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Trust Two People Under 30 Just This Once: Effective Techniques for Assessing Composition Students while Holding Them (and Ourselves) Accountable

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Abstract: With scathing commentaries like Mark Bauerlein's *The Dumbest Generation: How the Digital Age Stupefies Young Americans and Jeopardizes Our Future, or Don't Trust Anyone Under 30* presenting a troubling portrait of current college students, it is not surprising that so many professors lament the apathy, overblown and unwarranted confidence, and remedial skill levels of today's cohorts. Although it is undeniable that growing numbers of students, largely members of the Millennial generation, seem to feel profoundly special and worthy, it remains the responsibility of modern professors to engage and motivate these students using strategies like formative assessment and differentiated instruction, updated curriculum and delivery methods, and campus-wide accountability measures such as Student Learning Outcome (SLO) assessments.

Throughout the past five years, we have developed the named strategies in our composition courses; the results have been astonishing. We have watched self-proclaimed haters of English engage with their studies, develop ownership of their educational paths, evidence pride in their academic successes, and adopt personal responsibility. To elicit such dramatic revolutions, we utilize formative assessment techniques and specifically tailored feedback methods in our transfer and pre-transfer courses. These strategies, as Larry Ainsworth and Donald Viegut suggest in *Common Formative Assessments: How to Connect to Standards-Based Instruction and Assessment*, allow us to accomplish the following goals:

> (1) determine what standards students already know and to what degree; (2) decide what minor modifications or major changes in instruction [we] need to make so that *all* students can succeed […]; (3) create appropriate lessons and activities […]; and (4) inform students about their current progress in order to help them set goals for improvement. (23)

When students understand that their professors are genuinely reading their work, evaluating their progress, and differentiating instruction so that it is specific to both the needs of individual students and particular course sections, they instantly become more invested in their own and their fellow classmates' growth. Since Millennials are known for their "strong team instincts and tight peer bonds," as well as favoring "the teaching of values in schools – including honesty [and] caring," solidifying a seamless cohort and a genuine connection to a professor concerned with forthright feedback and student achievement are benefits from formative assessment that are especially appropriate for targeting modern students (Howe and Strauss 44, 188).

The formative assessment techniques we share in this paper emanate from years of experimentation at both community colleges and universities in Southern California and the United Arab Emirates. We are not only outfitted to discuss the impact of these strategies on improving student success; as faculty who are integrally involved in the generation, assessment, and campus-wide progressions involving SLOs, we are also both particularly well-equipped to

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note the significance of our teaching and assessment strategies in personal, department-wide, and campus-wide accountability efforts. By discussing specific processes and assignments relating to formative assessment, peer and instructor feedback, and modern curriculum and delivery methods, this presentation provides numerous practical strategies to improve student success, instructor confidence and aptitude, and campus-wide accountability and collegiality.

Keywords: Millennials, Composition, Formative Assessment, and Accountability

With scathing commentaries like Mark Bauerlein's *The Dumbest Generation: How the Digital Age Stupefies Young Americans and Jeopardizes Our Future, or Don't Trust Anyone Under 30* presenting a troubling portrait of current college students, it is not surprising that so many professors lament the apathy, overblown and unwarranted confidence, and remedial skill levels of today's cohorts. According to Elizabeth G. Hill in "Back to Basics: Improving College Readiness of Community College Students," "A large percentage of students do not overcome their basic skills deficiencies during their time at [the California Community Colleges]" (2008, p. 1). This unfortunate circumstance not only impacts students who are failing to achieve at the college level, but it also affects their instructors who struggle to find ways to effectively teach, engage, and motivate their charges. The lack of overall student success can be seen in Virginia S. Lee's review of Kathleen F. Gabriel's *Teaching Unprepared Students: Strategies for Promoting Success and Retention in Higher Education*. Here, Gabriel mentions this shocking statistic: "70 percent of students who took at least one remedial course in college do not obtain a degree or certificate within eight years of enrollment" (2009, p. 171). This apparent widespread failure on the part of both individual students and the higher education system as a whole ultimately falls on the shoulders of instructors, who struggle to balance academic standards and their own personal connection with students' varying goals and levels of motivation. Although it is undeniable that growing numbers of students, largely members of the Millennial generation, seem to feel profoundly special and worthy, it remains the responsibility of modern professors to engage and motivate these students using strategies like formative assessment and differentiated instruction, updated curriculum and delivery methods, and campus-wide accountability measures such as Student Learning Outcome (SLO) assessments.

