

**BROWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE
TEACHING/LEARNING COMMUNITY
CLASSROOM RESEARCH AWARD**

EVALUATION FORM

Name: Jo Ann Bamdas **Date:** June 7, 2004

Research Title: Improving Student Satisfaction and Reaction with Literature and Composition

Project Completion Date: May 6, 2004

State the problem/idea you researched/examined.

Improving Student Satisfaction and Reaction with Literature and Composition in ENC 1102 English Composition courses is a huge undertaking, as other researchers have pointed out (Ellingham, Thorner, and others). Dr. Pat Ellingham believes it may be "the hardest to teach which generally yields the most disappointing results." Furthermore, he states that students "mention Shakespeare or Poe," read little, and don't seem to understand how to put together a research paper. My former students complained they cannot relate to the "old" canon of literature, as it has little relevance to their own lives, returning to the poetry and drama they remember from high school is terrifying or worse, and adjectives describing the readings are "boring," "too long," "unexciting," and "depressing" focusing mostly on death, suicide, and unhappiness with very few happy endings. In particular, students dislike reading and thinking critically. In addition, our students come to the community college with heavy negative thinking baggage further stifling their very real educational and personal goals and objectives for the future. My students have said "I don't usually read anything; perhaps a paper or magazine occasionally," "I hate poetry and drama," "I don't understand all that old stuff," "I don't know why I have to learn this," "It's not relevant to my life," "I want to write my own poetry and music and screenplays for television and the movies," and "how's this stuff going to help me get a job?" On top of our students being forced to sit down and passively digest Shakespearean plays, poems, and fiction works without relevance, these negative experiences from former elementary, middle school, and high school English classes include receiving bad grades, conflicts with teachers, and feeling that they are wasting their time since most don't understand what they read and feel they are not good at writing. Therefore, students either withdraw, or stop coming to class, or worse stay in the class waiting to be "socially promoted," as they were in high school. Many students this semester told me that if they worked their hardest, they believe passing with a C is what I should do for them. Working hard and showing up to class everyday is reason enough for them to pass.

Thus, I attempt with this research project opportunity to find a way to captivate and engage students. A year ago I tried this project on my own in two ENC 1102 classes with a process I had just discovered called self-directed learning. It was extremely successful on a small scale. Thus I proposed to do this for a full semester, expecting even more success. This process gives each student of learning some independence and freedom to choose their own activities, to explore their own interests, give them options, allow them to choose the grade they wish to attain according to the time they need to manage their adult responsibilities with a certain amount of guidance from a helpful, pleasant, facilitator of information who clearly clarifies the overall structure and assignments doing so in a comforting and safe environment. According to Cheryl Lowry from Malcolm Knowles (1975), self directed learning is described as, "a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others," to diagnose their learning needs, formulate learning goals, identify resources for learning, select and implement learning strategies, and evaluate learning outcomes." Roger Hiemstra (1994) defines SDL as "any study form in which individuals have primary responsibility for planning, implementing, and even evaluating the effort." Broadly speaking, the most important self-directed learning issues to address are helping the student to understand this new, active way of thinking, learning to discover one's own interests, having a facilitator capable of assisting the student in their new way of learning by providing numerous suggestions and resources, providing a new system of evaluation, and doing all this in a comfortable, safe, pleasing learning environment.

Self-Directed Learning is a huge undertaking and has numerous benefits and some unfavorable factors that need to be addressed, all which I attempted during this project. Since I have personally experienced self-directed learning both as a student and as an instructor in the Winter, 2003, semester, I decided to compare and contrast various self-directed learning qualities in one classroom versus a "traditional" lecture type environment in the other ENC 1102 English Composition class.

Summary of Results

A single question might be asked of this research project: Is self-directed learning the answer to our quest for successfully teaching ENC 1102 to every one of our students so that they will bang at our institution's doors crying out for more Shakespeare, more Hawthorne, more poetry, more fiction, and more tragic drama! Although this research project brought phenomenal results in multiple areas through the extensive pre-class and post class student questionnaires, in all honesty, the answer is not conclusively proven by this research project. However, success has been achieved on two levels. One is that self-directed learning should be

used at least in part with a traditional classroom and several important student responses bear contemplation for teaching a different type of classroom and different types of assignments. For on the whole, this project is successful because as most students learned and this researcher has also become informed, additional ways to facilitate the course where a majority of students can indeed have a positive reaction and satisfaction with English Composition and Literature.

