Online Writing Center (OWC)

Fall 2011 End-of-Semester Report

Coordinator: Ingrid Kelly

Background: In the fall of 2011, the OWC offered expanded access. In contrast to the summer pilot of three online sections (serving approximately 85 students), the fall 2011 term linked the OWC to all English sections (092, 098, 120, 150, 151, 155) that included Moodle sites (309 students).

Students in English sections with instructors not using Moodle were not enrolled due to integration issues with Banner. IT reports that these issues will be resolved in spring 2012 when ALL COM students and instructors will have automatic access to the system. Nonetheless, students in any other section were still able to request enrollment to the OWC by submitting a request to moodlehelp@marin.edu. A total of 36 students requested OWC access via Moodlehelp during the term.

Number of Students: The OWC served a total of 309 students in the fall 2011 term.

Recommendations: Considering the data collected during the spring 2011 term, and noting that the OWC will expand service to all students in the spring 2012 term, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Increased hours in instructional support staff to meet the demand for online tutoring. The OWC will be open to all students in the spring 2012 term and will need increased support. One way to accomplish this goal would be to require that all IS’s scheduled in the Writing Center to check the OWC and respond to messages the last half hour of their scheduled assignment.
- More tutors scheduled with an equal number of hours, for example 5 online tutors scheduled for 4 hours a week would garner more consistency than 1-3 tutors assigned with arbitrary hours—10 hours a week, one at 2 hours, etc. More tutors scheduled for fewer hours promotes a wider availability during the week for answering student questions.
- Since the OWC has expanded access for spring 2012 and beyond, all students will now have access to the OWC via the MyCOM portal, increased IS hours should be assigned to the OWC in the future.
- A fixed and agreed upon staffing plan to insure the stability of the program is needed. The past practice of relying on instructors to “donate” hours to staff the OWC cannot sustain the growing needs of the OWC.
- An IS or teacher familiar with Moodle should be assigned and available in LC 120, the on-campus Writing Center, at least one day a week for one hour (preferably more) to answer Moodle related questions about the OWC or other issues with online classes to help students in person with orientation, navigation and other support issues.
- Improved oversight of the scheduling and workload for the Instructional Specialists. Too often IS’s are assigned who are uncomfortable/unfamiliar
with Moodle or with online tutoring. Ideally, each IS could be assigned at least one hour of online tutoring along with their traditional role of tutoring in the Writing Center.

- Increased hours for tech support to answer student help requests.
- Increased marketing to instructors and students. The widest use of the OWC is from classes where instructors are familiar with the service and with Moodle.
- Mandatory, paid training sessions for IS’s at different points in the semester, each term to cover effective tutoring strategies both online and face-to-face.

**Instructional Support (IS) Staff:** Jo Muilenberg, Kaitlyn Gallagher, Beth Shoefsky

- 3 Instructional Specialists
- 19.5 hours of coverage Monday through Sunday, 7 days a week
  - Monday: Kaitlyn (4)
  - Tues: Beth (2 hours), Jo (1.5 hours)
  - Wed: Beth (2 hours)
  - Thurs: Beth (1.5 hours), Fri: Beth (1 hour); Kaitlyn (4)
  - Weekends: Beth (2 hours --some weekends may be Saturday, some may be Sundays, and some may be a combination), Jo (1.5 hours)

- Response time: almost always same day

The following chart provides a summary of activity for the OWC during the fall 2011 term. A wide variety of support materials were accessed by students in addition to hits on the discussion forums where students ask advice from tutors. (A complete breakdown of all OWC activity during the term, is included in the an attached Excel file, consisting of 7,824 records.)

