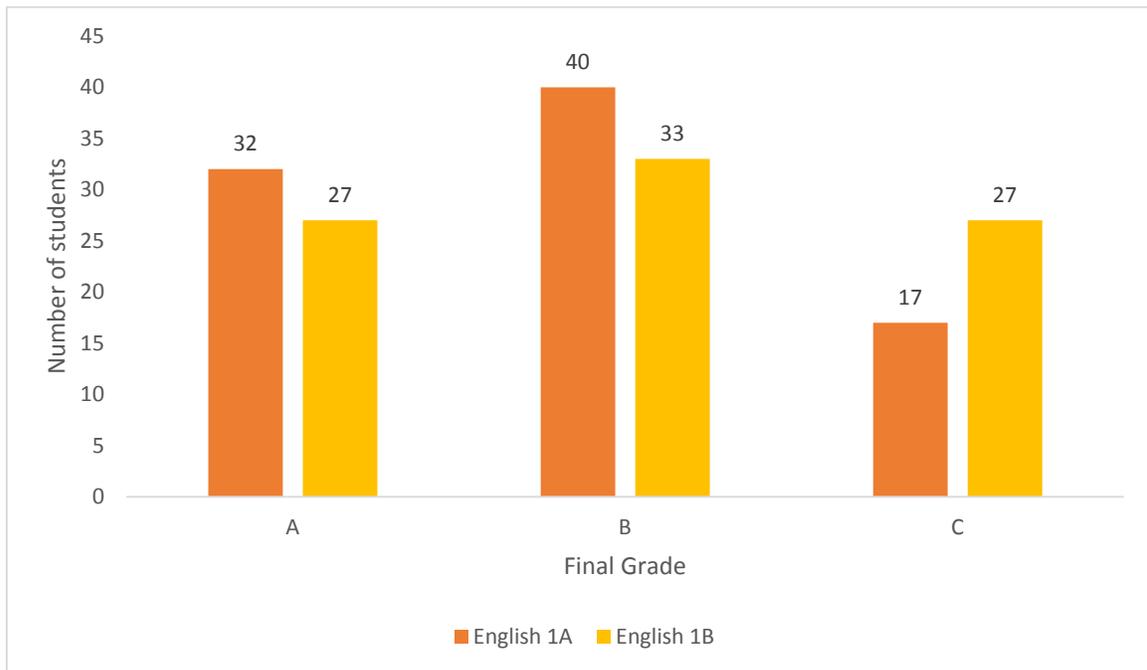


Chart 9: Final grades in English 1A and 1B of students who took those courses at community college

It is difficult to compare data of the two groups, one that took English 1A and 1B at SJSU and one that took the courses at a community college, because the numbers of students in both categories are so different. If the students accurately reported their grades, it may be important to

learn more about this difference in grades. While an “A” grade was uncommon for SJSU students to receive in 1A and 1B (only one student each reports receiving the grade), an “A” grade at community college seems more attainable in these courses. As well, while a “C” grade at SJSU was particularly common, especially in 1B, the “C” grade received at community college seems slightly rarer than receiving an “A” or “B” grade. This could indicate that the standards of 1A and 1B at SJSU are stricter than they are at local community colleges.

Major

Dividing students by major shows that a large number of students who were enrolled in one of the six 100A courses surveyed come from the College of Business. Of the 101 students surveyed, 37 students (36.6%) were majoring in Administration, Management, Marketing, Finance, CFM, Accounting, AIS, HR, or MIS. Following that, the College of Science and the College of Applied Sciences and Arts each had 13 students represented in the six courses. Student from the College of Science represented Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Math, Microbiology, and Molecular Biology. Students from the College of Applied Sciences and Arts represented the Forensic Science, Hospitality, Justice Studies, Nursing, Nutrition, Kinesiology, Public Relations, and Social Work majors. The College of Humanities and the Arts, as well as the college of Social Sciences each had 11 students represented in the survey. Students from the Humanities largely represented the art majors of Graphic Design, Design Studies, and Animation, with a small number representing the Chinese and Spanish majors. The students from the Social Sciences represented Communication Studies, Systems Engineering, Software Engineering, Psychology, and Sociology. All 5 students from the College of Education were majoring in Child and Adolescent Development. The five students from the College of Engineering represented Electrical Engineering, Software Engineering, and Technology. One student was undeclared and five students did not answer the question. Chart 10 below represents this data by college.

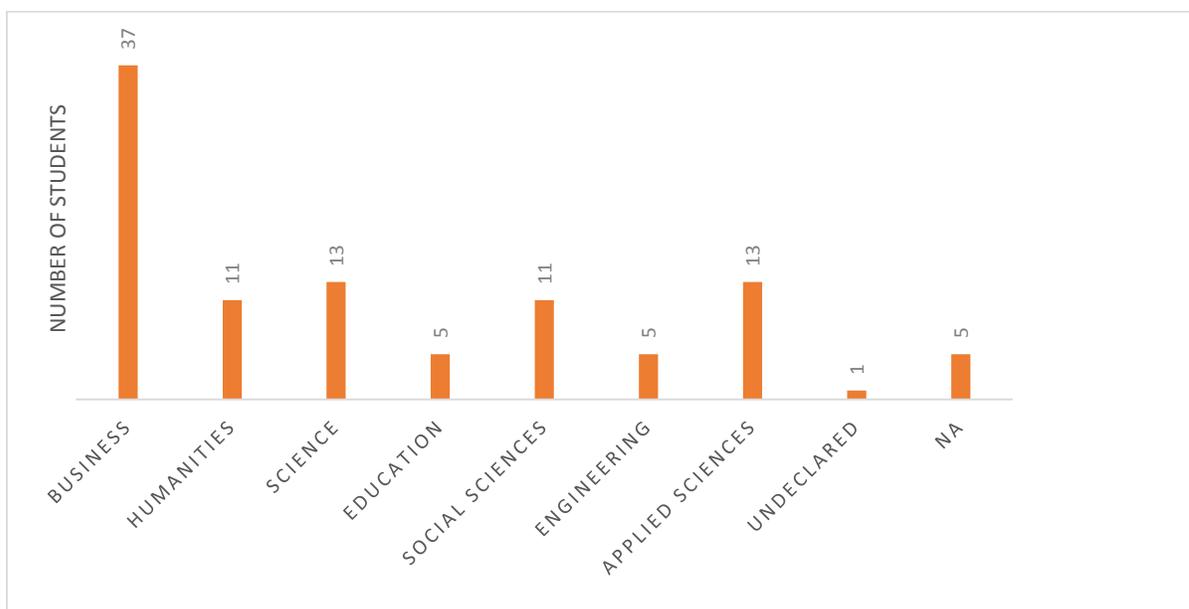


Chart 10: Student major by college

The data show that most students who take 100A are in a major within the college of Business. No other college comes close to rivaling the number of business majors.

Five focal students

As discussed in the methodology section, I emailed five former students whom I thought might identify with one of the following terms: 1) a late-arriving international student from an economically strong nation, 2) a late-arriving international student from an economically weak nation, 3) a student who falls under the umbrella term “generation 1.5,” 4) a U.S. born, native-English speaking student, and 5) a student with a disability. These students’ opinions and experiences about 100A helped inform many of my research questions, as well as shed light on issues that I was not aware of and that need to be addressed. I will refer to these students throughout my findings and suggestions, but here, I will portray brief vignettes of each student to further exemplify the great diversity of the students that 100A instructors teach.

Late-arriving international student from economically strong nation: Yen Chan

Yen Chan is 25 years old and lives in San Jose. She just graduated in spring 2013 with a B.A. degree in Animation/Illustration. She was born and raised in Hong Kong by college-educated parents and arrived to Santa Clara County when she was 17 years old to study fine arts as an international student. She describes her early years in school in Hong Kong as a motivated student who always went to the library and read before her classes. “I loved it,” she said. “I would always borrow, like, ten books.” She did not feel pushed by her parents to excel in school, although she feels that they did care about her education and pushed her to finish her homework. They found an English tutor for her, for example.

She had English education throughout her childhood and teen years, Monday through Friday, at least 40 minutes to an hour each day. “I knew I wasn’t good with language. I learned words very slowly and kept forgetting words. I liked the writing part, stories, so I could write a lot.” In high school, she didn’t like her English classes because the other kids were better than her with the language. She didn’t like to talk in class because teachers required responses in English. As for vocabulary and grammar, she said there was a lack of creativity in the lessons: “they tell you what you have to write, like something you have to copy.” They also didn’t do much reading. “When you read, you learn how to use the sentences and words, but they don’t have you read at all....We would never read a book, like a novel or fiction.” By her junior year, though, they had some good native English-speaking teachers from New Zealand. They were more open-minded, played games, and joked. Here, she started enjoying the courses and felt like she learned a lot with them. She began to speak more, too.

Yen’s sister was studying at Foothill College, so when Yen finished high school, she followed her sister to Foothill. She says that there is a lot more reading here compared to her high school experience in Hong Kong: “In high school, we would read a paragraph to two pages. Here we would have to read 200 pages. Here, I was frustrated because I’d have to look up twenty or more words a page.” In classes, the first two semesters Yen didn’t understand what the teacher was saying at all. “I’d come and leave without understanding,” she said. “I felt frustrated and lost. You try to listen, you try to focus, but you don’t understand and feel dumb and ashamed.”

She slowly began to get the feel of her classes and the culture. She spent two years at Foothill before transferring to San Jose State. SJSU was better than Foothill, she said, because at Foothill there were Chinese students everywhere, so she did not practice speaking much English. At SJSU, "I had to speak English. I only had one friend who spoke Chinese." She considered her friends at SJSU her mentors, as they would help her with the language and understanding homework assignments.

Late-arriving international student from economically weak nation: Meera

Meera is 32 years old and should graduate with a Bachelor's in Business Accounting in the fall semester 2014. She lives in San Jose. Along with going to school full time, Meera also works as a tutor for 20-25 hours a week, and a personal assistant for 6 hours a week. She was born in Cambodia and immigrated to the U.S. at 26 years old to pursue educational opportunities. In Cambodia, she grew up speaking Khmer, some French and some English. Now, she speaks English at home and Cambodian on the phone to her family in Cambodia. After she finishes her education, she is still debating whether she returns to Cambodia or remains here.

She says that the Cambodian school system is very different from the U.S. system. It requires a lot of self-study. The teachers are very strict. From grades one through nine, lectures are all in Cambodian. Grades nine and up included a French or an English option. Meera chose French. She said that from first through fifth grade she really liked school. Her parents worked hard and long hours and did not have much time to spend with her, and her teachers made her remember every word taught. She describes Cambodia as "third world" and that not many girls are allowed to go to school. "In my family, I am the first girl to go to school." Her father did not finish high school, and her mother received no education aside from some home school from her father. However, her mom speaks very fluent French, and her French is stronger than her Cambodian. She said that although her father did not value education at all, her mother pushed her to finish school. Meera's older sister did not have a chance to go to school. She went for 7-9 grade. Reading was not important at home and she did not do much reading as a child.

Meera's uncle, who lives in the Bay Area, sponsored her to study in the U.S. Meera spent three years at De Anza College before transferring to SJSU. She first took ESL classes there. "Here they believe in self-learning more than teacher responsibility. I like the system here better because it's more self-directed. It was the first time I really worked at English. I spoke little Cambodian." She says that received very poor grades on her essays. Grammar and structure were common reasons for this. "I started from scratch. Improve my grammar. I stopped listening to music in Cambodian. It helped. I watched the news [in English]. I would get no words one day, and the next day one word. At least I got one word. When teachers assigned a novel, I took three times to read it."

Student who falls under the term "Generation 1.5": Helena

Helena is 24 years old and a resident of San Jose who is majoring in Biochemistry. She should graduate in fall 2014 or spring 2015. She currently works on campus as a lab assistant, 20-25 hours a week. She was born in Los Angeles and lived there until age 3. She then moved to Mexico and lived there for the next ten years, until age 13. At 13, she returned to the United

States. She speaks Spanish at home with her family. Neither her mother nor her father have a college education.

She spent elementary and half of middle school, grades 1-6, in Mexico, then began eighth grade in Sacramento, California. She went to high school in San Jose. In Mexico, she was not encouraged by her culture or her family to get an education because she was female. She was not involved and included in math or science, and was merely encouraged to get a high school diploma. Her mom was always supportive of what she wanted to do, but she didn't know how to help Helena navigate the system, as she herself only had a sixth grade education. Her mom has always been there. Her father had a fourth grade education. He died of cancer when Beatriz was very young, and this is why her family moved back to Mexico when she was a child.

All books, all resources she needed were always found at school. She did not have them at home. When she came to the U.S. for eighth grade, she was placed with regular students and not in a second language program. Classmates translated for her. "The first year was really hard. I didn't understand anything at all. In reality, I wasn't learning." In high school, she was placed in second language classes. She found that she was able to navigate the system herself. The classes helped her, but the level of "intensity" of the ESL courses was not as strong as her regular courses.

One day, a presenter came to her Spanish class and told them about college. She thought, "I could do that." She took advantage of high school programs like AVID and CALSEP that help youth get into college. She said, though, that they don't help you socialize into college. They don't prepare you for the expectations, what resources you have, how to maneuver through the program. "I got into Berkeley, UCLA. I was so contaminated to get good grades. I was so afraid of myself. I asked UCB and they...I didn't have a sense of belonging. I decided to go to a small university but they didn't have ideas. I have always had this idea to change the education system." Helena did one year of college at National Hispanic University, then her second year at San Jose City College before transferring to San Jose State. Prior to beginning at SJSU, she held an internship at SFSU. She learned that she could go from a B.S. to a Ph. D. program. She wants to get a Ph. D. someday, and currently has a mentor and a scholarship that can help her attain this goal.

U.S.-born, English-speaking student: Max

Max is 28 years old and currently lives in San Francisco. She graduated spring 2013 with a B.A. in Photography. While attending school full time, she worked full time as a security officer. She was born and raised in Fresno, California. Max moved to San Francisco on her own when she was 19 years old. She struggled with jobs and was homeless for about a year. She then moved back to Fresno and attended Fresno Community College.

Max's mother is Native American, of the Yaqui tribe in Arizona and parts of Mexico. Max's mom was pulled from the reservation and adopted by a Mexican family. She was placed in Catholic school, but ran away at age 15 to Bakersfield, California. She started going to high school with a boyfriend, but never finished. Max's father passed away when she was very little.

He was part Blackfoot and Welsh. Max does not know her father's educational background, but thinks he might have finished high school.

Max had a tough life in and out of school. Her mom was an alcoholic and wasn't around much. Max was also molested by a family member for a long time. She received no help from family on schoolwork. "At school, I stayed under the radar. I didn't know how to read until third grade." She would fake it, until one day she was finally caught. They put her in an after school program. "They taught me nothing at that school." She remembers that kids were mean. She got in fights. Because her last name started with one of the last letters of the alphabet, she was put in the back of the class, but she couldn't see at all. She describes grade school as a nightmare: "Teachers never believed you. I reached out for help and did not get it. The classrooms were overcrowded. It was a low-income school district. Teachers didn't want you to waste their time. My mom even went to the school to ask to hold me back and the school said, 'no.'"

In middle school, the teacher and school thought Max was lying when she couldn't see the board. Her mom took her to the doctor and she got glasses. Max was sent to a better district for middle school. "We faked my address to avoid bad teaching and gangs." The curriculum was difficult in English – she remembers receiving Ds. However she scored high in math and science. Her mom did not care that much about her schooling, but did care enough to scold her for the Ds. "I got a few ass whoopings for getting Ds. A few dictionaries thrown at me." Max was selling drugs by middle school. She got expelled for selling drugs in eighth grade.

High school was similar for Max. She excelled in math and science, taking college prep physics anatomy and chemistry. No English; cheated a bit. Life was the same at home; she received no help with school. Her mom had no idea how to help. High school English was not Max's favorite. "I was pissed off with the prompts. They didn't apply to me, so I would 'bullshit' the prompts, make up stories and stuff. I found ways to cheat through it. I'd get so worked up; I didn't have the vocabulary to articulate." Max barely read at all during her K-12 education. However, high school was when Max found a passion for photography. "My high school teacher Mr. Stafford opened me up communicating through visuals. This helped me in English, as well. Stafford said 'save your money, go to a CC.' He referred her to SJSU, and he inspired her to want to be a teacher. Max graduated from high school her junior year, and was taking science at Fresno State during his senior year. Then Max tried out San Francisco for a year, struggled, and moved back home. She went to Fresno Community College for four years, then transferred to SJSU in 2008.

Student with a disability: Mary

Mary is 23 years old and lives in San Jose, on campus. She is majoring in Business Administration with a concentration in MIS. Her estimated graduation date is fall 2014 or spring 2015. She took English 100A with me during fall 2012 semester, and has not yet taken 100W. Mary was born in Mountain View, California. Her mom was born here to Chinese immigrants. Her dad emigrated here from Taiwan when he was a child. Both her parents hold Bachelor's Degrees and her father also holds a CPA degree. Although Mary's parents speak Chinese, Mary

speaks English to her parents at home and has two years of language courses in Mandarin Chinese. She is not fluent in Chinese.

Mary was born with Cerebral Palsy and a speech impairment. She currently uses an electric motor vehicle to get to class and needs a note taker. She is registered with the Disability Resource Center. With no mental disability, she always went to mainstream public schools in the Palo Alto school district, and always had an aid with her. Because of her physical disability, CP, she always had difficulty reading and writing because of the exhausting effort it takes to perform such movements as holding a book or writing on paper. Writing and typing are physical activities and they require much energy for people with CP. She remembers always having difficulty with writing and reading, but not mentally. She didn't want to type on the computers in sixth grade because of the daunting physical task, so her teacher said it would be better for her to read. Having to hold the book was hard. "It took forever" for her to read; however, her parents encouraged her to read and write, and she received enough technology for those activities in elementary, middle, and high school to be able to adapt to these challenges fairly well.

As for her high school experiences, she recalls enjoying English classes. She took all four years of English, and one of her favorite classes was creative writing because "you get to write about yourself." She was always motivated to do well and get good grades. "All my teachers and aids helped me, knew me personally, and what I could do. They knew I could attend college. Even my family encouraged me to do anything I wanted." Mary began her college career at Foothill College, and after two years she transferred to SJSU. Her first semester was not difficult in terms of her education, but in terms of accommodations. She lived on campus, and the bathroom did not accommodate her disabilities. She lived with other students who did not understand her disability. However, with time she adjusted and her second semester was "really good." She joined two clubs, met a lot of people, and knew her resources on campus. In terms of resources, she said that the Writing Center has helped her a lot, as well as the tutoring in the Business department. She also uses the DRC and states that they have not been as helpful as the DRC at Foothill. "I could ask whatever at Foothill and get a response. At SJSU, no one knows the answer. It's a "Go find out yourself" mentality. Mary is an exceptional student, a part of the international club AIESEC, as well as the MIS club. She is now an officer of this club. She spent her summer as an intern in Washington D.C.

Lecturers

Eight of ten lecturers responded to a questionnaire or gave an interview. For the background information on instructors, I included my own to add to the education and experience of the data set. The background questions asked about degrees, other languages spoken, experience as a lecturer, experience teaching 100A, and other courses they teach at SJSU or elsewhere.

All nine lecturers have degrees and post-Bachelor's degrees in writing, literature, linguistics, or TESOL. Many have combinations of these. Seven of nine instructors have specific degrees in TESOL or had a concentration in TESOL. Years' experience as a lecturer vary widely, with two lecturers with 2 years or fewer experience, three lecturers with 4-6 years'

experience, and four lecturers with over 10 years' experience, two having 20 years' experience. In terms of teaching 100A specifically, six of nine lecturers have taught 100A for six semesters, and three of those six since the course's inception six semesters ago. Two lecturers have taught it four semesters, and one lecturer has taught for three semesters. All nine lecturers teach other writing courses at SJSU or another college. Two of nine lecturers teach at another college. Four teach LLD 1, 2, or both at SJSU, two teach Health Science 100W at SJSU, and two teach ENGL 1A at SJSU. The two lecturers who teach at other colleges teach ESL or developmental writing courses. Seven of nine lecturers are multilingual, other languages including Farsi, Turkish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Malayalam, Spanish, and German.

Overall, this data indicate that 100A lecturers are well educated and experienced in writing, composition, or teaching English as a second or other language. Fluent in other languages, they also understand the difficulty and complexity of learning other languages. However, 7 of 9 lecturers indicated that they feel that they lack training working with students with disabilities and would like more training on understanding and helping these students.

Tutors

Out of the several resources that students use, two of the most popular are the Writing Center and Peer Connections. To obtain perspectives on the class and students from the experiences of the tutors, I sent a questionnaire to the coordinators of both programs, who willingly passed the questionnaires and waivers to their tutors. Six Writing Specialists from the Writing Center and two tutors from Peer Connections responded. The tutors from the WC responded with more negative experiences and frustrations than did the tutors from Peer Connections, who mostly had positive experiences with students.

Of the six WC specialists, five were currently working on their B.A. degrees, while one had finished a B.A. in English Education and was in the single-subject credential program. Of the two PC tutors, one was working on an M.A. degree in TESOL and one was working on a double-B.S./B.A. in Forensic Science and Japanese. Thus, two of eight tutors had a B.A. degree, while the others were working on their B.A. or B.S. Of the eight tutors total, one has been tutoring 100A students for 5 semesters, two have been tutoring them for 4 semesters, two had been tutoring them for 3 semesters, one had tutored them for 2 semesters, and two were tutoring them for just their first semester. The tutors varied in their responses to how many 100A students they worked with a week, four indicating 5-10, and four indicating 3-5. Overall, 75% of the tutors were currently working on their B.A. degrees, and 63% had been tutoring 100A students for fewer than two years.

What kinds of skills and knowledge does the current curriculum promote?

The goal of English/LLD 100A is to prepare students for the next step of the GVAR, their 100W classes. The course also aims to prepare students for their upper division coursework and professions by giving intensive practice in "prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing academic writing" (Generic Greensheet Template (Appendix E); Masters, 2012). Students research, analyze, and reflect on different kinds of writing. According to the Student Learning Objectives, by the end of the course students will be able to do the following:

- Use correct and situationally appropriate sentence structure and grammar;
- Utilize feedback from instructor and peers to improve the accuracy and clarity of writing;
- Recognize, select, and use basic activities of the writing process, including prewriting, organizing, drafting, revising, editing, and peer review;
- Critically self-reflect about the writing process and about making context-appropriate rhetorical choices;
- Critically read, interpret, and synthesize multiple texts;
- Write well organized, well developed essays with a clear thesis;
- Identify how types of written texts in a variety of fields (genres) are influenced by audience, situation, and purpose;
- Employ research strategies to collect, analyze, and evaluate data from primary and secondary sources. (Generic Syllabus Template (Appendix E); Masters, 2012)

The current curriculum is based in rhetorical theory, and students explore the rhetorical situation (Bitzer, 1968; Johns, 2002). Quite explicitly, students are introduced to and asked to understand, define, and use the intertwining parts of this rhetorical situation, including audience, purpose, genre, style, tone, rhetorical appeals and rhetorical strategies. From this theory, instructors assign three out-of-class essays, three in-class essays, and other assignments like homework, journals, and quizzes. Students' grades are determined wholly on a final portfolio, currently worth 70% of their grade and consisting of a cover letter and revised versions of their out-of-class essays, as well as a timed, final in-class essay, worth 30% of their grade.