Unfortunately, as Gerald Holton, co-author of *A Nation at Risk*, a major politicized report on education, points out, “the children of America are the most disenfranchised members of society [as] [T]hey do not vote, they do not contribute to election funds, they have no ownership in the media, they do not count when budget wars are waged against their schools.” In short, children in the America education system at the elementary, middle, and high school level have not had a voice in their own education. We rarely ask them anything. Thus, I found it necessary to ask about demographics, course load, personal interests, motivations, drive, goals, objectives, skills, priority system, strengths, weaknesses, learning styles and environment and multiple intelligences. I asked if they feel like adults or children and when. I asked them if they felt prepared to enter college level work, what are their outside adult responsibilities, and what are they looking for in an instructor/facilitator. I wondered at their education philosophy. I especially wanted to know about their perceived differences in college versus high school. I especially needed to know what they believe the definitions of self-directed learner and traditional and non-traditional student are. I asked their opinions on state mandated course and classroom policy, use of technologies, former experiences with reading, writing, thinking, and expression, and feelings about evaluation and plans for the future. All of these aspects must be considered at the beginning of each class by each instructor in order to best educate, motivate, and interest *each* individual student of learning in the 21st century in order that we all achieve our goals.

I discovered:

- Of the 24 respondents, 20 wanted either a self-directed learning classroom or some combination of both whereas four respondents wished to have a traditional classroom-learning environment. The qualities of the self-directed learning classroom environment stated by both classes were “fun,” “ability to choose my own readings,” “want options,” “no boring materials,” “want independence,” “no two persons are alike,” “allows me to grow,” “helps to learn better,” “balance,” “want guidance in an instructor,” “need a certain freedom to explore own interests.”
- Inquiry into history of reading material shows an almost equal selection from magazines, fable and fairy tales, books, newspapers, comic books, and some education materials.
- The majority (22 of 26) of students in both classes had remembered hearing stories as a child.
- The positive and negative experience in ENC 1101 was relatively the same (8 to 4 in SDL versus 6 to 5 in Traditional class)
- Exposure to the literature content in high school for both classes was relatively the same (lots of Shakespeare, Adolescent literature such as *Catcher in the Rye*, *Great Gatsby*, *Scarlet Letter*, *Of Mice and Men*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, as well as some poetry, plays, and some newspaper articles.
- Materials that are being read by both classes’ students are biographies, self-help books, new age books, non-fiction, autobiographies, “popular” books by authors such as Mary Higgins Clark, J. K. Rowling, Stephen King, Nicholas Sparks, J. R. R. Tolkien, and history books, newspapers, magazines.
- Also, the majority of students in both classes grew up on favorite literature such as *Babysitter’s Club*, *Hardy Boys*, *Sweet Valley High* books, Dr. Seuss, fairy tales and Disney, as well as teen magazines and books such as R. L. Stine’s *Fear Street*, *Lord of the Rings*, *the Hobbit*, *Nancy Drew*, *Goosebumps*. The traditional classroom student appears to have a higher level of reading material such as philosophy from the likes of Spinoza, Nietzsche, some African scholars and philosophers like Malcolm X, and others.
- It is my normal pattern of instruction to always ask students what they would like to read in order to include their interests; therefore, I asked both classes what type of materials they would like to read. They responded by asking for authors such as Hemingway, Robert Frost, Hawthorne, Anne Frank, Poe, Dickinson, Raymond Carver, Zora Neale Hurston, Chaucer, Tolkien, Toni Morrison. There was a real desire by the so-called “traditional” classroom for books by African American writers, comedies, romance, modern works, folk tales, mythology, and love stories.
- I wanted to see the interest in popular reading such as *Harry Potter* and was surprised that only 12 of the 26 respondents had seen the movies and only 4 had read any or all of the books. This is interesting since this series is a phenomenal read for adults AND young boys and girls!
- In the original questionnaire I asked students to tell me their favorite literature author and most couldn’t think of anyone, but when I rephrased the question and said name the first author and artists you can think of, the answers were quite interesting, especially when Stephen King and Picasso came up repeatedly. This bears some thinking and further research. I will be looking into this for a paper. Stephen King and Picasso were the overwhelming “first” names that came to mind with this question.
- Overwhelmingly both classes preferred short stories to novels (18 or the 26); A variety of reasons were given for preference.