### Online Writing Center (Fall 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Views</th>
<th>Related blog entries</th>
<th>Last access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>News forum</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Saturday, 24 December 2011, 10:44 AM (12 days 11 hours)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Topic 1**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Views</th>
<th>Related blog entries</th>
<th>Last access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![How to Contact a Tutor Online](Read Me First!)</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Saturday, 24 December 2011, 10:48 AM (12 days 11 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Saving a File in RTF Format](</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Saturday, 24 December 2011, 10:48 AM (12 days 11 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Writing Center Hours, Fall 2011 in LC 120](</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Saturday, 24 December 2011, 10:49 AM (12 days 11 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![English 98 Discussion Forum](</td>
<td>1113</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Monday, 19 December 2011, 11:59 AM (17 days 10 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![English 120 Discussion Forum](</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Friday, 16 December 2011, 02:46 PM (20 days 7 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![English 150 (1A) Discussion Forum](</td>
<td>1446</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Tuesday, 20 December 2011, 12:36 PM (16 days 9 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![English 151 (1B) Discussion Forum](</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Saturday, 31 December 2011, 11:05 AM (5 days 10 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Writing Advice for all Other Classes](</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Monday, 19 December 2011, 12:00 PM (17 days 9 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Technical Questions](</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Saturday, 24 December 2011, 10:44 AM (12 days 11 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Discussion Forum Archives: A record of past messages.](</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Wednesday, 14 December 2011, 08:43 PM (22 days 1 hour)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Writing Resources, Tutorials &amp; Interactive Exercises](</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Thursday, 15 December 2011, 09:29 PM (21 days)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Helpful Links for Writing &amp; Research](</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Wednesday, 16 November 2011, 12:48 PM (50 days 9 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Grammar Links](</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Wednesday, 16 November 2011, 12:48 PM (50 days 9 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Sample Paper in MLA Format](</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Wednesday, 16 November 2011, 12:48 PM (50 days 9 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![MLA Guide (PDF file)]</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Monday, 24 October 2011, 06:33 PM (73 days 4 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Views</td>
<td>Related blog entries</td>
<td>Last access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video: How to Format your Paper Using MLA Style Rules</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Wednesday, 26 October 2011, 04:01 PM (71 days 6 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video: MLA Formatting and In-Text Citation Style</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Topic 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Views</th>
<th>Related blog entries</th>
<th>Last access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Join us in the Writer's Room--Where Writers Chat about Writing Concerns</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Saturday, 17 December 2011, 01:15 PM (19 days 8 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat Tips</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Saturday, 17 December 2011, 01:15 PM (19 days 8 hours)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Topic 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Views</th>
<th>Related blog entries</th>
<th>Last access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using Discussion Forums Effectively in the Classroom</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Thursday, 11 August 2011, 08:00 AM (147 days 14 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring Strategies for English Language Learners</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Wednesday, 21 December 2011, 02:33 PM (15 days 7 hours)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Topic 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Views</th>
<th>Related blog entries</th>
<th>Last access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glossary of Common Writing Terms</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Wednesday, 21 December 2011, 03:06 PM (15 days 6 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary of Common Errors in Writing</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Wednesday, 21 December 2011, 03:17 PM (15 days 6 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot Topics for Research &amp; Writing</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Wednesday, 21 December 2011, 02:54 PM (15 days 7 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logical Fallacies</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Wednesday, 21 December 2011, 03:03 PM (15 days 6 hours)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Topic 8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Views</th>
<th>Related blog entries</th>
<th>Last access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Focus</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Friday, 30 September 2011, 03:03 PM (97 days 7 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph Development</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Thursday, 11 August 2011, 08:02 AM (147 days 14 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph Patterns 1: Help with Organization</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Views</td>
<td>Related blog entries</td>
<td>Last access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph Patterns 2: More Help with Organization</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Thursday, 11 August 2011, 08:04 AM (147 days 14 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Adjective Clauses to Enhance Sentence Structure</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Thursday, 11 August 2011, 08:05 AM (147 days 14 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic Sentences</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Tuesday, 11 August 2011, 08:14 AM (147 days 14 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Unity</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Thursday, 11 August 2011, 08:14 AM (147 days 14 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of MLA Format</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Thursday, 11 August 2011, 08:14 AM (147 days 14 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Phrases</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Thursday, 11 August 2011, 08:08 AM (147 days 14 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Art of Argumentation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Friday, 30 September 2011, 03:04 PM (97 days 7 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art of Argumentation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Thursday, 11 August 2011, 08:02 AM (147 days 14 hours)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of Contact Between Tutors & Students

- English 150 students & tutors generated a total of 121 posts throughout the term in the English 150 discussion forum.

- English 98 students & tutors generated a total of 112 posts throughout the term in the English 98 discussion forum.

- English 151 students & tutors generated a total of 51 posts throughout the term in the English 151 discussion forum.

- English 120 students & tutors generated a total of 20 posts throughout the term in the English 150 discussion forum.
Marketing Report

The following classes were scheduled for a visit by tutors. During these class visits the tutors distributed flyers, made a brief announcement about the OWC, and introduced themselves, inviting students to “visit” the OWC.

Introduction to College Reading and Composition I - 80169 - ENGL 098 - 010 8:10 am - 9:25 am MW Harlan Center 165 Nicola A. Smith (P)

Introduction to College Reading and Composition I - 80172 - ENGL 098 - 9:40 am - 10:55 am TR Temporary Building 101 Alicia M. Pasquel (P)

Introduction to College Reading and Composition I - 81555 - ENGL 098 - 060 6:10 pm - 9:00 pm M Building 16 212 Michelle L. Troen (P)

Introduction to College Reading and Composition I - 80175 - ENGL 098 - 070 6:10 pm - 9:00 pm R Harlan Center 129 Nicola A. Smith (P)

Grammar and Usage - 81124 - ENGL 098A - 020 Lawrence M. Tjernell

Introduction to College Reading and Composition I - for Non-Native English Speakers - 81780 - ENGL 098SL – 030 11:10 am - 12:25 pm MW Olney Hall 101 Ruth B. Britton (P)

Introduction to College Reading and Composition I - for Non-Native English Speakers - 81781 - ENGL 098SL – 040 6:10 pm - 9:00 pm Harlan Center 166 Cara A. Statucki (P)

Introduction to College Reading and Composition II - 80183 - ENGL 120 - 010 8:10 am - 9:25 am TR Harlan Center 173 Lawrence M. Tjernell

Introduction to College Reading and Composition II - 81216 - ENGL 120 - 012 9:40 am - 10:55 am MW Harlan Center 170 Lucas R. Drisdell (P)

Introduction to College Reading and Composition II - 80184 - ENGL 120 - 020 8:10 am - 9:25 am MW Harlan Center 170 Benjamin E. Jahn (P)

Introduction to College Reading and Composition II - 80185 - ENGL 120 - 03 6:10 pm - 9:00 pm M Building 13 226 Anne F. Walker (P)

Introduction to College Reading and Composition II - 80187 - ENGL 120 - 11:10 am - 12:25 pm MW Harlan Center 170 Blaze L. Woodlief (P)