The formative assessment techniques we share in this paper emanate from years of experimentation at both community colleges and universities in Southern California and the United Arab Emirates. We are not only outfitted to discuss the impact of these strategies on improving student success; as faculty who are integrally involved in the generation, assessment, and campus-wide progressions involving SLOs, we are also both particularly well-equipped to note the significance of our teaching and assessment strategies in personal, department-wide, and campus-wide accountability efforts. By discussing specific processes and assignments relating to formative assessment, this presentation provides numerous practical strategies to improve student success, instructor confidence and aptitude, and campus-wide accountability and collegiality.

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Brian P. Hall, in "Trying to Engage Students Can Break Your Heart," paints a troubling portrait of today's college students. He begins, "Many students enter my developmental English classes knowing that they are deficient in the basic skills of reading, writing, and critical thinking" (2009). While Hall's observations are relevant to the experiences of some students, they are also limiting in the sense that many students enter basic skills courses genuinely surprised by their placement and their overall lack of skills. This sense of surprise can be largely attributed to what Neil Howe and William Strauss explain as the Millennial sense of being "special." In *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation*, Howe and Strauss note that "older generations have inculcated in Millennials that they are, collectively, vital to the nation and to their parents' sense of purpose" (2000, p. 43). This feeling of "specialness" may explain Hall's continued discussion of his classroom experiences: "when these students come into my class, they expect to be able to arrive a half-hour late; to not have to worry about an attendance policy; to be able to talk, eat, text, and sometimes threaten one another without my holding them accountable." Most modern college students learn upon their entry that they are not only academically deficient, but they are also lacking an understanding of how to succeed in college in terms of even basic behavioral expectations. Because of students' dearth of level-appropriate academic and social skills, instructors become responsible for instilling this information through introducing accountability techniques in the classroom. Of course, when students recognize that their professors are not invested in them, or that there are not any immediate or long-term consequences for their individual actions, students tend to take their educational paths less seriously and are less invested in how much or little they learn. As educators, it is our job to ensure that our students are constantly and consistently held accountable. But how do we hold our students accountable, taking into consideration the various facets of the Millennials and the challenges that come with teaching this targeted group of individuals?

In our classes, one of the most effective methods we utilize to help students learn about accountability measures is formative assessment. Larry Ainsworth and Donald Viegut, in *Common Formative Assessments: How to Connect to Standards-Based Instruction and Assessment*, employ a 2003 National Education Association (NEA) study to explain why students benefit from formative assessments *for* learning:

> In the context of classroom assessment, however, one key purpose can be to use assessment results to *inform students about themselves*. That is, classroom assessments can inform students about the continuous improvements in their achievement and permit them to feel in control of that growth. Thus, classroom assessments become assessments *for* learning. Teachers involve their students in the classroom assessment process for the expressed purpose of increasing their achievement. (2006, p. 26)

Because many students enter college classes facing a discrepancy between what they believe to be their skill levels and the reality of their often lower placement, using formative assessment techniques in the classroom enables students to understand their placement level and chart their own progress, and these techniques afford instructors the opportunity to open lines of communication with individual students. The traditional mode, assessment of learning (summative assessment), involves utilizing the results of assessment to categorize learners and schools (i.e. an introductory placement test or standardized testing). On the other hand, the

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currently touted technique of assessment for learning (formative assessment) provides instructors and students with the opportunity to use information from the assessment to help learners improve their skills. Through assessment for learning, students gain a sense of ownership, develop a clear understanding of relevant expectations, and track their own achievement. The composition classroom can present an ideal backdrop for formative assessment.