To help students understand how the rhetorical situation shifts depending on audience, purpose, and genre, they write three out-of-class essays that explore different situations. The first is a rhetorical analysis of an academic article or other permissible document that is related to their major. The second paper is a discipline investigation, where students report on an interview that they give with a professional in their intended field. Lastly, students write a critical reading reflection on the assigned book that they read during the semester. In-class essays and journals also ask questions related to the book, so students have practice throughout the semester gathering ideas about the book's themes and their own lives. The in-class essays also serve as practice for the in-class final exam. This work must be completed by week 12 or 13 in the 16-week semester, depending on the semester, as holidays and breaks dictate the final day of classes. Compared to English 1A and 1B, which has the same 8,000 word-count rule, this is significantly short.

To understand what skills and knowledge the current curriculum actually promotes and how well it aligns with the student learning objectives of the course, lecturers responded to a series of questions about the curriculum design. They indicated that there are a variety of strengths to the course, including drafting and conferencing, quick-response writing, developing student awareness of campus resources, and preparing students for upper-division coursework and their professions. However, they also voiced concern about how the curriculum keeps them from being able to teach certain skills, including the course theme, critical thinking, and reading. To explore how well the goals of the curriculum are met, I have organized responses as they pertain to 100A student learning objectives.

- Use correct and situationally appropriate sentence structure and grammar

Moving away from the actual assignments, many voiced concern over having no time to teach grammar. “Grammar is the ghost that will forever haunt this course,” says one lecturer. “Grammar counts a lot, and I think all instructors are on the same page with that, but we don’t have time to teach it.” Lecturer after lecturer voiced the same obstacle:

You feel like there is no time to teach grammar. I get into fragments, run-ons, and comma splices.

I devote little time [to grammar], but not enough. I would like more time [to teach grammar].

Sometimes I feel like I am only preparing for assignments” [not grammar, writing, thinking skills].

Some do teach grammar, but with consequences: “I have gotten better at fitting grammar into the course, usually at the expense of discussing the CRR book. My approach in recent semesters has been to focus on a handful of key issues – subject/verb agreement, comma splices, fragments, plural versus possessives, quoting – that seem to give the students the most trouble in their essays. However, I am not sure I see great improvement by the end of the course.”

Students’ opinion of grammar teaching in the classroom varied, with most finding grammar lessons helpful. However, a significant minority felt that it did not teach enough. Rating the class in terms of its helpfulness with grammar, with 1 being not helpful and 5 being very helpful, 3 students rated it a one, 14 students gave it a two, 19 students gave a three, 36 students gave a four, and 26 students rated it a five. Three students did not respond. Chart 11 below represents this data.

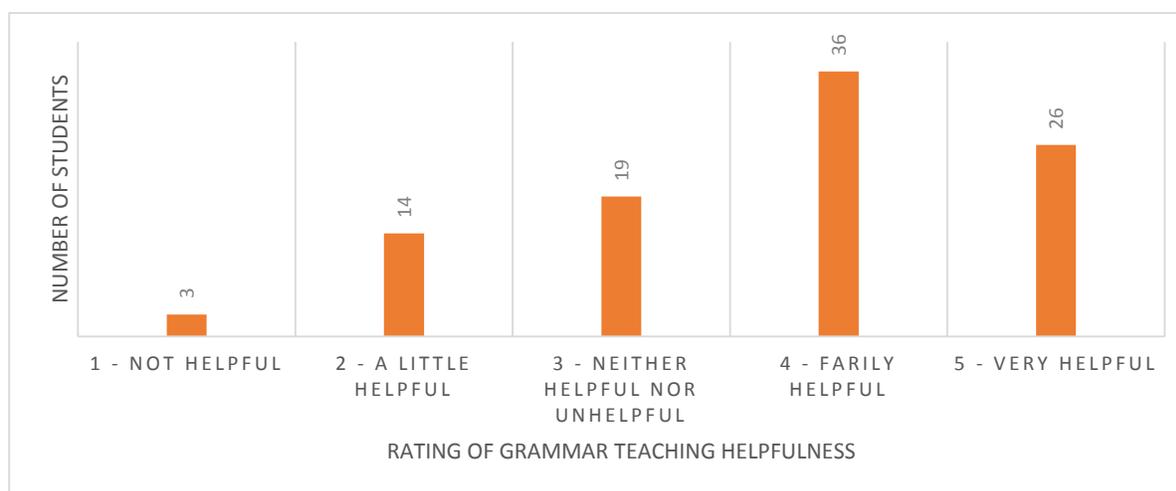


Chart 11: Student opinion of helpfulness of grammar lessons

Eight specific students commented on grammar in some way in the comments section of the questionnaire. Only one of the eight produced a positive response, writing that the class helped him or her improve on grammar. The other eight stated that more grammar would be

useful because they are second-language learners, and that the grammar they did learn was unhelpful because it covered what they learned in high school. The five focal students seemed to support this view. Three discussed grammar, two responding that although the grammar lessons were helpful, that they knew most of them. One said, “Most students know the rules, but they don’t apply them.” Another responded that she would have really liked to see more grammar.

When observing three different lecturers teaching four different courses, I witnessed little grammar instruction. For lecturer 1, I observed two different 100A courses three times. Of the three visits, she taught grammar and mechanics during one lecture, focusing on comma splices and run on sentences, as well as punctuation like the semi-colon and colon. As for lecturer 2, I observed one course three times. She did not give any lectures on grammar. I observed lecturer 3 three times for one course, and documented no grammar lessons. However, on all of these visits for all of these lecturers, the schedules were packed with important and valuable writing work, from evaluating written work, participating in in-class discussion about the reading, learning how to integrate quotes properly or expand paragraphs by using rhetorical strategies, and much more. Each lecture was valuable and informative, and students were largely on task and interested.

All in all, grammar is a topic that lecturers want to spend more time on, but they do not have that time because they are working on other course mandates or writing issues. Attending to grammar more will allow lecturers to move beyond basic grammar lessons that students say they have already learned (although are not applying) to provide more complex grammar work.

- Utilize feedback from instructor and peers to improve the accuracy and clarity of writing

English/LLD 100A promotes heavy drafting of a first, second, and final essay. Often times the first draft takes form in a peer review, the second in a one-on-one conference with the instructor, and the final is then turned in. All professors who took part in the survey promoted this drafting process, though some questioned how well students comprehend the importance of it. As one lecturer put it, “They do not have enough knowledge on what revision actually is, so I scaffold that skill within each assignment.”

The recommended conferencing process is that lecturers host personal conferences for each student for each paper. Every class and every semester is different, and some lecturers teach more 100A courses than others, so how often lecturers hold conferences is ultimately up to the instructor. However, since this student population needs much one-on-one writing attention, lecturers attempt to conference for as many papers as they can, or at least require their weakest students to come in for conferencing on each paper. For those teaching one course, this means upwards of 60 conferences. Those who teach two courses might host up to 120 conferences. Some have taught three courses in the past, which has resulted in upwards of 180 conferences in one semester. One lecturer writes, “I’m not sure if students feel the value in these short meetings. Despite having several 15-minute conferences throughout the semester per student (multiplied by 40 students), I often see ‘more conference time’ as a suggestion on my teacher evaluations. I can’t possibly hold more conferences than I already do.”

The drafting and conferencing process indicates that lecturers must look at each essay at least twice. If a lecturer has one course (20 students), he or she will read 120 papers, and will

then read again for the final portfolio. One lecturer says, “A six-page essay means six pages of errors.” Thus, although students in this course benefit from personal time with the instructor on their writing, instructors wonder if the time is meaningful and valuable for each student.

Students were not asked about conferencing time on the questionnaire; however, three students did write about conferencing time in the comments section. One said, “I suggest teachers should take time to show students what they need to work on the weaknesses in grammar and assignments in person so that they can understand what the weakness they stuck so far [sic].” Another said that some students have limited schedules, so conferencing for papers is difficult to work in.

The only tutor comments about time spent with students originate from the Writing Center show a misunderstanding of the significant number of hours of writing instruction – personal and lecture – that lecturers provide their students. Comments are as follows:

They need guidance, feedback, and support.

I feel that instructors need to help these students understand and follow a theme. Also, the instructors could do more involving pre-writing.

A peer review first draft, conference second draft, office hours, extended office hours (which all instructors indicated they have to accommodate the needs of their students), and lecture time are spaces where lecturers provide ample guidance, feedback, and support. Pre-writing takes form in this lengthy drafting process – no other writing course requires a first, second, and final draft. These comments from tutors show a need to educate tutors more about the class and establish ways that tutors can better reinforce the guidance and support that lectures give in class and office hours. All in all, the course adheres substantially to the student learning objective of utilizing peer and instructor feedback to improve writing.

- Recognize, select, and use basic activities of the writing process, including prewriting, organizing, drafting, revising, editing, and peer review

As indicated in the last SLO, students engage in prewriting, peer review, drafting, revising and organizing. This objective is one that students need significant practice with, and is one that lecturers dedicated a lot of time on during the times that I observed the courses. This section divides students’ engagement with this objective into two parts: the classroom and outside tutoring.

The Classroom

During classroom observations Lecturer 1 provided various activities in all three lectures of both classes. These included using accurate outside sources, organizing quotations and using them accurately, doing in-class prewriting, analyzing and not summarizing, organizing essays as a whole, learning conclusion strategies, thinking critically, analyzing others’ writing for strengths and weaknesses.

Lecturer 2 gave opportunities in class for analyzing the prompts of essay assignments,

outlining, thinking critically, and workshopping writing. Lecturer 3 provided paragraph organization and content expansion lectures, peer review time, and more. Her lectures revolved around finding balance between giving too much and too little information in essays, reading and thinking critically, and analyzing others' writing for strengths and weaknesses. The lecturers satisfy this student learning objective well. My observations show highly competent, qualified, positive instructors who display a variety of methods that all support the current curriculum.

Students, too, feel that this SLO is addressed strongly. On the student questionnaire, students were asked to rate the overall helpfulness of the class in developing academic skills (e.g. structuring essays, critical thinking, and considering audience and purpose) on a scale of 1-5, a 1 indicating not helpful at all and a 5 indicating very helpful. Not one student rated the course a zero, while four students rated a 2, seven students rated it a 3, a considerable 33 students gave it a 4, and 54 students rated the class a 5. Three students did not answer the question. The data is represented in Chart 12 below.

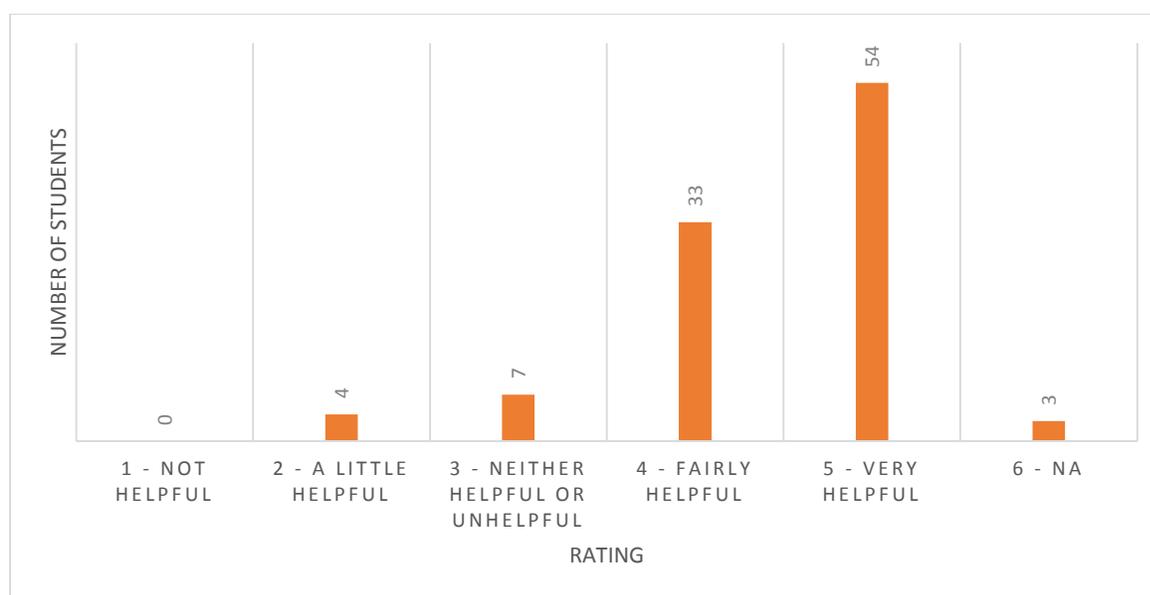


Chart 12: Student opinion of overall helpfulness in building academic skills

The data gives strong support of student opinion of their growth in building academic writing skills in 100A. Half of the students who took part in the questionnaire indicated the class as very helpful, while the majority of the rest of the students found it fairly helpful.

Outside Tutoring

Because the course is so fast-paced and high-stakes, student and lecturer stress is elevated. Students are encouraged to use a variety of resources to assist them through the class, and the resources take very different shapes. The most common resources mentioned in the questionnaire were the Writing Center, Peer Connections, LLD 004 (a one-unit course offered in

the Spring to 100A students), and the Disability Resource Center (DRC).¹ The Writing Center provides tutoring and workshops, while Peer Connections provides both tutoring and mentoring. During the first two weeks of class, lecturers advise some of their weaker students to enroll in the one-unit LLD 004, where the concepts that they learn in 100A are reinforced in a small group setting taught by a graduate student. Students with disabilities use the DRC to ensure that they receive the resources that they need to succeed.

In spring 2013, 306 students were enrolled in 100A. Of this number, only 29 students used Peer Connections tutoring for a total of 109 visits, according to the Peer Connections Director. Only 34 students used the Writing Center, 24 of them visiting more than once for a total of 109 appointments, according to its administrative assistant. This number may not be exact because the WC relies on the student to report complete, accurate information, and mistakes can be made. The total enrollment for the spring 2013 LLD 004 class was 93, according to the coordinator of the Language Development Center. Thus, 9% of students used Peer Connections, 11% used the Writing Center, and 30% took advantage of LLD 004.

Lecturers used and promoted some campus resources more than others. For example, only one of nine lecturers took advantage of the peer mentor program offered through Peer Connections, where a peer mentor is assigned to the class to work with students. Although not a writing tutor, the mentor can work in a lot of capacities, holding office hours to work with students on assignments and more. The instructor who worked with a peer mentor said, “It was awesome because [the mentor] really connects the students to tutoring, other mentors, and helps build more communication. Class is so frantic that there is not enough time to meet the individual needs of the students, to manage the pace for the students.”

Although this one program was barely used by 100A, other programs are used frequently, like the Writing Center. Lecturers’ comments about Writing Center use often correlate with comments about student conferencing and office hours, two other impacted resources outside of the classroom. One professor notes, “Conferencing is always a huge challenge. It is often discouraging. If we were at Stanford, there would be 10 students [as opposed to 20]. I talk about planning ahead, the Writing Center, not being disappointed when the Writing Center is booked.”

Another lecturer says that she does not hold mandatory conferences and emphasizes other resources for help: “No mandatory conference. It’s draining and not the most effective. Go to the Writing Center. There are other support services. I hold mandatory conferences for my weakest students, and provide time for conference for other students if they want one.” Even another says, “When class gets overwhelming, I push them to other [campus] resources.” Responses like this exemplify instructor stress with trying to provide time with each student. Exhausted, they push these students to other campus resources to find help.

Making students aware of their free and helpful campus resources is a skill that 100A lecturers promote, and it allows for successful completion of this particular student learning objective of prewriting, drafting, and editing. Lecturers make students aware of the library,

¹ The Disability Resource Center is now the Accessible Education Center, but is referred to throughout this paper as the DRC, as that was its name during the spring 2013 semester, when I collected data.

tutoring, mentoring, counseling, and other valuable resources that will help them. These students are not only building skills to succeed in 100A, but also to succeed in their academic career.

- Critically self-reflect about the writing process and about making context-appropriate rhetorical choices

The course tends to frontload this student learning objective with the first out-of-class essay, the Rhetorical Analysis, where students analyze a journal article in their major field of study for its rhetorical situation, appeals, and strategies. However, after this main assignment, this critical self-reflection on writing does not return to lecture until the very end of the course, when students write a cover letter for their final portfolio reflecting on their major assignments. Because of this disconnection, lecturers note two obstacles with this SLO: limited theme structure of the course and issues with student critical thinking.

Connection to a main course theme

The structure of the course does not allow for the three out-of-class essays, the Rhetorical Analysis, Discipline Investigation, and Critical Reading Reflection, to connect naturally, according to many instructors' opinions. A lecturer states that she likes it "...whenever things can overlap, like communication skills, rhetoric, discourse community. I'd like to see more of a natural feeding into each other. I've had to be really practical."

The concepts learned in the RA are not always retained for later assignments because there is no time to reinforce them as lecturers move on to the requirements of the next essays: "Something I wish was retained more [in the DI] is the communication part of the assignment. The best way to retain the RA assignment is have them address this in the communication section [of the DI]."

To support the continued reinforcement of a theme, another instructor says, "I am leaning back to when students had to analyze a document for the DI, then summarize an interview, as it's a reinforcement of the RA." Yet another lecturer echoes those sentiments: "I wish we could focus on one assignment at a time or that the assignments naturally complemented each other so that the overlap of drafting one assignment while preparing for another didn't feel so fragmented and chaotic." These quotes show how rhetoric needs to be reinforced through each assignment, not just the RA, as rhetoric is the theme of the course and is also what students are tested on for their final in-class exam.

Critical Thinking

Although critical thinking is a crucial skill for college students, 100A lecturers indicate a lack of its development in 100A students. After a discussion on basic assignment instructions, one professor exhaustedly professes, "I don't know how many times I explain it [the assignment]." He then continues that it is not just the directions that students have difficulty with, but also analysis: "Students don't know what the word 'analysis' means. That's one thing I struggle with: [getting them to] use examples, analyze the strategy, how and why authors use strategies, and if they're effective."

Showing misunderstanding of lecturers' job of teaching students to analyze, not summarize (a skill that faculty of all classes and all departments struggle to get their students to understand), one tutor from the Writing Center also notes this critical thinking obstacle, but assumes that lecturers do not teach it: "Instructors should emphasize that students should be analyzing and proving not summarizing. I tell and show students all the time how to do it, and they always say they wish instructors did this." The tutor's need for experience working with students and lecturers is exemplified in three ways. First, the use of the word *should* is used to tell highly educated and experienced lecturers what they should teach. Secondly, she assumes that lecturers do not teach this relatively common issue of student writing. Lastly, she makes the novice mistake of believing what students say about a lecturer, stating that students tell her all the time that they wish lecturers would teach them the skill. This quote juxtaposed with the frustrations of the lecturer trying to teach the skill above show the importance of more communication among lecturers and tutors, so everyone can help students build this important skill and not become frustrated with one another. Tutors should reinforce the material that lecturers teach, not assume that – because a student is not showing understanding of a skill – that lecturers are not teaching it.

Two other instructors voice frustration at students' not understanding directions, as one says, "The assignment sheets clear; they show exactly what they're supposed to do. With the RA, they are puzzled," and another voices, "[The DI] is very clear on exactly what to do. In a way, the prompt organizes the paper for them." Although the assignment sheets are clear and show exactly what students are supposed to do, that might be a problem. For example the RA prompt is three pages of directions and guidelines. In other courses, essay prompts are typically one page at most. The psychological effects of the length of that assignment may contribute to students' confusion, as too many directions may cause students to skip over parts in an attempt to find the most relevant points to expand on.

Many tutors in the Writing Center and Peer Connections noticed the difficulty with instructions and recommended simplifying them. For the Rhetorical Analysis assignment, tutors indicated the high level of stress that students suffer. No tutors commented on stress or understanding levels for the other two assignments. An example of these tutors' concerns follow:

Everyone was confused and frustrated with the rhetorical analysis because they couldn't understand it, it was too long of a paper for them to writer, and they couldn't relate to it.

Most students find the RA the most challenging because that is the one piece of writing where they have to apply what they learned over a short period of time into an essay. The CRR was the most relatable to students; however, because of the rushed schedule, many of them do not start early enough to give the essay enough polish.

Many students don't completely understand the instructions or what they're supposed to do. Many struggle with understanding the technical language. For example, students always bring in questions about what each of the rhetorical strategies are and what they mean.

Rhetorical analysis is always the most difficult. They usually love the discipline investigation because it involves their interests.

Many seem confused by the prompts. Even though they have clear and easy to understand directions, the students seem unsure of organization.

Assignments are too large and intimidating. Very broad topics that can overwhelm students. The difficulty in helping them is explaining the scope of the assignment.

One articulate tutor from Peer Connections wrote this thoughtful response:

I have observed that many 100A students lack confidence in their writing abilities (no matter if they are ESL or native English speakers) and this sometimes causes them to focus (too much) on what the instructor wants from them to the detriment of the creative/critically reflective part of the writing process. Students with limited English proficiency can have difficulty understanding and completing the assignments because they are still in the process of learning the language, and because of feedback received in previous composition classes, these students sometimes focus on grammar to the exclusion of developing content. For example, the rhetorical analysis of a document from the students' future field of work can be very difficult for ESL writers as these terms are somewhat abstract, in particular for those writers who have not acquired literacy in their first language.

This feedback from tutors is helpful. It indicates that what lecturers perceive as students difficulty with critical thinking may be due to the structure of assignment directions and not an inability to process those directions. It is not clarity that they have an obstacle with; it is the density of directions for an assignment that requires them to think quite abstractly about language, something they have never been asked to do before.

Another instructor describes the difficulty her students had with the RA in terms of its strong emphasis on certain parts of rhetoric:

I appreciate the goal of the RA, but the current assignment over-emphasizes the importance of rhetorical strategies. Students get hung up on memorizing the terms, and because the bulk of the RA is devoted to spotting, defining, and explaining the appeals and strategies, they walk away from the assignment with the idea that they should try to use a variety of appeals and strategies consciously in their writing. I would love to shorten this assignment and focus it more on analyzing how purpose and audience influences organization, development, and language.