Introduction to College Reading and Composition II - 80188 - ENGL 120 - 060
12:40 pm - 1:55 pm TR Physical Education Center 092 Elizabeth A. Sheofsky

Introduction to College Reading and Composition II - 80189 - ENGL 120 - 070
11:10 am - 12:25 pm TR Harlan Center 170 Roberta J. Anthes (P)

Introduction to College Reading and Composition II - 80190 - ENGL 120 - 080
12:40 pm - 1:55 pm MW Olney Hall 103 Nicola A. Smith (P)

Introduction to College Reading and Composition II - 80191 - ENGL 120 - 090
10 pm - 9:00 pm T Fine Art Center 215 Rowena L. Southard (P)

Introduction to College Reading and Composition II - 81345 - ENGL 120 - 110
9:40 am - 10:55 am TR Olney Hall 105 Sergio C. Rizzo (P)

Introduction to College Reading and Composition II - for Non-Native English Speakers - 80193 - ENGL 120SL - 0109:40 am - 10:55 am MW Harlan Center 126 Blaze L. Woodlief (P)

Reading and Composition (1A) - 81076 - ENGL 150 - 040
8:10 am - 9:25 am MW Portable Village 5B Noel D. Robertson (P)

Reading and Composition (1A) - 81077 - ENGL 150 - 050
8:10 am - 9:25 am TR Harlan Center 170 Sergio C. Rizzo (P)

Reading and Composition (1A) - 81078 - ENGL 150 - Instructors
9:40 am - 10:55 am TR Harlan Center 169 Benjamin E. Jahn (P)

Reading and Composition (1A) - 81080 - ENGL 150 – 070 9:40 am - 10:55 am
MW Harlan Center 171 Kaitlyn F. Gallagher

Reading and Composition (1A) - 81083 - ENGL 150 - 11:10 am - 12:25 pm
MW Business & Management Center 101 John A. Sutherland (P)

Reading and Composition (1A) - 81085 - ENGL 150 – 100
11:10 am - 12:25 pm MW Physical Education Center 091 Tristan D. Saldana (P)

Reading and Composition (1A) - 81086 - ENGL 150 - 110
6:10 pm - 9:00 pm Harlan Center 169 Tristan D. Saldana (P)

Reading and Composition (1A) - 81348 - ENGL 150 - 120
9:40 am - 10:55 am TR Harlan Center 161 Cara A. Statucki (P)

Reading and Composition (1A) - 81256 - ENGL 150 - 11:10 am - 12:25 pm David T. King (P)
Help with Organization
by Frances Slater - Sunday, 25 November 2011, 09:42 PM
I need help with my analysis paper. Does it flow well?

Re: Slater Analysis Paper
by Elizabeth Sheofsky - Thursday, 15 September 2011, 10:20 PM

Hi Frances,

Thanks for posting to the Online Writing Center. I'm not familiar with the book or author that you are writing about, and as I read through your paragraphs, I didn't get a complete sense of what had happened to Joseph or how Slater helped him to overcome his mental illness. You do include several examples of imagery and analogy to support the claim that you make in your thesis, but throughout your essay - in your introduction and in your body paragraphs - you need to provide more context for your argument - more details and explanation from the book so
that your reader has a better understanding of Joseph's mental state and Slater's techniques for helping him.

Though your examples are relevant, you tend to stay on a pretty general level as you are analyzing them. I suggest including more explanation of how these examples show that Slater is beginning to understand Joseph more and therefore help him to overcome his pain and fears.

Your citations are correct, and I've made a few comments about integrating your quotes more clearly in the paragraphs below.

Hope this helps.

Beth

“Veritas Vos Liberabit” means “the truth shall set you free” (Wikipedia). (THE PURPOSE AND MEANING OF THE NEXT SEVERAL SENTENCES, IN BRACKETS, ISN'T CLEAR; I'M NOT SURE HOW THESE IDEAS SUPPORT YOUR OVERALL POINT OR FIT TOGETHER. INSTEAD OF STAYING ON SUCH A GENERAL LEVEL, YOUR INTRODUCTION SHOULD GIVE YOUR READER SOME CONTEXT FOR YOUR ESSAY: TELL US WHO THE CHARACTERS ARE AND GIVE US SOME BACKGROUND THAT WILL CLARIFY YOUR ARGUMENT ABOUT THEM) There is a limit to how much the mind of a human being can handle that at the point where a boundary is violated. There is little hope for resilience and reconnection to their livelihood; eradicate the ills of separation. Trust and connection with another is necessary to regain the strength and peace to rise above the permanent mental scars. (INCLUDE FIRST NAME) Slater, as the author and psychologist, shares her journey with her audience about the frustrations, fear, and the triumphs of her working relationship with a schizophrenic patient. Slater’s chapter, Some Kind of Cleansing from her memoir, Welcome to My Country, reveals that underneath one’s mask is the true sense of being (THEIR TRUE PERSONALITY?). Healing takes form when we grasp the reason behind the wounds and extend it, understand it, and relate to it in our own lives for it is necessary for human survival (I'M NOT SURE WHAT YOU MEAN IN THIS GENERAL STATEMENT. DO YOU MEAN THAT EVERY PERSON NEEDS TO UNDERSTAND THEIR OWN PAIN BEFORE THEY CAN HEAL? ARE YOU REFERRING SPECIFICALLY TO JOSEPH? WHAT IS NECESSARY TO HUMAN SURVIVAL?). Slater’s use of imagery and analogy through her journey engages her readers to gain an understanding of Joseph’s haywired mind who lost the ability (“AFTER HE LOST THE ABILITY”?) to organize his words and thoughts.