From the first class period, students are introduced to the concept of self-evaluation through Student Information Forms (see attachment 1). On these forms, students provide basic information ranging from their names and contact information to more in-depth details about their future goals, intended majors, and histories with courses in the discipline. The answers to these questions allow instructors to engage individual students by reflecting on their personal strengths, weaknesses, and past experiences. Additionally, these forms enable instructors to initiate for students "what Piaget calls the process of 'de-centering'" (Lunsford, 2003, p. 301). In "Cognitive Development and the Basic Writer," Andrea Lunsford expands on "de-centering" by recounting Lee Odell's definition. In the following passage, Odell defines "de-centering" and Lunsford evaluates:

> "Getting outside one's own frame of reference, understanding the thoughts, values, feelings of another person; …projecting oneself into unfamiliar circumstances, whether factual or hypothetical; …learning to understand why one reacts as he does to experience." Although children first begin to "de-center" as early as the preoperational stage, egocentricity is still strong in the concrete stage, and, indeed, we apparently continue the process of "de-centering" throughout our lives. (2003, p. 301)

Here, with the help of Lee Odell, Lunsford illustrates the process that students struggle to accomplish in early college courses. Upon entry, many students are socially immature and focus their attention on doing well based on their interest in a given course. Through the student evaluation forms, instructors can obviously appeal to the centered, self-serving interests of entering students. However, the unexpected result of these forms is that they enable instructors to help students de-center by opening a line of communication with the instructor. This connection between the student and instructor is built on a developing sense of trust. Through this relationship, students learn to look outside of their individual interests, seek assistance, and achieve improvements. The constant employment of formative assessment tasks allows instructors the opportunity to continue these kinds of positive trends throughout the semester.

In the composition classroom, one of the prime opportunities for integrating formative assessment exists in holistic scoring activities. Students better understand the comments they receive on their formal writing assignments when they have the opportunity to provide similar feedback to their peers. According to Sadler, "for students to be able to *compare* actual performance with a standard […] and take action to close the gap […], then they must already possess some of the same evaluative skills as their teacher" (Macfarlane-Dick and Nicol, 2006, p. 204). In our basic skills and transfer-level courses, we commonly provide sample student essays from past semesters. Students read the selected essays aloud in small groups of four to five and make comments on specific components such as the thesis statement, paragraph structure, and source integration. Once they have completed reading the paper and making individual comments, the group is provided with one copy of the same rubric that will be used to assess their out-of-class essays on this subject. The students in each group must not only come

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to consensus on each graded section, but they must also justify the scores that they assign. Ultimately, the class discusses together the individual and overall scores awarded. After the class grades the paper as a large group, the instructor compares and contrasts the class's grade with the actual grade the paper received and provides specific insight into how that grade was achieved. Often, there is a disparity between the grades that the students and the instructor assign; interestingly, students regularly drop the overall grade by at least one full letter! The juxtaposition between students' and instructors' impressions of sample essays evidences the importance of students possessing evaluative skills that are similar to their instructors' techniques, such as Sadler mentions. When students evaluate the work of their peers, particularly when those peers are not in the same class, they are able to de-center, to learn from the strengths and weaknesses of their peers, and to apply what they gather to their own work. Because the students are not formally graded on their assessments of the sample student work, and because this process occurs in advance of the submissions of both the rough and final drafts, this activity is a low-stakes formative assessment that helps them become self-regulated learners. Zimmerman and Shunk explain that "the more learning becomes self-regulated, the more students assume control over their learning, and the less dependent they are on external teacher support when they engage in regulatory activities" (Macfarlane-Dick and Nicol, 2006, p. 205). This phenomenon can be easily seen as students repeat the sample student essay activity throughout the course. During the first experience, some students are unable to sufficiently justify the scores they give or create major discrepancies throughout the class-wide scoring system. Also, the instructor often has to provide more in-depth rationale regarding the overall grade. However, by the second or third exercise, students grade much more efficiently, are able to explain the scores they give, and find themselves in line with the instructor's grading standards. By listening attentively to students' comments throughout this activity and helping them identify how to use what they learn in this process to improve their own papers, instructors can use this technique as an effective formative assessment.

