Redesigning Assessment of Georgia Developmental Writers

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ABSTRACT

Assessing developmental writing differs from assessing writing of students prepared for college writing. Because developmental writers are beginning writers, they require instructional assessment that will guide and prepare them for more stringent grading standards. I come to these conclusions by researching the literature of Mina Shaughnessy, David Bartholomae, Peter Elbow, Brian Huot, and others. Their composition knowledge explains the developmental writing situation and offers assessment insight. Georgia developmental writing instructors offered essay assessment advice and classroom-tested knowledge by answering my survey questions. Compiling the evidence gained through literature research and instructor interviews guides my construction of a rubric for developmental writers. My rubric values writing process over formalist writing assessment, which stresses surface error. It addresses the traditional rubric categories (organization, unity, coherence, style, grammar, mechanics) by emphasizing planning, drafting, revising, and editing. These writing process components build writing skills which contribute to an organized, unified, acceptably error-free essay; therefore, the traditional, commonly-used rubric categories are satisfied.

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In Memory of Jerome Stern

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

My first semester teaching developmental English taught me there are no bad writers, only frustrated, underprepared ones. One student, whom I will name Natasha because we spent hours working on an essay based on the lyrics of her favorite song "Unwritten" by Natasha Bedingfield, labored tirelessly for months trying to improve her writing. Six hours from home, at her father's alma mater with a new Apple laptop computer and a dream of becoming a large-animal veterinarian, she sat in the front row every class meeting smilingly declaring her love of writing: "My high school English teacher told me she loved my writing because it has such style!"

Unfortunately, Natasha's style in her essay entitled "I Can Do Anything!" was confusing and certainly strayed from the formalist rubric that my college English department strongly suggested I use when judging her essays. As the semester matured, her writing style reflected more of her vibrant personality. Her written words flowed much more coherently and understandably, but the grammar and mechanics portion of the rubric required me to subtract twenty-five points. Overall essay structure and organization ate ten more points, and even an English teacher can do that math – one-hundred minus thirty-five equals sixty-five. Natasha did not make the C she needed to exit developmental English.

Entering Natasha's undesirable grade into the computer at fall semester's end did not put me in the Christmas spirit, and many regrets cluttered my head. "If only she knew

where to place a comma, if only she could spell, if only I could find her thesis statement!" When she received her final essay grade, I hoped that she would not let a departmentally governed assessment of her writing stop her from writing.

The writing struggle of a developmental English student challenges not only students but also instructors. When a student works diligently for weeks to complete a process writing assignment only to receive a low score, both student and teacher lament. The student says, "I did everything you asked -- I brainstormed, I made clusters, I let my peers read my paper and make suggestions, and I conferenced with you. Why didn't all of that work?" A typical answer may be, "You just have to work harder next time." However, instructors know it may take several "next times" for developing writers to reach college writing readiness.

Statistically, the pass rate of developmental English students is low. In an article titled "Developments," Complete College America, a national, non-profit organization formed to help states raise college completion rates, describes underprepared college students as becoming ensnared in a remedial "bridge to nowhere" facing an uncertain future. In 2006, 37.1% of college freshman entering two-year college required remediation. Of those students, 17.2% completed the college-level subject class, and only 7.2% graduated within three years. College administrators question developmental writing instruction, calling it costly and time-consuming, but little viable research of what works to improve overall developmental English exit numbers exists. Gwinnett Technical College in Lawrenceville, Georgia, received a grant in 2011 from the Georgia division of Complete College America to explore quicker, more cost-effective ways to improve developmental completion rates. Instruction of developmental written communication

skills is included in the study. Currently, developmental English students in state technical college classrooms spend 74% of class time completing textbook exercises in an effort to better basic mechanic, spelling, and grammar skills. The Technical College System of Georgia syllabus included in Appendix A illustrates the breakdown of class time.

Of course, clean, error-free writing is important, but, as Andrea Lunsford asserts in "What We Know - And Don't Know - About Remedial Writing," having students work exercises unrelated to individual writing has proven ineffective (50). An examination of successful instruction methods is necessary and timely; saving students from boring book work and helping them pass from Developmental English into a higher course may boost college completion rates. Currently, research on developmental writing focuses on better college preparation at the high school level, preventing the need for developmental instruction. Unfortunately, addressing K-12 inadequacies and implementing new teaching strategies may take years. Developmental writers need help now. Because Georgia's two-year colleges educate the largest number of developmental students, research at universities wanes. Considering successful methods of writing instruction with developing writers helps fill a needed research gap. One important aspect of writing instruction – assessment – deserves exploration.

Assessing developmental writing differs from assessing writing of students prepared for college writing. Because developmental writers are beginning writers, they require instructional assessment that will guide and prepare them for more stringent grading standards. I come to these conclusions by researching the literature of Mina Shaughnessy, David Bartholomae, Peter Elbow, Brian Huot, and others. Compiling the

evidence gained through literature research and instructor interviews guides my construction of a rubric for developmental writers that provides instructional assessment rather than punitive notation of error. Simply noting what is wrong with a piece of writing does not provide effective feedback to developmental writers to help them write better. What these writers need in order to write better are strategies, methods, and guidelines that will allow them to improve their writing over time, and a system of assessment that allows developmental writing teachers to provide this guidance in a focused manner. An instructional assessment rubric serves the needs of both students and their teachers.

This instructional rubric values engagement in the writing process over traditional formalist writing assessment, which stresses surface error, by emphasizing planning, drafting, revising, and editing. The traditional rubric categories (organization, unity, coherence, style, grammar, and mechanics) are embedded in the steps of the writing process rather than broken out into isolated components that are applied to a finished essay and rated discretely. With an instructional rubric, the traditional rubric categories are satisfied and standards are maintained, yet students are rewarded for engaging fully in the writing process and provided specific and detailed guidance. To move beyond a punitive, error-based assessment method that focuses on product rather than process toward an instructional assessment method that truly values process seems vital to the success of Georgia developmental writers.

Chapter II

ALL THINGS CONSIDERED: THE DEVELOPMENTAL WRITER'S CONFUSING PATH TO COLLEGE PREPAREDNESS

Assessment of developmental writers has been entrenched in formalism. Understanding the situation of Developmental English students helps with revising current formalist, consequently unsuccessful considering the low completion rates discussed in Chapter 1, assessment strategies. In addition to the typical freshman anxiety, students deal with the bleak realization they are underprepared for college. Suddenly, with one placement test result, their roads to degrees seem much longer. Many give up immediately due to the financial burden of additional classes not completely funded by federal aid. They question the system: "What classes will I take? How long will they last? When will I be able to start my degree classes? Will I have a 'real' teacher?" Most colleges do not allow students who need complete remediation (math, reading, and English) to start degree-level classes. Others allow students to start if they need help in only one area. Policies dealing with college admission, developmental class completion, class length and delivery, and class instruction deserve study if we wish to improve developmental writing assessment.

College Admission: Passing a "Writing" Test

College admission requirements for Georgia's underprepared college students can be confusing. Students applying to two-year colleges in Georgia must, like college students nationally, provide college-approved test scores: American College Test (ACT),

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), or Compass®. If ACT or SAT scores are not provided or do not meet college admission standards, students are required to take the Compass®. The Compass® is an ACT trademarked assessment used to place students into college courses. The test consists of three portions: reading, writing, and math. Students must pass both the reading (seventy out of one hundred points needed) and writing (sixty out of one hundred points needed) portions to enter first-year composition course. If a student's reading score is low, he or she places into a developmental reading class. If his or her writing score is low, the student places into developmental English class in which composition is emphasized. Arguments continue on whether or not reading and English should be combined into one class.

The Compass® writing assessment requires no writing. The test is a non-timed, computerized editing assessment. Students view a portion of text on a computer screen, click on portions of text sentence by sentence, and choose answers correcting surface errors from a multiple-choice list. In the words of one student, "That was ridiculous! How does that test know whether I can write or not! I did not write; I corrected someone else's writing." Some students exhibit an acceptable writing ability on essays written once in their developmental classes; unfortunately, the inadequate Compass® fails to assess true writing aptitude.

Adding to the confusion is the fact that colleges require students to pass the Compass® upon completion of their Developmental English class. As a result, students who write successful essays earning passing class grades are denied entrance into a higher course because of failure to edit text on a computer screen. Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in Tifton, Georgia, sees the irony in not including actual writing

assessment in class exit policy and allows students maintaining a seventy or above class average to write a final, timed essay. If their essays are acceptable by a panel of English professors, they gain the opportunity to retake the "writing" portion of the test that placed them into developmental classes, the Compass®. If they fail on the first retake attempt, students can take the test a third time. If they fail again, regardless of class grade or acceptable final essay, they do not exit the developmental class. Students are allowed three attempts to exit Developmental English. If students do not exit in three attempts, they must sit out of college for one year. In 2011, the attempt number was reduced to two. Thankfully, the Technical College System of Georgia is moving toward discontinuing the retake of the Compass®, allowing final class score, including process essays, to determine class exit.

Class Length and Delivery: More Computerized Assessment of Student Non-Writing

Once students are admitted and placed into developmental courses, the question of how to prepare them for college composition requires an answer. In her article "It's Not Remedial: Re-envisioning Pre-First-Year College Writing," Heidi Huse et al. explain a Tennessee university's plan to revise developmental writing courses. She highlights past issues that led to the redesign by explaining that for years, "the debate about who belongs at the university and who does not has existed" (50). In the early 2000s, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission eliminated remedial classes from their four-year institutions, moving them to two-year colleges. The instructional plan implemented by Huse's two-year college involves mandatory writing center time and instruction by professors with proven composition instruction success. Other states including California, Ohio, and New York have followed Tennessee in removing remediation from four-year

colleges. Georgia, joining in the national trend, also began moving remedial education to its two-year colleges in 2001 as Sara Hebel chronicles in her article "Georgia Strives to Raise Standards Without Leaving Students Behind." Georgia's two-year colleges, faced with an influx of students, began, as Mina Shaughnessy describes in *Errors and Expectations: A Guide for the Teacher of Basic Writing,* guessing "in the dark about sorts of programs they ought to plan" (1).

As mentioned earlier, a study underway at Gwinnett Technical College explores methods of instruction for developmental writing students. The results of this study will be used to implement a redesign of developmental courses in the Technical College System of Georgia. In a recent seminar conducted by Technical College System of Georgia curriculum specialists, instructors from around the state heard Gwinnett Technical College's plan for instruction. Describing the plan as alarming may be an understatement. Unfortunately, the plan differs greatly from Tessessee's plan. The instruction plan, delivered through an on-line education system, allows students to work at their own pace mastering grammar and mechanics exercises. The system named "My Writing Lab" involves very little independent writing; again, students choose answers from a multiple-choice list. Although students have the option of exiting the developmental class more quickly than a semester-long class, instructors are concerned about lack of writing instruction and assessment. Fearing writing may be lost in the shuffle of a hurried, hybrid course emphasizing correcting surface error in non-student produced text, instructors attending the seminar voiced concerns. An e-mail message from D. J. Henry, Associate Professor of English at Daytona State College and Technical College System of Georgia Developmental Education Redesign consultant, attempts to

allay fears: “Writing instruction will never be removed from the Developmental English classroom. It’s too important.” However, instructors still question the feasibility of shortened class time: “Will enough time be allotted to complete even one essay?” They worry the shorter, hybrid courses and continued upheaval of a confusing instructional plan will affect already tenuous student learning outcomes.