(START THE NEXT PARAGRAPH WITH A TOPIC SENTENCE THAT MAKES A CLAIM ABOUT WHAT WE LEARN ABOUT JOSEPH THROUGH SLATER’S USE OF IMAGERY)

Joseph is forty-six years old and was a student from Princeton University before
his mental illness steals his passion of language. Joseph craves writing. Through Slater's use of imagery, she states "... on some days he wears a floppy bow tie, on other days an army helmet and a green shirt with fake medals of honor dangling from the pockets. Although he claims to have crouched in the foxholes of World War I and sloshed through the jungles of Vietnam, Joseph, in actuality, has never been to war in the way we know it" (68). The "floppy bow tie" is an image reminiscent of his childhood where Joseph’s father takes pride in appearances and the exquisite education that Joseph began to acquire at Princeton University. Joseph retains his hope to connect with the outside world with the “fake medals of honor dangling from the pockets” (68). With these words, we visualize that he has a keen sense of his accomplishments and his pride as the golden child from his family to attend the most prestigious school in the world. Joseph suffers from his inability to write and communicate clearly. The images of war reflect Joseph stuck in a dark tunnel where fear is constant amongst his bouts of hallucinations and delusions.

Slater’s use of imagery also defines the terrors of Joseph’s schizophrenic struggles. Joseph is adamant to fight the ills of his mind with “an army helmet”. “The terrors live within him; the bombs are bursts of dopamine that sting the raw ravines of his brain” (68). We describe bursts of dopamine as a constant rush of adrenaline which causes chaos and fear within Joseph’s psyche. Slater conveys what is like in Joseph’s internal world and her devotion to uncover his fear and his truth; understand (SHE WANTS TO UNDERSTAND, OR SHE DOES UNDERSTAND?) his obsessive chaotic language on his mountains of papers and scribbled walls. She is eager to connect with Joseph as much he is within himself.

(THIS PARAGRAPH SHOULD ALSO START WITH A TOPIC SENTENCE THAT DIRECTLY SUPPORTS ONE OF THE CLAIMS YOU MAKE IN YOUR THESIS)

Although frustrated, Slater finally makes a profound connection with Joseph as she states "(THIS PHRASE NEEDS A SUBJECT. WHO OR WHAT SCRAWLED ONTO HIS PAGE?)scrawled my way right onto his page" (90). This action triggers some window of lucidity from Joseph. After a few days of solitude, Joseph watch for "... kids to pour out of the high school doors, and when a man wearing a Yale sweatshirt walked by, he banged on the glass. "Veritas,” he said to the air, and made a little bow. He attached so many medals of honor to his army shirt that he clanged when he walked. Eddie reported to us that Joseph sat up in bed all Sunday night, one arm raised in the air" (93). (IS THIS QUOTE
FROM SLATER? WHO IS EDDIE?) “Veritas” is the motto of Harvard University, a Latin word meaning Truth (Wikipedia). This small word gives us powerful meaning of Joseph’s cravings to attend Harvard. The image of his arm raised is similar to his clear pathway amongst mental chaos to determination and opportunities to his desperate desire to reconnect to the outside world, to the prestigious education and to the student he once was before his illness “ravaged” his mind. The next morning, Joseph announced to the staff, “I am going back to school” (93). Once again, his many medals are his constant reminders of his pride, his accomplishments of enrollment in an institution of higher education, his love of language, and the ability of have coherent thoughts. He is desperate to connect to his true sense of being; rise above the ills of his “ravaged” brain. (SO, DID SOMETHING HAPPEN TO HELP HIM TO UNDERSTAND HIS PAIN AND MOVE BEYOND IT?)

AGAIN, THIS PARAGRAPH NEEDS TO START WITH A TOPIC SENTENCE THAT CLEARLY SUPPORTS THE THESIS. ALSO, THE FIRST SENTENCE HERE IS A FRAGMENT

Another example of the woes as Joseph explains to Slater, “Worms sleep inside me, all clouds and test tubes” (90). In Joseph’s mind, we can visualize darkness with puzzles of words and other foreign pieces scattered about. Slater’s memory is triggered when she sees fear in Joseph’s eyes as he tries to make sense of his own writing. She remembers her own difficulty with language when she tried to pronounce a word in front of her kindergarten class. (I'M NOT SURE WHAT THE PURPOSE OF THIS PARAGRAPH IS OR HOW IT SUPPORTS YOUR THESIS. IT NEEDS MORE ANALYSIS TO SHOW HOW IT SUPPORTS YOUR MAIN IDEA)