One of the most frequently touted formative assessment techniques involves the integration of clear rubrics. Because we use rubrics to grade each of the formal essays in our composition classes, we also introduce the rubric for each unit to students during the sample essay exercises. By showing students these rubrics early in each unit, we can ensure that they clearly understand the requirements for the assignment; this results in higher paper grades and improved student achievement overall. In fact, we often allow students to help shape the rubrics during the sample essay activities. Although the instructor sets the overall format for the rubric, the students' feedback often results in minor changes to the initial rubric. For example, if students already have been taught a specific grammatical skill and are still showing signs of struggling with that skill as a group, the instructor might include a separate section on the rubric covering this particular skill. When instructors pay attention to the specific needs of each individual cohort, they are able to create a sense of buy in from the students. Ainsworth and Viegut highlight this process here:

> Because the students helped refine the rubric, they understood the criteria more thoroughly than they did before. They were noticeably more motivated than usual, and they were better prepared to actually produce the corresponding quality work because they understood what was expected. Last, they anticipated

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> receiving the type of specific feedback on their performance that would show them *how* to improve in the future. (2006, p. 83)

Since students actively help shape the rubric, they better understand what is expected of them on each assignment. Subsequently, the quality of student work improves. While students have a hand in modifying the rubrics, the instructor provides the general format for the rubrics, which commonly include identical sections; for example, we use content and development, grammar and mechanics, and research and formatting (see attachment 2). Since each unit for the course encourages students to bolster a new set of research and/or writing-related techniques, the structural similarities in the rubrics help students and their instructors easily chart areas of both progress and strife. The synchronicity and consistency of the content and format of the rubrics should also "reflect the concepts and skills that the teacher emphasized in class, along with the teacher's clear criteria for judging students' performance" (Guskey, 2003). Uniformly organized and clearly articulated rubrics enable students to connect expressed instructor expectations to their individual performances. As Susan M. Brookhart explains in *How to Give Effective Feedback to Your Students*, "Clarity is important; students need to understand the feedback information as you intend it" (2008, p. 32). Because they are clearly worded and organized, these rubrics prompt self-reflection and academic advancement on the part of the students. Students use these rubrics to not only identify uniform standards with their peers and instructors during the sample student essay activities, but they also can easily evaluate their own progress, thus becoming more self-regulated in their learning processes, as they chart the development or stagnation of their skills on subsequent assignments.

Once students have had the opportunity to review sample essays and the associated rubrics, and then ultimately submit their final drafts, students participate in one final formative assessment: self-evaluation questionnaires. The self-evaluation questionnaire is generally comprised of the following questions: (1) How would you describe your writing and thinking process for this essay? (2) What kinds of activities and assignments helped you formulate and develop your main idea? How did they help you? (3) How satisfied are you with the final essay? (4) What are your essay's main strengths and weaknesses? Be specific. (5) What would you continue to work on if you had more time? (6) Summarize my comments on your last essay. How did you use those comments to improve your writing on this essay? When answering these questions, students elaborate on their strengths and struggles throughout the writing process, how they integrated previous instructor and peer comments while drafting, and which classroom activities supported their learning most effectively. For instructors, these questionnaires are extremely beneficial to read in tandem with grading the students' formal essays. The instructor can provide feedback on the essay draft, on the rubric, and on the questionnaire. Regularly, instructors can learn which assignments were most helpful to students, whether or not the student is being realistic about his or her progress, and how or if the student is using previous instructor feedback to improve. Ainsworth and Viegut suggest that "Common formative assessments give teachers the *timely data* needed to provide students with the 'educational booster shots' of differentiated instruction" (2006, p. 5). When they review these questionnaires, instructors are able to differentiate instruction based on their knowledge of individual students' perceptions of their current strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, instructors can integrate more activities similar to those that students mention as being helpful for past assignments, and they can troubleshoot and even set up individual or small-group conferences with students who are struggling with particular skills.