Because little time exists to discuss the complex area of rhetoric in the one-month span of this assignment, students perceive rhetoric as a formulaic following of rules that they must be aware of when they write. There is no time to help students reflect meaningfully on rhetoric and to develop skills that help them naturally utilize such techniques without overthinking them. This instructor provides an interesting solution of possibly shortening the assignment and giving it more precise areas for the students to focus on.

The student questionnaires did not elicit responses about critical thinking; however, one of the five focal students addressed the issue. Yen said the following:

We need more critical thinking than grammar. I think that reading, watching videos about what people are talking about and how people respond, like the Alexandra Wallace video², the different ways of thinking and reacting. That's fresh. You kind of admire how people think, and you want to replicate that. For example, in art, I had to write a movie review, so I looked at *New York Times* reviews. It's not, "Ooh, I like that movie." It's more like, "Ooh, what you think?"

Yen clearly understands the importance of moving beyond summary and into analysis. She feels that the course can do a better job of providing those opportunities. The problem, though, returns to the pace of the course and how much time lecturers have to spend on one of many aspects that students need practice with.

All issues with critical thinking stem from the initial rhetorical analysis assignment. No concerns exist among students, faculty, or tutors about thinking through the DI and CRR assignments, and issues with working through the CRR assignment were concerned less with thinking and more with the rushed pace to critically think at the end of the semester. The issue with having time critically read, synthesize, and reflect for the CRR assignment will be addressed in the next SLO below.

- Critically read, interpret, and synthesize multiple texts

Like every concern before it, this objective, too, is oppressed by time. The shortened semester significantly impacts reading for L2 learners of English the most, as reading in a second or third language involves issues of processing, translating, and deciphering. So much of language is engulfed by culture; thus, students who did not grow up in the United States must process US history, idiomatic expressions and slang, geographic terms, and more as they read American literature. The obstacle with this objective is that with all of the other requirements of the fast-paced course, it is hard to read critically; however critical reading of the text is imperative to perform well on the last assignment, the CRR.

Although research shows that reading is an important skill in helping learners' writing, vocabulary, and grammar skills (Weinstein, 2001; Grabe & Stoller, 2001), all lecturers either want more time for reading or want the course to focus solely on writing, but they all feel there is no time to do all that is required in this course. One lecturer discusses her views on reading: "Reading for this population is incredibly important. Research shows reading helps internalize the structure of language. But students, one, don't have the time, and, two, it takes them three times as long to read. That's why reading activities are so important in the classroom."

She continues, "The teaching certificate I got was integrated reading and writing instruction, but the students don't have enough time to read, is the problem...I don't go in depth as I do in a regular class because I don't have enough time. I teach basic reading skills." The

² I use a YouTube video in class to show how poor rhetorical choices can lead to social consequences.

concerning part of this quote is that 100A has someone with specific training in reading pedagogy, yet the curriculum design does not allow her to exhibit that strength in her classroom, nor share reading ideas with other 100A lecturers.

Other lecturers also feel that because of the time constraint, the value of the CRR is questionable. One lecturer states the following:

I think I am in the minority here, but I have not seen the value in the CRR assignment in past semesters. If our goal is to help students prepare to succeed for 100W, I would rather focus on reading and writing more in line with the clear, concise, professional writing they will need in the future. I'm not sure the 2,000-word, traditional English essay accomplishes this.

Even another lecturer comments, "I like the [book], but ... students don't have time [in this class]; students skip, which defeats the purpose." Although lecturers note the lack of time to develop reading skills, most are quite adamant about the significance of reading for this class. One lecturer notes, "I agree [with the Book committee] that they should be challenged by the reading," while another supports her: "Reading is important. Most of them lack reading [skills], which is why they're writing is weak. At least we introduce them."

The above statements on reading reflect the views of the majority of the instructors, as seven of nine instructors are in favor of a book or a compilation of short works. Two of nine feel that a book obstructs other skill development for the class, and that this class should be about writing only and getting the students through this class. For example, one of these lecturers states, "Our students read well. Most of my students are 3.5 GPAs. [They are] Engineering. Why are we forcing them to read that's not in their reading comprehension?" However, this teacher also says that she likes the idea of a compilation of stories instead of a book, and her view here does show an understanding of the significance of reading: "I'm always trying to convince my students to read. My students are not reading." Two instructors are in the minority with their views on reading in the classroom, but these views are still very important and hold value, as they point to a possible restructuring of the course that will be discussed in the concluding portion of this report. These two instructors are in favor of no book for the class. One correctly states, "Students are already doing reading for each assignment: an article for the RA, two articles for the DI. Why a book?"

The idea of a short compilation instead of a book might be something to consider. Such compilations provide students with a wide variety of selections to notice choices in audience, purpose, and genre, and to explore the rhetorical appeals and strategies used by different authors. This could help contribute to the theme of rhetoric throughout the semester.

- Write well organized, well developed essays with a clear thesis

This SLO is one of the strongest that students achieve. They write three in-class essays, two journals, and three out-of-class essays, all of which receive substantial feedback from instructors. The drafting and revision process contributes to students' cementation of organized and developed writing. I will explore the strengths of this objective by examining opinions on

both in-class and out-of class writing.

In-class writing

Most instructors saw value in the in-class essay practice and in-class final exam. The three in-class essays are responses to the course novel that the students must read, and these in-class essays serve as brainstorm and note sessions for their final out-of-class essay, the Critical Reading Reflection. However, instructors were split about how well this process helps students with the CRR and in-class final exam. One lecturer comments, “I think they do work into the CRR, but are not very good practice for the final. It troubles me that the final is different [from what we have them write about in journals]. It helps for the CRR; it keeps a check for students to actually read the book. It helps calm their nerves for the final. But it doesn’t help with the final exam.”

Another comments the opposite: “The in-class practice prepares them for the final exam. I have come to see the value in helping students become more comfortable and competent with on-the-spot writing, which may be useful in some of their careers.”

What is of particular interest here is the value that students place on in-class essays. Four of five focal students wrote that in-class writing was an important skill for upper-division coursework and their profession. Mary said that the in-class essay was a crucial part of the class: “Most business classes, or any major, many of them have in-class essays. Business has a final in-class essay. One final was multiple choice and two essays of two pages each. It prepared me for that.” Backing her up, the other business student Meera said, “I like the 30% in-class final. What the real world needs that I would like to do more is in-class essay.” She said that her business final based 25% of the grade on a writing exam.

The art student Max supports the business students’ opinions of in-class writing: “It’s needed. They make you do it in 100W. I just wrote ten pages for American Studies for my finals. It should stay, especially in that class. I have to do it in my job every day.” Beatriz the biochemistry major, too, felt that the in-class essay “gives you experience with what you’d be doing in the real world.” Although no students who participated in the questionnaire noted the importance of in-class writing, that four of five of the focal students voiced support of it shows that students are aware of the value of this activity.

Out-of-class writing

Lecturers felt strongly that each assignment promoted the kinds of writing that they would need to be successful in their upper division coursework and professional lives. The Rhetorical Analysis reiterates the importance of understanding the rhetorical situation of audience, purpose, and genre, while teaching students other rhetorical strategies to better help them organize their essays and provide thoughtful, relevant content. Two students noted at the end of the questionnaire that they did not enjoy the RA or that they found it difficult. Of the five focal students, four of five discussed its relevance. Mary found it unhelpful and not relevant to her business major. Helena felt that the RA was helpful in understanding how a paper is written. Meera wishes that she had more time with the RA in order to learn the new concept of rhetoric

and the several new terms associated with it. Max had mixed feelings: “I absolutely hated the RA, but I loved it. I thought that rhetoric was really interesting, breaking down rhetoric.”

The Discipline Investigation promotes writing in the profession the most, and professors voice much approval of this assignment: “Students understand the DI. There are usually no problems with having to revise. The DI is relevant. They learn a lot from this assignment. Students get hired from this.” Students find the assignment relevant to their majors, as well, although one student notes that he or she wishes there was more time to look for an interviewee for the assignment. Three of the five focal students talked about the assignment. Mary found it to be the most applicable of the three essays to her future assignments and jobs. Helena enjoyed the assignment, but said that she already knew about her future career. Meera did not like the assignment much, but did find it helpful for her future.

The Critical Reading Reflection has students compare and contrast their own experiences with the experiences of characters in the course novel. A familiar format for them, as English 1A and 1B have them reflect on themselves, they tend to do well on it and also build awareness of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds as strengths and as an important and relevant part of their education. Students who participated in the questionnaire had the most to say about the CRR, with five students specifically discussing it in the note section of the questionnaire. One did not like the familiar 1A/1B essay: “Instead of CRR, practicing a research paper would be helpful.” Another student furthered this reasoning, writing, “Overall I like this class but think that reading and analyzing the book reminded me of my regular English classes where we wrote critical thinking papers. So if we have more new and challenging papers like DI, I’ll get more experience in learning other styles of writing.” Another student states that she had no interest in the CRR because the book was “dry.” The last student who had negative comments about the CRR said that he or she did not like it because there was no time left at the end of the semester to prepare for the assignment. Two of the five focal students found the CRR not very helpful. Meera said, “Research is important. Reflection isn’t.”

Despite positive or negative comments about the three assignments from lecturers or students, they effectively accomplish the SLO of writing well organized and developed essays with clear theses. All genres promoted – an analysis, a report, and a reflection – are all important skills for future course work and professions.

- Identify how types of written texts in a variety of fields (genres) are influenced by audience, situation, and purpose

This SLO is strongly adhered to for the first out-of-class essay, the RA, as students consciously analyze the rhetorical situation. The other two essays move on to address other skills and other SLOs. The final exam, which has students rhetorically analyze a professional document for its strengths and weaknesses, also addresses this SLO. To understand how the assignments do so, see the analyses of the above SLOs.

- Employ research strategies to collect, analyze, and evaluate data from primary and secondary sources.

This SLO, too, is substantially addressed in the course. For the RA, students must find a peer-reviewed journal article in their field of study and evaluate it. They learn formatting rules such as in-text citations, quoting and paraphrasing, and works cited or references pages. The DI has students find two legitimate outside sources to support the content of the interview that they hold. They evaluate these sources as valid, learning the difference between an invalid source like Wikipedia over valid sources like government or educational Websites. Both the RA and DI introduce transfer students to library resources. The CRR does not address the SLO aside from allowing students to continue practicing using quotation and paraphrasing strategies. For an understanding of how these assignments accomplish this, see the above analyses of other SLOs.

Overall, 100A accomplishes all of the SLOs that it intends to; however, more time is needed to address some of these SLOs more meaningfully and effectively. For example, grammar is an SLO that lecturers, students, and tutors find needs to be addressed more. Meaningful reading instruction tied to critical thinking also needs improvement. These issues have much to do with curriculum design, which is addressed with the next research question below.

How does the current curriculum design and grading policy affect the instructors' ability to effectively and meaningfully prepare for and teach 100A?

According to all nine lecturers interviewed, the curriculum is heavy on faculty and students, the pace is “frantic” and “chaotic,” and a high level of stress is placed on both faculty and students. The phrasings of each instructor are so significant that they all are shown below:

[The curriculum is] Ridiculously too much. The students don't have time to digest one assignment before they are on to the next. They need time to comprehend, revise....It would be nice to have more time for each assignment.

It's intense, with periods of almost impossible [work]load.

Too much to cover and so much pressure to produce. Not enough balance in working through reinforcement.

The pace on us is killer. The pace on them does force them to pay attention, take notice and prioritize, all skills that they need to develop. It's not just reading and writing [that we are teaching]: it's basic skills.

The workload is too much for both instructors and students. There is not enough time for three big assignments. I am always juggling....The curriculum is restricting [of time]. Too much for the time. No time to explore writing, grammar, anything.

There is not enough time. Much of the course is about getting through guidelines, 'housekeeping.' Writing instruction has become sort of secondary. I wouldn't say it's at the forefront.

Very little [time devoted to actual writing instruction]! Out of 29 class sessions, a minimum of 10 on the syllabus are devoted to in-class essays and explaining and reviewing these essays, the exam, and portfolio instructions.

I think it's pretty fast. We don't have enough time to do everything...I wish we had time to teach more writing and grammar. Unfortunately, we do "brush up" grammar, and it's not very productive. I wish we had more time or somehow make some of the lessons shorter. I need more time on teaching writing, not major assignments.

[The curriculum] is quite intense, especially the third paper [CRR]. The stress level is quite high. I sometimes panic that I'm rushing. I try to shift syllabus and make adjustments throughout the semester. Flexible. Try to talk to colleagues about where they are at that keeps me on track.

These nine quotes not only provide a picture of the frenetic pace of the course, but also of the intense workload that instructors have. Three drafts per paper, several conferences per semester, normal office hours, a full novel, three in-class essays, grading, an 8,000-word requirement and more compile in a period of 13-14 weeks depending on the semester, which leads to further opinions about the curriculum design. As one lecturer asks, "Is 8,000 words [requirement] too much for this student population?" Another says, "Word count causes errors in repetition, wordiness, and ineffective writing, especially with the RA." Even another comments, "A five page essay [requirement] means five pages of errors." These comments bring up a number of issues surrounding time constraints that push toward a restructuring of the course, including more time to teach writing style and grammar instead of getting through strict and lengthy guidelines of major assignments. A number of issues arose through the interviews with lecturers that impede their ability to teach constructively and meaningfully. These issues are the following: quick turn-around time for grading, the portfolio resubmission process at the end of the semester, and the portfolio and final exam grading process.

Quick turn-around time for grading

By far, the last few weeks of the semester are the most difficult for lecturers and students, as they still have so much to do: "The final weeks feel very rushed as we try to address three drafts of the CRR, practice in-class essay strategies for final exam, and prepare for the portfolio and cover letter." Another says, "Getting through the RA and DI with all those new concepts and the time it takes to complete a good interview leave me rushing through the CRR, and I always feel bad about that." One more lecturer says, "[For the CRR] I hold no conference because there is no time at the end of the semester. I want more time to conference, but I don't have it. One on one time is crucial for these students."

To survive through a shortened semester and intense workload, lecturers have developed approaches to the course that have helped, though many do not like teaching in the ways that they have had to. One lecturer describes the current situation as such:

I'm interested in ways to teach this course, ways to bridge the higher academic course with the realities of the students in this course. A goal is to keep the rigor of the course,

but there's such a mismatch of curriculum to the realities they can take, it's practicalities. When we are not so preoccupied with the workload, I think there are ways. There are certain aspects of the curriculum that are not realistic. For the most part, we [lecturers] agree. We're a great group of colleagues. The discordance happens at a higher level, not at the teachers'.

As lecturers struggle to find a balance between giving a rigorous and valuable product and working with the realities of the classroom, they acquiesce to practicality over creativity and stimulation. One says, "I tend to have a rather practical approach, focusing on getting the requirements covered and hoping to find in additional helpful content whenever possible. I try to emphasize ideas/concepts as they relate to students."

Two lecturers' opinions stand out uniquely as they describe their teaching as curtailing to a final exam: One says, "[This is] a course that constitutes the WST. The student needs to get through it. If that means teach to the test, that's what I'm doing. Get them through." Another says, "Unlike 1A, where the assignments support the writing skills and strategies I want to teach, my lessons in 100A are designed mostly to support the assignments. It feels like a 'teach to the test' approach, where the focus on the course is on helping students prepare for a final exam and portfolio, while hoping maybe they'll pick up something about writing in the process."

Although lecturers have issues with the quantity of work required in a short period of time, they actually do not find problems with the standardized curriculum that they need to follow: "The Sac State curriculum is effective for this population because ...the underlying motive of this curriculum is to reinstate self-confidence and to really make writing instruction more explicit." One lecturer said, "I felt relieved, to be honest, by the [standardized] curriculum. For my other classes, I rearrange constantly. With a standardized curriculum, it's like, how can I better understand this and teach this, and focus on the human being and not the curriculum?" Another says, "There is enough freedom for now....As far as autonomy, for what it is, a writing assessment course, it is freeing – it is the pressure to produce that is difficult."

The structure of the course affects how lecturers give feedback and grade essays. Because of the shortened semester and the heavy drafting process, lecturers feel tremendous stress trying to grade papers in a shortened time period. One lecturer said, "Other classes aside from 100A, you have two weeks to grade. For 100A, we have five days' turnaround." Another continues, "The pressure is on us to grade quickly. When you have two or more classes a semester, it's hard to provide constructive feedback. I have two kids. Kids get sick. In this class we don't have flexibility." Lecturers have little personal time with family when family members have needs. Unlike with other courses, they cannot adjust the schedule for when they or their family members need attention, as the structure of the course must stay the same for each class, so students have time to prepare for the final portfolio and exam process.

Portfolio resubmission process

The intense turn-around time for grading is not the only issue about grading that lecturers felt was unnecessarily stressful. The grading process at the end of the course is also time-consuming and perhaps invalid. One reason that the semester is short is to give students who fail

the course one extra week to work on and resubmit their portfolio. Most lecturers were not supportive of this process:

At the end of the semester, I will not petition for them. We have had a whole semester. I am here for them.

I think it's a good thing [to petition portfolios]...but it is a tremendous amount of extra work at the busiest time of the semester for both the student and the instructor.

I have mixed feelings [about students petitioning portfolios]. On the one hand, I hate to see students not pass, especially those who have worked hard. On the other hand, they have had all semester to prepare the essays in these portfolios. If a semester's worth of non-passing work can suddenly be brought up to par in one week, it signals to me either that a) the student could and should have written a passing portfolio in the first place, b) the new work is not their own, or c) there is a problem with the grading process.

Thus, the extra week given for the weakest students in the course to attempt one last time to revise their work not only is one reason that the semester is shortened, but it also is a detriment to the stronger students who have taken the class seriously the entire semester and who could use that extra week to reflect and revise their final portfolios. The extra week given to these weakest students changes the dynamic of the class on them, too. For three months, students have just enough time to produce and not any time to revise. They are taught quantity over quality. Then, after they fail the final portfolio, they are given the time they needed in the first place to reflect and revise, time they did not have beforehand. Again, for the strong students, this is not a problem: they adapt and adjust. The weak students, on the other hand, not only lack the writing skills to adapt to this, but also time-management and other academic skills that would have allowed them to work with the pace of this course in the first place. Thus, the weakest students are strung along for another week, hoping that a few more days will allow them to turn a semester's worth of non-passing work into passing work.

Portfolio and final exam grading process

As for the portfolio and in-class essay grading process, the instructors had further concerns. First, all instructors feel that the 1-4 grading rubric, 1 being failing and 4 being excellent, is not a valid way to assess the portfolios and final exam [See Appendix E for sample syllabus and rubric]. Most writing assessments, like the English 1A and 1B final exam assessment and the WST assessment, is six categories (1-6). The reasoning behind the 1-4 rubric is that back when the course used a 1-6, then later 1-5 rubric, lecturers rarely used the "5" and "6" category. Thus, these categories were dropped. However, just because they are not used often does not mean that they are not an important place holder. Place holders are valuable, whether they are used or not. For example, the English article system consists of the articles *a*, *an*, and *the*. However, we forget that a fourth article exists, the *zero* article, or no article. This latter article is used with the generalized plural noun: [No article] Dogs are great pets. Just because we do not see the article, does not mean that it does not have a valuable place holder within the language. Back to the grading process, with a 1-4 rubric, one crunches the mid-range category so that a B-grade paper and a C-grade paper essentially fit in the same category, the 3.

One professor says, “The ‘3’ [on the final rubric] is way too big of a category,” and another feels that the 1-4 rubric inflates many students’ grades because a passing paper that receives a 3 may not be a strong passing paper that still receives a 3.

Not only does the 1-4 rubric possibly inflate exam scores, but also the weight of the final exam, which is 30% of the students’ grade, while the final portfolio is 70% of the grade, causes further concerns about grading and inflation/deflation. All nine lecturers think that 30% is too much, as most final exams fall between 20-25% of a final grade:

I don’t like the [in-class] final exam being such a big part of their final grade, since timed writing is often a reason they’ve failed the WST and I don’t feel there is enough time in the course to really focus on improving that skill.

The reality is that they have to write open-ended answers on tests in other courses. There is a value in that [the in-class essay], but 30% is a lot.

It troubles me [about the in-class exam] that good writing but no content is a pass, but grammar mistakes with awesome content is a no pass.

I’ve been pushing for 80-20 because we teach other courses with a 20% final exam. It is not fair to ESL students. At least 25%, but not 30%. LLD 1 and 2 is strictly portfolio based. If we do this, a lot of students will get As. This class is to replace the WST. In-class writing is a main assignment.

The above comments show that the majority of lecturers do not support such a heavily weighted final exam. To address the unfairness of the portfolio-exam issue, two lecturers voiced their understanding of why the exam grade should be 30%:

The in-class exam is important because you really get a sense of their writing. Their revision process is unfair for the portfolio. Some students can go to tutoring more than others. There’s a bit of appropriation no matter what.

I am not really a fan of timed, in-class writing as a meaningful assessment of writing skills. However, I do think it helps offset the portfolio grade, which often feels a bit inflated by the grading process or by the students’ having had an entire semester to use outside help in completing their papers.

All of these lecturers bring attention to the validity of the final grading process. If the reasoning behind a 30% final exam is to offset the inflation by the portfolio, then we need to address the inflation and grading process of the portfolio, not punish second language learners of English. Lecturers also bring up an important point about outside help, like tutoring. The students who work multiple jobs and have family obligations are not going to have time to see a tutor. The students who have a looser schedule will be able to access more outside help. Tutors from the Writing Center expressed this concern, as well, two mentioning that students often view the center as an editing space, not a tutoring one.

For the portfolio grading process, which is 70% of the grade, lecturers had mixed opinions about the process, with most feeling that it is important to have the class's own instructor grade the portfolios in some capacity:

I'm happy that I get to be one of the readers [on the portfolio]...In the early stage when we weren't allowed to score our own portfolios at all, I felt that our professional integrity was insulted.

Other lecturers reading our students' portfolios is too much. There is a huge time crunch. I'm not a fast reader; I get distracted easily. I wish it could be quantifiable for me. I can't read through a set quickly. This semester, the turn-around is too quick.

No matter how carefully it is outlined on the syllabus in class, the grading process confuses the students. It also seems inappropriate that the bulk of their work does not affect their grade. I have mixed feelings [about switching grading with other instructors]. It is helpful to have a second or third opinion on borderline portfolios. At the same time, I do not feel I am able to assess the work of students in other classes effectively. In the rushed timeframe, I do not know how carefully any of us are reading these portfolios that are worth 70% of the students' grade.

At the CATESOL conference last semester, UC Berkeley had an interesting process. At UCB they do the following: Portfolio is P/NP by an outside grader; then the home instructor gives it a grade.