Stephen J. Handel and Ronald A. Williams argue against hurried, hybrid courses in their article “Reimagining Remediation.” If we believe “we can improve students’ college-level skills by making them do precisely the same thing in college that they failed to do in high school – only faster or online,” our thinking is, at best, “naïve” (30). Educating developmental English students requires an enlightened approach to composition instruction. Because little contemporary evidence or research on best writing assessment practices in Georgia’s two-year colleges exits, investigating successful classroom strategies helps. Fortunately, as Handel and Williams recognize, developmental or remedial education “needs to be rescued from its second-class status,” so a quantity and better quality of research may be done to improve classroom practices and assessment methods (32). Students need to be rescued from computer-generated grammar and editing exercises and be allowed to work on their own writing. Agreeing with the earlier student question, we should ask, “How do we know a student’s writing has improved if we don’t assess actual student writing?”

Developmental Class Instruction

C. A. Kozeracki states in his article “Preparing Faculty to Meet the Needs of Developmental Students” that “central to developmental students’ academic success is the presence of a well-trained, dedicated, and respected faculty” (39). Gwinnett Technical

College's plan involves adjunct instructors who may or may not have training in composition theory and method. Developmental students deserve instructors who are knowledgeable about not only their subjects but have some understanding of how to assess the writing of remedial students. Generating successful methods of developmental writing assessment requires awareness that assessment methods effective in degree-level classes may confuse the class and frustrate the developmental teacher.

According to Heidi Estrem in her article "The Portfolio's Shifting Self: Possibilities for Assessing Student Learning, "writing … is something that is best assessed by viewing documents produced over time" (125). Frequently, time constraints imposed by a single semester are not enough for underprepared remedial students to produce an adequate essay regardless of the work spent during draft revision; the final draft fails to reflect the overall composing effort and understanding of revision gained throughout the writing process. For developmental English students, writing is a struggle, so assessing writing produced in a final draft and not considering knowledge gained through process pushes students to eschew writing process taught and discussed in class, forms the idea that draft revision is pointless, and reinforces negative feelings toward writing. Even though an essay may have taken a month to produce, the final product may not stand up to strict, formalist assessment. Successful assessment methods should be based in composition research; this requires an instructor with writing process knowledge who knows how to apply that knowledge to assessment.

In an ideal developmental writing world, students are admitted to colleges based on writing samples, taught by instructors well-versed in process writing instruction with an understanding of developmental writing assessment, are allowed enough time to

prepare for college writing, use computers only to enhance actual writing, and are passed out of the course when their writing has improved enough to offer them a chance at passing a higher course. Fortunately for two-year colleges and faculty who enjoy paychecks, developmental students want an education. We cannot reject paying students, so we must find ways to improve their writing skills. Realizing these students are confused by non-writing based curriculum and inappropriate exit policies, are beginning writers, and fear writing because of past experience should improve our writing assessment strategies. Building greater understanding of the writing process through assessment promotes better long-term writing and, hopefully, provides the skills not only to pass college-level English but also to gain a degree.

Chapter III

SEARCHING FOR A BETTER METHOD OF DEVELOPMENTAL WRITING ASSESSMENT

Understanding confusing assessment strategies employed by colleges frames the search for a clear, effective, instructional assessment method to use when grading developmental student essays. The path to college English for the underprepared student is unclear; therefore, once students enter developmental English classes, assessment of their writing should be completely and understandably defined. Finding that understandable definition requires an examination of what other English educators have done and are doing.

Defining Basic or Beginning Writers

The search begins with a developmental writing pioneer, Mina Shaughnessy. Her 1977 book *Errors and Expectations: A Guide for the Teacher of Basic Writing* rescues teachers and students from classroom frustration. Responding to the open admissions policies of the 1960s when New York colleges began accepting students "who were not by traditional standards ready for college," Shaughnessy offers strategies deserving further study (1). Shaughnessy describes professors' reactions to open admission essays: "… the essays these students wrote during their first weeks of class stunned teachers who read them" (3). Professors informed their supervisors that they expected most of these writers to fail; the problems these writers had were "irremediable" (3). Shaughnessy understood these reactions and realized that these teachers were simply underprepared to

deal with basic writing students, as she termed them. She explains to teachers that these basic writing students are not "slow" but are "beginners, and must, like all beginners, learn by making mistakes" (5).

In her article "Diving In: An Introduction to Basic Writing," Shaughnessy instructs English teachers to examine themselves. Sounding weary of college faculty's viewing of basic writers as "handicapped writers" who will never "catch up" to their college-ready peers, she issues a challenge: Don't ask, "What is wrong with these students?" instead ask, "What is wrong with my teaching?" (234) She offers a specific method for questioning classroom instruction involving four stages also applicable to assessment: 1) "Guarding the Tower", 2) "Converting the Natives", 3) "Sounding the Depths", and 4) "Diving In" (234-238).

Of course, we who pledge allegiance to our subject wish to maintain its integrity and guard the tower, but what is the integrity of English? What are we guarding? Shaughnessy's daunting question, "'What are the consequences of flunking an entire class?'" implies the answer, "I will be feared as a teacher, and no student will register for my class" (235). However, that practical answer is superficial; Shaughnessy wishes for a selfless answer. Flunking an entire class helps no one. Yes, the tower is guarded, but we have denounced an important aspect of English – communication. We require students to communicate through writing, and by shushing them with harsh assessment, we risk a learning silence. What we as teachers communicate through assessment must promote learning and continued written talk.

Next, Shaughnessy urges teachers to "admit some to the community of the educable" or convert "the natives" (235). Students have knowledge that may simply be

unfocused; helping students focus their writing through specific guidance helps them assimilate into a once foreign and unwelcoming learning community. When teachers enter Shaughnessy's third stage of instruction development "Sounding the Depths," they begin to examine themselves not only as teachers but as writers. What influenced the teacher's writing? Asking that question facilitates understanding because teachers/writers realize that culture, academia, and experience shape writing ability. Often, students' lives may be devoid of enrichment, so the teacher provides enrichment opportunity. For writing teachers wishing to apply Shaughnessy's theories, that opportunity for writing enrichment may be a process because it encourages planning and thought. Few writers produce fluent, near perfect papers with no preparation, so teaching and rewarding the process allows students to start "from scratch;" of course, as Shaughnessy points out, educators must decide "where scratch is" (238).

Finally, an educator decides whether or not to "dive in" and "make the decision that demands professional courage – the decision to remediate himself" (238). This decision means reevaluating not only our beliefs about students, learning, and our classroom instruction strategies but also our views on assessment.

Shaughnessy's advice is timeless; her four suggestions for developmental writing instruction offered in "Diving In" work well in today's classrooms because teachers must resist assuming that high school graduates are prepared for college writing. Developmental instructors should start from the beginning with these beginning writers and teach process writing. Until students understand process writing and show some writing skill, assessing students as more advanced writers is fruitless. Offering students an instructional assessment method fosters learning while assessing and encourages

students to take more responsibility for the final product. Although instructors may feel as if we are teaching skills better taught at the middle school or high school level, we must remediate ourselves and prepare students for college English.

Dealing with Error

Obviously, a study of assessment of developmental writing must address error. Revisiting *Errors and Expectations*, we find Shaughnessy explaining that "'good writing'" is not necessarily "'correct writing,'" and helping students understand and interpret their errors builds writing savvy. Shaughnessy eschews correctness and the emphasis on error as a "malignancy" among English teachers and clarifies that her emphasis on error simply delves into ways to help basic writing students gain control of their writing (6). Each chapter of her book addresses a type of error: handwriting and punctuation, syntax, common errors, spelling, vocabulary, and sentence errors. She provides instructional methods dealing with each error type. Yes, these methods include exercises, but they are assigned only after the teacher reads a student's writing sample. For example, a student who has no spelling problem is not required to complete spelling exercises.

Shaughnessy also examines the causes of error and offers teachers ways of understanding how cause contributes to error. Understanding why a student's essay is riddled with syntax error helps a teacher help the student correct the error. Applying Shaughnessy's advice, we consider syntax error, or "problems that keep a sentence from 'working' or being understood" (47). Teachers must understand that students know what they are attempting to write; they simply don't know how to write it. Students write what they know and burden the reader to figure out what the words mean. James Moffett's

definition of this type of error in *Teaching the Universe of Discourse* illustrates that a student who does not know the word "dregs" instead less precisely refers to "what is left in the cup after you finish drinking" (68). This student should be encouraged to work on building vocabulary.

Finally, Shaughnessy explains the level of basic writing improvement students and teachers should expect. No one, student nor teacher, is "finished learning to write" (275). However, Shaughnessy does expect to see "a clear indication of control over errors in punctuation and grammar" after one semester of instruction but warns that our expectations should remain cautious (276). Errors will still be present, but the basic writing student is more aware of how to handle them. Applying Shaughnessy's theory shows us that drafting requires a quantity of writing; when students see the same type error occurring repeatedly, they learn to recognize their individual writing issues saving the educator assessment time. Shaughnessy's advice helped students of yesterday and also helps current developmental writing instructors build instructional assessment methods.

Andrea Lunsford provides more developmental writing error advice in her article "What We Know – And Don't Know – About Remedial Writing." Lunsford cautions: attacking "all error at once will only confuse and discourage the student" (50). Understanding student error and its causes, then employing effective instructional methods to counteract it, boosts writing ability. Lunsford, through a study of developmental students at Ohio State University, linked poor writing ability to poor reading ability. For example, a student's written response to text may be syntactically incorrect simply because the student did not comprehend what he or she read. She

proposes "student-generated" sentence combination as a possible syntax fix (51). Lunsford mimicking Shaughnessy maintains that having students write more builds writing ability. Again, applying both theories shows a quantity of writing boosts student error awareness. When students notice the same issues occurring through multiple drafts, they assess themselves more effectively.

Another often cited compositionist calls for teachers to resist assuming beginning writers are incapable of college writing. David Bartholomae, contributing to Teresa Enos' *A Sourcebook for Basic Writing Teachers*, urges teachers to see basic writers (Bartholomae adopts Shaughnessy's term) as legitimate writers in his article "Writing on the Margins: The Concept of Literacy in Higher Education." Though a basic writer may use inappropriate language or work "outside the conceptual structures" of "his more literate counterparts," the student is still a writer who works as any other writer to systematically compose ideas on paper (qtd. in Enos 69). Our role as teachers is to help basic writers interpret through error analysis how their writing systems work, thus helping students gain control over their own writing. Bartholomae offers an example: "… error analysis is a method for reading nonstandard sentences by seeing the actual sentence within the context of what we imagine to be its 'intended' form" (80). Bartholomae refers to the imagined sentence as a "shadow sentence" (80). Does Bartholomae expect teachers to do a close reading of every basic writing essay searching for hidden sentence meaning? Perhaps in Utopia teachers assess basic writing mindful of shadow meaning, but in real college environs, overworked educators have little time for guesswork, and some essays simply veer too far from college grading standards to afford basic writing students a passing grade.