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The self-evaluation questionnaires, combined with additional formative assessments, help students become more invested in the course and in their overall success in college.

One of the most well-known trends in evaluating individual students' overall success in college is through student learning outcomes (SLOs). Formative assessment techniques can actually be extremely beneficial when measuring SLOs. At this stage, most faculty are familiar with student learning outcomes but often see them as a burden rather than a helpful tool that they can actually use to benefit students. Stan Katz (2009) mentions a solution here, in his article "Assessment in Higher Ed": "My own preference would be to establish a process of formative evaluation in which the measures helped us systematically to improve teaching and learning, to produce better outcomes. But of course if the measures are mainly aimed at accreditors, or employers, or alumni, I think that the whole process is less educationally useful." Developing such a process, where formative assessment is used particularly by academic departments to assess SLOs, is a feasible goal. One strategy that we have used successfully involves creating a standard rubric for the research paper assignment in freshman composition. The process begins formatively when students receive and review a sample essay with the same rubric that will be used to evaluate their formal research papers. Because they have the opportunity to develop similar evaluative skills to those of the instructors, and because they understand the assignment more effectively based on their use of the rubric, this preparatory activity fosters students' improvement on their final assignments. Ultimately, after completing this exercise, greater numbers of students receive higher SLO scores. This trend benefits not only individual learners but also the instructors who take the time to cover these formative tasks and as a result receive higher class averages with formal SLO assessments. Ainsworth and Viegut identify several benefits of using common formative assessments in ways that connect to the SLO process. The authors suggest this:

> Grade-level and course/department teams use the results of common formative pre- and post-assessments: (1) to diagnose student learning difficulties; (2) to set individual teacher goals as well as team goals for student improvement; (3) to identify and share effective teaching strategies to accomplish these goals; and (4) to plan ways to differentiate instruction so that *all* students can succeed on subsequent formative assessments and on final summative assessments. (2006, p. 24)

When academic departments develop common formative assessments early in the semester, individual instructors can begin introducing those exercises to students in non-threatening, low-stakes circumstances. Students' repeated exposure to similar assessments allows them to better understand the methods through which they are evaluated and to become more comfortable with the testing environment overall. Furthermore, instructors can utilize the results of early formative assessments to determine not only the areas in which their students are successful but also those in which the students need further instruction. Instructors also can identify both individual goals for improvement in their courses as well as department-wide goals for increased success overall. Because the formative assessments begin early in the semester, instructors have the opportunity to share effective teaching strategies for particular skills amongst themselves before final summative assessments take place and scores are recorded. Stan Katz elucidates this common circumstance relating to SLOs: "Most of these institutions report that they had already 'articulated a common set of learning outcomes for their students,' but that they used their

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assessment data mostly 'to fulfill accreditation requirements.'" This widespread but dire depiction of SLOs can be easily altered with the integration of formative assessment. When instructors communicate with each other and work together to create effective formative assessments and teaching strategies, they alter the perception of SLOs across their campuses; instead of fulfilling a useless accreditation mandate, instructors can empower their students, their colleagues, and themselves through consistent, well-planned formative assessment.