These responses shed light on even more issues with this final grading process, not on the part of the student, but on the part of the lecturer, and as always, it returns to the aspect of time. At the end of the semester, when lecturers have four or five courses total, they must stop the grading processes taking place in their own courses to make time to grade portfolios of students who are not their own. In a rushed and stressful time period, the attention that goes into reading these outside portfolios is questionable. The lecturer knows his or her students the best: their writing capabilities, work ethic, participation, and comprehension. An outside reader knows nothing of this context and must give a rushed evaluation of students' hard work. Students trust in this process; they are taught to believe in these processes, that they will get a fair evaluation. Solutions to this and all issues brought up in this report will be addressed in the conclusion of this report; however, it is interesting to note the solution that one lecturer brought up about UC Berkeley's current system.

The next research question shifts away from time constraint and validity issues of the curriculum and toward the course as a meaningful, helpful space in which students and instructors feel motivated and interested in their work.

How does the current curriculum design and grading policy affect student and instructor interest and motivation?

To see if a correlation exists between the curriculum design and student and instructor interest and motivation, several questions in the interviews and questionnaires asked students' and instructors' opinions about the process. The answers revolving around students have been

categorized by student understanding, interest, and motivation. Lecturer interest and motivation is explored thereafter.

Student Understanding

To gauge students' understanding and interest in each essay, as well as how helpful they found the assignment to their needs, three questions on the student survey asked them to grade each assignment on a 1-5 scale, 1 indicating no understanding/interest/helpfulness and 5 indicating much understanding/interest/helpfulness. See Chart 13 on page 51 for a visual representation of the findings.

As for the Rhetorical Analysis, two did not understand it at all, eleven found it difficult to understand, forty-one found it not easy yet not difficult to understand, thirty five found it fairly understandable, and twelve found it easily understandable. About 12% found it hard to understand, 40% found it not difficult yet not easy, and 46% found it understandable.

The Discipline Investigation was more understandable by far. One indicated that it was very difficult to understand, six indicated that it was somewhat difficult to understand, eighteen found it not difficult yet not easy to comprehend, forty-six found it fairly easy to understand, and twenty-eight found it very easy to understand. Two students did not answer the question. Thus, only 7% found it hard to understand, 18% found it not easy but not difficult, and 75% of the class found the assignment fairly easy to very easy to understand.

For the Critical Reading Reflection, six found it very difficult to understand, thirteen found it difficult, thirty-one found it not easy but not difficult, thirty-five found it fairly easy to understand, and fourteen found it very easy. Two did not respond. Thus, 19% found it difficult, 31% found it not easy and not difficult, and about 50% found it easy to understand.

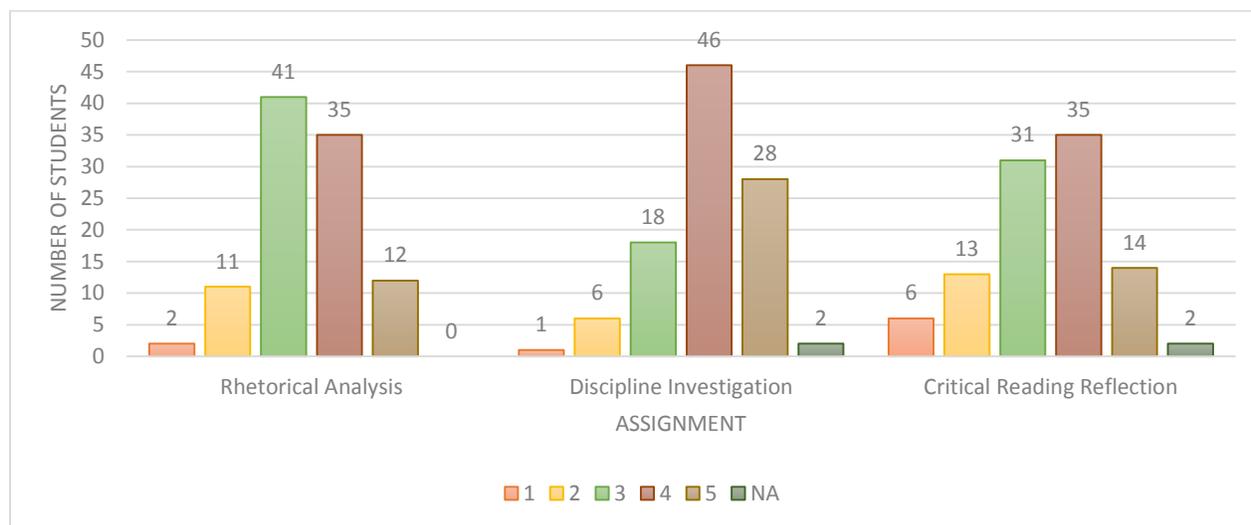


Chart 13: Student understanding of each essay

The data indicate that the DI is by far the most understandable assignment, though a large number of students had no trouble understanding the RA or CRR. Few students found any of the assignments difficult to understand.

Student Interest

For the Rhetorical Analysis, five students had no interest in it, fourteen had little interest, twenty-two did not care either way, thirty-nine were fairly interested, and twenty-one were very interested. This shows that 19% had little-to-no interest, 22% neither found it interesting or uninteresting, and 59% found the assignment fairly or very interesting.

For the Discipline Investigation, not one student responded that he or she had absolutely no interest. Three responded that they had little interest, nine responded that they did not care either way, thirty-three found it fairly interesting, and fifty-four found it very interesting. Two students did not respond. Thus, only 3% had little interest in the assignment, only 9% found it neither interesting or uninteresting, and 87% of the students found it fairly or very interesting.

As for the Critical Reading Reflection, twelve found it not interesting at all, nineteen found had very little interest, sixteen found it neither interesting or uninteresting, twenty-nine found it fairly interesting, and twenty-three found it very interesting. Two students did not respond. Therefore, 31% found the assignment of little-to-no interest, 16% found it neither interesting or uninteresting, and 52% found it fairly or very interesting. See Chart 14 below for this representation.

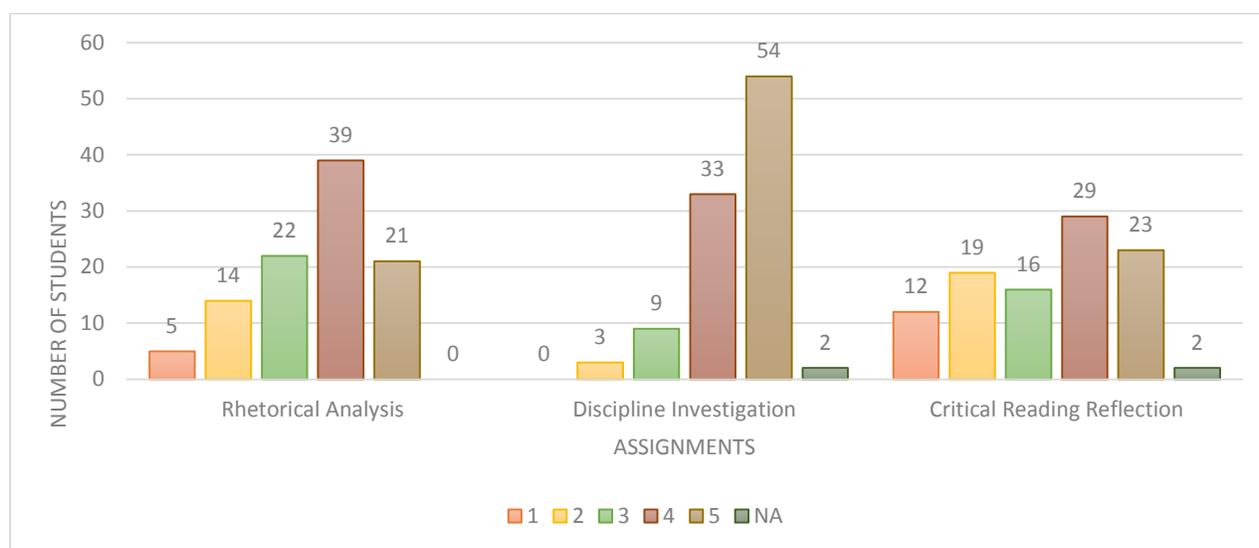


Chart 14: Student interest in each essay

Just as with student understanding, the DI is the essay that students found the most interesting. The RA, too had a high level of interest, despite it receiving a number of students not understanding it well. The data on the CRR is the most spread: several students found in uninteresting, while a slightly larger number found it interesting. Perhaps this has to do with the time crunch of the assignment, as well as the book selection for that year.

Helpfulness

The last question asked students to rate if they found the assignment helpful for them. The Rhetorical Analysis was ranked in the following manner: two found it not helpful at all, ten

found it only a little helpful, six did not find it helpful or unhelpful, thirty-nine found it fairly helpful, and thirty-nine found it very helpful. Five students did not answer the question. Thus, 11% found the assignment unhelpful to some degree, 6% found it neither helpful nor unhelpful, and 78% found the assignment fairly or very helpful.

For the Discipline Investigation, only three students found it not helpful, three found it only a little helpful, seven found it neither helpful or unhelpful, twenty-three found it fairly helpful, and sixty-two found it very helpful. Three did not respond. Thus, only 6% found it unhelpful, 7% found it neither helpful nor unhelpful, and 87% found it fairly or very helpful.

Lastly, five students found the Critical Reading Reflection not helpful, eleven found it a little helpful, sixteen found it neither helpful nor unhelpful, forty found it fairly helpful, and twenty-seven found it very helpful. Two students did not respond. This shows that 21% found it unhelpful, 16% found it neither helpful nor unhelpful, and 68% found it fairly or very helpful. The data is represented below in Chart 15.

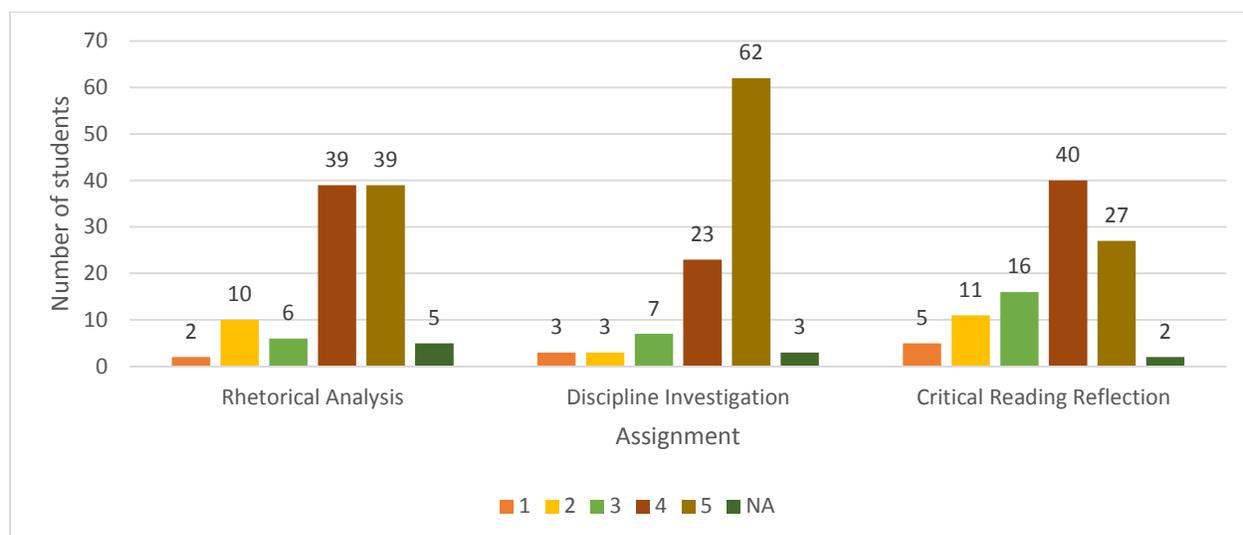


Chart 15: How helpful students found each essay

The DI comes out on top again as the most helpful essay, according to students. A large majority of students found the RA and CRR helpful, as well. However, the CRR data gives indication that several students found the essay unhelpful. This corresponds with some of the data collected from their questionnaires.

Looking at the RA, DI and CRR respectively, I represent students who fairly or really understood the assignments as follows: 46%, 75%, 50%. As for interest in the RA, DI, and CRR respectively, students who were fairly or very interested in the assignments are here: 59%, 87%, 52%. In terms of helpfulness of each assignment to student's writing growth and knowledge, the RA, DI, and CRR respectively rank as follows: 78%, 87%, 68%. This data indicates that the DI is by far the most understood, interesting and helpful assignment. Roughly half the class understood the RA and CRR well; however, students express slightly more interest and helpfulness for the RA.

Teacher motivation

The lecturer questionnaire and interview questions also elicited responses from lecturers that highlighted their own motivation for 100A. The answers indicate a strong enjoyment for teaching the course, but overwhelming exhaustion, also. One lecturer said, “I came here [to SJSU] because I *want* to teach this class.” Another lecturer said, “100A is a great class for us to teach because we enjoy this kind of thing.” To add to that, another says, “I have learned a lot teaching this class. I know so much more about teaching. It’s amazing how much I’ve learned.” One more lecturer added, “Faculty support is crucial. I feel like we’re a team. It’s reassuring. It’s very difficult to teach this class.” The lecturers of 100A are a tight group of individuals who support one another and who are led by a supportive coordinator. Lecturers take their work and the academic paths of their students seriously.

The desire to teach this class is high; however, the stress and anxiety stem from the workload. The conferencing and drafting process, as indicated earlier, takes up a lot of the course. Overall, the conferencing drains lecturers, who give anywhere from 60 to 180 conferences a semester depending on the number of sections they teach. Quotes by instructors used earlier to show other answers to questions showed this exhaustion; however, one lecturer encapsulates this overwhelming workload here:

Conferencing process is stressful for me as an instructor. Aside from the logistics challenge of scheduling so many conferences in our English Department’s shared office spaces, meeting with 40 students in a week means that I can only spend about 15 minutes per student, which is not enough time to address any real issues with their writing. Since a number of students showed up underprepared, much of my time is spent simply repeating or clarifying the assignment instructions or letting them know they are on the right track. This feels like a waste of conference time.

Lecturer motivation is also important to consider when reviewing assignments. Lecturers show great motivation and enjoyment for teaching the RA; however, they dislike the monotony of grading it:

It’s [the RA] fairly new for me, but the intellectual challenge is nice.

I’m excited to teach it [the RA]. New concepts.

My understanding [of rhetoric] improves each semester. I have a better understanding, but look how it’s taken *me* so many semesters!

The grading of the RA is tiring. I force myself to read a certain number of essays each night. More sections equal more a day. The RA turns out to be too mechanical. There’s no flow. That level of analysis takes time, but they don’t have time to analyze it.

Currently, the RA is tedious to read...

Lecturers find the RA not only enjoyable and interesting to teach, but also important. However, they do indicate that it takes a long time to understand rhetorical concepts and that reading the papers is not enjoyable. In fact, it’s monotonous to read the same concept over and

over again in upwards of 40-60 papers, all analyzing similar papers for ethos, logos, pathos, exemplification, narration, description, and other rhetorical strategies. Unlike the DI, where all students are going into different fields and interviewing different, interesting people, or the CRR, where all students reflect on their own incredibly different and engaging life experiences with language, culture, and education, the RA is a bland regurgitation of rhetorical concepts in an effort to prove their understanding of these concepts. Normally, if one wants to gauge student understanding of concepts, a short answer or even multiple choice test is more valid. The assignment of an essay, on the other hand, does not test understanding of concepts. It tests students' abilities to think critically about concepts.

Lecturers, just like their students, tend to enjoy the DI assignment. They find it relevant to students and the essays interesting to read. One lecturer noted, "I really like the assignment, and most students seem to find it rewarding." Another said, "I often find out new information, which is interesting." Even another said that it is "[t]he best. It's connected with their majors, they enjoy it. It always comes out as the best. They have the maximum discoveries; it's interesting to read. It increases my own knowledge."

Lastly, the lecturers voice stress when it comes to working with the CRR because there is no time to truly work with a reflection assignment. One said, "I want to do more than I am able to do within the time constraints." Another said, "Remove the reading reflection [CRR] completely. At least it's varied; I get their experiences. But because of the time crunch students just skim the surface. Did they really read and explore?"

However, many instructors voice their enjoyment that they get from this assignment: "The best of these are often the most interesting things I read in a semester." Another stated, "It's a great assignment. I love how it's build from the beginning with journals; it's familiar to students. Like 1A and 1B, they've had to do it [reflections] before." Another stated, "I enjoy the CRR, the students' stories. It elevates you spiritually – how they live and how they think. It makes me laugh, cry, it elevates my spirit, makes me humble."

To conclude, both students and instructors exhibit strong interest, motivation, and understanding of the course. Students feel that the content is meaningful and that they grow as writers. Lecturers, though stressed by the factor of time, enjoy the student population, the material, and the outcomes.

How well do students achieve the objectives set forth in the curriculum?

In the spring of 2013, when this data was collected, a total of 25 of 306 students enrolled in 100A, or 8% of students, failed the course. Ideally, this means that the 281 students who passed the course have achieved its objectives and are ready for 100W and upper division coursework. However, does this mean that they reach the student learning objectives of the curriculum? Most lecturers feel confident that the majority of students who pass 100A are ready for 100W and beyond. The few students who pass through 100A underprepared will unfortunately struggle in 100W and other courses, which may be the tough news that they avoided receiving in 100A.

Two research studies conducted on 100A in the past two years indicate that students receive quite a work out in 100A and that often times 100A is more difficult than 100W. Collins (2012) indicates that of 60 students surveyed in her analysis of 100A students moving to 100W, 35 (58%) received a higher grade in 100W than in 100A. In a report prepared by the Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics (2013), the findings indicate that besides A-range grades, 100A students' grades in 100W that are on par with their peers who passed the WST and moved straight into 100W. This does not mean, however, that 100A is meeting its goals. Issues of grade inflation at the 100A level, as indicated by the questionable final exam and portfolio grading process, as well as inflation at the 100W level, as indicated by Collin's (2012) report, adulterate the perspective we can gain from the data that I have collected for this report. However, if the Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics shows data comparing students who passed the WST – and therefore are deemed “prepared” for 100W and academic coursework – with students who failed the WST and took 100A, and if the grades of 100A students tend to be on par with these “prepared” students, then it may be safe to indicate that 100A is an effective course. It is placing students on competitive par with their peers who passed the WST.

One 100A lecturer from the English Department voices an important concern about grade inflation in her classes:

Almost all of my students pass each semester, with the exception of one or two [out of 40], and they deserve to pass the course.... On that note, I am also concerned that so many writers end up with 'A' grades. When I compared final grades between my 100A and 1A students over the past semesters, the 100A students received much higher final grades, although their writing skills generally were on par with or weaker than my 1A students'.

Final grades for 1A over three semester (125) students): A+ = 0; A= 1, A- = 7

Total A-range grades = 8/125 (6%)

Final grades for 100A over three semesters + summer (131 students): A+ = 3; A= 18; A- = 30

Total A-range grades = 51/131 (39%)

It makes me uncomfortable to send students to 100W with an A grade when there is so much room for improvement in their writing. I think it does both the students and their future teacher a disservice. I think adjusting the weight of the portfolio or expanding the 1-4 scoring rubric would help address this problem.

Two of the five focal students interviewed had taken 100W, one indicating that 100W was easier than 100A, and one indicating that it was harder. Yen, the Animation/Illustration major, took Theater Arts 100W and felt that she was prepared for the class, stating that 100A was harder. She said that most of the writing took the form of group work, and that students wrote a grant, a proposal, and a research essay. The class was more about her profession. She received a B+ in English 100A and an A in 100W. Max, the Photography major, took English 100W. Although 100W was more difficult for her than 100A, she said that she loved English

100W, as the focus on poetry reminded her of the analysis that she does in photography. She equated the two art forms of poetry and photography on the same level, one emphasizing the word and the other emphasizing the visual, yet both revolving around language and humanity. The work in that class was individual. She received an A- in 100A, but a C+ in 100W. This data, though small, could indicate that diversity in how 100W is taught, depending on the department.

What stifles the question, too, of how successful 100A students are in 100W is that many students are unable to register for 100W for a year after they take 100A. Because 100A grades are not posted until the end of the semester, students cannot prove that they passed the course, thus disallowing registering for 100W until after grades are posted. By then, all 100W spots have been filled. Three of five focal students encountered this predicament, and by informal discussions with other students, I know that this is a large problem. Mary, the student with a disability, could not take 100W the following semester after 100A. Mary, who has cerebral palsy and who relies on a large, electric motorized vehicle to move around campus, arrived the first day of classes the following semester to try to obtain a spot, but there weren't many available. Because of her disability, it is hard to get around campus and sit in class to see if she could get in. With her wheelchair, it is hard to get out the door of a packed classroom without severely interrupting class and embarrassing herself. She ended up only going to two classes because of this physical difficulty. Her inability to get into 100W delayed her taking Areas R and S of the GWAR standards, and she now has to wait until spring 2014 to take them. It also delayed her graduation.

Helena, the student who classifies as generation 1.5, suffered the same predicament as Mary. She could not register because her grade for 100A was published too late and all 100W classes were full. She said, "It has extended my graduation one semester. For Biochemistry, I must have 100W before I take the rest of the courses. It is frustrating because a lot of students want to add. There were like seven people wanting to add. You're competing every day." Meera, the business student from a country of low economic status, also tried to take 100W the following semester and could not register.

Thus, it is worth asking how many students are affected by this glitch in transition between 100A and 100W? If 100A objectives are to prepare students for 100W, and some students must wait one semester to one full year before taking 100W after 100A, how do students afford – economically and time-wise – to float around for that long, delaying their graduation and access to jobs?

Despite the workout that students are receiving in 100A, as well as possible issues with grade inflation and transfer into 100W, most 100A lecturers feel that most of their students are ready to move on to 100W:

I believe that 19/20 will pass this semester, and I think most of them are ready for 100W, assuming they continue with the strategies they've used this semester, including use of the Writing Center. I think the system is working, certainly better than leaving these students to repeat the WST ad nauseum with no actual learning. I have had student come

back after moving on to 100W, and no one has said they couldn't handle it. A few have even said that, after taking 100A, 100W seemed easier/less intimidating.

Out of 20, the majority are prepared [to move on to 100W]. The ones that struggled will continue to struggle. The students who are weak are going to be weak. Maybe four students in my 100A took my 100W. Maybe one passed with a B-. I think I teach a pretty manageable 100W course. A student told me my 100W was easier than 100A. My 100W contains a cover letter, resume, social science driven research paper, article reading, APA manual.

As a 100W instructor, I feel 100A is effective. Some of my 100A students come to my 100W. [It feels good that] I was able to guide them through their writing career [at SJSU]. My 100A students versus my non-100A students [in 100W] are more structured and ideas have more depth. I think it would be helpful for even 100W students who pass the WST to take 100A. It's one of the best courses we have.

Two of the nine 100A lecturers interviewed also teach 100W. Their perspective is valuable, as they have firsthand knowledge of the rigor of 100A over that of 100W. Overall, with the data shown, 100A meets its goals of effectively preparing students for 100W. The students who barely passed 100A will move on to struggle in 100W.