- The traditional classroom student likes poetry (14 to 1) whereas the SDL classroom liked poetry 6 to 3. The SDL classroom said they believed poetry was hard to understand, had bad experiences with it (some liked it because there was a good experience with it) whereas the traditional classroom's group of students said overwhelmingly that they liked it but the majority said they knew very little about it. The SDL classroom knew quite a bit more about poetry. Poetry was rarely stated as having been read in high school or elementary school, so this is interesting. More questions should be asked about this. What is missing here? This seems like a topic that deserves further research for me to look into. Furthermore, it would be interesting to research the poetry classes in other institutions and at BCC. Definitely more questionnaires needed for student input so we can improve their interest and motivation in reading with pleasure (somewhere we have forgotten the pleasure of reading and focused only on the pedagogy).
- Most students who had instruction in Shakespeare prior to this class (both classrooms) feel the same way about Shakespeare. They have read Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth, Othello, Hamlet, Julius Caesar (one read a sonnet or two), and most are sick of it and have no interest in learning more.
- Both classes like or have some interest in drama.
- The majority of both classes equally said they had heard of literary criticism but did not know much or anything about it. However, both classes, especially the "traditional" classroom "guessed" or attempted to define the words "literary criticism" and did an exceptionally good job of it.
- When I asked the question of each class, "do you like to read" five of the students in the SDL classroom said yes, one said somewhat, and three said no whereas the "traditional classroom" overwhelmingly said yes (13 to 1). *
- When I asked both classrooms if they had done any writing of plays, books, novels, screenplays, poetry, etc., the majority went with "no" (8 to 1 in SDL) and (10 to 4 in Traditional). Also I found that the majority of students from both classes draw, scribble, or doodle.
- The majority of students from each class said they liked dancing, music, and art. I found this interesting from several points, perhaps the most important being from music and art. Since some form of art and music is liked by almost everyone, why can't these two be used to further interest, engage, and motivate students with the literary genre of art (see my report on the "What is art?" project from this semester).
- The negative experiences with literature can be evenly compared in both classroom types. Negatives are over-concentration on Shakespeare's "same-old" works (concentrating on suicides at the high school level didn't seem to be such a good idea to one student) and going on with Shakespeare too long, getting bad grades (evaluation), reading long, boring novels, conflicts with instructors teaching the literature, short-term concentration, and difficulty understanding these works in particular in the relevance to the student's lives. The 10:00 traditional classroom seemed to have more negatives. The negative words heard repeatedly are "boring, unexciting, dull, turned off, uninterested." More times than I can remember, I keep hearing: I am not good at reading or I am not good at writing. These negative beliefs need to change and as teachers, we need to find a way to get rid of these self-fulfilling prophecies.
- The positive experiences of the students in the SDL classroom centered on receiving good grades, winning an award for poetry, being able to use materials such as National Geographic for its pictures and illustrations, coming to understanding with a difficult piece of literature, and reading that is entertaining and made interesting by the teacher. The "traditional" classroom had students who had positive experiences when the class read and participated as a whole, the breaking down of difficult works finally became meaningful, when a poetry contest was won, and especially when discovering some work that actually has an impact on a person's life – the big picture is seen. The bottom line is both classrooms virtually see these positive experiences almost identically.
- Other information students wanted me to know came mostly from the 10:00 so-called "traditional classroom." These students asked me to clearly explain assignments, be willing to help, go over readings I might not fully understand, want to work with other students who don't mind working, want an interesting class, want a teacher who won't "suck all the fun and smiles right out," express themselves without a test on it, be able to learn from one another, to spread the assignments out, and be aware that we are taking other courses, work full and part time jobs, and make the class memorable and fun. Sounds good to me!

Moreover, the findings from the post-class questionnaires, which were born out by the final grade evaluations, review of Portfolios, journal entries, and myriad activities given and invented throughout the semester, proved to be highly enlightening in many ways. The following is an overview and the complete findings are attached as one of the Addendums to this report:

- The majority of both classes believed themselves ready for college, read the syllabus, believed it important to think for themselves and be able to articulate verbally and orally one's own opinion, that tutors, mentors, anyone can help them achieve their goals, and that teacher and student can learn together and that this is an important collaboration especially for the self-directed learner.
- This facilitator had a great, positive experience with the 10:00 so-called "traditional" research classroom and this is born out by the definition of a self-directed learning student, the definition which oddly enough the traditional classroom seemed to know instinctively and the "knowledgeable" SDL classroom never seemed to grasp or want to understand. In fact, at the end of the semester as opposed to the beginning, the SDL classroom majority reversed

their pre-class questionnaire decision as to whether to have a self-directed learning classroom or a traditional classroom. The 8:00 class, although the end of semester evaluations were good, did not seem to enjoy the self-directed learning opportunity, as I believe the 10:00 class would have.