Bartholomae further explains his theory on the writing systems of basic writers and how to nudge those systems into more academically appropriate strategies in "The Study of Error." He urges teachers to not "dismiss the text as non-writing, as meaningless or imperfect writing" simply because it violates convention (254). He advises us to read it as a "story by Donald Barthelme or a poem by e. e. cummings" (255). We praise bizarre literary writing; why not read basic writing text as "evidence of intention" charting "systematic choices, individual strategies, and characteristic processes of thought" (255). He explains that we all "speak our own language as well as the language of the tribe," so non-academic students speak a language teachers may not understand (255). Examining the text may reveal a "level of control and intent we" should be "willing to assign to the writer" (255). Bartholomae provides uncorrected student text for analysis:

This assignment call on chosing one of my incident making a last draft out of it. I found this very different because I like them all but you said I had to pick one so the Second incident was decide. Because this one had the most important insight to my life that I indeed learn from. This insight explain why adulthood mean that much as it dose to me because I think it alway influence me to change and my outlook on certain thing like my point-of-view I have one day and it might change the next week on the same issue. So in these frew words I going to write about the incident now. My experience took place in my high school and the reason was out side of school but I will show you the connection. The situation took place cause of the type of school I went too. Let me tell you about the situation first of all what happen was that I got suspense from school. For thing that I fell was out of my control sometime, but it taught me a lot about respondability of a growing

man. The school suspense me for being late ten time. I had accummate ten dementic and had to bring my mother to school to talk to a counselor and Prinpicable of the school what when on at the meet took me out mentally period (260).

When asked why the paper (three pages total that go on to explain that he was late because of Philadelphia's subway system) was written as one continuous paragraph, the student replied, "'It was all one idea. I didn't want to have to start all over again. I had a good idea and I didn't want to give it up'" (262). This student understands a paragraph as developing "a single idea;" a "peculiar" method "but not illogical" (262).

Obviously, this paper is full of error. How much attention do teachers need to give error when assessing? Heeding Bartholomae's advice, the answer is a lot, but we should view error not "as policeman, examiners," or "gatekeepers" but as a diagnostic tool used to guide our instruction and assessment (255). When we know a student has a problem with essay format and organization, then we must make sure he or she realizes the assignment calls for several developed paragraphs. The organization problem may improve through multiple drafts, becoming more obvious to the writer. Even though Bartholomae's student had his own method of organization, helping students realize that their organizational systems do not comply with academically accepted formats should encourage students to adopt methods of more prepared writers.

Bartholomae offers more answers to helping struggling writers move away from their marginal status in his article "Teaching Basic Writing: An Alternative to Basic Skills." Keeping in mind we must help basic writers "imagine themselves as writers writing," our instruction should center on the writing process (87). Basic writers assume that "good writers sit down, decide what they want to say and then write straight through

from an Introduction to a Conclusion without making any mistakes along the way" (88). Realizing that all writers go through a process and often struggle with that process helps build basic writing confidence and awareness of individual writing issues.

Marrying Instruction to Assessment

Developmental writers improve when their educational paths are clear. Providing a rubric that maps a clear writing path makes assessment less difficult. Teachers must remember Shaughnessy's theory that basic writers are beginning writers, and instruction methods need to be simple. If our assessment complements our instruction, the transition does not confuse students. Richard Fulkerson offers instructional advice that is easily applied to developmental writing assessment in his article "Four Philosophies of Composition." His words help teachers decide what should be valued through assessment: "My research has convinced me that in many cases composition teachers either fail to have a consistent value theory or fail to let that philosophy shape pedagogy" (347). He cites several classroom situations where teachers failed to effectively communicate to students expected assignment outcomes, and that miscommunication negatively influenced student writing. The worst example Fulkerson illustrates involves a forty-year-old female writing student who had been in a Nazi concentration camp as a child. Her writing assignment required her to write about something of great importance to her. She decided to face the childhood trauma of her parents' death by the hands of Nazis. She had never spoken of this horrific event with anyone (not even her husband) but other concentration camp inmates. She opened the paper with one sentence: "'Can you forget your own Father and Mother? If so – how or why?'" (348). Her teacher responded to the heart-wrenching paper by marking a D minus at the top and explaining

the grade with this mindless comment: "'Your theme is not clear – you should have developed your first paragraph. You talk around your subject'" (348).

Fulkerson advises teachers to avoid "mindlessness," or as he terms it, "modal confusion" by keeping in mind the four types of composition that may take place separately or in combination in student writing: expressive – the writer writes for himself often expressing his feelings, mimetic – the writer thinks and composes about reality, rhetorical – the writer writes to affect the reader, and formalist – the writer pays close attention to "traits internal to the work," like grammar, mechanics, and organization (344). The concentration camp student's paper was expressive but was graded from a formalist view. If the assignment had been communicated clearly (I want you to write about something that means something to you, and in your paper, I want to see a clearly developed thesis statement in your opening paragraph), then the student would have known not to begin her paper with one sentence.

Developmental writers deserve specific assignment instructions and must understand how their writing will be judged. Fulkerson's theory guides us to make assignments clear, and if the assessment and assignment are linked providing students a written plan of expected assignment outcome and how the final product will be assessed, then an essay will be more successful. Instructional assessment affects developmental writers' ability to discern what acceptable college writing looks like. As educators, we cannot expect developmental writers to compose an acceptable essay if they have no clear picture of how to create one. Simply, if a map, or rubric, is provided, students simply read essay assembly directions.

Developmental students who don't have a usable understanding of process writing fear assessment because they know that their final product is not college English ready. Students guess about what they think college writing should be, hoping for an acceptable grade. Not only does assessment affect developmental student writing production pushing students to write what they think a teacher wants, but, as Peter Elbow explains "assessment tends so much to drive and control *teaching*" (187). In his 1993 article "Ranking, Evaluating, and Liking: Sorting Out Three Forms of Judgment," he reminds us that, like the Learning Support Redesign currently enjoying reign in Georgia, "professionals keep changing their minds about … testing and assessment" (187). He offers guidance by breaking assessment into three descriptive categories: ranking, evaluating, and liking. He defines ranking as "a single scale or continuum or dimension along which all performances are hung" (187). To evaluate means to judge "a performance … by pointing out the strengths and weaknesses" (188). Lastly, liking trumps ranking and evaluating, requiring teachers to "like student writing" (200). "Troubled by ranking," Elbow pushes for teachers to move beyond single, isolated, over-simplified responses to writing (188). Evaluation allows readers to examine the text on many levels including the creativity of ideas, the structure and sequence of the piece, the clarity of the writing, tone of voice, and grammar errors (191). Good teachers consider a "range of possibilities" (192). How do we escape ranking when institutions demand it? Elbow suggests a portfolio approach to grading. Looking at a student's collection of work allows teachers to comment on individual papers without the pressure of ranking each one. Valuing improvement between essay drafts follows Elbow's advice allowing teachers to view the improving collection of work, not just final product. An instructional

rubric incorporates draft improvement and acknowledges a student's ongoing writing maturity.

Elbow also values students' ability to respond to peer writing, adherence to assignment schedule, overall effort, and improvement. He advocates grading by contract – a contract with students that guarantees a certain grade if students meet all contract criteria. Heeding Elbow's advice, incorporating an instructional rubric is like contract grading because a rubric clearly lays out a writer's path to better writing. Elbow also evaluates effort and investment in the paper. When a student is required by an instructional rubric to draft multiple times, a great amount of effort is required building greater paper investment. Viewing multiple drafts allows teachers to determine what Elbow terms as "potentially good" in the text and aids teachers in helping students harness that potential and build on it (200). Liking student writing makes responding and criticizing easier; when we like even one sentence in a piece of writing, we want to help bring it to full potential. Typically, a good teacher likes student writing. Liking developmental writing is challenging for teachers but, as Elbow advises, is essential to helping developmental writers improve. Liking developmental writing makes it much easier to assess.

Brian Huot's assessment theories in *(Re) Articulating Writing Assessment* promote the teaching of writing by morphing assessment into a positive instruction tool: "Since grades and assessment signify what we value in instruction, connecting how and what we value to what we are attempting to teach seems crucial" (Huot 63). Applying Huot's theories shows teachers that providing students with a clear assessment path, or instructional assessment rubric, allows them to write toward a positive final grade.

Helping students understand the process of writing involves making writing choices. Sometimes these choices overwhelm developmental writers, but as they become more comfortable writing, realizing that they actually have some control over text on the page, true writing improvement begins. Becoming comfortable with process writing builds writing control and helps student learn to assess their own writing, making a teacher's assessment a smoother experience. If classroom pedagogy promotes the same form of assessment the teacher uses, then students have a clearer understanding of process writing and can make more informed writing choices.

Process writing taught writing teachers to teach writing; Huot's "instructive evaluation" technique teaches students to assess their own texts (70). Huot, like Peter Elbow, affirms that writing portfolios provide students time to grow as writers. He evaluates texts during the portfolio process, prompting students' clearer vision of final products. Because portfolios showcase a writer's development through consecutive writing samples, not assessing development allowed through portfolios only continues "the rift between the way we assess and the way we teach" (74). Huot's theory addresses developmental writing students' disillusionment with assessment; they don't understand why time spent planning, drafting, revising, and editing is not acknowledged by final essay grades. Their writing certainly improves as they master process, so if we don't value improvement between drafts, we denounce our classroom process emphasis, a practice Huot dislikes.

Vicki Spandel and Richard Stiggins, high school language educators and academic testing experts, look at writing assessment psychologically in their 1994 book *Creating Writers*: "We can influence" student "performance … simply by the way in

which we assess" (8). Learning from the advice of Fulkerson, Huot, and now Spandel and Stiggins, we see that in assessing developmental English essays, we must be careful that our assessment process equally translates what we want to teach. In a developmental English classroom, much time is spent planning, drafting, revising, and editing essays, so if the assessment rubric reflects those writing process components, then communication from teacher to student is maximized. We want to teach writing in a developmental writing classroom, so our assessment rubric must include process writing components.

Spandel and Stiggins illustrate a classroom situation where the assessment method fails to promote the actual subject. A science teacher assigns a group project requiring group members to assemble a model of a hand with flexible finger joints. Watching the teacher walk around the room with a clipboard, students perceive the teacher to be judging the functionality of their models. Actually, the teacher is looking at the models, but she is also assessing group participation. Running short on time, one group turns to the strongest group member to complete the model thinking that a complete, working model will earn the entire group a good grade. Wrong! Had they realized that group participation weighed heavily in their assessment, group members may have performed differently. The question becomes: What was the teacher teaching? Was the group learning how the bones of the hand work or how to participate in group projects? (9).