V. Shifting Away from a “Pressure to Produce” Mentality, Creating a Thematic Course, Working with Campus Resources, and Changing the Grading System

As stated by many who teach and take 100A, this is an effective course taught by experienced and passionate lecturers who are one cohesive unit, and it succeeds in preparing most students for 100W. The main issue is not whether or not this course is effective, as most data points to “yes,” but rather how the 100A curriculum can be adjusted to relieve instructor stress and promote more valuable writing instruction. Based on the data gathered in the form of observation, interviews, and questionnaires, I highlight some patterns in this data and propose the following shifts in how 100A is taught. Specifically, I want to address the following areas: the largely Asian and Asian American student populations that 100A serves, the largely Business major population that 100A serves, approach, curriculum, communication with campus resources, final exam and portfolio grading, transfer to 100W, and the 100W program.

Asian and Asian American Students

The data from this research indicates that the majority of the students who participated in the questionnaire, 57%, originate from Asia, with a substantial 42% of those students coming from Vietnam. This data represents 101 – roughly 1/3 – of the 305 students who took 100A in spring 2013. Thus, it is likely that the heavy influence of Asian and Asian American students in 100A continued through those classes that did not participate in the study. Several questions now arise: How can we help this majority succeed in 100A? What strengths do this population bring

to the course that lecturers can use to help other students? What weaknesses do these students have that overlap with weaknesses of other students? Further research at SJSU might explore the impact that our Asian and Asian American students have on writing programs, and how the university can better foster success for this important demographic at SJSU. A next step might be to survey the resources that this student population currently has at SJSU to help them succeed. For example, clubs or associations may be a way that students can connect, share experiences, and help one another with the demands of 100A and other courses. If there are environments on campus that help Asian and Asian Americans succeed, then lecturers can be made aware of them in order to point students toward a comfortable environment for help or resources. If such spaces do not exist, then it is worth exploring how SJSU can create such resources to promote success.

As well, parts of the 100A curriculum can legitimize the experiences of different groups and bring forth their stories. For example, this semester, three colleagues and I are using the book *East Eats West*, by Andrew Lam, a Vietnamese-American who shares his experiences with cultures colliding as well as meshing as he integrates into U.S. culture as a young immigrant. Bringing literature into the classroom that is culturally relevant to students' lives allows students a way to connect and participate in the writing classroom, a space in which students have often felt uncomfortable. Other areas of exploration in this course can cover topics of disability, or the lives of Mexican Americans or Mexican immigrants, to continue to legitimize the experiences and educational achievements of our diverse students.

Business Majors

Another large group represented by the data is Business majors. Dividing students by major shows that an overwhelming number of students who were enrolled in one of the six 100A courses surveyed come from the College of Business. Of the 101 students surveyed, 37 students (36.6%) were majoring in Administration, Management, Marketing, Finance, CFM, Accounting, AIS, HR, or MIS. The next numbers to follow that were much lower and came from the College of Science and the College of Applied Sciences and Arts, which each had 13 students represented in the six courses that I observed. Thus, it is worth asking the following questions: How can we help Business majors succeed in 100A? What resources do Business majors currently have that can help them with writing? For example, the Business department has a tutoring center specifically for their students. How can 100A better communicate with the Business department to establish pathways to success for these students? Now that Business has been identified as a major influence on 100A, lecturers can think about these questions and possible solutions.

Approach

The approach used for this class has its basis in rhetorical theory (Bitzer, 1968; Johns, 2002). Not only do lecturers enjoy teaching rhetoric, but also students find it helpful. The suggested changes to the approach are minimal, really surrounding the need to carry the theme of rhetoric throughout the entire course, as currently it frontloads teaching explicit rhetorical thought in the first assignment, then returns to it months later for the final exam. Currently, students learn the rather abstract concept of rhetoric – often times taught in one semester as a

class or even as an entire degree program – along with its vast terminology, in one month. These concepts emerge now and then within the course, but students do not truly explore them again until the final exam, of which 30% of the students’ final grade is on the mastering of the rhetorical situation. Adjusting the approach to carry rhetoric through all assignments will allow students more time with this complex subject and see how it works in several different kinds of writing. This can be implemented by adjusting the curriculum.

Curriculum

These proposed shifts are intended to take away the massive grading burden that lecturers undergo in the shortened semester. They also suggest minor changes in several parts of the curriculum to make the class more manageable for students. The intent is to keep the academic rigor of this demanding course, while at the same time opening some space for more effective writing and reading lessons, space that we currently do not have. The following areas in which shifts are proposed are the following: centralized reading and meaningful writing, major assignments, essay prompts, and conferencing.

Centralized reading and meaningful writing

The course should consider making reading more central to the writing process, which would add interest and engagement to the Critical Reading Reflection, which currently is a rushed assignment about which students’ opinions on interest and helpfulness varied. Reading is crucial for writing development, as “L2 readers generally have weaker linguistic skills and a more limited vocabulary than do L1 readers. They do not have an intuitive foundation in the structures of the L2, and they lack the cultural knowledge that is sometimes assumed in texts” (Grabe & Stoller, 2010, p. 189). Thus, reading provides L2 students exposure to syntactical and grammatical forms, often repeated many times in a text, as well as cultural understanding of the implications in the text. When reading is integrated with writing, students must slow their writing process down to make room for the critical thinking involved in analyzing texts. When writing for word count is central, the course champions quantity over quality and rushes students through the development of these important and interrelated skills. As of right now, based on the data, the two most critical skills for writing and vocabulary development need development in this current curriculum: reading and grammar.

Studies show that grammar instruction is more beneficial when it is contextualized and that reading is directly linked to writing and vocabulary development (Frodeson, 2010; Grabe & Stoller, 2010). The four skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing are not learned separately: “The inadequacy of a four-skills model of language use is now recognized....There is a general acceptance of the complexity and interrelatedness of skills in both written and oral communication and of the need for learners to have the *experience* of communication, to participate in the negotiation of meaning” (Savignon, 2010, p. 15). As well as being central to the development of these four literacy skills, reading is also the foundation for critical thinking:

In academic settings, reading is assumed to be the central means for learning new information and gaining access to alternative explanations and interpretations. Reading also provides the foundation for synthesis and critical evaluation skills. In addition,

reading is the primary means for independent learning, whether the goal is performing better on academic tests, learning more about subject matter, or improving language abilities” (Grabe & Stoller, 2010, p. 187)

The critical thinking that is developed in 100A will transfer into other courses that students are concurrently taking and will also be a skill for future reading in their professions or for personal purposes. Grabe and Stoller (2010) provide several reading needs that research shows can be addressed by classroom activities, including “helping students build a large recognition of vocabulary, giving students many opportunities to read so that they develop reading fluency and automaticity, making reading a routine practice in and out of class [and] motivating students to read” (p. 188). Meaningful reading instruction then significantly builds vocabulary knowledge (Lee, 2009/2010; Schoonen, Hulstijn, & Bossers, 1998), promotes careful reading of texts and awareness of text structure and discourse organization (Grabe & Stoller, 2010), and builds strategic reading skills for academic purposes (Janzen & Stoller, 1998; Pashaie, 2009/2010).

One last adjustment that can be made to the curriculum is the week that lecturers provide at the end of the semester for students who fail the portfolio and final exam to revise their portfolio for one last chance at passing. Instead of cutting the class short for the very few students in 100A who are direly underprepared for university, lecturers can add a week onto the semester to give students who are prepared for university to work more on their writing. One more week in the course would promote its philosophy of drafting, revision, and meaningful writing.

Major Assignments

Since reading – and challenging reading that promotes analyzing and critical thinking – is so important to writing development, I considered this when making proposed adjustments to the out-of-class essays in 100A. All assignments are perfectly valid and important to the course, and the majority of both students and lecturers represent this view. All of it is crucial and needed for academic literacy development, but it is too much for a 13-week semester and with students with varying proficiencies. How do we keep all the concepts we currently teach, but cut down the workload? To make more room for meaningful reading, thinking, and writing, I propose to remove one of the three out-of-class essays. Based on the data, the Critical Reading Reflection is the most rushed assignment, and students find it the most irrelevant to their academic careers. However, as research indicates, reading is imperative to writing and critical thinking growth (Day & Bamford, 1998; Grabe & Stoller, 2010; Frodeson, 2010; Urquhart & Weir, 1998; Weinstein, 2010). Thus, I propose to keep the CRR because of its importance in the language classroom. The Discipline Investigation is both a popular assignment and relevant to students’ academic and professional lives; therefore, the assignment should stay. However, the Rhetorical Analysis, although important and helpful – according to the data collected – is difficult to understand, cumbersome on students to write, and monotonous for lecturers to read. Because rhetoric is the central theme of the course, though, and because it is so helpful for students to comprehend the significance of rhetorical choices in writing, I propose to remove the Rhetorical Analysis as a central, 1750-word assignment. Instead, analyzing written works for rhetorical

choices can be produced as smaller journal assignments that students engage with several times throughout the semester. This would allow the central theme of rhetoric to take place throughout the entire semester instead of being frontloaded at the beginning.

The course can keep rhetorical analysis as a two-page journal activity done two or three times in the semester, which will uphold the 8000-word required word count of the class. By making this shift, lecturers still teach the significance of the rhetorical situation and prepare students for the in-class final exam, but they eliminate one of the three drafting, conferencing, and grading processes that are so exhausting on lecturers. The current curriculum for an average instructor is represented in Figure 1 below, which shows tremendous overlap in teaching very different and disconnected assignments, as well as a tight time crunch, especially at the end of the semester:

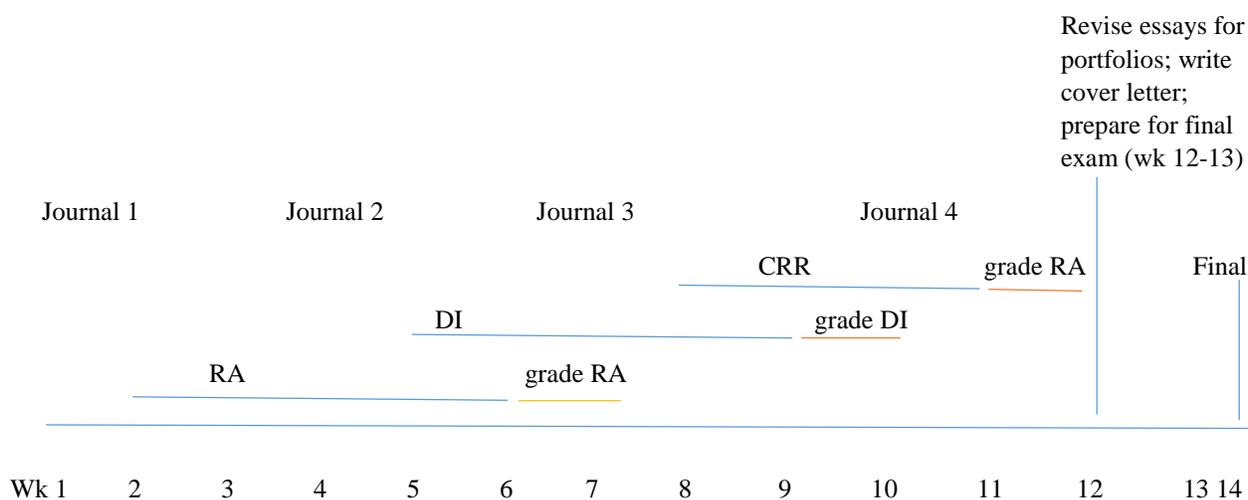


Figure 1: Current 100A curriculum on a 13-week semester

Because students should ethically have at least two weeks to revise their three essays for their portfolios, write a cover letter for the portfolio, and study for the final exam, lecturers currently must finish grading the CRR by week 12, although this is difficult to do. I often must give my students their CRR assignments back with only a weekend left to revise it for their portfolio. This means that before students finish one essay, lecturers must introduce another one, overlapping material that has an intimidating amount of directions that overwhelms the students. These three essays total 5500 words. In order to give students enough time to revise each essay, and because lecturers do not have time to lag, they must grade each assignment within roughly five days after it is due, opposed to the usual two weeks that writing instructors have to grade for other 15-16 week courses.

This process can be simplified without sacrificing any concepts of the course and without taking away its rigor by considering the following structure by removing the RA paper and replacing it with three short journal assignments, as shown in Figure 2 on the next page.

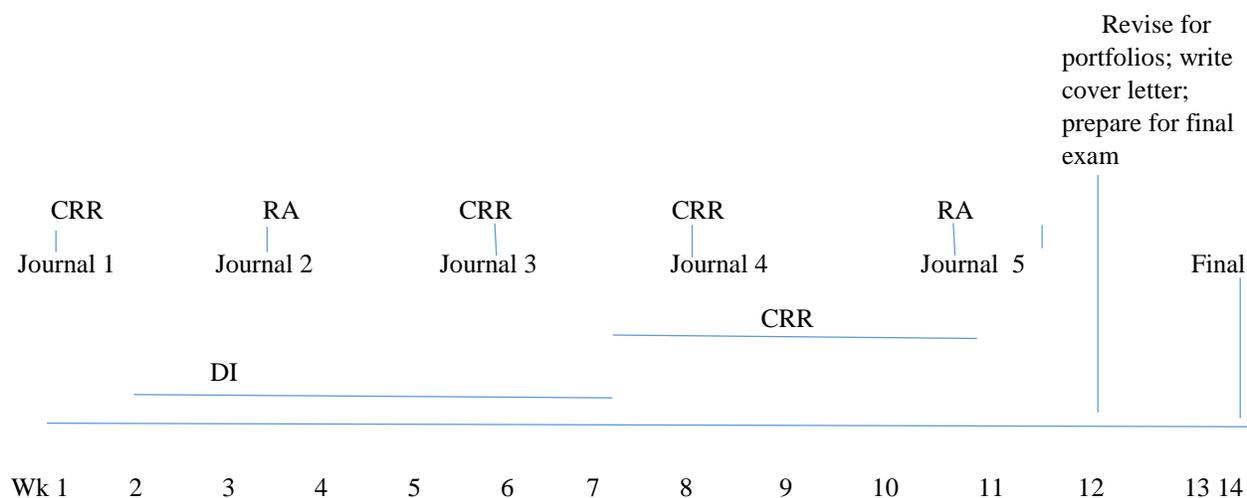


Figure 2: Proposed 100A Curriculum Change

In the above visual, the RA as a large assignment has been removed and replaced by two journal assignments that will function as rhetorical analyses. The other three journal assignments will continue to function as brainstorming activities for the Critical Reading Reflection. Each journal is roughly 500-600 words, for a total of 2500-3000 words.

Journal 1 is a diagnostic that functions as entry into a main theme of the book that must be read for the course. For example, *East Eats West*, by Andrew Lam, is his memoir on the clashing of his native culture and language of Vietnam with his new culture and language of America. Thus, for the first journal, students are asked to describe a time in their lives when they have felt two or more cultural experiences at odds with each other. Journal 2 coincides with learning the rhetorical situation. As students learn rhetoric in class, they will be assigned a two-page homework assignment for which they rhetorically analyze the book they are reading for audience, purpose, genre, style, tone, rhetorical appeals and strategies. For example, in my course, they would rhetorically analyze the beginning chapters of Lam's *East Eats West*. Because it is a homework assignment, lecturers will not have to spend hours grading for grammar, although they can point to a few issues for the student to work on, nor will they have to wade through hours of reading the same concepts over again in six-page papers. Lastly, they will not have to go through a rigorous drafting and conferencing process for a large out-of-class paper. Instead, they can focus those few lessons that they save on other important areas: student understanding of complex rhetorical concepts, grammar lessons, or style lessons.

Journal 3 and 4 return students to connecting themselves with the literature they read. These journals will help them draw connections between their own experiences and observations and the themes that are evolving throughout the book. Journal 5 falls at the end of the Discipline Investigation assignment. Here, they will write a two- or three-page homework assignment where they rhetorically analyze the choices they made for the DI and compare those choices to those they are making for the RA. Short journals on three different genres, purposes, audiences, styles and tones will allow students to experience how the rhetorical situation shifts. They will learn the complex concept of rhetoric in one semester as opposed to one month. They will be

graded on their understanding of the concepts that will help them be better writers in their upper division coursework and professions. Lecturers can use these short assignments to help individual students focus on two to three grammar rules, instead of marking and grading an entire paper on rules that take some time to master.

Peer review, conferencing, and lectures having to do with explaining the Rhetorical Analysis assignment take a minimum of five class periods that could be used to prepare class activities on reading, grammar, organization, style, and academic purposes, further developing student interest in and motivation for reading and writing and removing the confusion that comes with the RA in large-assignment form.

Shortening the RA means more time for the other two assignments, the DI and CRR. As indicated by professors, students need time to understand the DI assignment, and find two peer-reviewed journal articles and someone to interview. The DI helps students build library and research skills important to their success in academia. By starting the DI earlier, lecturers might even find time for a library research day, helping students understand the resources available to them as students. Students will also not be stressed for time to find someone to interview for the paper. Because the DI can be started earlier, the CRR can also be started earlier. More class time can be dedicated to the reading, a skill students desperately need to practice. The CRR will not be rushed, as students now have one full month to work with the assignment without being distracted by other assignments. Students will have time to put the “reflection” in Critical Reading Reflection, and really understand the book instead of skim it. Currently, all semester instructors are forced to stress the themes of “follow directions” and “quantity over quality.” Then we somehow expect students to critically reflect and revise in a short period of time at the end of the semester. This is counter-intuitive to helping them build critical thinking and revision skills.

Out-of-class essay prompts

According to lecturers and tutors, students have significant trouble working through the prompts for each assignment. For spring 2013, the RA prompt is three pages long, and the DI and CRR are two pages long. To compare, the prompts that I give my English 1A students are never more than one page long. The directions to each 100A assignment are overwhelming and must be cut down. Appendix F provides the current Rhetorical Analysis prompt, and Appendix G shows a proposed concise version of the same prompt. Insightful comments from the Writing Center and Peer Connections tutors provide a glimpse into how it is like trying to work with students through the directions:

Assignments should instill good writing values. These assignments are too long and intimidating.

In my experience, everyone was stressed about the word counts, so a lot of the students did not feel that writing concisely was worth it.

I don't think such an extensive word count is necessary.

I think just about every time I've worked with a student on any of these assignments we've spent an entire tutoring session reviewing the instructions and planning the paper; I don't mean to suggest that the assignments are too difficult, but perhaps the instructions might be simplified or streamlined? I have observed that students are engaged in the assignments, which I believe is because they are able to work within their fields of study.

Although some tutors show unawareness that word count is a mandate set by Board of General Studies (BoGS), that a couple of them voiced this opinion shows that they are concerned over the same issue that lecturers are: sacrificing quality for quantity. Some of this quality can be grasped with fewer directions, as many tutors also indicate that the directions create a large problem for students. Fewer directions promotes critical thinking and problem solving skills to get through an assignment. Giving students too much directions results in a stack of class papers that are exactly the same. Although this is important for holistic grading purposes at the end of the semester, it completely stifles creativity and promotes too much reliance on the instructor and prompt. In future classes, students will not receive such formulaic and involved directions. Thus, 100A prompts should promote more student choice.

Conferencing

Although my proposal to eliminate one of the major assignments means that instructors can eliminate one entire conference session from their curriculum, conferencing is still a crucial part of all writing instruction, not just instruction for L2 learners, and should still remain an important aspect of this course. The course should still uphold its values of student-instructor interaction and student-student interaction, as this communication continues to assert to students if they are understanding material, or if they are off track. The students in 100A are at a variety of different language proficiency and academic proficiency levels. Classroom time can only focus on one level. Thus, students below that level or above that level benefit from one-on-one time with the instructor the most, as they receive lessons and feedback that will help work on writing issues not addressed in the curriculum of the course.

In order for conferencing to continue to be an important part of 100A, lecturers must have a manageable class size. As of right now, the cap for 100A is 20 students; however, recently the course cap is under threat from administrators who want to increase the class size by three to five more students. For decades, the National Council of Teachers of English and the Conference on College Composition and Communication have recommended a cap of 20 students for regular composition – ideally 15 – and 15 for basic writing (Haswell, 2010). However, as Roberts-Miller (n.d.) notes, “For administrators with no experience teaching writing, writing classes are not significantly different from other classes, in which grading two or three more exams adds a trivial burden on the teacher...” (1). Unfortunately for writing instructors, “... even a few students can mean additional hours of grading and conferencing.” Roberts-Miller continues, “...[S]maller classes simply work better... teachers can meet with students more often and do a better job of engaging in responsive and reflective teaching” (1).

Research indicates that close and consistent interaction with students, including conferencing, promotes academic success (Hippel et. al., 1998; Kuh et. al., 2010; Ladson-

Billings, 1992; Roberts-Miller, n.d.). Whether faculty teach 20 or 25 students does not matter in terms of student retention of material, according to many studies that show larger class size does not inhibit student learning (Sheppard & Gilbert, 1991; Gribbs, et. al., 1996; Kennedy & Siegfried, 1997). Toth and Montagna (2002) in their article evaluating current studies on class size state, “The results were as varied as the methods, with two studies showing no relationship between class size and achievement, three indicating a negative relationship, two showing mixed results, and another reporting a positive relationship between these two variables.” However, Borden and Burton’s (1999) study indicated a negative impact of large class sizes was significantly greater among lower ability students. Basic writing courses require a strong relationship between students and the instructor because these classes place strong emphasis on student-student and student-instructor interaction. Writing classrooms have workshops, peer activities, small group exercises and more. The current 100A course design is backed by research indicating that conferencing and drafting are significantly important to writing development.

The issue, then, is not whether or not students will retain lecture. The issue is workload on lecturers: “There is fairly good evidence on what constitutes good practice in the teaching of college writing: thoughtful writing assignments, considerable writing on the part of students, and thoughtful feedback from instructors. This gets harder with the addition of each student.” (Roberts-Miller, n.d.). Superficial and rushed feedback on writing will result in fewer students passing the course: “The more that a program emphasizes revision..., multiple drafts, and teacher accessibility, the more that having a small class matters” (Roberts-Miller, n.d.). Thus, how a class is taught – the values that it incorporates – dictates student success more than class size. Because 100A values revision, feedback, and conferencing, two of which are a part of the student learning objectives, then it needs a smaller class size to promote its philosophy effectively and to help students who have never received the attention that their writing needs succeed because these activities take time and attention on the part of the instructor.