- Since environment is such an important factor in the self-directed learning process, I asked each class about the optimal time for taking class. This I found extremely important because of the large number of withdrawals, missed classes, late attendees, and lack of interest, and passive learning taking place in the 8:00 class. The SDL classroom as a majority (6 or 12) thought 8:00 a good time but 5 said no it was not ideal, but 7 students said they would take an 8:00 class again agreeing that morning is the best class time for them. Other optimal times mentioned were 10:00-11:00 or between 8:00 and 10:00 or 10:00 to 12:00. The best time for studying for the majority is at night in a quiet area. The majority of the 10:00 traditional class students were happy taking a class again at this time.
- This “traditional” classroom had an “older” student averaging 20 years of age whereas the so-called “SDL” classroom average age was 18. The student of today has many forces pulling on the student’s attention and can harm educational pursuits and retaining students in class. For the SDL classroom, the priority noted is Education, Parents, Significant Other, Children in that order; however, the 10:00 “traditional class” truly should have been named the SDL classroom because it fits the profile and is born out through their personal history and their success post-semester evaluation and miscellaneous activities and in the level of interest and motivation. Their priorities clearly show that education is not their number one priority. They noted Parents, Children/Education, Elderly Relative Caring for One; then Significant Other. Furthermore, I did not have the problems with attendance and withdrawals experienced in the 8:00 SDL classroom.
- Moreover, the traditional classroom was better at organizing their time. Clearly, they had a time management plan in place for achieving their goals and the SDL classroom, on the other hand, had little time management strategies (3 of 12 had a plan). The traditional classroom student had more diverse and a stronger support system than the SDL classroom.
- Procrastination is an issue affecting enjoyment and reaction to ENC 1102 as well as many other classes. Most of the students questioned believed a workshop or more information on this topic would be most helpful.
- The majority of each class believed the environment was comfortable and conducive to learning and were made to feel comfortable with the facilitator and by her. They all felt they were treated as adults except when it came to the attendance policy; some indicated they felt like children.
- Because the goal of the research project was to find activities interesting, motivating, and increasing reaction and satisfaction with literature, numerous resources were used. The majority of the students from each class liked using technology such as the web-enhanced syllabus and website where they had access to several topics in the public discussion area and email capacity, access to multiple PowerPoint presentations, the facilitator’s self-published Study Guide to the campus read: “Ghost Dancing,” take-home tests, assignments, and announcements. Additionally, both classrooms were provided with diverse resources such as novels, short stories, children and adolescent literature, poetry, drama, newspaper articles, and activities for long and short types of writing. Students in the SDL class liked least of all doing so many papers, the portfolio, the book “Ghost Dancing” self-directed learning; while students in the traditional class liked least of all the writing requirement, the one page papers on structure, the research paper, the attendance policy, too much writing, and some of the readings. Most interesting to both classes was the semester theme: “What is Art” (see assignment attached as Addendum herein), the review of children and adolescent literature, poetry, live theater field visit, Shakespearean Sonnets, and the theme of culture and storytelling woven throughout the semester.
- Even though we have been told and heard for ourselves that students do not like to read, I found this just the opposite for this semester. The majority of the students in each class had been reading, but of course, several either never did read, hated to read, or read only when required by assignment. Both classes found they were better readers at the end of the semester than at the beginning. Largely, I find the answer in the questionnaire. The majority of students in each class had had a positive experience with reading as a child. However, the reading improvement can be borne out by at least two successful activities newly learned: annotating while reading and learning and practicing the précis that is brief summary or paraphrase of material read. I believe the sheer variety and freedom to choose their own materials added to this success in “better” reading at semester end. Moreover, the majority of students said they would rather seek deeper meaning in reading rather than stick with “easy” or “simple” books and articles. Although, the student’s favorite authors did not change this semester, additional authors and genres did increase for many students.
- Evaluation is an important element in the process of self-directed learning. I evaluated at least 28 diverse activities per classroom. Each activity is exactly equal to the next and averaged by the total number of activities. This gives a true value and helps over-emphasis on one thing the particular student may believe they are not “good” at. As students have numerous strengths and some weaknesses, it is unfair to weight so heavily on a few things. So with the percentages I have a true value of a student’s overall performance. There is little to no test anxiety in my classes. Usually, I have a broad topic, such as I had for mid-term exam wherein I asked both classes to tell me what they learned (in essay format). The responses were great! This way I am able to read each student’s perspective on

learning, evaluate the class as a whole, and then go back and grade each student individually. This seems fairer to me and to my students. The SDL classroom received 6 A's, 2 B's, 3 C's, and 5 F's. The Traditional classroom students achieved 6 A's, 4 B's, 5 C's, 1 "I" (this is more than likely going to change to an "F," and 1 F.

In most respects, both classrooms' students were similar goals and objectives and expectations for an English Composition class. They all bring "baggage" from their previous personal and educational experiences affecting their performance, and at least three-quarters of all students want to achieve a positive and satisfactory experience in the course. I believe I was able to accomplish this in part. There is much more that needs to be done by my colleagues and me.

My Methodology (see Addendums)

As proposed, I set up an extensive and comprehensive methodology that included the following:

- Set up course syllabus containing objectives, timing suggestions, evaluation data
- Collected data on student activities (tests, research, small and long papers, PowerPoint presentations on key literary terminology, URL links, email communications, Public discussions
- Reviewed extensive lists of activities and evaluation
- Prepared extensive, comprehensive pre-class and post-class questionnaires I designed to receive answers from the "whole" student
- Comprehensive review of student's Portfolio of Learning and Portfolio of Creativity
- Facilitator resources and information provided each group and two prevalent themes throughout the semester were evaluated: culture and what is art?
- Instructor kept a journal of personal reactions to project
- Instructor reviewed the website for content and interaction on an extremely high daily basis