When teaching writing, we may spend hours in the classroom planning and revising essays only to negate all of that hard work by grading for correctness, much like the science teacher who meant to teach hand bone structure but actually taught how to participate in a group. A course's advertised goals of improving oral and written communication bog down when ten points are deducted for omitting a comma before a

conjunction but only five for lack of paragraph detail. This action confuses student learning outcomes by favoring surface error over thought development contributing to a blurred understanding of good writing.

Spandel and Stiggins offer an explanation of why mindless formalist assessment occurs: pointing out that a poor opening paragraph or a lack of one is easier than finding what is good in a paper and helping the student build on positive aspects. *Direct assessment* emphasizes true writing skills and coincides with assignment; *indirect assessment* confuses writing students by emphasizing traits not germane to the assignment. Indirect assessment often involves tabulating the number of obvious grammatical and mechanical errors occurring in an essay and is practiced too commonly in developmental English. Consider these questions:

1) How well do students identify correct use of commas in a series?
2) How well can students interpret information from four journal articles and use that information in writing a two-page persuasive essay? (Spandel and Stiggins 25)

The first question can be easily answered by counting the number of times commas in a series were used correctly. The first question (indirect assessment) does not tell us enough about a student's ability to analyze and communicate information effectively because it is simply the least complicated road to assessment. The second question, which utilizes direct assessment methodology, requires much more investigation. Spandel and Stiggins assert that "direct assessment is not about rights and wrongs;" it measures "critical questions, issues," and the ability to address those questions and issues (26).

Because “writing is complex,” we must end indirect assessment, or “the easy way out” (31).

Spandel and Stiggins also prefer analytic over holistic scoring. Holistic scoring addresses all writing components working together to “achieve an overall effect” (32). Still, holistic scoring ends in one score of a final product; it does not score each individual process writing component. That final essay may have “a powerful voice but weak mechanics” or be error-free with weak ideas (33). The two essays receive the same overall score, but the more powerful essay is slighted. Do writing educators really want to promote clean yet simple writing? Analytical scoring advantages strong writing because it links component writing instruction with assessment. Analytical scoring likens holistic scoring because it also sums parts of a whole, but it defines writing components or traits and describes how each is achieved. The traits need to be necessary, viable writing components that differ enough to be individually scored. Following Spandel and Stiggins analytical model, an instructional assessment rubric for developmental writers incorporates process writing components- planning, drafting, revision, and editing. When students read the rubric and are aware of what components or traits of writing will be scored, they feel less overwhelmed because they address each trait singly – a “one step at a time” approach. Composing an essay becomes simpler with each step addressed and moves students toward writing independence.

The last category of an instructional assessment rubric involves revision and editing – two process writing components that involve writing choices and text evaluation. Evaluating deserves a place in process writing, occupying the last and final step. Saying to students, “Assessment is partly your responsibility,” asks students to play

an active role in their writing education (Spandel and Stiggins 104). The authors also endorse providing students with a grading rubric that allows students to think about the included traits while moving through their papers. Knowing that they have addressed each component helps them value the final product. When developmental writers become more invested in writing, they produce higher quality work, which raises their chances of progressing through college classes.

Next, we look specifically at the writing rubric and how it helps developmental writers. While rubrics may have negative effects on some writers (advanced writers may feel restricted by rubrics), developmental writers require the structure rubrics afford. As Bruce Saddler and Heidi Andrade effectively illustrate in their article "The Writing Rubric," developing writers benefit from the guidance a rubric offers. The article showcases two students: one student, Maren, enjoys writing and does it well while another student, Katie, does not enjoy writing and is reluctant to even try. Maren follows a rubric provided by her teacher, carefully reading and revising as she writes. Katie "promptly loses the rubric" in an effort to dodge the assignment entirely (480). Katie's writing process resembles "a ship without a rudder" because she lacks the ability for "mindful involvement" (49).

Basically, Katie has inadequate knowledge of process writing. Writing teachers provide the structure, which may be in rubric form, to help students become self-regulating writers who make informed writing choices (49). As mentioned earlier, the component breakdown of a rubric makes completing an essay less overwhelming to students, and that they realize they do have some control over final product. Rubrics, the authors endorse, provide a specific listing of "'what counts'" and describe how the

important writing properties are scored with ratings "from excellent to poor" (49). Saddler and Andrade's theory applies to developmental writers because they recognize the importance of including understandable language in rubrics. Allowing students to have input when planning a rubric ensures that students comprehend the assessment plan.

Following Saddler and Andrade's advice, our assessment methods should encourage students to take some responsibility for their written texts. Including peer assessment or review in an instructional rubric, urges students to evaluate text and suggest changes. During peer assessment, students may feel pressure from their peers to write more clearly. This type of peer pressure improves writing and removes some assessment pressure from the teacher. Moving students toward writing independence through peer assessment requires careful planning and guidance. Teachers spend years learning to respond to writing, so students may stumble through initial assessments. In time, developmental students learn to become better self-assessors through experience with peer assessment. When writing improves through a nudges from a peer, writers find satisfaction in knowing that they have communicated well through writing. Writing confidence builds, and writer identity blooms.

Assessment as Accommodation

New research shows English educators endeavor to accommodate or listen to student educational concerns. Heidi Estrem instructs teachers to view assessment as a way to learn about students in her 2004 article "The Portfolio's Shifting Self: Possibilities for Assessing Student Learning." She asks, "What does our (writing) assessment privilege?" (126) Citing Kathleen Blake Yancey, Estrem quotes "'education ultimately and always is about identity formation,'" so our assessment methods should promote

student sense of self (126). The Conference on College Composition and Communication's 2005 position on assessment emphasizes a "specific, purposeful" method aiding in building a social writing community where students feel their "multifaceted" selves are valued. Because current developmental classroom assessment methods may be contributing to disappointing exit numbers, delving into our understanding of assessment and its purpose becomes increasingly important. Brenda Helmbrecht describes one struggling writing student's reaction to assessment in her 2007 article "Giving Grades, Taking Tolls: Assessing the Impact of Evaluation on Developing Writers." Her view illustrates the importance of accounting for audience when assessing student writing: Do instructors consider the impact assessment has on students? She attempts to answer this thought-provoking question by following one student through his writing process. The focus student is actually Helmbrecht's younger brother, Paul, a freshman enrolled in English 101. Frustrated by what he termed "'mean' and insensitive feedback" to his first essay, Paul sought his older sister's help (307). Helmebrecht wonders "whether the assessment practices students encounter on their essays effectively usher them into the conventions of academic discourse, or simply scare them away from that ambition entirely" (307). Paul questioned his ability to write after receiving instructor feedback.

Helmbrecht attests "to the fact that evaluating student writing" is an area about which teachers remain insecure (307). The unsure feelings justifiably result from the understanding of the "toll" exacted from students by assessment (307). Paul's tower guarding instructor summed up the idea development of Paul's essay with this comment: "'For a thoughtful person your writing exhibits an almost *stunning* thoughtlessness --

hurried, slang-filled, and well-nigh disrespectful to the principles of logic and succinctness. Consider the C-/D+ a gift'" (308). The grade did not offend Paul as much as the emphasis on lack of thought. He wished "to be acknowledged as a thoughtful, committed student," not reprimanded like a child (308-309). Paul invested much time and effort into his paper; having it dismissed so harshly offended him. Unfortunately, composition instructors are plagued by "'inherited practices'" (314). Receiving harsh evaluation from past teachers affects current instructor assessment -- a "this is how I learned to write, so you should be fine with it" thing. As writing scholars, we may be comfortable with heavy critiques, but "what works" for us as writers "will probably not work for them [students]" (314, my addition). Helmebrecht's assessment theories teach educators to consider how our assessment affects students and urges us to examine the purpose of our assessment. Are we assessing as we were assessed? If so, why? Is it appropriate for developmental writers? Only if it is building writing skills.

Building an instructive rubric for developmental writers requires an understanding that even though college instructors are trained to deal with college writers, we have to "remediate" ourselves and rethink our instruction, evaluation, and assessment methods when teaching a developmental class (Shaughnessy 238). Consequently, we cannot and should not insult the intelligence of our beginning writers or developmental students. To help counteract the necessity of attention to error and other surface concerns often required for these students by college learning outcomes, we can emphasize the development of organization by assessing and rewarding planning, facilitate the development of content through assessing and rewarding drafting, and enhance the

development of style by assessing and rewarding revision as these occur over a continuum of several drafts.

Identifying Key Concepts for Developmental Writing Assessment

Building an instructional rubric for developmental writers requires educators to consider key concepts provided by composition experts. Incorporating this knowledge into our assessment practices helps to ensure student writing improvement.

- Beginning writers- Shaughnessy explains that basic writers are beginning writers and must be allowed time to grow as writers. Awareness of Shaughnessy's beginning writer theory should shape our assessment of developmental writers; error-based assessment does not permit beginning writers to learn from their inevitable mistakes.
- Unique writing systems - Bartholomae explains that developmental writers are writers who have their own writing systems. Unfortunately, their systems do not align with college standards, so writing teachers may offer instruction that nudges developmental student writing toward academic discourse.
- Instructional assessment - Huot's instructive response theory serves as a model for instructive assessment. Understanding that if what we teach coincides with how we assess, then we teach through assessment.
- Direct assessment - Spandel and Stiggins favor direct assessment and warn educators against assessing what we don't necessarily value. If we wish students to improve as process writers, then we must shun formalist, surface error assessment.

- Analytical assessment – Spandel and Stiggins also favor analytical assessment because it values writing components separately. Simulating this idea requires teachers to include process writing components in a rubric.
- Rhetorical assessment - Fulkerson explains that rhetorical writing affects readers. Adhering to his theory, rhetorical assessment affects students pushing them to excel as process writers.

Learning from experts, we understand that beginning writers cannot be assessed as mature writers, and even though these beginning writers' texts differ from more prepared academic writers, beginning writers are writers, nonetheless. If we link instruction with assessment, then learning continues even through the grading process, becoming a less daunting occurrence. Educators must always be clear in what we value; if we value process writing, then we must assess it to affect long-term writing improvement. Including an instructional rubric that includes process writing components is the key to tying instruction to assessment.