Later, Slater provides the glimmer of light at the end of his dark tunnel. She finds the missing piece of the dark puzzle to connect Joseph with the love of language and writing. As Slater study the plaque at a museum, “. . .(THIS QUOTE DOES NOT FIT GRAMMATICALLY IN THIS SENTENCE AND NEEDS MORE EXPLANATION) cilia that acts like filters, catching and then clearing away dark particles and poisons. Keeping us free from intrusive toxins, cilia are crucial to human survival” (101). Here, we can clearly understand Joseph’s mental pains(I THINK THAT THIS POINT NEEDS MORE EXPLANATION IN ORDER FOR US TO UNDERSTAND HOW IT SHOWS JOSEPH'S PAIN). Without the cilia, there is disconnection to life as we know it. The toxins are similar to the disruptive chaos Joseph experiences from his mental illness. Using the techniques to perform as the cilia(UNCLEAR PHRASING. WHAT TECHNIQUES?), Slater reorganizes the puzzle of words and trims the “chunks” off his writing; triumphantly Joseph is found not lost in his chaotic world of language (108).
In conclusion, we can gather that Slater connects with her patients through intense investigation into the patient’s shattered lives to bond the gap between the patients’ loss of self to the warm embraces of their livelihood. Slater goes to extreme lengths to educate us on the ills of the human mind and gain insight with her patients by reflecting on her own memories of shortcomings. Through her style of writing, her readers are able to visualize the disconnections and connections that are paramount throughout her memoir, *Welcome to My Country*. Perhaps psychologists could improve the practices of treating their patients without boundaries and exist as one. We conclude, the truth shall set us free.

Consequences of Political Apathy
by **Michael Coleman** - Sunday, 20 November 2011, 09:42 PM

Hi, I was hoping to get some feedback on this paper as a whole, namely if my thesis statement is clear, and backed by clear topic sentences with persuasive enough support. Any other comments are also greatly appreciated. The assignment for this paper is to write a persuasive essay with a clear audience. Thank you for your time. -Mike

Re: Consequences of Political Apathy
by **Kaitlyn Gallagher** - Monday, 21 November 2011, 10:09 PM

Hi Michael, Great topic for an essay! Here are my notes on reading this draft, per your specific questions:

Your topic sentences do stray notably from your thesis claim and subject to a broader/difference subject increases in civic participation, of US responsibility, future disadvantages as other nations surpass the US.

In this last case, you do reconnect your paragraph content to your essay claim, which somewhat saves the day, but your topic sentences really should anchor your paragraph in a main idea that is reflective of the thesis directly. Both should be present: a strong topic sentence as a "contract" with your reader stating what point will be developed re the thesis, and a clear ending connector closing the paragraph, reiterating that connection after the evidence has been presented. So review your paragraphs to be sure that the content of them answers the "consequences of political apathy" thesis.

I noticed while reading, for example, that some argument you present reflects
more of the reasons we should be politically active, rather than the consequences of not being so.

You are a strong writer! I hope these comments are helpful.

KG

Re: Consequences of Political Apathy
by Michael Coleman - Tuesday, 22 November 2011, 11:02 PM

Thank you Kaitlyn for your feedback. I do have an issue with starting with a certain idea and then as I start writing and re-writing it morphs into something else. I will try to revise with more clarity in regards to my thesis and topic sentences. What a quick response! This was my first time using this online tutoring and I'm not sure why I waited this long to check it out. I will be back soon...

Thank you again,

Mike

XLOWC.201180 » Forums » English 150 (1A) Discussion Forum » E150 Proposal/Keon

Re: E150 Proposal/Keon
by Elizabeth Sheofsky - Tuesday, 11 October 2011, 09:29 PM

Hi Patricia,

I enjoyed reading your draft; you've included some relevant quotations and examples to support your claim. I do think that it is important that some of the information in your conclusion be moved to the introduction; I hadn't realized until the very end of your essay that your purpose here is to convince the school board to adopt a program on media literacy. Also, your conclusion doesn't feel like a conclusion to me; it includes some useful quotations that introduce new information and that would better serve you if they were part of a body paragraph. I suggest reorganizing the introduction and conclusion so that all of the information in those two paragraphs comes in the first couple of paragraphs of your essay (but together, this would be too long for one paragraph, so be sure to organize your ideas carefully). If the purpose of this assignment is to convince the school board to adopt a particular educational program, then that (plus the reasons you are going to use to persuade the board) should be part of your thesis.

Here are a few other comments on the organization of your essay:

The paragraph that begins "Some could argue...." in which you refute the
opposing viewpoint, could use a stronger topic sentence. Even if some people argued that this were the case, a program that would greatly benefit 50% of students seems beneficial enough in itself. Would the opposition be arguing that a media literacy program wouldn't be cost effective since it may seem that it would benefit only girls? State their claim more clearly, and then refute it.

Also, your organization of facts about the survey needs to be clearer. Instead of writing, "Here are a couple answers to a survey question....," you should first state the question that Damico and Fuller posed to students and then give the two students' answers. But don't stop there; after you give their answers, you should include some analysis of the students' viewpoints to support your point that it is important that educators understand students' points of view about the media, and then explain how this understanding will help teachers to create a strong media literacy program.

I think you have a strong start here, and with some reorganization and a new conclusion that wraps up your overall argument, you'll have a really interesting essay.

Hope this helps!

Beth

---

From: Elizabeth Sheofsky <esheofsky@mycom.marin.edu>
Date: September 17, 2011 3:20:39 PM PDT
To: Ingrid Kelly <ingridkelly@mycom.marin.edu>
Subject: XLOWC.201180: Re: Help on thesis and concluding device. Advice

Hi Vicente,

This is a strong draft of your essay! You've done a good job of including specific and relevant research to support your claims. I've made some comments below about each of your paragraphs:

Intro: You could use a smoother transition between the first three introductory sentences and the following sentence where you start to address the specific argument of your essay:

Life is full of unexpected challenges. Most of these challenges we face every waking hour are the result of how we have been educated. The more educated
we are, the more tools we have to face reality and its circumstances. Due to the continuously poor scores and school performance from African-American students on standardized tests...