Optimal Results

I believe I was prevented from achieving maximum results because I chose the 8:00 a.m. class to research the self-directed learning when, in fact, I believed early on and still believe that a better classroom would have been the 10:00 class as a research specimen. The fact that students kept coming in late or withdrawing had an effect on the remainder. I never seemed to be able to snap them out of their lethargic, passive trance-like state, even though the majority of the students said they would take an 8:00 class again. I have never had a positive experience with a class at 8:00 because this has been an issue before. Another contributing factor may have been the age. Other factors may have contributed as well. Even through extensive synthesis of both pre and post-questionnaires, I am unable to attain an answer for the lack of interest and motivation for these students. Frankly, I am baffled. My experience throughout the semester, even though one could not tell when I walked into the classroom, was one of looking forward to seeing my students in the 10:00 class when that time came. The traditional 10:00 class seemed more engaged and more interested in the subject (even though they said education was not their first priority!), and let little outside influences keep them from their goals.

Evaluations of Pre and Post Questionnaires for Each Class are Attached

Attached are both the pre-class and post-class questionnaires for the self-directed learning classroom as well as the traditionally taught classroom. Please note that both evaluation forms have complete student input along with my specific notations on reflections and suggestions I have for several other research projects. The questionnaires have a great deal of pertinent information for reflection. I have also attached the mid-term reflections of student learning from the SDL classroom.

Sharing

I intend to share the results of my classroom research with Broward Community College in a number of ways. I have prepared a PowerPoint presentation that is readily available to be provided by email. I also have numerous resources on the self-directed learning process. I have samples of the SDL learning contract, activities and evaluation grid, copies of student Portfolios, annotations, journal entries, etc. I will be delighted to give any number of workshops necessary to spread the word about self-directed learning and the many things learned about students and teaching and learning during this classroom research project. I also plan on doing further research on my own, preparing several papers for education journals, presenting my work at pertinent conferences. I will also share my work not only with my colleagues in the English Department but with other important departments.

Faculty and Other Discipline Applications

In addition to English, Reading, ESL departments, others that can benefit from my research are Counseling, Orientation, Retention, the Dean's office, Staff Development, the Business department, and at the Holcombe Center for Excellence, among others. I will also contact other departments about the possibility of team teaching or guest speaking in my future classes.

Follow-up Research and Other Ideas for Further Exploration

Because of the comprehensive pre and post-class questionnaires emphasis on the "whole" student, the voice of the student is available. Several student issues have been raised which I did not think about as restricting student's reaction and satisfaction with learning to critically read, think, and write about literature which deserve further inquiry.

- The idea that if a student works hard and just attends class that they should be "socially promoted" – a politically correct term today for being passed along, as indeed they have been
- Children and adolescent literature has numerous benefits and few downsides and should be incorporated into a basic course, as this fine literature helps improve reading interest and success as well as motivation (I am in the process of putting a workshop together and several articles on these benefits – I would love to teach a course on this literature and will be proposing this for a classroom research project to improve satisfaction and reaction in English Composition courses)
- The attendance policy needs to be discussed and at minimum needs to be incorporated into the Orientation and Retention and Strategies for College Success programs
- A connection between these literary genres must be found and made relevant to student's actual lives
- I propose we put together some type of PowerPoint presentation for Orientation that shows the differences between college and high school. I have a sample from St. Thomas University which a friend gave me to view, which I highly recommend
- The student success rate in the 8:00 classes and 50 minute classes needs further researching
- Learning styles and multiple intelligences need to be incorporated into the active classroom of the 21st century
- The 21st century community college traditional classroom needs to change to fit the adult responsibilities of the community college student today

In summary, I wish to thank the Teaching/Learning Community Classroom Research Award committee for giving me this opportunity to research such an important process: self-directed learning. In reviewing this report, one may possibly feel the research and its results overwhelming and overreaching; however, even though I did not receive the optimal results for which I was looking, I did learn a great deal about how to achieve student reaction and satisfaction in an English Composition class. Moreover, I learned from a very important group of people – that often silenced group -- our students – many other important issues needing further research, contemplation, and discussion. Classroom research projects like these with and without reward but always shared will finally get us to our goal: improved education for everyone. I will be listening, facilitating, and learning wherever I can to improve education for students and for us all.

"Watch and Learn: Teach and Grow"

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Addendum

What is Art? (Project)

Gather students into groups of 3 or 4 or 5; make it their choice.

Tell them they have 15 minutes to “create” art. (When they look to you – ask them “why are you looking at me? I am not here).

Walk around the room but do nothing – just listen and note their comments. Some of these comments can be put on the board like “I am not creative.” I recommend this for our visual learners.

After 15 minutes, ask one person in the group to explain what art was created (usually they all think of art as drawing so draw (smile) their attention to this). Briefly discuss art. What is art? What do your students say art is? Who says one thing is art when another thinks something else? Explain that art is not just drawing, but it is also verbal and written storytelling, poetry writing, drama writing, fiction writing, music, dance, etc.

Next

Give them five minutes to “create art.”