Chapter IV

HELP FROM GEORGIA DEVELOPMENTAL ENGLISH INSTRUCTORS

Unfortunately, changing inappropriate placement testing, confusing class delivery and curriculum, and formalist class exit policies significantly would require college administrative intervention; however, instructors maintain some control over what happens in classrooms. Because of the developmental writing redesign taking place in Georgia's Technical Colleges, suggestions for improved assessment methods are being studied and considered. Before building an instructional assessment method including a rubric that would reflect new methods for assessing developmental writers, looking at what other Georgia instructors are doing in developmental English classrooms around the state is necessary. This graph illustrates the college type and classes taught by instructors included in an e-mail survey:

Instructors teaching at four-year colleges.	**Instructors teaching at two-year colleges.**	**Instructors teaching both Developmental English and degree-level English.**
3 1.Gainesville State College 2.Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College)	5 1. Wiregrass Technical College 2. Southern Crescent Technical College 3. Albany Technical College 4.Gwinnett Technical College 5.North Georgia Technical College	7 1.Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College 2.Gainesville State College

Survey Questions

1. Do you require students to turn in all work associated with an essay (any freewriting, planning, and drafts), or are you okay with a final draft only?
2. Do you give points for essay planning, participating in a peer review session, attending a conference, or revision strategy?
3. Do you use a rubric when assessing student essays? Will you attach a copy?
4. If you teach college-level classes along with developmental classes, do you assess, evaluate, or judge your Learning Support papers any differently than you do those of your ENGL 1101 or ENGL 1010 (technical college degree-level English) classes?

Georgia instructors were e-mailed this list of survey questions. Returned surveys were followed up by phone calls for further research and clarification.

Survey Answers to Question 1

Do you require students to turn in all work associated with an essay (any freewriting, planning, and drafts), or are you okay with a final draft only?

The answers to the first question reveal whether or not the instructor values process. As research suggests, students benefit from learning process writing; similarly, survey answers show that most teachers value process. Several respondents allow students to draft during class time while they move from student-to-student, offering guidance. All draft work is turned in with the final essay. One respondent holds a peer response session during the drafting stage, and several respondents require students to attend individual conferences. One respondent does not require any proof of process, asking for the final draft only. However, he admits to getting "suspicious that the work is

not original" when a final draft is turned in, and he has not met with the student to discuss the essay prior to submission. This teacher's answer is not easily qualified: He values process only because it assures original work? When asked if he counts off for not turning in a rough draft, he answers, "No."

Answers to Question 2

Do you give points for essay planning, participating in a peer review session, attending a conference, or revision strategy? Question one reveals most instructors value process, but how much? Should each component (planning, drafting, revising, editing) of process be valued? Six instructors respond they don't give points for peer review, planning, or attending a conference because these activities contribute to a final product. Interestingly, one instructor gives points for draft improvement, explaining that once students understand how to plan an essay, incorporate the plan into a rough draft, then revise the rough draft, the improvement from rough to second draft is worthy of recognition. This teacher finds rewarding inter-draft improvement encourages continued student writing. One professor maintains that he does not value or require pre-writing exercises at all; he is only interested in the final product.

Answers to Question 3

Do you use a rubric when assessing student essays? Will you attach a copy? The first replying instructor does not use a rubric but incorporates an "error tracking sheet" (see Appendix B). The error tracking sheet addresses "serious problems with content" like no thesis statement, lack of supporting ideas, lack of specific details, no conclusion, too few words (not meeting targeted assignment guidelines), and less serious problems like sentence-level errors. She deducts the greater number of points for serious errors (10

points maximum per error) and two points for each less serious error. Students are aware of her tracking system when they begin writing.

The second surveyed instructor does not use a formal rubric; instead, he uses a "mental checklist." Grammar weighs heavily in his checklist, and he expects students to keep a "grammar journal, a series of exercises directly focusing on their individual error patterns." He closely examines essay structure, but he is less concerned with content. He doesn't really care "what people think." He cares that they can "argue their points."

The third educator uses a rubric (see Appendix C) that values "knowledge of subject" equally with "mechanics," each count thirty points. Fortunately, a student cannot fail simply because of errors in grammar, usage, or punctuation. She does not give points for essay planning, peer review, or revision strategy; however, she encourages students to rewrite their essays "for a second but equal grade." She believes "we all have to learn from our mistakes," and "mistakes" are marked on all work and returned to students. Often she ups "the ante for the second paper," marking mistakes at twice the point value. For example, mistakes on first papers are five points and ten on second papers. She divides mistakes into categories: failing to use *somebody* and *nobody* as singular pronouns (subject-verb agreement), misspellings, and writing "to" instead of "too" (using adverbs incorrectly). She counts errors in the same category as one mistake.

The fourth responding teacher spends much time workshopping papers, so students have a clear revision path. She wants them to value process, and divides her rubric accordingly: planning (25 points), drafting (40 points), and revising and editing (35 points). When asked how she responds to error, she again cites her rubric, which addresses editing. She teaches grammar and style throughout the semester, so in a

developmental class, if the lesson on parallel structure has not been taught, then she does not count off until after it is addressed in class. She uses "editing sessions to look for error related to the grammar we are discussing that week as well as all of the grammar we have discussed up to that point."

The fifth teacher provides a "Criteria for Grading Writing Assignments" (see Appendix D) that divides essay components into six point values that correspond with number grades. The "Criteria" also defines "major errors" and sets limits on how many errors are allowed per grade category.

Three other instructors use rubrics but could not supply them due to college department policy; however, they did divulge that the rubrics stress formalist assessment.

Answers to Question 4

If you teach college-level classes along with developmental classes, do you assess, evaluate, or judge your developmental papers any differently than you do those of your ENGL 1101 or ENGL 1010 classes? The answers to this question show how the instructor views developmental writing. If instructors answer that they hold all students to the same standard, then developmental writers are not developing writers. If they treat developmental writers differently, they understand that they are beginning writers and should not be expected to write at college level until course completion. Research encourages teachers to view developmental writers as beginning writers.

Three instructors assess all students equally, holding them to the same grading standards. One of these teachers explains, "If students master process, then their writing will stand up to the highest of standards."

One educator uses separate rubrics for her ENGL 1101 (degree level) and ENGL 0099 (developmental) students. The developmental rubric's highest grade category translates to a B/C on the 1101 rubric, so an A essay in a developmental class is not an A essay one class higher.

A fourth professor explains that his expectations remain the same regardless of class level; however, he spends more time conferencing with students and moves at a slower pace in his developmental classes than he does in his ENGL 1101 classes.

Another professor understands developmental students often differ from traditional students: "I can remember so clearly developmental students who were so afraid of this class. For some of them, it had been years since they were in an academic setting, and they were so lacking in confidence, that I had to continually build them up even when I was pointing out weaknesses in their writing. It was such a joy to see them improve and grow and become more confident in themselves."

However, her softness stops at assessment. This professor applies a universal rubric to developmental essays, but acknowledges that students may not produce passing college-level work until course completion. An A developmental essay may equate to a C English 1101 essay.

The next educator assesses her developmental classes differently from her college-level classes – she is harder on her college-level students.

The last replying instructor does not teach degree-level classes because she is heavily involved in developmental education. She offers some interesting assessment insight describing evaluation of student essays "like short tutoring sessions" because students are involved in their own assessment process. Her college employs classroom

tutors who give students "immediate face-to-face feedback." She also shares a "Record of Writing Progress" (see Appendix E), which is used during tutoring sessions and helps students establish writing routines. She shares another rubric (see Appendix F) that tutors use when looking at a student's drafts. The rubric is in checklist form and offers suggestions for grade improvement. This teacher does feel that developmental writers should be assessed differently from degree-level writers.

Contemplating Instructor Answers

The instructor interviews offer useful and not so useful solutions to instructional assessment problems. First, looking back to the Error Tracking Sheet (see Appendix B), the errors with the least point value are the errors Joseph Williams refers to in "The Phenomenology of Error "as located through 'a deliberate search'" and may not interfere with the reader's understanding of the text (165). These are superficial errors like comma misplacement or capitalization problems. The reader understands the text and is not overly distracted by the errors. The most point deductions are awarded to problems with content like lack of idea development and lack of specific detail – errors that do interfere with a reader's understanding of the text. This value system instructs us to denounce tedious errors and concentrate on depth of thought. Another surveyed instructor idea allows teachers to value process by giving extra points for peer review sessions – an alternative that may counteract a departmental rubric that values superficial error.

One surveyed instructor promotes long-term writer improvement with her requirement of a revision plan. Requiring all work associated with the essay be turned in and including it within the final grade reinforces classroom-taught process and honors all student essay work. Another's point distribution plan (planning – 25, drafting – 40,

revising and editing – 35) simply encourages writing. This plan deserves emulation because it fully embraces process rewarding writing steps. The logical point distribution reflects time spent at each writing step – drafting often takes the most time. If students know this grading triad prior to writing, their composing path seems clear.

Another surveyed instructor's approach reverts to formalist assessment of past decades. Although I appreciate his idea of an error tracking journal because it places the onus of error tracking on the student, his lack of focus on content and student thought is disturbing. He is overly concerned with "correctness." Another educator also places a lot of emphasis on error – thirty points possibly deducted for mechanics on her rubric. Her theory of "upping the ante" with each consecutive paper confuses me. Keeping up with what error is worth throughout the semester seems like too much math. Another contributing educator offers a detailed, well-developed assessment plan; however, though the Record of Writing Progress (Appendix E) is commendable, her rubrics are too detailed (Appendix F). A two-page rubric affords students much feedback, but teachers are time-challenged. The teacher providing this rubric works jointly with writing tutors to help keep up with student progress. For a teacher without the luxury of a writing center and trained tutors, her plan seems too time-consuming and difficult to implement alone.

Chapter V

PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER: BUILDING AN INSTRUCTIONAL ASSESSMENT METHOD FOR DEVELOPMENTAL WRITERS

As Erika Lindemann observes in the preface of *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers,* "All teachers stand on the shoulders of others," and I'm extremely thankful for the interviewees who shared their insight, experience, and assessment methods helping me build my method (i). As teachers, we must decide how we are affected by student writing error and how we react to it through assessment. As Joseph Williams advises and Robert Connors and Andrea Lunsford agree, if error is "perceived as a flawed verbal transaction between a writer and a reader," then our reaction as "mellow, student-centered, process-based selves" should be to adopt instructional assessment methods, or methods based in classroom-taught process (Williams 153; Connors and Lunsford 395). Allowing students to understand how they will be assessed (providing the rubric with the essay assignment), providing a clear writing path, and valuing inter-draft improvement prepares developmental writers for college writing. As interviewed instructors assert, developmental writing essays may not compare to those of higher course level essays until the course ends. My experience with instructional assessment reflects this theory. By semester's end, student essays are stronger, and the texts withstand a more stringent rubric. However, at the beginning of a semester, developmental students require a rubric acknowledging their beginning writer status.

A rubric for developmental writers should include terminology familiar to developmental students. Class instruction includes lessons in planning, drafting, revising, and editing. Students understand these words, and they equate planning with organization; drafting with content development, revising with style, unity, and coherence improvement; and editing with error reduction. Handing a developmental student a rubric separated into categories addressing organization, idea-development, unity, grammar, and mechanics inspires the question: "But didn't we do all these things already? Why don't we get a grade for that?" These are valid questions considering the amount of class time devoted to planning, drafting, revising, and editing, so if we adhere to research suggesting that assessment mirror instruction, including these already familiar terms in a rubric makes sense.