To compare 100A’s class size to basic writing courses at other California State University and University of California institutions, the following data helps put its current cap choice into perspective. Compiling a comprehensive list of over 240 universities nationwide, Haswell (2010) indicates the following self-reported caps on undergraduate basic writing courses from the six CSUs that responded. Because it has been three years since this data has been collected, these numbers might be different now:

CSU Monterey Bay: 22

CSU Northridge: 19

CSU Hayward: 20 intermediate / 15 basic

CSU Sacramento: 16

CSU Stanislaus: 20

CSU Fresno: 20 (TAs); 25 (part-time instructors)

Of all 240 universities that self-reported data on its composition programs, 125 of them reported numbers for basic writing courses. Of 125 colleges and universities, 92 of them (74%) were capped at 20 or below. The fewest amount of students was 8 in a class, with the mean cap being 16.5. Therefore, SJSU falls within the average of CSUs represented in the data; however, its cap is higher than the average cap of colleges and universities polled nationwide. The current cap of 20 allows for 100A instructors to provide meaningful feedback, conference time, and effective classroom activities to support students. Any more than 20 will compromise the quality of teaching in the classroom. Grading one single essay takes anywhere from 10-20 minutes, depending on its quality. To add, for example, three students to a classroom equates to six or nine more students a semester, depending on the number of sections one teaches. This equates to several more hours of grading per assignment per semester. Lecturers are already paid part-time wages for full time work. Contrary to assumption, lecturers also work summers, reading new literature and designing activities and exams from that literature, designing course syllabi, and often teaching summer courses or working other jobs. Also contrary to assumption, lecturers do not just work a few days a week in the classroom. Every day – weekends, too – lecturers grade papers, prepare for lectures, problem solve as student situations arise, conference, hold office hours, and more. To exploit my colleagues and me further by adding several hours of grading, conferencing, and other work without increasing our pay for this additional several hours of work is disrespectful and demoralizing, despite our high level of education, experience, and passion for education. Worse, students suffer the most, as their professors do not have the time nor patience to guide them properly through their writing and thinking processes.

Communication with other resources

Stepping away from inside the classroom and looking outwardly toward the other resources that are important to English/LLD 100A, the largest issue that 100A lecturers and 100A resources need to work on is communication. 100A lecturers and tutoring centers can work together so that faculty does not overburden these centers and so that tutors better understand the realities of the classroom and faculty expectations of how tutors should work with their students. Furthermore, tutors can benefit from ESL training. On the other hand, 100A faculty, who are well educated and experienced in L2 learning and teaching, feel vulnerable with their knowledge of how to help other students who take this course, specifically students with disabilities. Therefore, 100A can work on building better communication between lecturers and the Accessible Education Center. Lastly, there might be a way that lecturers can better utilize not only tutors, but perhaps also enlist graduate students to help with 100A, as the promising and important LLD 004 class encourages.

Writing Center and Peer Connections

From obtaining feedback from Writing Center specialists, WC tutors feel that 100A students overburden this resource. Although only 34 of 306 students (11%) enrolled in 100A for spring 2013 actually utilized the WC, and only 29 of 306 students (9%) used Peer Connections, these tutors are usually seeing the weakest students, as those are the students for which lecturers seek outside support. From interviews with lecturers, some stated that when they get overwhelmed with the workload, they pushed students to the Writing Center and other campus

resources. Other lecturers voiced frustration with the way tutors work with 100A students. Moussu (2013) summarizes the problem here: “When university/college faculty members believe that ESL students’ writing skills are not equivalent to those of native speakers, they frequently send these ESL students to their institution’s writing centres (WCs). However, this often results in frustration for WC staff, the students, and faculty members” (p. 55). Moussu pushes the importance of beginning a dialogue among lecturers, students, and staff as a way to alleviate such frustrations.

Tutoring resources are very important to 100A lecturers, as lecturers cannot possibly help these diverse students with different needs all by themselves. This difficult job takes communication and help from all resources, and requires understanding on the part of tutors that these students need a lot of help. One Peer Connections tutor expresses her experience with 100A genuinely:

Working with 100A students exposes me to the writing abilities and the writing challenges faced by the student populations that I would like to work with (I hope to teach LLD 1 and 2 or similar courses after I finish my M.A.). I really enjoy working with 100A students because their courage and tenacity inspires me; many of these students lack the “linguistic capital” that is valued by academia and thus must work extra hard to learn to think and write in ways that will allow them to successfully complete their writing assignments and eventually obtain their degrees. In fact, it was my work with LLD 1/2/100A students that led me to enter the M.A. TESOL program.

Although this tutor shows the knowledge and compassion necessary to work with these students, tutoring them is very difficult and requires constant patience. Many tutors at the Writing Center expressed struggles that they have had trying to help 100A students. Their frustrations indicate that they could benefit from receiving more L2 training, as the Peer Connections tutor with a strong TESOL background was quite aware of the sociocultural and sociopolitical issues behind these students’ writing struggles, and seemed better able to assist them without showing frustration in her comments. Some comments from the WC staff are below:

Some students only come because they want someone to edit their papers.

They come to the WC for editing not tutoring often [sic].

Many students come in to work with a tutor on the same assignment multiple times. After about 5 or 6 visits, they have solid papers. However, while some students do actually learn through this process, many don’t. Their papers are not the result of their work, but rather the work of the tutor. It’s unfair that these students pass, since the majority of their grade is based on the papers, when they don’t, in fact, actually know how to write. You might consider changing the grading scale.

I strongly feel that it is inappropriate for tutors to help with the cover letter. If you want a true writing sample, they should write them in class.

These responses are somewhat concerning. For one, they show that students are possibly misunderstanding the purpose of the WC, which is to help by tutoring, not editing. Lecturers can better communicate with students at the beginning of the year that these spaces are not for editing, that they are intended to be learning spaces where they can gain an understanding of their writing errors. On the other hand, the second-to-last comment from a tutor is disconcerting to lecturers. She indicates that she is changing the paper of the student so much that it is the work of her and not the student. Tutors must be aware of their roles and responsibilities and not be editing student papers whatsoever. It is not the intent of any lecturer to have their students receive editing. Lecturers assume that they are sending their students for extra understanding of grammar, content, and style rules. If a student is coming in five or six times to the WC, then perhaps the WC needs to establish rules about how many times a student can receive help on one particular paper. For example, perhaps students can see a tutor for up to three times per paper.

The final comment is concerning, as well. Students should be able to utilize the WC for any writing assignment they need assistance with. The 100A curriculum establishes various assignments throughout the class, along with a 30% in-class final exam, to garner a “true writing sample.” Comments like these indicate a complete unawareness of the course structure and goals. Therefore, perhaps lecturers can give professional development workshops throughout the semester to tutors to help them learn how to work with second language learners, understand the theoretical underpinnings of the course, what lecturers actually teach in the course, and how we expect tutors to work with our students.

One WC specialist writes, “Most students are great and responsive, but I think they would benefit more if we visited once every other week.” Writing Specialists visiting the classroom is a good idea, as this is what Peer Connections mentors have been doing with positive results. As well, the Peer Connections feedback was much more positive and aware of the student population of 100A perhaps because Peer Connections tutors work with lecturers inside the classroom via their mentoring program. Thus, these tutors and mentors are exposed to the students and curriculum in the classroom – they actually see how it all works. Inviting WC specialists into the classroom will provide them with a context through which they can work with students on their assignments. Lecturers can do better at opening up their classrooms to tutors and specialists.

Therefore, Although some of these responses seem negative and show the inexperience of students still working on their first degree, and although some of these writing specialists seem to be unaware that they are telling highly educated, experienced lecturers what they should be doing in the classroom (all suggestions that lecturers are, in fact, already doing), it is important to note the tone of these, as these students do not mean to sound rude; on the contrary, they show frustration about how to work with second language issues and the need for learning opportunities for these tutors to better understand the students and the class that they work with. The responses also indicate that 100A lectures could come to the WC and Peer Connections to provide workshops on how to assist L2 students. When asked what kind of training from which

they could benefit, every tutor who participated in the study wanted training to work with L2 learners:

Yes! We have no ESL training. Difficult discussing sentence structure, grammar, and word choices....Tutors do not have ESL training, which we would need to tutor these students and not edit for them.

Absolutely! We are not trained to help specifically 100A students, so sometimes if we cannot adequately explain every rule to them, they get upset.

Yes, it would be useful if we could regularly visit the entire class.

ESL training, DRC training.

I think we could benefit from participating in ESL programs...

I absolutely believe so, especially for ESL students. I also come from a background where English is my second language. It is not uncommon to see how some students will attempt to translate directly from their native language into English.

All tutors show enjoyment in their positions and a want to improve their knowledge so that they can better help students. Although frustrated with how to help students, they show zeal for learning how to help them. These tutors are the best writers on campus; if we can provide them with further training, then we are contributing to their formation as better teachers in the future. It is also clear that writing specialists can benefit from learning about what this course is, who the people are who teach it, and further training in second language acquisition theory and practice. Some of the assumptions that WC specialists made about the course and its lecturers were at times disrespectful to the well-educated and experienced lecturers who teach the course. However, this can be seen as a positive opportunity for 100A lecturers to teach these students about the course, its students, and current pedagogical choices that work well for this student population. The feedback from the Peer Connections tutors showed much more awareness of the curriculum design and respect for the learners and lecturers of the course; however, these tutors also either had more education in second language pedagogy or experience with second language learning. They also work with 100A in the classroom. From all of the tutors' responses, lecturers can better communicate with the tutors and mentors, such as helping tutors understand how the course is graded, as well as how to prioritize grammar and content errors over issues that are not important, and even how to ensure that they are not editing students' papers, but tutoring.

Accessible Education Center

Lecturers, too, can benefit from some training. Though they are well-educated and experienced in second language acquisition studies, most lack knowledge on how to help other student demographics in the classroom, like students with disabilities. For example, 7 of 9 lecturers specifically voice discomfort at knowing how to help students with disabilities. The two lecturers who felt comfortable indicated that they have loved ones with disability, so their personal experience allows them an understanding that others might not have. Students with disabilities, just like students whose first language is not English, cannot be clumped together as

one demographic. These diverse students have very different needs that lecturers must accommodate and learn about, from physical, psychological, and cognitive. When one thinks about the reasons behind someone not passing the WST, one might forget about psychological aspects of human personality that keep students from passing. Thus, lecturers see a higher concentration of students with disability in 100A than in other classes that they teach. For example, in three years of teaching at SJSU, I have never had a first-year composition student registered with the Accessible Education Center (formerly Disability Resource Center), while in one semester alone I have had up to six students with various disabilities who were registered. On top of this, there are cultural stigmas about disability that keep some students in class from seeking such a resource, while other students just simply may not know that they have a learning disability. Some concerns about working with students with disabilities are expressed below:

I would like more training in recognizing disabilities and information about what resources are available for these students.

I am not comfortable with confronting disability. Do they know the resources available? Also, in a lot of cultures, disability is looked down upon. I would like to know the whole process of the DRC [Disability Resource Center] – how it determines what resources students are given.

DRC students are left behind [in the curriculum]. I have a level of discomfort [trying to help them]. I have these moments talking to them that are overwhelming to them. I don't know what this course does for those students.

I would love more professional development in disability and how we can work with it, but we don't have that.

I'm not very comfortable because I don't know if I'm able to help them. One student, I take notes for her; I aimed to talk to DRC but couldn't. My other DRC student works with the Writing Center a lot. I get overwhelmed after working with them. A 15-minute meeting with the DRC to see how we could help [students] better [would help].

I do not have any training in working with students who have disabilities and do not feel equipped to help students with serious disabilities. For example, last spring I had a student who struggled terribly with spelling, punctuation, and constructing basic sentences. His writing was nearly unintelligible. He was a very sweet student and a wonderful class participant, but I had no idea how to help him improve his writing, other than to sit with him and work on his sentences one by one. In an hour, we might have tackled one paragraph. We met for an hour per week throughout the semester (this has happened several times with DRC students), but I saw zero change or improvement. I wished I had better support so that I could have helped him and used our time (his and mine) more effectively.

These comments are just a small sampling of many that indicate a need for more professional development for working with students with disabilities. Often times, administrators and chairs assume that such writing skills classes are for L2 learners. L2 learners are just one of many kinds of students that 100A works with. Yet another aspect of disability that lecturers work with is psychological or behavioral. More than one Crisis Assessment and Intervention Team (CAIT) report has been filled out by 100A instructors in the last few years. I had to fill one out during my fourth semester teaching the course after feeling unsafe because of a student's behavior in class and via email. Some other lecturers voice their concern here:

I had an incident with a student who didn't agree with my grades. The experience was inappropriate, creepy, weird. He possibly had a psychological disability. At first I didn't know how to address certain things, but I have learned a lot.

I do have that fear at the end of each semester, although nothing has escalated. My fear stems from having students who are angry to take 100A and exhibit hostile, belligerent attitude toward their classmates and me throughout the semester. In my first semester of teaching, I did approach the administration (department, counseling services, and campus police) for help with a belligerent student after several of his classmates emailed me to say that they felt 'unsafe' with him in the classroom. Administration advised me to have a supervised conference with the student. The university counseling center advised me to fill out a CAIT report and walk the hostile, male student personally to their offices. Campus police said that they couldn't interfere unless the student actually performed a violent act or crime, but they offered to have an officer on alert during my class period. I did hold two conferences with the student (which caused temporary improvement in his behavior) and filled out a CAIT form, but the CAIT team did not actually follow up on the report until the last week of the semester. Since they would not provide me any information, I was not sure what actions they took or if I needed to be fearful of the student's response. After this experience, my overall feeling was that the administration was concerned for my student's safety but not my own. Also, I remain surprised by how seriously the university responds to acts of plagiarism, while threatening, disruptive, or abusive behaviors in class is tolerated.

Last semester, I used two stern class warnings, one email, and private conferences to address repeated instances of lateness and bad attitudes in one of my sections. It did not have any effect and came back to haunt me on my student evaluations. As I learned last year, the negative comments on my evaluations will affect my annual evaluation. Therefore, I am reluctant to address these discipline issues if they arise again.

Because 100A is a fast-paced, high-stakes course, it adds to the stress of students who tend to have difficulty working with such situations. Therefore, as lecturers work with L2 acquisition, they are also learning how to help students with learning disabilities, as well as how to handle situations that escalate with students who might have other disability or behavioral obstacles. As for lecturers' concern about how to best help students with disabilities, perhaps the

coordinator can arrange a meeting or a small workshop with the AEC, so lecturers better understand the process and perhaps learn a few strategies to help particular students. For example, students with dyslexia can benefit from particular reading strategies that will help them through a text or even through proofreading their own papers. As well, a protocol should be set up so 100A lecturers know exactly what to do if potentially dangerous situation occurs with a stressed student. Lecturers should know how to try to help a student, but also should be supported by their departments and the administration so that they can safely get out of such an occurrence. I have been backed into my office, followed to my office, harassed through email, and more. Lecturers should all have a clear strategy on how to keep both students and themselves safe.

Graduate Students

As discussed earlier, 93 of 306 students – 30% -- took advantage of LLD 004, the one-unit writing lab offered to 100A students in spring semester. LLD 004 was utilized far more than Writing Center and Peer Connections tutoring. At the beginning of the spring semester, 100A lecturers advise two or three of their weakest writers in class to take advantage of the 1-unit lab offered at the Language Development Center, an invaluable resource for SJSU students working with language. Because such a large number of 100A students benefit from this lab, I recommend extending it to fall semesters, as well.

LLD 004 is a model that allows, also, for the learning development of graduate students who are currently in the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) program at SJSU, as well as others who have interests in student writing. The course gives graduate students exposure to the kinds of students and types of errors that they will come across when they become teachers or lecturers in the future. The experience that graduate students gain from this lab will place them ahead of other students looking to teach writing, as they will be more comfortable with and less stressed by the needs of these students in real classroom environments. Thus, providing more opportunities for graduate students in both Linguistics and English will give these future teachers the experience they need, as well as provide more opportunities for 100A students to take advantage of this lab. English graduate students – often given an English 1A to teach – can first develop their teaching habits through providing smaller practicum courses for 100A. After they develop these skills in a smaller, less intimidating environment, they can then graduate to taking on a full 1A or 1B classroom, where they will be exposed to a variety of levels of student writing and well equipped to handle it.

Final Exam and Portfolio Grading

The final portfolio and grading process is unpopular with both students and lecturers. The portfolio, which is currently 70% of the final grade, gives preference to students who have time for outside tutoring. As indicated by some tutors, some students go to tutoring upwards of six or seven times to polish their papers, while other students work several jobs, have children, commute, or must attend to other responsibilities that don't allow them to access outside help.

The final exam, a first draft process that favors native speakers over L2 learners, is weighted at 30%, thus over-punishing L2 learners for sometimes minor grammar mistakes that may take a lifetime to understand, if they ever do. There are many ways that the current final grading process can be adjusted. I will outline one idea for the portfolio, final exam, and grading rubric that could work.

Portfolio

Instead of the portfolio being 70% of the final grade, it should be 75% of the final grade, allowing a reduction of the final exam from 30% to 25%. However, because many students find outside help to polish their writing, then the rubric grading must change. UC Berkeley's current design of having a second reader grade as Pass/No Pass, instead of a rubric score, may be a smart solution. First, at the end of the semester, lecturers have a difficult time making time to read students' work that is not their own. The turn-around time is demanding, as lecturers must submit grades and finish the other courses that they teach. With a Pass/No Pass system, the outside reader does not have to read so meticulously in order to give a specific rubric score; instead, he or she can skim through to ensure that the essays have all of the elements, that the students have followed directions, and that there are no significant issues with the writing. Then they can give a score of Pass or No Pass. This will keep lecturers from assigning a "4" – the highest rubric score – to essays that they may or may not have read thoroughly. However, a quick read can absolutely be sufficient to tell if a paper is passing or non-passing.

After the outside reader gives a Pass/No Pass, the portfolio returns to the actual lecturer of the course. The lecturer, who knows each student – his or her work ethic, completion of all assignments, participation, and performance – can take this into account. As of right now, class homework and participation, along with any points earned during the semester, does not count for the final grade. Counting this work toward the final grade gives lecturers more authority over their students' grades. For example, I have had students who have missed several classes, had poor attitudes, and who have scraped by the entire class receive a high B or even A in the course due to an outside reader's look at his portfolio, as well as his high performance on the in-class exam. The process deflated me as an instructor, as the entire semester I was very strict on him, knowing that if he did pass the course, he would barely do so. On the other hand, I have had incredibly brilliant students who completed all assignments, participated in class, and showed great intellectual strength, but who did not perform strongly on the final exam and whose outside readers gave lower scores on the rubric, despite their portfolios being quite strong, in my opinion.

The instructor dictating the final portfolio grade might reduce grade inflation. At the very least, it is worth experimenting for one semester, preferably spring, so lecturers or the coordinator can analyze data over summer to indicate if the process would be worth keeping. This process eliminates the stress on the outside reader to grade quickly and gives the actual lecturer more authority over his or her students' grades, as currently he or she is in control of only 25% of the grade.

Final Exam

With a system that allows instructors more control over the final portfolio grade, then the final exam can be reduced from 30% to 25%. This is more representative of typical final exams in other departments, which range from 20-25% of the final grade. As well, it is less of a blow to L2 learners who know the grammar rules, but who are limited by time to proofread for errors and think of the higher vocabulary that they want to use to sound more articulate: "...The widespread expectation that adult language learners can attain completely monolingual-like command of an L2 is unrealistic and only possible in a nation that is overwhelmingly monolingual (Harklau, Siegal, & Losey, 1998, p. 8). Many of my students voice their frustration that they spend so much time looking for that right word, and that they resort to simplifying their vocabulary just to get through the exam on time. They are aware that they do not sound as articulate as they would like to, but there is nothing that they can do about it. An in-class essay is a wonderful representation of first-draft writing. However, the entire class promotes drafting and revision, as these skills will help them throughout their academic careers. By the end of the class, students learn the skills of starting assignments early so that they have time to draft, utilizing tutoring, and thinking critically and reflectively about their work. To then place such high value on a "one-shot" exam instead of drafting and revision does not align with the philosophy of the course. Any concerns one might have about possible inflation of grades because of the 5% reduction might look to the change in rubric design as a way to provide more accurate grading.

Rubric

Currently the rubric is a 1-4 scale (see Appendix E). Earlier in 100A's evolution, the portfolio and final exam were graded with a 1-6 rubric, then later with a 1-5 scale. The rationale behind changing the rubric to a 1-4 scale, as discussed earlier, was that the 5 (and earlier the 6) rating was rarely used. However, just because it is not used often does not mean that its place is not significant. As it currently stands, The "3" rating is huge, and depending on the mix of portfolio and in-class essay scores, can result in a student receiving a B, B-, C+, or C. These are very different grades given to work differing substantially in quality. Thus, I recommend that the course returns to at least a 1-5 scale, if not a 1-6 scale, as English 1A and 1B use.

By dividing the rubric into more categories, lecturers can more accurately assign a final grade to the in-class essay. This improved accuracy, coupled with the Pass/No Pass system of the portfolio, should allow for lecturers to give more appropriate final grades to their students. 100A lecturers are educated, experienced, ethical educators. It is a blow to our integrity when 75% of our students' final grade is dictated by outsiders who do not know the individual strengths and weaknesses of our students.

Transferring to 100W

An issue of major concern is that after students pass 100A, many of them are unable to continue on to 100W the following semester. Because final 100A grades do not post until late semester, 100W classes for the following semester are already full. The stress that students

undergo because of this is unfair on them and instructors. They failed the WST, acknowledged their weakness in writing, and chose to seek help developing their skills. In return for this awareness and proactive attitude, they lose time and money waiting to take 100W two semesters later, thus prolonging many students' graduation date. This glitch places a huge burden on instructors, as well, as they are left apologizing to students at the end of the semester, stating that there is nothing that they can do. To tell this to 40-60 students is depressing and demoralizing. Students also "blame the messenger," the lecturer, for these institutional constraints. These students are hardworking, and they believe that the system will move them through. Instead, the university treats them as an afterthought.

Since 100A's curriculum was adapted from a similar program at California State University, Sacramento, I contacted the designer of the program to ask if their similar class, English 109 and 109M (for multilingual writers) had similar obstacles with transferring students to their next step in their GVAR process. She said that initially they did, but they have designed a way to get around it. At CSU Sacramento, students submit their portfolios a few weeks prior to class ending. The outside reader then gives a Pass/No Pass score to the portfolio, much like the UC Berkeley program does, mentioned earlier in the findings section. If one more week is added to the end of 100A, as proposed earlier, and the course becomes an actual 16-week course. Then this process can further take form in reality. The portfolio then could be submitted by week 14, especially if students write only two out-of-class papers instead of three, and receive a Pass/No Pass score. This score is then sent to the administration who opens up enrollment for students who have passed the portfolio. Students at CSU Sacramento who do not pass the portfolio then have two more weeks to work on their writing.

SJSU's 100A differs from CSU Sacramento's writing skills course in that it also has an in-class final exam. Students still must finish the course and pass the in-class final exam to move on to 100W. Thus, even if the SJSU administration opens up registration early for students who pass the portfolio, many students can still fail the course. However, if 25 of 306 students failed the course last spring 2013, that is not a lot of names to have to later drop from the system. The burden on the administration to accommodate students who pass the portfolio is small, as few fail the course and would have to be dropped from 100W.