Call on them randomly from the new list of students and ask them to share what art they have created (some are amazed what they can create in five minutes).

Make sure this art is put into their portfolio of creativity so it is the first piece of art they have created. So they are now part of the class and have contributed. So much can be gained from this activity. Shows a cohesiveness, helps the shy to not be so, shows what classmates can create in five to fifteen minutes, puts everyone on equal footing, etc. This is good to remind them of when they moan about journaling or keeping the portfolio.

Make sure everyone gets to share their “art” verbally so the auditory learners can hear the art. Finish up the following class meeting if you have to but I recommend finishing in one session.

At the end of the semester, do this activity again and share what has been learned about art. Through research, I have found poetry, art, and music to be overwhelmingly a commonality everyone can share.

This is an excellent beginning and ending activity for the semester in ENC 1102. Everyone learns a lot that usually stays with them and on into life. It has multiple positive benefits.

Other themes: History, storytelling, cultures, folktales, fairytales, myths, art, music, dance, poetry, rhythm, connection to various types of music/dance/art, aesthetics, and the idea of various perspectives and viewpoints.

Jo Ann Bamdas 1/9/04

Addendum

Pre-Class Questionnaire Self-Directed Learning Classroom

SDL CLASSROOM RESPONSES

Student Questionnaire ENC 1102

Please type your answers (preferably in a different color font or different size font) to the entire form and return no later than 1/12/04.

(I will email the document to you)

Also, please go through your text, "Literature: The Human Experience" and tell me what you have read before and when. I will try not to duplicate its usage; however, some works are better read again and again for *full* understanding. When we understand the work better, we tend to like it more. Also, we understand works better the more we read and discuss and critically think about these works. Some people study ONE author and ONE work all their lives!! Some of these "people" could be YOU ☺.

This will be included in your words written requirement along with your end of the semester evaluation.

Reviewing the remaining 12 Students from the original 24 who turned in questionnaires. I believe this compilation is more pure using the 12 students completing the term rather than including all of the questionnaires turned in. However, it is interesting to note for further research into why these students either withdrew or stopped coming to class that 2 wanted a traditional classroom; one thought a little of both would be good, one did not respond, and 8 wanted to have input into their class (SDL).

Would you rather be in a "traditional" classroom where your instructor is telling you what to read, what to learn, and what to write -- or would you rather decide on what you would like to read, learn, and write based on your interests? Explain in some detail.

NO RESPONSE (2) TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM (0) SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING (6) A LITTLE OF BOTH (4)

Addendum

Pre-Class Questionnaire Traditional Learning Classroom

TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM RESPONSES

Student Questionnaire ENC 1102

Please type your answers (preferably in a different color font or different size font) to the entire form and return no later than 1/12/04.

(I will email the document to you)

Also, please go through your text, "Literature: The Human Experience" and tell me what you have read before and when. I will try not to duplicate its usage; however, some works are better read again and again for *full* understanding. When we understand the work better, we tend to like it more. Also, we understand works better the more we read and discuss and critically think about these works. Some people study ONE author and ONE work all their lives!! Some of these "people" could be YOU ☺.

This will be included in your words written requirement along with your end of the semester evaluation.

26 Students were originally registered for this class; 12 withdrew, 1 failed for not attending the final exam (among other things), Reviewing here Questionnaires of the 15 Students Who Received Grades for the Course* However, it would be interesting for another research project to review the questionnaires of those who failed the class, withdrew, and/or stopped attending as to their views on the questions herein. It is interesting to note that of the four students who attended at least ¼ to ½ the class said they wanted a classroom where they could have input (SDL) so they could retain interest and focus in the class.

Would you rather be in a "traditional" classroom where your instructor is telling you what to read, what to learn, and what to write -- or would you rather decide on what you would like to read, learn, and write based on your interests? Explain in some detail.

NO RESPONSE (1) TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM (4) SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING (7) A MIX (A LITTLE OF BOTH) (3)

Addendum

ENC1102 8:00 SDL Class

What we learned so far this semester: Student Remarks from 03 08 04

"I have been able to view how I learn in a different way. This helps push yourself to want to learn."

"I have learned to annotate a story or chapter."

"I can read a little better in between the lines."

"We have learned that art comes in many forms...Art can be found everywhere, everyday. It is up to us to open the eyes to see it."

"We learned how to create a PowerPoint presentation together so that I could learn and the others in class too."

"I learned about 'Ghost Dancing' and other spiritual Indian short stories that I really never discussed previously in other school English classes."

"Self directed learning is new to me because we talk the time to do work that we are interested and capable of doing. In ENC 1101 and high school, I was only taught what was on the teacher's learning planner and the due date. It is good to learn things we enjoy."

"I have gained more knowledge of literature and art."

"The stories we are reading have helped me a great deal. These stories help me learn new words and teach me the traditions and cultures of other people."