Providing a rubric that incorporates familiar terminology when an essay is assigned allows students to easily work through the rubric categories. Every essay assigned in a developmental writing class requires about three class periods devoted to brainstorming about the topic, freewriting, listing, or clustering. After planning is done, students may write paragraphs summarizing their ideas for their essays. Once all planning activities are done, students feel confident that the "planning" portion of the rubric is fulfilled. Next, drafting begins; developmental writers should compose several drafts before considering turning in a final essay. Providing feedback during the drafting stage saves students from serious global issues like lack of a thesis statement and paragraph disunity and saves teachers much frustration when reading final drafts. During the revision stage, students are required to attend at least one peer review session and incorporate peer suggestions into their drafts. Editing requires a close reading, examining

the essay line-by-line, an editing check list, and a conference with the teacher. The amount of time and effort put into composing one developmental essay should be acknowledged and respected through assessment. When students follow through with all rubric steps, grading final drafts is much less time-consuming for the teacher because essays lack serious problems and are less error-filled.

A rubric, appropriate for assessing developmental writing process knowledge, is shown below. Total student score equals 100:

Rubric for Developmental Writers

Planning	Essay includes evidence of freewriting, listing, clustering, or outlining, and planning contributes to an organized essay. **19 -25 points.**	Essay includes evidence of planning, but it is unrelated to the draft and final essay. Essay is somewhat organized. **9-18 points.**	Little evidence of planning. Essay is not organized. **0 - 8 points**	**Planning Total** –
Drafting	Essay includes multiple drafts, and the improvement between drafts is very good (ideas are more developed between 1st and 2nd drafts; later drafts show improvement in unity and style). **29 – 40 points**	Essay includes at least one draft, and the improvement between drafts is acceptable. **13-28 points**	A draft is included, but there is little improvement between drafts. **0 -12 points**	**Drafting Total-**
Revising/Editing	Writer participated in at least one peer review session, incorporated a clear revision plan as discussed in student/instructor conference, and used an editing checklist. All tasks contribute to an essay with very few distracting errors. **25-35 points**	Writer performed one of the three tasks described in previous block. Essay has a few distracting errors. **10-24 points**	Writer's revision/editing tasks are inadequate. Essay contains distracting errors. **0-9 points**	**Revising/Editing Total-**

Planning

A well-planned essay is a well-organized essay. Erika Lindemann illustrates walking students through the pre-writing stage, or "those activities that precede composing a draft," with exercises like free writing and brainstorming that bring ideas to mind (109). Listing, clustering, or outlining builds idea complexity and helps with paragraph development and overall essay organization (109). Free writing urges students to "just write!" Often, developmental writers freeze when asked to write because they think any classroom writing will be judged. This low-stakes exercise requires little coherent thought, allowing words to flow unrestrained onto a page. In the words of one student: "I filled a whole page without really trying!" Students revisit their free writing, discovering ideas and details useful for composing an essay. These ideas and details may be incorporated into clusters, allowing a clearer picture illustrating how details support topic sentences, and paragraphs support thesis statements. Offshoots of the main topic become paragraphs, and details from the paragraph ideas become supporting details. This graphic organizer helps students visualize essays. Developmental English students may be language weak, but math or science strong. Putting words together like a puzzle appeals to these visual, often tactile learners. Listing details and grouping like details together also aid developmental writers.

At least two planning exercises are needed to produce a well-organized developmental essay. Any planning must be turned in with the final essay to capture full point allowance, and of course, the essay must adhere to the plan. Developmental writers are often fickle, changing their minds mid-essay and straying to a completely different topic. This rubric clarifies through a point deduction why straying from an original plan

is not conducive to effective writing. Initial planning must be included when the final essay is turned in and should contribute in some way to the final product. If the original plan does not contribute to the final product, points are deducted.

Drafting

Moving from the planning/prewriting stage to drafting stage requires writers to begin "solving problems" (Lindeman 28). Drafting may be the most difficult stage for developmental writers because it requires a commitment to writing improvement and building a writing work ethic. I include inter-draft improvement in my rubric because I wish to reward the amount of work that goes into drafting. As I illustrated in my first pages, students who are disillusioned with grades that are not a reflection of time spent writing belittle writing process instruction. During this difficult stage, writers grapple with word choice or a "'rhetorical problem,' a persistent uncertainty about our purpose, our sense of audience or our projected self" which may cause frustration, but Erika Lindemann quoting Flower and Hayes, asserts writers plan "as they write*"* (44). The long-term writing skills gained from learning to problem solve while drafting should be recognized with assessment. Ideas and details that seemed important in the prewriting stage may prove irrelevant during drafting. Developmental students are reluctant to discard details built during clustering or listing and clutter a draft with the unusable text. Multiple drafts allow writers to see usable details evolve and grow while realizing the "clutter" remains stagnant. Once writers see how the unusable details impede meaning, they quickly abandon inappropriate content.

The developmental writing rubric encourages through point value the importance of drafting. If all drafts are not turned in with the final essay, students do not receive a

high point value. The rubric easily covers the "why didn't I make an A?" question: No second draft? No A. Developmental writers require several drafts before handing in a final draft; however, developmental students resist drafting, thinking one or two drafts are enough. Grading one draft from a developmental student is not a positive experience for teacher or student, so encouraging drafting through assessment allows for a more positive outcome.

Revision/Editing

As planning and drafting often intermingle, so do revising and editing. Drafting, or "rewriting, incorporates both revising and editing" (Lindemann 29). "True revision involves reseeing, rethinking, and reshaping" text while editing includes subject-verb agreement problems and punctuation issues (29). Good revision instruction is paramount to producing good writers. Understanding the revision strategies employed by students helps plan instruction. Nancy Sommers writes of her study of twenty Boston University freshmen in her article "Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers." She finds the students employing seemingly simplistic strategies: *Scratch Out and Do Over Again, Reviewing, Redoing, Marking Out, Slashing and Throwing Out (*qtd. in Johnson 198). When students "scratch out," they do just that – scratch out or mark through words, phrases, or sentences exchanging them for "more decent" or "better" words (198). They may add the words or groups of words to other areas in the text. Students who "review" substitute words. "Redoing" simply "means cleaning up" or getting rid of words or groups of words that don't seem to fit (198). "Marking out" resembles "scratching out," and "slashing and throwing out" simulates "redoing." Though the wording is juvenile, "the students understand the revision process" (198).

Regardless of language, getting students to revise "willingly" is difficult (200). Because of past experiences, students have a passive view of writing; they wrote one draft, turned that in, and called it done. The idea of revising to make the first, second, or even third draft better is foreign to developmental students. Developmental writers seem to think they are bad writers, so they do not see writing as a way to communicate ideas. In the words of one student, "Do you really care about what I wrote that much?"

Revision instruction that helps students see writing as communication urges productivity. Stephen G. McLeod working with others at Jackson State University in Mississippi explains in his article "Improving Writing with a PAL: Harnessing the Power of Peer Assisted Learning with the Reader's Assessment Rubrics" how peer review sessions or peer assessment sessions help students and assessment-burdened teachers:

- Help "students develop important social skills as they learn to give and receive frank, tactful, and respectful feedback from others."
- Contribute "to students' professional preparations because peer assessment is a vital component or work in academe, business, and the professions."
- Foster "positive attitudes toward writing and builds the self-confidence of student writers."
- Promote "learning about the disciplines and learning about the writing process itself."
- Are "timely and efficient." Overloaded professors who have dozens of essays to evaluate are aided by students who have the

time to "provide rich, detailed" response (qtd. in McLeod et al. 489).

Of course, developmental writers require guidance and direction before they can effectively respond to peer texts. McLeod, an assistant professor of English at Jackson State University in Mississippi and director of the Richard Wright Center for the Written Word, along with other Jackson State professors provides detailed but easily followed peer assessment guides (Appendix G). These guides are applied to process essays (may be adapted to most essay types). The first guide (Appendix G) applies to the rough draft; the second works well when students who are in the final drafting stage.

After students have participated in a peer review session, they incorporate peer suggestions or concerns into their revision plans. The teacher-provided "Record of Writing Progress" (Appendix E) allows students to track peer and teacher comments, suggestions, and concerns helping them chart a clear revision path. The "Record" addresses global and local concerns defining each: global concerns – issues that affect the whole essay (thesis statement, organization, transitions, development, relevance) and local concerns – issues that affect only surrounding sentences (spelling, grammar, and mechanics). These separations help students break the essay up, and they seem to feel less overwhelmed by the enormity of an unfamiliar project.

Finally, students edit. Separating editing from revision is difficult with beginning writers, so repeating "We are not worried about commas and apostrophes during revision!" helps writers differentiate between the two. Providing an "Error Tracking Sheet" like the one provided by an interviewed teacher (Appendix B) works well as a final checklist (minus the global/major error section). Pairing revision with editing in the

rubric devalues error. A peer response sheet, a revision plan page and an error checklist must be turned in with the final essay to ensure full point allotment.

Applying the Rubric

Mike Rose explains in his article "Remedial Writing Courses: A Critique and a Proposal" "our remedial classes … should be very process-oriented" (115). After all planning, drafting, revising, and editing are finalized and completed papers lie on my desk, application of my "process-oriented" rubric begins. Students are required to hand in all pre-writing or planning exercises, all drafts including revision plans, and editing checklists. This seems like a lot of paperwork, but actually it's a quick check-off of components. Once I check off the required components of each category, I read the essays, assessing overall organization, draft improvement, and grammatical/mechanical errors. Points are determined for each block, and then they are totaled. Reading through the following student essay may aid understanding of rubric application. The first section displays a rough draft a student composed after free writing on the topic and compiling a list. The student's topic: "Fashion: What Was Old is New Again."

Skinny Jeans

Skinny jeans were really popular with some 1980's and 1990's rock bands such as Poison, Guns-N-Roses, Montley Crue Kiss, Bon Jovi and Slaughter. Skinny jeans have been very popular since the 1980's. Skinny jeans are also known as skin tights, cigarette pants, slim jims, pencil pants, peg leg pants and "spray ons" and many others. This recurring trend first came across America by the way of the Rock-N-Roll boom during the 1950's. Elvis Presley stunned the country by wearing tight jeans while showing off his famous "gyrating hips."

Obviously, this draft amounts to a poorly planned paragraph, but it does offer enough detail to be expanded into a longer piece. In a peer review session, students rated the title "applicable," commenting that it was uninteresting and should be improved in later drafts. One student suggested the title "Skinny Jeans: Once Old, Now New Again."

The thesis statement is difficult to locate, but students reviewing the text suggested using "Skinny jeans have been very popular since the 1980s." Certainly, there are no paragraph divisions, so students commented negatively suggesting the multiple names of skinny jeans mentioned could be explored and described in separate body paragraphs. There are no transition words used, so the flow needs improving. Students suggested a chronological order referring to the decades mentioned incorporating words like next, after, and during. Students also wished to see a clear introduction and conclusion.