Regulation of 100W

Based on my interviews with the focal students who have taken 100W, my interviews with lecturers about former students' sharing their experiences about 100W, and my own former students telling me about their experiences in 100W, I propose that the scrutiny that 100A receives in terms of its validity as a class, its curriculum and grading process also be applied to 100W courses, the second step of GVAR that students must complete. I see my students inside and outside of the university. Many of my old students work at stores that I shop at, and others stop by my office to say, "Hello." With few exceptions, these students tell me that 100W is much easier than 100A, and they tell me of the higher grades that they receive on their assignments. In some students' cases, I am not at all surprised that they performed well in 100W, as they were strong writers and thinkers, or developed these skills substantially through 100A. In other students' cases, however, I am surprised when they tell me that they are receiving A's on their

essays in 100W, as in my opinion, they need much more attention to their writing. This is indicative of one of three possibilities: either students have learned a significant amount about writing in 100A and thus are performing quite well in 100W, the grading in 100W is not as regulated as it is in 100A, or both are happening simultaneously. Collins (2012) also voices concern about grade inflation in 100W. Because 100W is housed in many different departments with different writing standards and expectations, it would be difficult to regulate the course like 100A is currently regulated. However, it should be a topic of discussion in the future.

VI. Democracy and Social Justice in Education

Reviewing ENGL/LLD 100A, I am confident that SJSU is at the beginning stages of developing one of the greatest writing courses that the university has to offer, and quite possibly a model for other universities from which to learn. SJSU proudly boasts that it is one of the most diverse universities in the nation. As well, it provides access to education to underrepresented minorities, first-generation college students, immigrants and transfer students. As noted in the introduction, one third to one half of students nationwide enter the university requiring developmental coursework in writing, math, or both (Attewall et. al., 2006; Bettinger & Long, 2005; Callahan & Chumney, 2009), an effect of creating a more equitable and accessible public university for students of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds over the last forty years (Ferris, 2009; Shin & Bruno, 2003). Administrators stress that such developmental coursework should not be provided at the university level – students who are underprepared must go elsewhere to catch up before entering the university. However, this is an inherently flawed attitude. Complex issues in administration and curriculum at adult schools and community colleges keep students from receiving the preparation they need to function at the university level. For example, Masters' (2010) study of a community college ESL classroom found that the class of 13 students was actually a combined class of low, intermediate, and advanced learners, as the rural college could not afford to keep all three levels open that semester due to low enrollment. Students at the higher levels of English proficiency thus were not receiving adequate practice with language to help them rise to the next level in development. They were held back by a curriculum designed for intermediate speakers. Thus, as Kuh et. al. (2010) state, "...admitting only the most talented and well-prepared students [to universities] is neither a solution nor an option..." (p. 8). As Rose (2009) so aptly puts, "...the broader, important issue about remediation is the role it plays in a nation that prides itself on being a 'second chance' society. An educational system as vast, complex, and flawed as ours must have mechanisms to remedy its failures" (4). When basic skills classes are done correctly, he states, then rather than marginalize remediation, universities have an opportunity to invest in it: "The notion of a second chance, of building safety nets into a flawed system, offers a robust idea of education and learning: that we live in a system that acknowledges that people change, retool, grow, and need to return to old mistakes, or just to what is past and forgotten" (4).

SJSU currently has a group of well educated, experienced, passionate educators who teach 100A and want to see it develop. SJSU also has a strong Writing Center and Peer Mentor program, along with other helpful resources that are the beginning to a vast communication

system to help writers – weak and strong – develop through their time here. The next step in strengthening this program – after all, why would anyone want to weaken it? – is to shift it in a way that keeps its strengths and acknowledges and changes its shortcomings. I return to Rose (2009) again, as his voice in this matter is succinct: “Successful remedial programs set high standards, are focused on inquiry and problem-solving in a substantial curriculum, use a pedagogy that is supportive and interactive, draw on a variety of techniques and approaches, are in line with students’ goals, and provide credit for course work” (3).

The changes I propose – or shall I give credit to where it belongs – the changes that my colleagues, students, and tutors proposed throughout the action research project that I conducted, fit perfectly within Rose’s definition of the work that we do. This class should not be seen as a burden; rather it should be seen as an investment in some of the greatest artists, engineers, and entrepreneurs that the Bay Area has to offer. It should not be a stressful course that faculty shun teaching; rather it should be an opportunity to inquire about language, how and why students struggle with it, a puzzle that needs the attention of minds who care to solve it.

Although developmental courses often are not of central importance to universities (note the lack of reporting and analysis on 100A prior to this report), classes like these are valuable and cannot be eliminated, as the immigrant population and its children in the United States continue to take advantage of a relatively affordable and equitable education system. Harklau et al. (1999) estimated that possibly 225,000 English learners graduate from U.S. high schools annually, many of them continuing on to college. In a recent *San Jose Mercury News* article, reporter Katy Murphy brought readers’ attention to the declining rate of college access and the falling success rate of students at local community colleges (2013). A recent *San Francisco Chronicle* article gave the recent statistic that 1 in 5 Californian children are growing up in severe poverty (Garafoli, 2013). There are problems outside the university walls that keep many students outside of them and that mark students as underprepared if they do enter college. If the university continues to accept underprepared students, then the university must provide proper resources to underprepared students to increase their chances of graduating.

Courses like 100A must remain in university in order to uphold dedication to diversity and social justice (Cooper & White, 2006; Freire, 1970/2000; Kincheloe, 2004). Kincheloe (2004) uses the metaphor of walking through minefields to call attention to the current educational situation, where “[o]n some levels teachers and students discover that schools pursue democratic goals and education for a democratic society; on other levels they find that schools are authoritarian and pursue antidemocratic goals of social control for particular groups of individuals” (p. 2). Developmental education is a consequence of making university more accessible and equal. We must stop looking at it as a burden, an annoyance, a necessity, something that just needs to get done, and instead we need to develop this as a reality of a diverse state and nation. We need to take it seriously and embrace the well-educated and experienced professionals who want to teach the most difficult students to teach, who are up for the challenge, and who want to make a difference. However, these lecturers need the support of a university that understands the importance of writing and reading, and of the several resources that the university provides these students. These students who have been pushed along their

entire lives do not need another stressful, fast-paced course that pushes them along. As many of them voiced the contrary, they want individual, one-on-one attention.

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APPENDIX A: LLD or ENGL 100A Student Questionnaire, Page 1 of 4

A. Background Information

1. Name _____ 2. Age _____ 3. City you currently live in _____

4. Email _____ Can I contact you with further questions if I have them? _____

5. Planned semester of graduation _____ Major _____

6. Have you taken the WST? ____ If yes, how many times? _____

7. What was your highest score on the WST? Essay score _____ Objective score _____

8. When was the last time you took the WST? Date _____

9. When did you take English 1A? _____
Where did you take English 1A? _____
What was your grade in English 1A? _____

When did you take English 1B? _____
Where did you take English 1B? _____
What was your grade in English 1B? _____

10. Other courses you are taking this semester:

11. If you are currently employed, please describe your employment, including number of hours that you work each week.

12. Have you lived all your life in the US? ____ If not, in what country were you born? _____
At what age did you arrive here? _____

13. What languages do you use at home? (list all, from most used to least used) _____

APPENDIX A, Page 2 of 4

B. Your Opinions on English 100A

On a scale of 1-5, please rate the assignments by circling the number that best corresponds to your feelings.

I. The assignments

A. Rhetorical Analysis (RA)

1. How would you rank your understanding of the RA assignment?

1 – very difficult to understand 2 – difficult to understand 3 – not easy but not difficult

4. easy to understand 5. very easy to understand

2. How would you rank your interest in the concepts of the RA assignment (i.e. rhetorical appeals, strategies)?

1-- not interested 2—a little bit interested 3—neither negative or positive interest

4 – fairly interested 5 – very interested

3. How helpful did you find the assignment in terms of understanding the importance of rhetoric and developing your future essays with rhetorical concepts in mind?

1-- not helpful 2 – a little bit helpful 3 –neither helpful or unhelpful 4 –fairly helpful

5 – very helpful

B. Discipline Investigation (DI)

4. How would you rank your understanding of the DI assignment?

1 – very difficult to understand 2 – difficult to understand 3 – not easy but not difficult

4-- easy to understand 5-- very easy to understand

5. How would you rank your interest in the concepts of the DI assignment (i.e. your future professional discourse community)?

1-- not interested 2—a little bit interested 3—neither negative or positive interest

4 – fairly interested 5 –very interested

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6. How helpful did you find the assignment in terms of understanding the importance of communication, reading and writing skills in your future job?

1-- not helpful 2 – a little bit helpful 3 –neither helpful or unhelpful 4 –fairly helpful
5—very helpful

C. Critical Reading Reflection (CRR)

7. How would you rank your understanding of the CRR assignment?

1 – very difficult to understand 2 – difficult to understand 3 – not easy but not difficult
4. easy to understand 5. very easy to understand

8. How would you rank your interest in the concepts of the CRR assignment (i.e. boundaries in education)

1-- not interested 2—a little bit interested 3—neither negative or positive interest
4 – fairly interested 5 – very interested

9. How helpful did you find the assignment in terms of understanding the importance of critical reflection skills?

1-- not helpful 2 – a little bit helpful 3 –neither helpful or unhelpful 4 –fairly helpful
5—very helpful

II. The class

1. How would you rate this class in terms of helping you build academic essay skills? (i.e. structuring essays, critically thinking, considering audience and purpose)

1-- not helpful 2 – a little bit helpful 3 –neither helpful or unhelpful 4 –fairly helpful
5—very helpful

2. How would you rate the class in terms of helping you with grammar?

1-- not helpful 2 – a little bit helpful 3 –neither helpful or unhelpful 4 –fairly helpful
5—very helpful

APPENDIX A, Page 4 of 4

3. How would you rate your 100A experience overall?

1 -- not helpful 2 – a little bit helpful 3 –neither helpful or unhelpful 4 –fairly helpful
5—very helpful

Please use the rest of this form to express anything else you would like to about this class. You may elaborate on the categories above (the assignments, the readings, and the class in general). You may suggest ideas for improvement or tell us what you really liked about the course. Remember that all information is anonymous. Your teacher will never see this form.

APPENDIX B: LLD or ENGL 100A Tutor and Writing Specialist Questionnaire

Please save and return questionnaire by e-mail to Katie Masters at Katherine.masters@sjsu.edu

Name _____ E-mail _____
 Age _____ Ethnicity _____ Country of Birth _____
 Sex: _____ F _____ M Languages other than English that you speak: _____

May I contact you by e-mail if I have any further questions? _____

- 1.) What is your educational background (working on B.A., B.A., M.A., certificates, specializations)?
- 2.) How many semesters have you been tutoring at SJSU?
- 3.) How many semesters have you been tutoring ENGL/LLD 100A students?
- 4.) Approximately how many 100A students do you assist a week?
- 5.) What are some rewarding aspects or positive experiences that you have with working with 100A students?
- 5.) What are some of the struggles that you have when tutoring 100A students (i.e. volume of students, students' comprehension ability, behavioral obstacles, student's stress level)?
- 6.) In your experience and observations, are there any particular stresses, writing obstacles, or comprehension obstacles that you feel 100A students have (or have more of) than other students that you help?
- 6.) Do you think tutors/specialists could benefit from specific training to help 100A students? If so, please explain (i.e. working with students with disabilities, second language obstacles, behavioral obstacles, other):
- 7.) If you can remember the assignments, can you give any feedback about the assignments that 100A students bring you when they need help (Rhetorical Analysis, Discipline Investigation, Critical Reading Reflection)? What are students' reactions to the assignments? Do they seem confused? Do you find it difficult to help them through the directions of any of the assignments? Anything else?
- 8.) Is there any helpful feedback you might give instructors about working together to help these students?
- 9.) Anything else you would like to add about your experiences and observations working with 100A students?

If you have any questions, please e-mail me at Katherine.masters@sjsu.edu

APPENDIX C: ENGLISH/LLD 100A Instructor Questionnaire, Page 1 of 4

This questionnaire is anonymous. Any identifying information that I ask of you is for me to keep track of data. No readers of my research will know how to identify you. You do not have to answer any question you do not want to. If after the interview you feel like you forgot to express some ideas, concerns, or anything else, you can e-mail me with follow-up ideas.

Personal (please type in answers):

Name: Age: What country were you born in? What languages do you speak?

Instructional:

List all degrees you hold:

How long have you been a lecturer?

How many semesters have you taught English/LLD 100A (or 96S)?

Have you taken any semesters off from teaching 100A?

How many sections of 100A are you teaching this year?

How many students in each section?

What other classes do you teach at SJSU?

Do you currently teach at other institutions?

Short answer section: Please type your answers to the following questions below each question.

Curriculum:

- How do you feel about the pace of this course in terms of instructor workload for a 13-week semester?
- What approaches guide you in your own teaching of the course, or what overarching strategies do you keep in mind while teaching that help you through the course?
- How much freedom do you feel you have in terms of the curriculum? In what ways do you feel restricted by the curriculum? In what ways do you feel that you have autonomy within the curriculum?
- This class is based on heavy revision: a first, second and final draft for each of the three assignments? How do you go about working with that (i.e. peer review for first draft, conferencing, etc)? What seems to work well and what doesn't? Is there anything you like or don't like about the drafting process for this class?
- This class is also based on heavy conferencing, where we are supposed to conference with students once for each paper. Could you tell me how you go about working with that? What seems to work well and what doesn't? Is there anything you like or don't like about the conferencing process for this class?

APPENDIX C continued, Page 2 of 4

Reading:

- Do you use *Reading Rhetorically* or the packet materials? How and why?
- What would you like to see in the novel for this class? A book, collection, no book?
- What would your ideal reading situation for the class look like?
- How much time do you feel is actually dedicated to reading instruction in your class and why (what influences more reading or inhibits less reading)?
- What are your thoughts on the importance of reading with this course, and do you think you are able to devote enough time to this skill?

Writing:Out-of-Class Assignments

RA

- Prompt issues/praises?
- Perception of student interest/motivation?
- Perception of student understanding?
- Your own motivation in teaching rhetoric explicitly?
- Your own motivation in reading the papers?
- Anything else you would like to add?

DI

- Prompt issues/praises?
- Perception of student interest/motivation?
- Perception of student understanding?
- Your own motivation in teaching this assignment?
- Your own motivation in reading the papers?
- Anything else you would like to add?

CRR

- Prompt issues/praises?
- Perception of student interest/motivation?
- Perception of student understanding?
- Your own motivation in teaching critical thinking and reflective skills associated with this assignment?
- Your own motivation in reading the papers?
- Anything else you would like to add?

In-Class Essays/Journals

- How do you see the in-class writing being incorporated into the CRR? Does it seem to work?
- What do you like about the in-class writing process, and how do you feel it helps students?
- What do you not like about the in-class writing process, and how do you feel it might inhibit students?

APPENDIX C continued, p. 3 of 4

- Do you feel like you and your students have enough time to work with all the writing assignments that you are supposed to work with? Why or why not?
- How much time do you feel you are able to actually dedicate to writing instruction (as opposed to, say, going over directions, reinforcing material, etc?)

Grammar

- Do you use a grammar book for this course? If so, which one? If not, what do you use instead?
- How much time do you devote to grammar? Are you happy with the time you devote to it? Do you wish you had more time, or perhaps a different approach to helping with grammar?
- Do you feel you would like more time to work with grammar?
- How do you teach grammar? Explicit lessons throughout, or as issues arise, etc?
- Could you see some sort of hybrid course develop for grammar to be taught online?
- What are other concerns with grammar and this course?

Students:

- What majors of study do you feel are the most prominent in your classes, if any? Do you notice some majors more strongly represented than others?
- How many students did you receive this semester who were registered at the DRC?
- Could you give me a range of how many students a semester you get who register with the DRC?
- How comfortable are you with your current professional development in working with students with developmental or learning disabilities? Would you like more training or support? In what ways?
- This is a “high stakes” course. Everything depends on their portfolio/in-class essay at the end. Some instructors have had experiences with stressed out students at the end of the year and have even had concern for their own health and safety. Have you had any experiences where you’ve had a stressed 100A student that has escalated into a situation? If so, could you briefly describe it? Were you able to comfortably handle it on your own, or did you feel that you needed support from the coordinator, department, or campus counseling?
- Do you feel you discipline in this class more than others that you teach? On what do you discipline (Being on time, behavior, habits)? What kinds of methods do you use (stern warnings, direct or indirect approaches, etc.)?
- About what percentage of students do you feel are second language learners in your class this semester (students born in a country other than an English-speaking country)?
- Do you approach this course as primarily an English Language Learning course, a developmental writing course, or other?

Grading

- The work that students do in class ultimately does not count towards their final grade. The grade is based on portfolio (70%) and final exam (30%). How do you feel about that? Benefits? Concerns?
- The grading process is two-fold. First, you and one other instructor read your students’ portfolios? Benefits? Concerns?
- What are your thoughts on the in-class final exam? Is it an effective, legitimate part of this class? Is it something that is not necessary for this class? Other thoughts?

APPENDIX C continued, Page 4 of 4

- Students who fail have an opportunity to revise their portfolio once more in hopes of passing the class. How do you feel about this extra opportunity for students?
- What would you feel about coursework counting more? Let's say 70% of the class was based on coursework, homework, participation, 30% on a final portfolio, and remove a final in-class exam? Do you see benefits to the coursework counting more? Do you see issues with coursework counting more?
- How many students do you feel will pass your course this semester, and how many students do you feel are truly ready for 100W and upper division coursework?

APPENDIX D: LLD or ENGL 100A Student Interview, Page 1 of 4

A. Background Information

1. Name _____ 2. Age _____ 3. City you currently live in _____
4. Email _____ Can I contact you with further questions if I have them? _____
5. Planned semester of graduation _____ Major _____
6. Have you taken the WST? ____ If yes, how many times? _____
7. What was your highest score on the WST? Essay score _____ Objective score _____
8. When was the last time you took the WST? Date _____
9. When did you take English 1A? _____
 Where did you take English 1A? _____
 What was your grade in English 1A? _____
 When did you take English 1B? _____
 Where did you take English 1B? _____
 What was your grade in English 1B? _____
10. Have you taken English 100W? _____ If yes, what semester? _____
 What was your grade or will be your prospective grade? _____
11. If you are currently employed, please describe your employment, including number of hours that you work each week.
12. Have you lived all your life in the US? _____ If not, what country were you born in? _____
 At what age did you arrive here? _____
13. What languages do you use at home? (list all, from most used to least used) _____

A. Background in-depth.

1. Where were you born?
2. Where did you live as a child? A teen? Now? Tell me about that movement, that experience.
3. Tell me about your elementary school experience. What do you remember of it, both the school and home life aspects of it.
4. Tell me about your elementary school experience as it relates to reading and writing.
5. How motivated were you to read and write for school? On your own?
6. Did your parents push you to read and write at home?
7. Was reading important in your household?
8. What books resonated with you from childhood?
9. Tell me about your middle school experience, in general. What do you remember of it, both the school and home life aspects of it.
10. Tell me about middle school as it relates to reading and writing.

APPENDIX D continued, Page 2 of 4

11. How motivated were you to read and write for middle school? On your own?
12. Tell me about your high school experience in general. What do you remember of it, both the school and home life aspects of it?
13. Tell me about your high school experience as it relates to reading and writing.
14. How motivated were you to read and write in high school? On your own?
15. Looking back, what were some of the main obstacles you had with reading and writing, and when did you have them?
16. What were strategies that you used, or that other people in your life used, to help you overcome them?
17. Do you feel like there were any negative aspects of your youth that you feel may have contributed to any lack of resources or knowledge of the American educational system and how to navigate it?
18. Do you feel that there were any positive aspects of your youth that you feel may have opened up doors or opportunities for you in education?
19. Tell me about your educational pathway after high school? What did you do? Did you take time off to work first? Did you go to community college? How long? Why did you make the choices you did? How did you decide on SJSU?
20. What are you doing now at SJSU and how has your experience gone so far? Difficulties? Annoyances? Positives?

B. Your Opinions on 100A

- 1.) Overall, tell me about your opinion of 100A. Was it helpful for you? Do you feel that it was worth your investment, rather than attempting the WST again?
- 2.) What were some aspects of the course that you really liked?
- 3.) What were some aspects of the course that you really didn't like?
- 4.) How did you feel about the pacing of the course (the amount of time you had on each assignment)?
- 5.) Do you feel that your writing improved from taking this course? In what ways?
- 6.) Do you feel that your reading improved from taking this course? In what ways?
- 7.) Do you feel like 100A taught enough grammar rules?
- 8.) Would you have liked to learn more grammar in 100A?
- 9.) How do you think grammar lessons helped you, or would help you if you had them?
- 10.) How did you feel about the grading process of this course – that your classwork doesn't count and that your entire grade is based on the final portfolio and final exam?
- 11.) How did you feel about the final portfolio process? Did that help you in any way (i.e. reflection on your skills, revising your work, etc)? Did you think it was a good process, a bad process, and why?
- 12.) How did you feel about the final in-class exam? Do you feel that is a valid way of testing 100A students? Why or why not?

On a scale of 1-5, please rate the assignments by circling the number that best corresponds to your feelings.

I. The assignments

D. Rhetorical Analysis (RA)

10. How would you rank your understanding of the RA assignment?

1 – very difficult to understand 2 – difficult to understand 3 – not easy but not difficult

4. easy to understand 5. very easy to understand

APPENDIX D continued, Page 3 of 4

11. How would you rank your interest in the concepts of the RA assignment (i.e. rhetorical appeals, strategies)?

1-- not interested 2—a little bit interested 3—neither negative or positive interest
4 – fairly interested 5 –very interested

12. How helpful did you find the assignment in terms of understanding the importance of rhetoric and developing your future essays with rhetorical concepts in mind?

1-- not helpful 2 – a little bit helpful 3 –neither helpful or unhelpful 4 –fairly helpful
5—very helpful

E. Discipline Investigation (DI)

13. How would you rank your understanding of the DI assignment?

1 – very difficult to understand 2 – difficult to understand 3 – not easy but not difficult
4-- easy to understand 5-- very easy to understand

14. How would you rank your interest in the concepts of the DI assignment (i.e. your future professional discourse community)?

1-- not interested 2—a little bit interested 3—neither negative or positive interest
4 – fairly interested 5 – very interested

15. How helpful did you find the assignment in terms of understanding the importance of communication, reading and writing skills in your future job?