As today's youth embrace high-tech wonders and continue to amuse themselves through networking tools available on the World Wide Web such as Facebook and Twitter, one stops to ponder this: must we, as educators, appeal to the Millennial students' minds by embracing various technological gizmos and by trying to amuse our students in the classroom? According to Siva Vaidhyanathan, an associate professor of media studies at the University of Virginia, the answer is simply *No*. "There's this expectation that your No. 1 job is to pander to this exotic alien consumer. At that point, you cease being a teacher and you are simply selling yourself to an audience that might not be interested in buying" (Hoover, 2009). What we have learned through our teaching experiences is that rather than trying to "sell" ourselves, we can bridge the gap between what students have to learn versus what they want to learn by using formative assessment and differentiated instruction techniques. Throughout the past five years, we have developed a variety of formative assessment strategies in our composition courses; the results have been astonishing. We have watched self-proclaimed haters of English engage with their studies, develop ownership of their educational paths, evidence pride in their academic successes, and adopt personal responsibility. To elicit such dramatic revolutions, we utilize formative assessment techniques and specifically tailored feedback methods in our transfer and pre-transfer courses. These strategies, as Larry Ainsworth and Donald Viegut suggest, allow us to accomplish the following goals:

> (1) determine what standards students already know and to what degree; (2) decide what minor modifications or major changes in instruction [we] need to make so that all students can succeed [...]; (3) create appropriate lessons and activities [...]; and (4) inform students about their current progress in order to help them set goals for improvement. (2006, p. 23)

When students understand that their professors are genuinely reading their work, evaluating their progress, and differentiating instruction so that it is specific to both the needs of individual students and particular course sections, they instantly become more invested in their own and their fellow classmates' growth. Since Millennials are known for their "strong team instincts and tight peer bonds," as well as favoring "the teaching of values in schools - including honesty [and] caring," solidifying a seamless cohort and a genuine connection to a professor concerned with forthright feedback and student achievement are benefits from formative assessment that are especially appropriate for targeting modern students (Howe & Strauss, 2000, pp. 44, 188). By taking the time to create and implement a variety of formative assessment techniques in the classroom, instructors not only improve overall student success, but they also enhance their teaching skills, their relationships with colleagues, and their campuses' overall reputations.

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STUDENT INFORMATION FORM

Please complete this sheet and return it to me.

NAME: _____
First Middle Last

NICKNAME/NAME YOU PREFER TO BE CALLED: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION:

_____
Email Address Contact Phone # (don't forget area code)

DO YOU HAVE ANY DISABILITIES OR SPECIAL NEEDS THAT REQUIRE ACCOMMODATION?

_____NO _____YES _____PREFER TO DISCUSS IN PERSON (PLEASE SEE ME)

IF YES, PLEASE ADVISE: _____

_____

AGE GROUP: ____ 17-21 ____22-25 ____26-30 ____31-40 ____41+

____ PREFER NOT TO ANSWER

EDUCATION

WHEN AND WHERE WAS THE LAST ENGLISH CLASS YOU TOOK? _____

_____

MAJOR: _____ MINOR: _____

DO YOU PLAN ON TRANSFERRING TO CSU, UC, OR ANOTHER UNIVERSITY TO EARN A HIGHER DEGREE?

____YES ____NO ____UNDECIDED AT THIS TIME

WHAT IS THE HIGHEST DEGREE YOU WISH TO EARN? _____

WHAT IS/ARE YOUR FAVORITE SUBJECT(S) OR SPECIAL AREAS OF STUDY?
_____

_____.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO GET OUT OF THIS COURSE? _____

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_____.