The student's (I will call her Betty) second draft improved (see Appendix H for entire draft). The essay is divided into six paragraphs with clear introductory and concluding paragraphs. The introductory paragraph is more focused, but the three-point thesis statement is rather simple (common in developmental essays):

Skinny jeans have made a huge come back in the past two years. People of all ages and genders are wearing Skinny Jeans. Skinny Jeans are very popular with the younger generation of people. But, there are many from older generations that like to wear skinny jeans also. Skinny jeans can be a piece of art, fashion, or a personal statement.

If Betty sticks to her thesis statement, we expect her first body paragraph to explain how skinny jeans are "a piece of art;" instead, the first body paragraph is her original paragraph discussing 1980s bands and Elvis Presley she handed in as a rough draft.

Betty's second body paragraph does not discuss fashion, as her thesis statement suggests, but tells of her buying a pair of skinny jeans her senior year of high school and wearing them for her senior pictures. Her third body paragraph strays even further explaining how skinny jeans cause health problems. Her fourth body paragraph finally touches on how skinny jeans have been a popular fashion staple for many years. One sentence in this paragraph sparks a revision idea: "My parents grew up during the skinny jean trend and they have said that they wore them all the time when they were younger." This sentence interested me, so during a conference I asked her how she knew her parents wore skinny jeans. She replied, "My mom bought me my first pair, and while we were shopping she told me this funny story about meeting my dad for the first time. They were both wearing skinny jeans, so they knew they had something in common. The first thing my dad said to my mom was 'I like your jeans.'" Bingo! Now we had an interesting, unique essay detail. I suggested she use this story in her essay as a way to show how skinny jeans have spanned the fashion decades. She brightened with my suggestion, "I think I can do that!" In her final draft, Betty adopted her peer's title suggestion and introduced her topic with her parents' skinny jean meeting:

Skinny Jeans: Once Old Now New

I was born because my parents like skinny jeans. Seriously, when my father was twenty, he saw my mother standing across a crowded movie theatre lobby and thought she looked good in her skinny jeans. He walked over and said, "I like your jeans." The rest is history. My parents married, had me and my brother, and for the first day of school my senior year, my mom took me shopping for skinny jeans. Skinny jeans have been a fashion must for decades.

After incorporating a revision plan, an editing checklist, and three drafts, her essay was definitely improved – the flow was better, the unity was better, and her individual style showed. The global stumble that kept her from a B was her refusal to omit the "skinny jeans are bad for your health" section. Even though her peer pointed out, "That does not fit," and I agreed, she left it in allowing it to interrupt unity and organization. Her final grade tabulates: Planning – 17, Drafting – 35, Revising/Editing – 23, totaling 75 out of a possible 100.

Her C measures much worse by ENGL 1101 rubric standards. As interviewed teachers relate in e-mail interviews, developmental essay grades measure much lower when compared to higher course grades. A developmental rubric ranking difference reflects student effort, growing understanding of writing process, and budding writer confidence. By exiting developmental English, Betty gains the chance to pursue her degree. If held to other standards, she may give up her pursuit of a degree.

The next student highlighted is Arnold (not his real name). Arnold was asked to write an essay profiling a local restaurant. He was to conduct an interview with someone associated with the restaurant, plan the essay using interview details, draft working from the plan, and continue with revision and editing. Arnold chose the snack bar of his local country club. Arnold had a very difficult time sticking to the assignment. His rough draft (see appendix I) spoke about his experience growing up playing golf and eating lunch at the snack bar and followed the directives of the assignment, which required him to focus on the restaurant but was meandering and unfocused.

After reading his rough draft, I knew there were focus/organizational problems, so I asked him to show me his interview questions and answers. He had none.

After explaining that the assignment could not be completed without an interview, Arnold turned in a much improved final essay packet. His planning exercises included his interview questions, a cluster of ideas, and even some freewriting. He interviewed the snack bar cook whom he'd known since he was nine years old. From his interview questions, he created a cluster plan. At the center of his cluster are the words "snack bar." The offshoot words are "memories of childhood," "cook," "feels like home." His details for "memories of childhood" are "club champion who was mean to me" and "seeing my picture on the 'wall of fame.'"

In his final draft (See Appendix I), his interview answers were well-incorporated, and his cluster plan was evident in paragraph organization. His thesis statement, "The cozy, laid-back restaurant has a home-like feel," incorporates his planning ideas: the cook who is like a second mom, his young memories of the restaurant, and the overall cozy feeling of the place. During peer review, students asked him why he spent so much time as a child at a restaurant alone. He had not even considered the fact that he'd not explained that he and his friends lived on the golf course and could easily walk to the snack bar. He got a lesson in audience consideration! He revised his essay and added an explanation of his living situation and how area kids walking to the golf course snack bar was common.

When I began grading Arnold's essay, again I checked off the necessary components: he had evidence of planning, two drafts, participated in a peer review, had a revision plan, and an extensive error checklist. I feel his drafting shows excellent progress, so he makes a 95/A. I deduct five points because his planning was done out of order. If he'd done his interview first, his rough draft would have been more focused.

Sadly, not all developmental essays are passing essays. Often, students simply refuse to adhere to process, thinking they write well and that they "don't need to go through all that." I've included two examples:

We have had an undefeated soccer season and it's the last and final game. Preparing for a game like this is always stressful. To deal with all the stress building up, I like to take an early morning run at the top of the beach. This helps build up the endurance for the whole ninety minutes you are about to run. After, the run I come home and fix a break full of protein to regain off the energy I just burned off. I'll take another jog to the store for a Gatorade to restore all of the electrolytes I have lost. My ball comes along with me to keep my ball control up to par. I only have four hours left till game time. It's time to take a shower close my eyes and visualize the game. I put my Jersey on along with the rest of my equipment and head to the field. I arrive at the field two hours before anyone else does. I like to get as many shots as possible on the goal. Warming up and staying hydrated are important parts for a big game like this

Example 2:

How someone would prepare themselves to pay bills?

There is one way I know how to prepare myself to pay bills. What I do first is go online to www.walmartbenefits.com to see how much is my check ,then I check to see how much I have on my debit card. Like for instance, what I have to pay when I receive my check on August 27, 2012 would be my two loans, CBA, SSI, and my car tag. What I do to figure out how I would pay my bills is I would separate debit from cash. I know that my two loans would I have to be pay in cash and CBA, and SSI would have to be by a debit card. After figure this all out I add the debit and the cash up and then from my

check I subtract from the debit that help me figure out how much money have to take out to pay my bills in cash. Finally, I figure out how much I would have left on my debit card by seeing how much I have to take out from subtract check amount to the amount from the debit side that was add, from the cash that was add up I would subtract it from the amount that was take out from the cash side and that would give me my remaining balance on my debit card.

When we receive papers like these which are supposedly full essays, even an instructional assessment method is no help. There are no paragraph delineations, and the essay needs serious revision/editing. These are Fs because the writers refuse to participate in planning, drafting, revising, and editing activities even when the assignment/ assessment plan is clear. When questioned about the failing grades, any teacher using the developmental writing rubric enjoys a written explanation already provided to the student.

Considering an instructional method of assessment builds writing strength and prepares the underprepared student. Because Developmental English completion rates are low (Chapter 1), implementation of instructional assessment methods is crucial for academic success. Moving away from red pen error marking, making certain students understand writing process, and guiding them through several essays through feedback and assessment produces more confident, invested writers who are more capable of producing academic writing. In the words of a student, "I'm a good writer. I just need a little help."

Mina Shaughnessy's instruction remains a usable model for implementing instructive assessment. Developing my assessment method, I adhered to her accommodating,

nurturing theory for beginning writers. Adhering to Brian Huot's advice, I aimed for a method that would reflect my classroom instruction. Also, as Spandel and Stiggins advise, I wished my method to be analytical – emphasizing individual writing process traits. Finally, I thought of Richard Fulkerson's approaches to composition; his rhetorical writing category applies to instructional assessment. As writing teachers, we wish to affect the student through all methods of instruction much like a writer affects a reader. An accommodating, analytic, instructional, and rhetorical approach guides my assessment of Georgia developmental writers.

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Appendix A

Moultrie Technical College Learning Support English Syllabus Course Description

Course Description and Standards

Quoted from TCSG (click for PDF link)

Prerequisites

ENGL 0096 - English II (201003)

Course Description

Emphasizes the rules of grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and writing in order to ensure a smooth transition into communicating orally and in writing. Topics include basic grammar, basic mechanics, spelling, and writing skills

Competencies

Description	**Minutes**
Basic Mechanics	675
Spelling	90
Basic Grammar	900
Writing Skills	585
Total Minutes	2250
Total Credit Hours	3

Appendix B

Error Tracking Sheet

Error Tracking Sheet	Writing Sample Date of paper	Date of paper	Date of paper
Fragments (frag)			
Run-ons (R-O)			
Comma Splices (CS)			
Other Comma Errors (C)			
Apostrophe (Apos)			
Other Punctuation (Punc) Semicolon, colon, quotation marks			
Spelling (Sp)			
Verb Forms or Tense (V)			
Agreement (Agr)			
Pronoun Usage (Pron) or (Pron Ref)			
Wrong Word (WW)			
Word Choice (WC)			
Word Out ^			
Word Endings (WE)			
Capital (cap) Letters No caps(/)			
Sentence Sense (?)			
Point of View (POV) Using the pronoun, "you," as subject or inconsistent POV			
Others			
Serious Problems with content			
No Thesis			
Lack of Supporting Ideas or Lack of Specific Examples			
No Conclusion			
Not the target length of 600-1000 words			

Appendix C

Instructor Rubric

Knowledge of Subject		**30 points possible**	**points earned**
	1. Appropriateness	10 points	
	2. Accuracy	10 points	
	3. Perspective	10 points	
Organization		**20 points possible**	
	1. Structure	10 points	
	2. Coherence	10 points	
Awareness of the Reader		**10 points possible**	
	1. Development	3 points	
	2. Emphasis	3 points	
	3. Diction	4 points	
Mechanics		**30 points possible**	
	1. Grammar and Usage	15 points	
	2. Punctuation	15 points	
Format		**10 points possible**	
		10 points	
		Total	0

Appendix D

Criteria for Grading

ENGL 97 & 98 CRITERIA FOR GRADING WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

6 (100%)

Excellent thesis statement
Outstanding inclusion of specific details and examples
Outstanding vocabulary and sentence structure
Outstanding unity, organization, and coherence
No major errors or only 2 minor errors

5 (90%)

Controlling central idea or thesis statement
Good inclusion of specific details and examples
Good vocabulary and sentence structure
Good unity, organization, and coherence
No more than 1 major error or 2-3 minor errors

4 (80%)

Clear central idea or thesis statement
Adequate inclusion of specific details and examples
Adequate vocabulary and organization
Fair unity, organization, and coherence
Simple sentence structure
No more than 2 major errors and/or several minor errors

3 (70%)

Weak thesis statement
Inadequate development – too short and/or lacks specific details and examples
Poor vocabulary or misuse of words
Some attempt at organization
No more than 3 major errors and/or several minor errors

2 (60%)

Lack of central idea or unclear thesis
Poor vocabulary and/or non-standard expressions
Inadequate development of topic
Lack of logic and organization
More than 3 major errors and/or multiple minor errors

1 (50%)

Lack of thesis statement
Disconnected, garbled sentences, and/or long, uncontrolled sentences
Overuse of short, choppy sentences
No development of ideas
Numerous major and minor errors

MAJOR ERRORS

Comma Splice	Overuse of Idioms	Three Misspelled Words
Sentence Fragment	Lack of Subject-Verb Agreement	Misuse of **to** or **too**
Fused Sentence	Lack of Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement	Misuse or **their**, **they're**, or **ther**
Principle Verb Form Errors	Use of 2nd Person (you, your, yours, etc.)	Misuse of **its** or **it's**

THREE OF ANY THE FOLLOWING = 1 MAJOR ERROR

Misuse of ;	Misuse of ' in possessive nouns	Misuse of capitalization
Misuse of ' for plural	Misuse of ' in possessive pronouns	

Appendix E

Record of Writing Progress

Record of Writing Progress **Name: _____**

ENGLISH 098

Evening Students Only: On weeks when you write two essays, turn in one of the two to Mr. Gordon by Wednesday of that week.