1-- not helpful 2 – a little bit helpful 3 –neither helpful or unhelpful 4 –fairly helpful
5—very helpful

F. Critical Reading Reflection (CRR)

16. How would you rank your understanding of the CRR assignment?

1 – very difficult to understand 2 – difficult to understand 3 – not easy but not difficult
4. easy to understand 5. very easy to understand

17. How would you rank your interest in the concepts of the CRR assignment (i.e. boundaries in education)

1-- not interested 2—a little bit interested 3—neither negative or positive interest
4 – fairly interested 5 –very interested

APPENDIX D continued, Page 4 of 4

18. How helpful did you find the assignment in terms of understanding the importance of critical reflection skills?

1-- not helpful 2 – a little bit helpful 3 –neither helpful or unhelpful 4 –fairly helpful
5—very helpful

II. The class

1. How would you rate this class in terms of helping you build academic essay skills? (i.e. structuring essays, critically thinking, considering audience and purpose)

1-- not helpful 2 – a little bit helpful 3 –neither helpful or unhelpful 4 –fairly helpful
5—very helpful

2. How would you rate the class in terms of helping you with grammar?

1-- not helpful 2 – a little bit helpful 3 –neither helpful or unhelpful 4 –fairly helpful
5—very helpful

3. How would you rate your 100A experience overall?

1 -- not helpful 2 – a little bit helpful 3 –neither helpful or unhelpful 4 –fairly helpful
5—very helpful

C. Your Opinions on 100W

1. Have you taken 100W, yet?
2. From which department? (i.e. Health, Business, English)
3. Was it difficult for you to get a space in this class? Why?
4. If you have not taken 100W, yet, why not? Tell me about your experience trying to get in.
5. How did you feel you did with 100W? Was it easy, moderate, or difficult for you? How so?
6. What kinds of reading activities did you do in 100W?
7. What types of writing did you do in 100W?
8. Do you feel that 100A was more difficult than 100W? How so?
9. Do you feel that 100A helped you to be successful in 100W? How so? Can you name particular things you learned from 100A that you applied in 100W?

Please express anything else you would like to about this class. You may elaborate on the categories above (the assignments, the readings, and the class in general). You may suggest ideas for improvement or tell us what you really liked about the course. Remember that all information is anonymous.

APPENDIX E: SYLLABUS TEMPLATE FOR SPRING 2013

San José State University

ENGL or LLD 100A –Writing Competency Through Genres

Course Greensheet – Spring 2013³

Instructor:

Email:

Office:

Office Phone:

Office Hours:

Desire to Learn:

Course Day/Time:

Prerequisites: Passed ENGL 1B or equivalent; taken WST at least once without passing.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Serves as alternative satisfaction of the WST requirement if passed with a C or better (C- or lower will not satisfy the WST). Prepares students for 100W through drafting, feedback, and revision to demonstrate writing competency. Develops ability to analyze written genres used in the students' chosen disciplines as well as write analytical and reflective essays.

COURSE GOALS

ENGL/LLD 100A is one course taught in two different departments. It is designed with the goal of preparing you to succeed in 100W, other upper division classes, and your profession. You will have intensive practice in prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing academic writing. You will be asked to research, analyze, and reflect on various kinds of writing and to produce a minimum of 8000 words, including a rhetorical analysis, a report about writing in your chosen discipline, and a critical reflective essay on a book length work of non-fiction.

³ This course has been adapted from a similar one developed by Julian Heather and Fiona Glade at CSU Sacramento.

Student Learning OBJECTIVES (SLOs)

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- a. Use correct and situationally appropriate sentence structure and grammar;
- b. Utilize feedback from instructor and peers to improve the accuracy and clarity of writing;
- c. Recognize, select, and use basic activities of the writing process, including prewriting, organizing, drafting, revising, editing, and peer review;
- d. Critically self-reflect about the writing process and about making context-appropriate rhetorical choices;
- e. Critically read, interpret, and synthesize multiple texts;
- f. Write well organized, well developed essays with a clear thesis;
- g. Identify how types of written texts in a variety of fields (genres) are influenced by audience, situation, and purpose;
- h. Employ research strategies to collect, analyze, and evaluate data from primary and secondary sources.

Required Textbooks and Materials

- Instructor-made packet and/or Bean, John C. et. al. (2011). *Reading rhetorically (3rd edition)*. NY: Longman.
- Rose, Mike. (1989). *Lives on the Boundary*. Penguin. ISBN 978-0-14-303546-6
- Grammar text (Instructor's choice)
- A college-level English dictionary
- Internet access

TUTORING and other RESOURCES

- Writing Center: 1st floor, Clark Hall, <http://www.sjsu.edu/writing center>
- Peer Connections locations:
 - 1st floor, Clark Hall
 - Student Services Center 600
 - Living Learning Center, Campus B village, 1st Floor
- LLD 4: One-unit tutorial class to support learning and success in English/LLD 100A assignments. Twelve weekly sessions of one-on-one coaching with graduate students who specialize in second language writing issues. Students enroll based on commitment to personalized learning and instructor recommendation. In-person enrollment (Feb. 4th – Feb. 8th, 10-12, 1-4 in 244 Clark) is on a 1st-come, 1st served basis, with some seats reserved for those in T/Th afternoon classes.
- Computer hardware and software assistance – please see Help Desk, First floor, Clark Hall

Online Resources

- **Desire2Learn or the new system, Canvas:** (instructors add as needed)
- **Turnitin.com:** We will be using Turnitin.com for the three main writing assignments. The turnitin software is already embedded within Desire2Learn, so you do not need an additional password to access turnitin.com.

CLASS RULES AND PARTICIPATION

(Instructors insert expectations for participation, attendance, arrival times, behavior, safety, cell phone use, etc.)

GRADING POLICY AND ASSIGNMENTS

This is a portfolio-based writing class. Your final grade for the course will be based on scores given to your portfolio and your final exam.

During the first 14 weeks of the semester, you will earn eligibility points for each assignment or activity that is required as well as for participation. The maximum number of points is 100. You must have at least 70 points to be eligible to submit your portfolio and take the final exam. If you have not earned the minimum of 70 points by the end of the 14th week of the semester, you will receive an F in the class and you will not be able to submit your portfolio. The points you receive prior to submitting your portfolio and the feedback you receive from your instructor on your drafts are intended to ensure that you have a complete portfolio, strong participation in the class, and improvement in your writing through feedback and drafting. The points you receive during this time will not be calculated as part of the final grade. They are simply an entry ticket that allows you to submit your portfolio and take the final exam.

You are encouraged to use the tutoring services on campus if you or your instructor feels that you need additional support, but all work is expected to be your own. If the instructor has reason to believe otherwise, then he or she has the right to require additional evidence that the work is your own.

In the final weeks of the semester, you will assemble your portfolio, write a brief cover letter, and write an in-class final essay. Your final grade will be based on the scores given to your portfolio and final exam by two readers. The portfolio is worth 70% and the final exam is worth 30% of the final grade. (see grading rubric and grading scale included in this greensheet). To receive a C or higher for course, you must receive at least 70% out of 100% on your portfolio and final exam combined.

After the portfolio and final exam are scored, the instructor **may choose** to petition a low-pass portfolio or final exam for a higher score if she or he believes the score is inaccurate. To be considered for such a petition, the student must be in good standing in the course and have **excellent, consistent participation** in all classroom activities. Students who fail the portfolio may, on the recommendation of the instructor, have one more opportunity to revise during finals week.

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment	Description	Word count	Assessment
Rhetorical Analysis	For this assignment you will analyze a piece of professional writing in your major or field or work, describing the rhetorical strategies that were used by the author and how these strategies contributed to the purpose of the document.	1750	Maximum 25 points
Discipline Investigation	In this assignment, you will write a report about working in your major field. This report will describe an interview you will have with a professional in your chosen field; you will also write about information you collect from at least two outside sources (articles), following appropriate citation and reference styles (APA or MLA).	1750	Maximum 25 points
Critical Reading Reflection	Throughout the semester, you will read sections of a full length work of fiction or non-fiction (in Spring 2013 it is <i>Lives on the Boundary</i>) and respond to what you read in a series of reflective journals. Two of these will be written in class. At the end of the semester, you will draw on these reflections to write the Critical Reading Reflection.	2000	Maximum 25 points
Cover Letter	This is a one paragraph letter to readers of your portfolio in which you explain which of the three above assignments is your best work and why.	200-300	Maximum 5 points
Homework, quizzes, journals & participation	Your instructor will decide how to assign these points to your class work and participation. There will be a minimum of 4 journals (2 in-class, 2 out-of-class).	1500	Maximum 20 points
	<i>By the end of the 14th week, you must have earned at least 70 points by doing all of the above work, including drafts, peer editing, revisions, etc. If you have not earned at least 70 points, you will not be allowed to submit your portfolio and you will receive an F.</i>		Maximum 100 points; minimum 70 points

Assignment	Description	Word count	Assessment
Final Portfolio	<p>The portfolio must include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Portfolio Checklist initialed and signed by both student and instructor; • A clean, final draft of the cover letter – 500 words • A final, clean copy of three main assignments comprised of at least 5500 words of revised, polished writing (see above); • First and intermediate draft of each of the three main writing assignments which show instructor’s comments and a rubric marked by the instructor; • Two in-class, handwritten journals; • The assignment sheets for all assignments; 	6000 words of final, polished writing	Scored according to the scoring rubric by two readers. Worth 70% of your grade.
Final Exam	An in-class, timed essay, common across all sections of 100A.	500 words	Scored according to the scoring rubric by two readers. Worth 30% of your grade.

GRADING RUBRIC to be used in evaluating both the portfolio assignments and the final exam.

THE WRITING:

4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meets all expectations in the rhetorical choices of the assignment, including genre, purpose, format, evidence, tone, and conventions. • is well-organized and thoroughly developed. • shows good or superior control of grammar, including syntactic variety, range of vocabulary, etc. • intelligently addresses the assignment.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meets most of the rhetorical expectations of the assignment, including purpose, format, etc. • is somewhat organized but may require more development. • contains some grammatical errors, inappropriate word choice, or incorrect usage that rarely obstruct reader's understanding. • may address some parts of the assignment better than others.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meets few rhetorical expectations of the assignment. • shows weak development and cohesion and/or inappropriate rhetorical choices. • shows an accumulation of grammar and syntactical errors that interfere with readers' understanding. • omits or misunderstands major parts of the assignment.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fails to meet the rhetorical expectations of assignment. • fails to organize and develop ideas. • contains grammar and syntactical errors that seriously interfere with readers' understanding. • fails to address the assignment.

Guide to the four categories

- Rhetorical expectations, including purpose, format, tone, etc.
- Development and organization
- Grammar and syntax
- Addressing the assignment or topic

Letter grade to percentage scale

A+	98-100	
A	94-97	↑
A-	90-93	
B+	86-89	
B	82-85	
B-	78-81	
C+	73-77	
C	70-73	Serves as alternative satisfaction of the WST
<hr/>		
C-	66-69	Does not serve as alternative satisfaction of the WST
D+	62-65	↓
D	58-61	
D-	54 or lower	
F	Not eligible for portfolio and final exam	

SAMPLE SCHEDULE (instructors need to complete this schedule for their own sections)

Week	Tuesday	Thursday
Week 1 1/24		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course introduction • Introduction to key concepts: discourse communities, genres, and rhetorical analysis
Week 2 1/29 – 1/31	Diagnostic essay in-class (Journal 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce Rhetorical analysis assignment (RA) • HW for next class – bring possible documents for analysis for the RA ; begin looking for a person to interview for the Discipline Investigation assignment
Week 3 2/5 – 2/7		
Week 4 2/12- 2/14		Suggested DUE date: First draft of RA

Week	Tuesday	Thursday
Week 5 2/19 – 2/21		Suggested DUE date: Second Draft of RA
Week 6 2/26 – 2/28	Suggested: Introduction to Discipline Investigation (DI)	Suggested DUE date: Final draft of RA
Week 7 3/5 – 3/7		Suggested: Mid-course feedback to instructor
Week 8 3/12 – 3/14		Suggested DUE date: First draft of Discipline Investigation
Week 9 3/19 – 3/21		Suggested DUE date: Second draft of Discipline Investigation
3/25 - 3/29	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK
Week 10 4/2 – 4/4	Suggested: Introduce Critical Reading Reflection (CRR) M-W classes, note that April 1 is also a holiday!	Suggested DUE date: Final draft of Discipline Investigation
Week 11 4/9 – 4/11		
Week 12 4/16 – 4/18	Suggested DUE date: First draft, CRR	
Week 13 4/23 – 4/25		Suggested DUE date: Final draft, CRR Suggested: Assign cover letter.
Week 14 4/29 – 5/3	Suggested: Administer SOTES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students notified if they are not eligible for the portfolio and final exam. • Portfolio preparation workshop for eligible students • PORTFOLIO SUBMISSION DEADLINE 5/3⁴

⁴ Note that for students to have time to revise all essays and write a cover letter for the final portfolio, instructors must finish grading by Week 13 at the latest. This is where I get a “13-week” semester from, as all lectures after week 13 pertain to portfolio instructions and final exam preparation.

Week	Tuesday	Thursday
Week 15 5/6 - 5/10	PORTFOLIO READING takes place between 5/3 and 5/10 FINAL EXAM DONE IN-CLASS – 5/6 OR 5/7 NO MORE 100A (WHOLE) CLASS MEETINGS AFTER 5/7! FINAL EXAM READING DAY – FRIDAY MAY 10TH	
Week 16	RESULTS CONFERENCES, PORTFOLIOS RETURNED TO STUDENTS (5/13 -5/14) Students who are allowed to revise their portfolios must turn them in by May 20th, 5 pm. Results back by May 22nd, 5 pm.	

Dropping the course

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester's Catalog Policies section at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic calendar web page located at http://www.sjsu.edu/academic_programs/calendars/academic_calendar/. The [Late Drop Policy](#) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/>. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes. If you pass the WST after the drop deadline, you will not be able to drop 100A or withdraw without penalty. You will only be allowed to withdraw for the reasons specified in the late drop policy.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the Advising Hub at <http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/>.

GRADING: 100A is graded A-F. CR/NCR is not an option in this course because a "credit" in 100A will not serve as alternative satisfaction of the WST requirement (students must receive a C or better in order to fulfill the WST requirement).

INCOMPLETES: No incompletes will be given for 100A.

(Note: Policies section taken off syllabus template for this report to save space)

APPENDIX F: CURRENT RHETORICAL ANALYSIS PROMPT

Purpose & Audience

Purposes:

- To develop your understanding of rhetoric by investigating how a writer constructed a professional document or text in your major field
- To practice analytical thinking and clear writing⁵

Audience: Your instructor, your classmates, and other faculty members on the ENGL & LLD 100A review committee.

Writing Steps**Step 1: Select a document to analyze**

Choose a piece of writing that was written by a professional in your major or a field that is closely related to your major. The text should be **at least 3 pages long** so that you will have enough material to analyze and write about.

These writings may include, but are not limited to:

- Academic and trade publications (journals, newsletters, articles)
- Company web sites (Internet and Intranet)
- Professional society web sites (e.g., Federal or State Bar Association, the National Association of State Foresters, Society for Technical Communication, etc.)
- Internal correspondence (the audience is within the same company or organization as the writer), for example: memos, policy & procedure documents, reports such as audit reports, project status reports, proposals, lab reports, etc.
- External correspondence (the audience is outside the same company or organization as the writer), for example: letters or reports to customers or vendors, sales or marketing materials, external blogs, newsletters, etc.

Note: There are many sample documents available on the web. Use a Google search to find these in your discipline. You can also ask people you know who are working in your major field for a document they may have written. Ask your professors in your major courses for suggestions as well.

Step 2: Analyze the paper you selected

As a preliminary step, before you actually write the first draft of your paper, you should try to answer the following questions about the document you are analyzing:

- What do you think was the author's purpose in producing this writing?
- Who was the intended audience?
- What genre does it represent?
- What style and tone did the author use? (formal, informal)

⁵ This assignment has been adapted from a similar one developed by Julian Heather and Fiona Glade at CSU Sacramento.

- What rhetorical appeals did the writer use? (ethos, pathos, and logos—these terms will be explained in class)
- What strategies were used to develop ideas? (description, narration, process analysis, compare and contrast, cause and effect, etc.)
- How is the text organized, and why do you think the author chose this particular organizational pattern? Is there a particular format that is used?
- Why do you think the author included or omitted particular information?
- What kinds of evidence did the author include to support his/her point of view, and how was that evidence used?

Step 3: Decide which appeals and strategies you will focus on in your paper. A writer might use many appeals and strategies, but some are more important than others in achieving the writer’s purpose. So you need to be selective; choose those that you think are the most important (or most interesting) and write about them in your body paragraphs.

Suggested Organization of your Paper

Introduction

Write an introductory paragraph with several sentences that do the following:

- Discuss **in general** how/why writers use rhetorical writing to achieve their *purpose*.
- Introduce the paper you plan to analyze. Identify the author and describe the circumstances under which the paper was written. (You may have to guess based on the content and purpose.) Give the full title of the paper, when it was written and who was the intended audience. Describe what you think was the writer’s purpose: What did he/she want to achieve? What do you think the author wanted the reader to think or do after reading this paper?
- Identify the rhetorical appeals and strategies used by the author, and identify those that you plan to discuss in your analysis (preview statement). Note that you do not have to discuss in depth *all* of the strategies the author uses.

Analysis

Each paragraph in the body should have its own topic sentence and a unified focus. For this analysis, you could write one paragraph on each of the rhetorical appeals/strategies you mentioned in the introduction. In each of these body paragraphs, it is useful to:

- Define the rhetorical appeal/strategy you are going to write about (you may quote or paraphrase from your course readings)
- Quote or paraphrase 2-3 examples from the paper that illustrate the use of that appeal/strategy
- Explain how or why the example illustrates the appeal/strategy and how the appeal/strategy *contributed* to author’s purpose

Conclusion

The purpose of the conclusion is to (a) summarize briefly the main points of the analysis and (b) explain the significance of your analysis by considering the following questions:

- What conclusions can you draw about the role **in general** of rhetorical appeals and strategies in producing clear communication through writing?

- Was the author successful in using the various rhetorical appeals and strategies for the intended audience and purpose? Give examples.
- What changes might you recommend to the author to better achieve his/her purpose?

Format Guidelines

- Your final draft should be approximately 1750 words, with 1-inch margins and 12 point font, single spaced, Times Roman font. Double space between paragraphs; use headings and subheadings for the sections to guide the reader. Please number your pages.
- The final draft of the report is to be submitted to turnitin.com
- Make sure you save your document as a Word document. The file name should be as follows: Last Name, First name – RA.com, e.g. **Jones, Mary – RA.com** (or instructor's preference)

Things to Keep For Your Portfolio

- A copy of this assignment sheet
- A copy of the document that you chose to analyze.
- All drafts produced for this assignment.
- A copy of instructor comments and peer reviews on your earlier drafts.
- A clean (unmarked) copy of your final draft

Important Dates

First draft due (4 pages min) to turnitin.com	Dates due:
Second draft: mandatory peer review	
Final draft due to turnitin.com (1750 words)	

APPENDIX G: PROPOSED REVISED RHETORICAL ANALYSIS PROMPT

Purpose & Audience

Purposes: a) To develop your understanding of rhetoric by investigating how a writer constructed a professional document or text in your major field, and b) to practice analytical thinking and clear writing.

Audience: Your instructor, your classmates, and other faculty members on the ENGL & LLD 100A review committee.

Writing Steps

Step 1: Select a document to analyze

Choose a piece of writing that was written by a professional in your major or a field that is closely related to your major. The text should be **at least 3 pages long** so that you will have enough material to analyze and write about.

These writings may include, but are not limited to:

- Academic and trade publications (journals, newsletters, articles)
- Company web sites (Internet and Intranet)
- Professional society web sites (e.g., Federal or State Bar Association, the National Association of State Foresters, Society for Technical Communication, etc.)
- Internal correspondence (the audience is within the same company or organization as the writer), for example: memos, policy & procedure documents, reports such as audit reports, project status reports, proposals, lab reports, etc.
- External correspondence (the audience is outside the same company or organization as the writer), for example: letters or reports to customers or vendors, sales or marketing materials, external blogs, newsletters, etc.

Step 2: Analyze the paper you selected

As a preliminary step, before you actually write the first draft of your paper, use the “Framework for Analyzing Genres” worksheet on **page 17** of your reader as a guide to take notes on your article about the rhetorical patterns you see (i.e. audience, purpose, genre, appeals, and strategies). In essence, you will be breaking down the article, taking notes and highlighting pieces of it that you want to discuss in your essay.

Step 3: Decide which rhetorical appeals and strategies you will focus on in your paper. A writer might use many appeals and strategies, but some are more important than others in achieving the writer’s purpose. So you need to be selective; choose those that you think are the most important (or most interesting) and write about them in your body paragraphs.

Step 4: Write your first draft by using the “Organization” hints on the second page of this handout.

Organization of your Paper

Introduction

- Discuss **in general** how/why writers use rhetorical writing to achieve their *purpose*.
- Introduce the paper you plan to analyze. Give the full title of the paper, the author(s), when it was written, and the intended audience. State why the paper was written. What did he/she want to achieve? What do you think the author wanted the reader to think or do after reading this paper?
- Identify the rhetorical appeals and strategies used by the author that you plan to discuss in your analysis (thesis statement). You do not have to discuss in depth *all* of the strategies the author uses. Focus on 5-7 appeals and strategies.

Analysis

Each paragraph in the body should have its own subtitle, topic sentence, and a unified focus. For example, you could write one paragraph on each of the rhetorical appeals/strategies you mentioned in the introduction. In each of these body paragraphs, it is useful to:

- Define the rhetorical appeal/strategy you are going to write about (you may quote or paraphrase from your course readings)
- Quote or paraphrase 2-3 examples from the paper that illustrate the use of that appeal/strategy
- Explain how or why the example illustrates the appeal/strategy and how the appeal/strategy *contributed* to author's purpose

Conclusion

Briefly summarize the main points of your analysis and explain the significance of your analysis by considering the following questions:

- What conclusions can you draw about the role **in general** of rhetorical appeals and strategies in producing clear communication through writing?
- Was the author successful in using the various rhetorical appeals and strategies for the intended audience and purpose? Give examples.
- What changes might you recommend to the author to better achieve his/her purpose?

Format Guidelines

Your final draft should follow APA or MLA format, be approximately 1750 words, with 1-inch margins and 12 point font, double spaced, Times Roman font. Use headings and subheadings for the sections to guide the reader. Please number your pages.

Materials to Keep For Your Final Portfolio

Everything you do in this class is important and must be kept for your final portfolio. **Do NOT throw away drafts; SAVE all drafts (1st, 2nd and final), and keep all handouts and prompt.**

Important Dates

First draft due (1400 words min)	Peer Review:
Second draft due (1700 words min)	Criterion:

Final draft due (1750 words)	1 hardcopy in class; 1 copy to Criterion:
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