I think your thesis is clear and makes some important points that you go on to explain in the body paragraphs. My only comment about your thesis is that its direct focus is on the two major opposing arguments that you will address, and then you only very briefly mention your argument (better scores). This isn't wrong, but you might consider making your thesis a bit more balanced by developing the last part of the sentence to be a bit more specific. I'd also recommend changing "the media and its audience" to "the media and the public."

Body paragraph #1:

This paragraph starts off with some pretty broad, somewhat vague ideas; you begin to address the specific argument of your essay in the fifth sentence. The paragraph needs to begin with a focused topic sentence that directly states one particular reason that using Ebonics as a teaching tool would be beneficial to students. Can you crystallize the main idea that you want to get at in this paragraph into a one-sentence topic sentence right from the beginning? (I'm wondering if the last sentence in this paragraph is actually your topic sentence, though it may be too specific to be a t.s. as it seems to focus only on vocabulary.)

This sentence needs some revising:

Adopting African American Vernacular English is another tool towards closing the gap between African-American students and students from other districts is a pragmatic approach that would ensure a way to suppress a suboptimal situation in this disadvantaged district.

BP #3:

You argue that the public view of Ebonics is erroneous because most people believe that it is a dialect, but you haven't refuted this incorrect idea and provided the correct information. Are you arguing, then, that Ebonics is actually a language, not a dialect, and that the public needs to be made aware of this? And if it is a language, why does that mean that it should be used in teaching? You need to go further in this paragraph to educate your readers on 'the truth' about Ebonics and to explain why this means that Ebonics would lead students to more success (in other words, connect the ideas in this paragraph to your thesis).

The following sentence at the end of the paragraph is packed with information that need more explanation. Can you elaborate on these points before you end the paragraph?

Despite the difficulties imposed by the public perception and the perpetuation of such distorted views that affected the community during the early years after the Ebonics resolution, including lack of federal funding (Harris), numerous scientific
studies have been helping to correct this deviation from the obvious benefits of bilingual education (Wolfram).

I know that the next paragraph will go into detail about the scientific studies, but I’d suggest saying more here about lack of funding, how the negative public opinion has harnessed this cause, etc.

BP #4:

You have some good information here, but you need to relate the outcomes of these studies to the Ebonics controversy at the end of the paragraph so that you can directly show how using Ebonics would benefit students in the Oakland school district. Also, you seem to hint at the cognitive benefits that would be achieved through a sort of bilingual education (as you had mentioned in the intro) - can you elaborate on this idea?

Were these studies that you refer to done with students who speak Ebonics, or were they done with students who spoke a different language/dialect?

I'm wondering if the term "vernacular" is more closely related to a dialect or to a language. I'm bringing this up because if if vernacular=dialect, then using this term would seem to contradict the point you alluded to in the previous paragraph, that Ebonics is not a dialect but a language. Just something to think about... I'm not sure how easy it would be to answer this question, as it seems that linguists define these terms differently.

Conclusion:

A good start, but it could use a powerful concluding sentence that emphasizes that using Ebonics as a teaching tool will lead to improvements in education for these students, better test scores, etc.

Hope this helps!

Beth
Bringing Students and Teachers Together

The ‘Ebonics’ Resolution adopted by the Oakland School Board made a policy statement directing the superintendent of schools to devise a program to improve the English-language acquisition and application skills of its African-American students (Full Text 1). The city was facing a very real and grave education problem. Black children represented 53 percent of the district’s enrollment, and roughly 71 percent of them were in special education classes, while 64 percent had been held back a grade. Black students accounted for 67 percent of truancy cases and 80 percent of suspensions and had an average GPA of 1.8 on a standard 4.0 scale (Zeltz 6). This is when the Oakland School Board declared Ebonics, or more commonly referred to by most linguists as African-American Vernacular English (AAVE), a language or dialect to be utilized as a tool in teaching its African-American students Standard English. However, as Cheryl D. Fields points out in her article Ebonics IQ: What have we learned? “Most had never heard of Ebonics before December 18, 1996, and once they did, few understood what the school district meant when it expressed its intent to use this new “language” to teach the district’s African American children.” (par 1) What this decision by the Oakland School Board (OSB) will do is improve the educational experience not only for the students who have been raised in an environment that uses AAVE, but also broaden the teachers abilities in educating those students. The teachers will gain a better understanding of who those students are and where they come from as a direct result of accepting and working with them in the language they are most familiar with.