Date	**Topic**	**Writing Coach**	**Global Comments** (issues that affect whole essay, e.g. thesis statement, organization, transitions, development, relevance)	**Local Comments** (issues that affect only surrounding sentences, e.g. spelling, grammar, mechanics)
Week 2				
Week 2				
Week 3				
Week 4				

Appendix F

Rubric Used by Writing Tutors

RUBRIC FOR ENGLISH 97 & 98 WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

STUDENT'S NAME: _____ **ASSIGNMENT:** _____

☐ **Tutoring recommended**

For each of the competency standards below, areas <u>NEEDING IMPROVEMENT</u> are marked with an X.

<u>CONTENT, AUDIENCE, & TONE</u>

☐ The writing contains a central idea, which is maintained throughout the document.

☐ Ideas are fully developed with relevant and specific examples and details.

☐ The writing demonstrates an awareness of the audience and has an appropriate point of view and tone.

<u>ORGANIZATION, UNITY, & COHERENCE</u>

☐ Paragraphs and/or supporting sentences are connected to the central idea, and their organizational pattern suits t**he** assignment.

☐ Transitional expressions are used effectively for flow, coherence, and cohesiveness.

<u>MECHANICS & STYLE</u>

☐ Word choice is professional and appropriate for the audience and assignment.

☐ Sentence fluency is achieved through a variety of sentence types and lengths, concise wording, and flow

<u>GRAMMAR</u>

☐ Content is not affected by major grammatical errors, such as fragments, comma splices, fused sentences, and agreement mistakes.

☐ Content is not affected by minor errors such as punctuation and capitalization; or spelling or usage errors

Writing Assignment Grade: _____

GRADE	HOW TO IMPROVE
A **(90-100)**	Your writing has fulfilled all of the standards listed above, as well as those required below for a grade of "B." It may have a few minor mistakes but nothing major. In addition, your writing stands out because of one or more of the following characteristics: originality, seamless coherence, sophistication in thought, thoroughness, and/or depth.
B **(80-89)**	Your writing has fulfilled most of the standards above and exhibits above-average writing skill through one or more of the following characteristics: interesting vocabulary, sentence variety, specificity, mature tone, consistent voice, and/or consideration of the audience's needs. However, there are a few issues that need your attention. Work on these areas to improve your writing: ☐ Content ☐ Organization ☐ Unity/Coherence ☐ Grammar/Mechanics ☐ Style ☐ Editing/Proofreading.
C **(70-79)**	Your writing has fulfilled most of the standards above, but has major problems in a few areas or minor problems in all areas, and there are some issues that need your immediate attention. Work on these areas to improve your writing: ☐ Content ☐ Organization ☐ Unity/Coherence ☐ Grammar/Mechanics ☐ Style ☐ Editing/Proofreading.
D - F **(< 70)**	Your writing may have fulfilled a few of the standards above but has major issues that need your immediate attention. Work on these areas to improve your writing: ☐ Content ☐ Organization ☐ Unity/Coherence ☐ Grammar/Mechanics ☐ Style☐ Editing/Proofreading.

COMMENT

Appendix G

Betty's Essay

Skinny Jeans: Once Old Now New

Skinny jeans have made a huge come back in the past two years. People of all ages and genders are wearing Skinny Jeans. Skinny Jeans are very popular with the younger generation of people. But, there are many from older generations that like to wear skinny jeans also. Skinny Jeans can be a piece of art, fashion, or a personal statement.

During the 1980s, Skinny Jeans went by several names such as skin tights, cigarette pants, slim jims, pencil pants, peg leg pants, and spray-ons. This recurring trend first came across America by the way of the Rock-N-Roll boom during the 1950s. Elvis Presley stunned the whole country by wearing tight jeans while showing off his famous gyrating hips. Famous banks like Poison, Guns-N-Roses, Motley Crue, KISS, Bon Jovi, and Slaughter they all were infamous for wearing Skinny Jeans. Not only did they wear Skinny Jeans, but any pair of pants they wore, whether they were made of leather or cotton, the legs of the pants were skinny also. Many of these bands during this time made fashion statements when they wore these pants.

Skinny Jeans come in a wide variety of colors and sizes and they are made to fit everyone. Several young teens and younger kids like to wear them to school. The younger generations of children are bringing back a trend that has been very popular for several years now. I got my first pair of Skinny Jeans when I was in high school. The Skinny Jeans were a new piece of clothing that I hadn't worn yet. I was a little nervous wearing them to school for the first time because I didn't know what everyone would say or think. I also took my Senior Pictures in my very own pair of Skinny Jeans that fit very

well. But, last year I had to give them away because they had gotten too big for me. I loved wearing them I wish I had another pair of them.

Skinny Jeans can also cause a lot of health problems for men and women such as tingling sensations in your legs, severe nerve damage, constricted blood flow that can cause leg pain, bladder and yeast infections, heat stress, and possible fertility problems later on in both men and women. They might also cause severe back pain and fainting while wearing them for a long period of time. People with acid reflux and heartburn should not wear them because of serious stomach issues from wearing these Skinny Jeans. They also slow down the digestive process in several ways that are very harmful. Don't get me wrong they are very fashionable and stylish but, they should only be worn every now and then.

I have always heard that Skinny Jeans have been around for several decades. My parents grew up during the Skinny Jean trend and they said that they wore them all the time when they were younger. I don't think that there has ever been a more popular trend in my whole life. Several people are making their own personal fashion statements by wearing these jeans to work, school, or on dates or to many other places. Have you ever heard of the express that history always repeats itself? Well, in this instance it has been for the past few years. Everywhere you turn there are several girls and guys who are wearing them every day. No matter where you look there will always be a growing trend in skinny jeans.

Skinny Jeans have always been a growing trend in the world today and they will always be as long as people continue to wear them. I think that wearing Skinny Jeans can be incorporated in today's society for many years to come. I also think that if the Skinny

Jeans had not been here during the time it was than the world would probably be very different today. Also, Skinny Jeans have several different names, colors, and styles of Skinny Jeans. Skinny Jeans can always be an art form, fashion trend, or a personal statement in our society today. Skinny jeans can always be an art form, fashion trend, or a personal statement in our society today. Skinny Jeans will always be here for us to wear and they will make fashion statements in the future.

Appendix H

Arnold's Essay

My Snack Bar Home

Two miles outside of Tifton, Georgia on Highway 82 West is Springhill Country Club. In the back of the building overlooking the putting green is the golf course snack bar. I've often wondered why it's not called something different like "Hamburger Heaven" because the hamburgers that come off the grill are like heaven. The twenty feet by twenty feet restaurant with its six stools facing the grill and seven four-top tables is a favorite for golfers and non-golfers; anyone can eat there. The cozy, laid-back restaurant has a home-like feel.

After a brutal day on the golf course watching my ball hit three trees, land in the sand, take a swim, and finally disappear, I dejectedly walk with my buddies to the snack bar to get a cold Gatorade. "Well, you crazy boys, was it that bad?" Hearing XXXX "Ree-Ree" XXXXX playful southern drawl brings a smile to my face and the bad golf round is forgotten. XXXXX is the forty-year- old cook who's been cooking my favorite patty melt since I was nine years old. She's served hungry, sad golfers for twenty years. She left and cooked at a rival club a few years back, but she missed us so much she returned after only three months. XXXXX is the sweetest/meanest woman I know. I say that because she's syrupy sweet one minute cooking us guys our lunch, and then the next minute she's yelling at us to clean our golf shoes before we grass up her floor. I slide onto my favorite bar stool (third from the door) next to my friend XXXX (always second from the door) and watch XXXXX work her grill magic. "Y'all got girlfriends yet?" she asks. "No, XXXX, you know you're the only girl we need!" is always our reply. She laughs, flipping my burger, and XXXX inhales his favorite chopped, grilled chicken, a "Ree-Ree" specialty.

While waiting for our food, I sneak behind the counter and snatch a deck of cards before XXXX can swat me with her spatula. She does not like anyone in "her area," but I don't like to interrupt her cooking for her to get me the cards. We must play "Tonk," a dumbed-down version of spades, while we wait for our food. Others golfers come in and order fried chicken, grilled shrimp, or BLTs, and Marie calls into the big kitchen for extra help. Robert and I play cards and gaze out the window wondering when our friend Thomas will finish his round and join us. The view from the snack bar window is of the number one fairway tree line, a serene scene that adds to the laid-back atmosphere. The only time the snack bar is not its usual friendly, easy atmosphere is when a pissed off golfer comes in and slams open the cooler making the aluminum door handle clang against the wall. XXXX hollers, and the sad guy apologizes.

Now that I'm almost eighteen and will be leaving to go off to college next year, I remember all the good and even not so good times I've had with my friends at the snack bar. When our middle school golf team won the region tournament, our newspaper picture was proudly displayed on the snack bar bulletin board – the "wall of fame." That wall is saved for local golf stars turned pro, such as Nanci Bowen, 1995 LPGA Champion, and club champions. The club champion this year is xxxx xxxx. His picture hangs prominently in the center of the wall of fame. XXXX and I have a love/hate relationship. XXXX loves XXXX, and I don't love XXX. I remember when we were ten XXXX pushed me against the snack bar door which opened spilling me onto the concrete porch outside. Who knows why he pushed me? That's XXXX, but when I eat at the snack bar now and watch all of the other "little kids" growing up under (snack bar lady's) tutelage, I wonder if there are any XXXXs. Are there any shy XXXXXes, fun-loving

XXXXs, and steady XXXXXs? I don't know; I do know that one of those kids has taken my stool!

I am convinced the snack bar at Springhill will always be one of my favorite places to eat and hang out. It has everything anyone needs: great food, some great people, and a great atmosphere. Whether I'm eating burgers, playing cards, or talking about a bad golf day, it feels good – like a second home.