IS THERE ANYTHING SPECIAL LISTED IN THE COURSE SYLLABUS OR TEXTBOOKS IN WHICH YOU HAVE A PARTICULAR OR SPECIAL INTEREST? _____

_____.

IS THERE ANYTHING IN THE COURSE SYLLABUS THAT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND OR WISH TO DISCUSS? COMMENTS? _____

_____.

IS/ARE THERE ANY PARTICULAR TOPIC(S) LISTED IN THE SYLLABUS OR TEXTBOOKS THAT YOU ARE NERVOUS ABOUT OR FEEL MAY BE DIFFICULT FOR YOU?
____YES ____NO

IF YES, WHAT IS/ARE THE TOPIC(S)?_____

_____

_____.

PLEASE TELL ME A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF (GOALS, HOBBIES, INTERESTS, MUSIC, ETC.): _____

_____

_____

_____.

STUDENT AGREEMENT: I have read carefully the entire syllabus for this course. I understand the course objectives and requirements, the grading standards, the general schedule of assignments, the expectations for student conduct, the Turnitin.com policy, and all policies regarding attendance, participation, and due dates. My enrollment in this course entails that I will comply with these policies throughout the duration of the semester.

_____
NAME DATE

PROFESSOR'S NOTE:
THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. THIS INFORMATION WILL ENABLE ME TO GET TO KNOW YOU ALL A LITTLE BETTER AND TO TAILOR MY INSTRUCTION AND LESSONS TO MEET YOUR NEEDS. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO COMMUNICATE WITH ME (IN PERSON, VIA E-MAIL, DURING OFFICE HOURS, ETC.) WITH ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS YOU HAVE ABOUT THE CLASS, COURSEWORK, REQUIREMENTS, ETC. I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU THIS SEMESTER!

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Grading Rubric for English 010 – Essay #2

Key	Exemplary (A)	Good (B)	Satisfactory (C)	Needs Improvement (D)	Unsatisfactory (F)
Content	All aspects of the essay question fully addressed: visual description, tone, audience, strategies Develops ideas thoughtfully and thoroughly Uses excellent and thought provoking examples	Many aspects of the essay question addressed: visual description, tone, audience, strategies Most ideas developed in detail Uses appropriate examples	Most aspects of the essay question addressed: visual description, tone, audience, strategies Attempt to develop most ideas Sufficient use of examples	Major aspects of the essay question unanswered: visual description, tone, audience, strategies Most ideas are undeveloped Weak/irrelevant examples	Fails to address the essay question: visual description, tone, audience, strategies Ideas are undeveloped and irrelevant No examples given
Grammar and Mechanics	Consistent use of standard writing conventions Consistent use of appropriate sentence boundaries Consistent use of appropriate s/va	Consistent use of standard writing conventions but with some errors Mostly consistent use of appropriate sentence boundaries Mostly consistent use of appropriate s/va	Satisfactory use of standard writing conventions Satisfactory use of sentence boundaries but with some fragments and/or run-ons Satisfactory use of appropriate s/va	Lacks consistent use of standard writing conventions Significant and consistent fragments and/or run-ons Significant and consistent s/va errors	Lacks use of standard writing conventions Sentences lack boundaries and create unclear meaning Writing lacks appropriate use of s/va
Structure and Organization	The essay presents a clear, well-developed thesis statement and essay map Paragraphs exhibit clear topic sentences and effective use of specific examples Paragraphs clearly and consistently support and develop the main point Uses clear, consistent transitions Essay includes a clear, well-developed introduction, body, and conclusion	The essay presents a thesis statement and essay map Most paragraphs exhibit proper structure and use of relevant examples Paragraphs adequately support and develop the main point Uses clear transitions Essay includes a clear introduction, body, and conclusion	The essay presents a thesis statement and essay map but lacks consistent focus Some paragraphs exhibit adequate structure and use of examples Some paragraphs do not support or develop the main point Attempts to use transitions Essay includes an introduction, body, and conclusion	The thesis statement and essay map are unclear and/or irrelevant Most paragraphs do not exhibit adequate structure or examples Most paragraphs do not support or develop the main point Uses inconsistent transitions Introduction, body, and conclusion unclear	The essay lacks a thesis statement and essay map Paragraphs lack structure and examples Paragraphs are unrelated to the main point No transitions used Essay lacks an introduction, body, and/or conclusion

_____ (-5) Prewrite
_____ (-10) Peer Review

Total Score: /100 **Notes:**