The success of those students will be largely influenced by the choice teachers make to either accept or not accept the task of learning appropriate methodologies that will help them better understand the educational needs of those students who may have been left behind or excluded based on their color, speech or socioeconomics. It is irresponsible of a teacher to disregard a student whose needs may require them to practice methods that lay outside the margins of their familiar pedagogy. It should go without saying that the task of teachers is to teach their students to be proficient in language and literacy, as well as all academic subjects. It should also be a given that teachers should be sensitive to the backgrounds of their individual students and not alienate black children and youth because of the way they speak (Woodford, 1997). The teachers’ approach in creating an atmosphere that invites those children who are most vulnerable to participate and engage in the classroom is paramount and so needs to be examined and well executed. If we hope to create positive communities in which students from diverse backgrounds can thrive academically, we need to examine how our approach to students’ linguistic diversity either includes or pushes out our most vulnerable learners (Christensen 2008).
Including the most vulnerable learners by allowing Ebonics in the classroom will allow teachers to become more creative in their methods of teaching. There are many ways in which teachers can successfully use AAVE to improve their students success rates in learning Standard English. John Rickford, in his letter to Senator Spector cites 6 studies which show that taking the vernaculars of students into account can facilitate their mastery of the standard variety, as well as the curriculum-central skills of reading and writing (1997). Contrastive Analysis is an example of one such method in which the teacher draws the students’ attention specifically to the differences between the vernacular and the Standard English. In his Writings on the Ebonics Issue: Using the Vernacular to Teach the Standard, Rickford points out a study conducted by Hanni Taylor, a professor at Aurora University, that produced positive results from using this method. “What she found after eleven weeks was that the kids who were using traditional techniques showed and 8.5 percent increase in their use of Ebonics speech in their writing while the kids who had benefited from Contrastive Analysis showed a 59 percent decrease in their use of Ebonics features in their writing.” (1998) It clear that there are many ways the students will benefit from teachers who develop more culturally related teaching methods such as this one.

It is well known that teachers’ expectations effect the students’ achievements. When teachers engage those students who will benefit most from using AAVE as a tool, the biases, judgments, and prejudices (of both parties) will diminish, creating more positive expectations. “Teachers often perceive African-American students from working or lower-class backgrounds as incapable of high-quality academic work.” say’s Gloria Ladson-Billings in her article What We Can Learn from Multicultural Education Research (1994). When teachers make the time and effort to engage those students by bringing AAVE into the classroom the walls of communication come down, allowing for the teachers to become more acquainted with the students needs and abilities, thus educating themselves as well as the students. In the same article Ladson-Billings even suggests that teachers “spend time in their students’ community and apply in the classroom what they learned in student’ homes.” (p. 24) Teachers can not have positive expectations of their culturally diverse students if they do not understand the cultural diversities those students are raised and live in.

I added the file in an attachment, I hope that works.

I would like to know how my thesis topic is coming accross. I would like to finish at this point with my conclusion and wonder if I have stated enough fact to do that. Also, I can't seem to find out how to dbl space the body. Thank you for your input. Tricia

**XLOWC.201180 » Forums » English 150 (1A) Discussion Forum » 2nd Draft T. Keon/Ebonics**

**Re: 2nd Draft T. Keon/Ebonics**

by **Kaitlyn Gallagher** - Friday, 16 September 2011, 10:01 AM
Hi Tricia,

You write ably! In general as a writer you should keep an eye on wordiness and be sure you are strictly adhering each paragraph to your thesis points. Here are my specific suggestions:

pp1: You might reconsider the phrase "This is when" because what you're establishing in the passage is that there was a grave ongoing problem in need of addressing, rather than addressing a time or event that caused the recommendation.

pp2: Work on simplifying and making more direct the topic sentence in this paragraph: "The success of those students will be largely influenced by the choice teachers make to either accept or not accept the task of learning appropriate methodologies that will help them better understand the educational needs of those students who may have been left behind or excluded based on their color, speech or socioeconomics." In addition to being a "packed" sentence, it does not exactly reflect the claim of the thesis, which states that teachers will benefit from using AAVE. This sentence rather states that students success will be impacted if the teachers choose to not use appropriate methods. It also goes broader in reference and tone that the previous passages, which refer directly to AAVE or Ebonics, vs appropriate methodologies.

pp2's body is really arguing that all students have the right to good education and it is the teacher's mandate to provide it, so perhaps adjust your thesis to reflect that claim. In my opinion, it is a stronger one than the idea that teachers will benefit.

You might rethink the quote about teachers spending time in the students community, since it is not directly applicable to the controversy around AAVE. This paragraph also needs more evidence in terms of the effect of using AAVE on teacher expectations, and therefore on student performance. With that addition you could move to concluding.

Highlighting the entire text and choosing paragraph under View in Microsoft Word should give you the option to choose doublespacing.

Hope this is helpful!

Best, Kaitlyn
I would appreciate your comments on each paragraph so I know what works and what doesn’t. Thanks!

American students. The reason that Oakland school district took this step was because “African Americans accounted for 71% of the students enrolled in spelling education or learning disabilities-type classes, but only 37% of those enrolled in Gifted/Talented Education classes” (American Shibboleth: Ebonics by Stanley Novak) (YOU JUST NEED TO USE THE AUTHOR’S LAST NAME IN THIS CITATION, SINCE YOUR WORKS CITED ENTRY BEGINS WITH HIS LAST NAME). They wanted their students to be able to speak Standard English. But I don’t agree with this because they want to dedicate an entire program to students who use Ebonics. I simply don’t believe it is necessary and it harms the students in the program as well. Standard English should be used to teach students. (SEE MY NOTE ABOVE ABOUT THE THESIS. YOU COULD COMBINE THE IDEAS IN THESE LAST 3 SENTENCES)

(WHAT IS THE MAIN ARGUMENT OF THE NEXT PARAGRAPH? IS IT THAT IT IS UNFAIR TO DEDICATE A PROGRAM TO EBONICS BECAUSE IT ISN’T A TRUE LANGUAGE? IF SO, WORK ON STARTING THE PARAGRAPH WITH A TOPIC SENTENCE THAT MAKES THIS CLAIM AND THEN SUPPORTING THAT ARGUMENT WITH MORE EXPLANATION)

The Oakland school district was going to use Standard English Proficiency Program to introduce Ebonics in school according to American Shibboleth: Ebonics. So funding (YOU HAVEN’T MENTIONED FUNDING YET, SO YOU ARE RESPONDING TO A POINT THAT YOU HAVEN’T YET EXPLAINED) isn’t the problem: the problem is that they were going to use an entire program for this. What about the Hispanics and the Asians who need to learn Standard English? They were going to be excluded because this program was going to be dedicated to something that is not even a language (IF IT IS THE CASE THAT EBONICS IS NOT A LANGUAGE, YOU NEED TO EXPLAIN/SUPPORT THIS USING EVIDENCE FROM THE READINGS OR YOUR RESEARCH. WHY ISN’T IT A LANGUAGE, AND WHY DOES THIS MEAN IT SHOULDN’T BE USED IN SCHOOLS?). That is unfair to the other students.