"Ghost Dancing" is a great example of learning new words and teaching traditions and cultures of other people. Even though the book started off a little dry and confusing, once you get into the book, it seems to suck you in. I caught myself getting into the book. Looking back at it now, I see all of what I took from the book, which is a better understanding of the Native Indians of America."

"I took knowledge from applying the literary terms to the stories we read...from the subject and theme differences...to exploring different types of characters...and on to the various settings, plots." I learned how to analyze a story beyond mere reading. The exciting parts of all of this is with the self-directed learning. I seem to go at my own pace. I have my own time to get things accomplished. I am able to take more from the class without having to be told what to do. And to me that has been the key to this class; the self-directed learning gives students an advantage compared to other students in traditional English classes."

"I have learned in two short months that when I read something I should do an annotation because it gives me a chance to think about what I am reading and I can even go back and look at this annotation if I forget what the story is really about."

In the first week, I did not understand the term "art," but now I know that art is everywhere. It may be something I read, or a picture I see, or a photograph, or even more."

"I liked very much learning PowerPoint technology, as it gave the entire class the freedom to teach others."

"Most of all, I have learned in a fun way that I do not have to wait for my teacher to tell me what I need to do. I have to or I should go out there and do something on my own."

"The literary terms we have been discussing have helped me in breaking down the words and meaning for better understanding so I am able to apply the terms to the numerous and diverse readings."

"With self-directed learning," I have gained an understanding of the value of time. I am able through self-directed learning to pace my time throughout the day, not only in my becoming more aware of things I am interested in but through learning more in reading and writing through using the portfolio."

"One of the best teachers is yourself." As a person, I am going to want to learn when I want to and this self directed learning helps me (and I am sure others too) do that."

"Responsibility is one of the major things I have learned this semester. The learning contract has been a great tool to help me mature by giving me the freedom but forcing me to be responsible for my own actions with no excuses."

"I have learned to read in a whole new way. I annotate, write down unfamiliar words, and denotate. I completely dissect the story looking for narrator, subject, theme, irony, etc. I have learned new things about English but about myself as well."

"I learned that the plot is the series of events that are interrelated in a story (like a chain). It basically is the core of the story being told."

"Simile is a comparison between two things using either "like" or "as."

"Metaphor is the comparison between two things without the use of "like" and "as."

"Sociological novel is a novel that talks about events that are taking place during the time period; for example, political changes."

"Denouement is basically the wrap-up of the work, where the story comes to an end."

"A précis is a very brief summary of a written piece of work."

"A sweat lodge is part of a ritual performed by a lot of Native Americans to purify their bodies and spirit. "Ghost Dancing" is believe (in the Native American culture) to allow the dead to communicate with the living."

"Magical Realism" is something real that has some supernatural effect like in the movie "Water for Chocolate" when the girl cries in the pot and everyone who ate of this got really sick and sad."

"I have learned in the past two months a great deal about literature, art, and even myself. For example, I have learned to deeper analyze stories and find myself asking the right questions for gaining understanding. Now as I read I ask myself about characters, setting, tone, and what is subject and what is theme. Most importantly, I have learned about myself by budgeting my time to juggle my workload and other responsibilities. I completely surprised myself by enjoying a movie with subtitles and have since watched another such movie. A new door has been opened to me."

"One of the many things I have learned is there are round and flat characters in a book (as in real life :-D); for example, Jimmy in "Ghost Dancing." A round character changes."

"I have learned at another level that annotation is important. I learned this in 1101 but I have gotten much better at it by expressing my ideas, thoughts, and questions as I read."

"Annotations, articles from the newspaper, the teacher, the learning plan, discussing "what is art?," and "Ghost Dancing" has made a change in me for this English class as it created some kind of energy in me to be active and try my best to ace this course."

"During the spring break I learned a lot while working on my portfolio. I realized that I had some weaknesses in what we had been learning and did some research that helped me out."

"In the last two months I have learned to read in a more intellectual way by finding a more specific purpose for my reading."

"I have learned that art is not just drawing, but it is anything creative of the mind."

"I have learned that when doing research I should always go beyond the first page of the website and look deeper to find more."

"I have learned that literature is not just a subject that it is a composition that tells stories, dramatizes situations, expresses emotions and stretches our mind to help us grow personally and intellectually."

"I have learned that 'self-directed learning' may not be for me although I am going to stick it out. I have learned that some projects are easier than others. I am afraid that some of the assignments will be the downfall of my grade."

"I have learned that time management has become imperative to the success of my attempts over the past two months. Balancing time for school, work, home, and fun has become a challenge. My primary train of thought is not get it done fast, but how do I get it done? Planning is so important. Visualizing what needs to be done in a specific time frame must be done. I recommend being practical, leaving room for error and delay, as it really happens (in life)."

Addendum

Self-Directed Learning Contract

Learning Contract

You elect the point value in relation to the grade you wish to receive. The assignments you are electing are included on your Learning Contract. Points are determined by the assignments you elect to pursue and the quality of the assignments. Materials submitted can be re-submitted for one additional review if the assignments are turned in on a weekly basis.