A program dedicated to Ebonics is simply not necessary. There are other programs in the school district that help students who speak Ebonics (LIKE WHAT? INCLUDE SOME SPECIFIC EXAMPLES). The fact is you can’t force someone to learn something. Few students succeed in learning Standard English (IS THIS TRUE? AND ARE YOU REFERRING ONLY TO AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS? EVIDENCE?), but this isn’t the school’s fault. School teachers reinforce Standard English in their students when they speak it. If students don’t learn it, it’s because they don’t see the importance of learning Standard English. (OAKY, YOUR ARGUMENT HERE IS CLEAR, BUT IT COULD USE SOME MORE EVIDENCE, EXAMPLES, AND/OR REASONING TO
This brings us to our next reason.

If the program was to go into action we basically would be demonstrating to students that Standard English is not necessary since they can get their classes in Ebonics. Teachers would be minimizing the need to speak Standard English. Yet, we know the importance of this in the workforce and our children should know too. This program would be detrimental to our children. (AGAIN, YOU ARE MAKING A GOOD POINT HERE, BUT THIS IS A PRETTY SHORT PARAGRAPH THAT DOESN'T CONTAIN A LOT OF EXPLANATION. CAN YOU SAY MORE ABOUT HOW THIS PROGRAM WOULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO CHILDREN AND HOW IT WOULD PREVENT THEIR SUCCESS LATER IN LIFE?)

Ebonics should not be used as a teaching tool in public schools. There are many programs already out there helping students with learning disabilities. By allowing this program to go into action we would be harming the students by lessening the need to speak Standard English in school. So make the right the choice and use Standard English and only Standard English in the Oakland School district. WHO IS THIS LAST SENTENCE DIRECTED AT? THE SCHOOL BOARD? THE TEACHERS? THE PARENTS? YOUR TONE HAS SHIFTED FROM CONVEYING INFORMATION TO ADDRESSING AN AUDIENCE DIRECTLY. IF YOU ARE SPEAKING TO THE SCHOOL BOARD, THEN YOU SHOULD ADOPT THAT ONE THROUGH THE REST OF YOUR ESSAY)

Appendix

OWC Tutoring Guidelines

Please review the following guidelines established for tutors assigned to the OWC:

- Tutors should check into the OWC starting on the second week of classes and stop checking posts after finals week.

- The OWC runs on a first come-first-serve model. OWC tutors should give priority to the earliest dated messages.
• Please give priority to students who have not received a response from another tutor.

• Please check into the OWC site on your assigned days to insure that we have tutors responding every day to make certain students are receiving responses in a timely manner. Our goal is to respond to messages within 48 hours (24 hours during summer sessions). If your weekly hours are not spent responding to students, please take the opportunity to complete any of the suggested tasks listed below.

• Each OWC shift includes a specific time frame. When tutor checks in on the OWC during the week, they sometimes wondering who's going to pick up the posts, especially if they came in late the day before. So when we are assigned days to check in and respond, the time frame should be a 24-hour span that ends at some point in the evening.

  o For example, if my assigned day is Sunday, Monday, or whatever, I would be responsible for every post that came in by six o'clock on that day, and anything left over from the day before that came in after 6:00. Where two people are assigned the same day, we would share the posts that came in from Monday evening after six, all the way through Tuesday at 6:00. There would be no ambiguity, and we could be sure all posts would be answered in a fair distribution--as fair as it can be considering that posts from students are randomly timed.

• Please use other tutors and other instructors as a resource. Ask questions, ask for support, keep communication open. If you are feeling overwhelmed and need more help, please report these difficulties so that we may ask for more online tutors if needed.

**Suggested Tasks**

• Review the models of “best practices” for online tutoring responses

• Create training materials for tutors for sample responses, FAQ page, or other materials

• Research sites to include on the English Links page for grammar, research, tutoring, and writing links

• Explore the site to become more familiar with chat and discussion forums

• Explore the Tutor Training Links posted in the Tutor Section of the OWC
- Suggest changes, additions or deletions to existing materials posted on the OWC

- Speak to other instructors and students about the OWC to inform them of the service; you may wish to visit classes to make announcements, send e-mail, or create flyers.

- Create a “Macro” file of responses for thesis statements, development, unity issues, etc. so that you can use them when responding online

- Train other tutors or students to use the OWC.

- Share resources with other tutors, macro files, comment tips, etc.

- Add to the suggested tasks list

- Collect and distribute sample student postings to for other tutors and sample answers to use for future training sessions.

- Share concerns, ideas, and suggestions with the tutors and faculty by e-mailing these suggestions to the tutor/faculty e-mail list.