Any format you wish to use for your Learning Contract is acceptable.

Your learning contract must be signed and dated by both student and facilitator. Any changes must be approved by both parties in writing.

Student

Jo Ann Bamdas

Addendum

Traditional Classroom Basic Course Structure

As the Basic Structure* of the ENC 1102 class for this semester each Student must:

1. Prepare a portfolio for all their work.
2. Annotations of work read in the text: Literature: The Human Experience.
3. Discover and prepare 5 précis (summaries) of resource URL's of website.
4. Journal entries of free-writing on anything (dated).
5. Write an essay on fiction, an essay on poetry, and an essay on drama (6 pages) OR you may write a 6-page essay combining a discussion about fiction, poetry, and drama. Hint: To do this find a common thread between literature from the three and then begin weaving your opinion with support.
6. Critically analyze one poem or one drama or one piece of fiction with a literary criticism movement. Say something about what other literary critics have said about the one piece of fiction you choose.
7. Select a favorite author toward the end of the semester and write a one-page paper supporting the reasons why this author is important to you (what you like) utilizing proper MLA documentation to do so. Be sure to cite your sources on a Works Cited.
8. Select fiction (short story or small novel), poetry, or drama by a children's or adolescent literature author. Write your own short summary biography about the author; then one reason why you like the works of this author and support it with samples of his or her work.
9. Create something utilizing at least one aspect of something you learned then write a reflection paper about it (at least one paragraph with topic sentence and opinion supported).
10. Read about all the literary eras (see terms and relevant chapters in your text as well as *The Bedford Glossary of Literary and Critical Terms*) then write a one-page paper why you like (or even dislike) a particular literary era, which you will support with substantial examples and description using MLA documentation of course with appropriate Works Cited page.
11. Prepare a research paper with MLA documentation and Works Cited of 7-10 pages. Further details will be provided at a later date; however, the paper must discuss at least three elements from literature and one must be language (figurative – such as simile, metaphor, irony, symbolism, or other). Others can be as discussed throughout the semester such as plot, characterization, figures of speech, etc. The first draft will not be graded but will be counted in with the word count required. Present research paper with PowerPoint technology. Provide your Instructor with a diskette of Presentation and Research paper plus all backup attachments such as outlines, drafts, prewriting, etc.

12. Something must be written about “Ghost Dancing” out of the numerous activities that will be provided by your Instructor.
13. A one-page paper will be relative to William Shakespeare’s theater productions and/or sonnets.
14. Attend the play that your Instructor arranges (TBD) then write a reflective paper on the experience utilizing some of the elements discussed in class.
15. Attend wRrites of Spring events.
16. Collect articles on literature (art, dance, music, film, etc. are fine but mix it up) from periodicals (New York Times for example) on a regular basis throughout semester. Minimum for portfolio should be 7 or 8. More will receive extra credit. They must be annotated and have reflections based on what you know and are learning.
17. Chances are good mid-term and final exams will probably be given on an as-needed basis. They *may* be take home or even in class open book.
18. There will be written activities quite often such as short quizzes and tests and study questions made as well as some paragraph and essay writing as related to the works we are studying in class.

Note that all research papers, mid-term and final exams will be permanently retained by your Instructor.

Attendance is expected. We will also be working in groups quite often such as doing group journal entries and learning the difference between persuasion and argumentation when comparing ideas of tradition with Shirley Jackson’s “The Lottery” with Anna Linzer’s “Ghost Dancing.”

Please note: I have tried to vary the size of the papers so as to make your success in the class as great as possible.

**I will try to adhere to the above; however, this structure is subject to change as needed. I will place announcements on the web-enhanced cite as per the Syllabus. All other information as to any questions you may have can be found on the Syllabus therefore it should be consulted.*

Addendum

Self Directed Learning Classroom

Grading Components and Scale

Contracted Item	Minimum	Maximum	Selected
Learning Contract	5	5	
Portfolio of Creativity	10	10	
Annotations (5)	20	25	
Resource URL’s	5	10	
Evidence of Individual Learning: film reviews, critical reviews, drama reviews, etc., textbook chapter outlines, vocabulary sheets, Powerpoint™, field visit (film, theater presentation, poetry reading performance, etc.), Shoebox activity	20	50	
Presentation or Skit or Play or Poetry Reading or Screenplay or Music Written, or poetry written	20	20	
Literary Discoveries: (essays or reviews) Poetry, Drama, Criticism Terms, Etc.	20	20	
TOTAL Points*	100	140	

*Extra Credit is Possible

Grade Scale

98-100 Points A
95-97 Points A-
90-94 Points B+
85-89 Points B
80-84 Points B-
75-79 Points C+

70-74 Points C
65-69 Points C-
60-64 Points D+
55-59 Points D
50-54 Points D-
0-49 Points F