

To: Michael Kaler  
From: Chester Scoville  
Re: WDI Final report, ENG202

Date: 22 May 2018

a) What did we do? On the whole, we executed the plan for this course according to our initial proposal: we asked the students to write their essays in stages, beginning each term with a short proposal at the outset, moving on to a partial draft, then culminating with a full final essay. Each of these assignments was marked with commentary by their Teaching Assistants, and returned in sufficient time to incorporate the feedback into the students' subsequent work. In addition to all of this, we assigned periodic short, formative writing tasks in the tutorials, both analytical and creative, so that each student built up a small portfolio of work over the course's duration.

The major differences between what we planned to do and what we ended up doing were largely circumstantial. There was some miscommunication between the Department and the Registrar's office during the previous summer, which led to the tutorials being scheduled at awkward times; this, combined with the ongoing shifts in our curriculum (addressed more fully in section e) led to a much smaller enrolment than we had anticipated. This meant that there were fewer tutorial sections, and fewer students in those tutorial sections. The TAs therefore were able to devote more time per assignment than we had planned, but also sometimes had a harder time running the tutorial exercises than we had planned due to attendance issues and a small cohort. We anticipate these issues to be resolved next year.

b) How did it work (objective)? The students' marks overall were

within the usual range for a course of this size and level; however, the RGASC analysis of the students' writing demonstrated marked improvement in multiple areas of writing, not always reflected in the final assessments. For example, the RGASC analysts found improvement in the areas of clarity, organization, argument structure, citation, and close reading, which carried consistently into the second term. These results, coupled with my own observations of the students' writing and the TAs' observations, seem to indicate that this structure is a foundation worth building on.

c) How did it work (subjective)? In the students' course evaluation surveys, the multiple-stage essays were mentioned positively, as an opportunity to gain feedback and improve writing. The Teaching Assistants also mentioned in their final interviews that they felt this structure to be positive, although they did have some very useful suggestions for how the structure might be tweaked for the next time around. Most encouragingly from my point of view is the comparison of the pre- and post- surveys that asked about student confidence; in nearly every area, it appears that student confidence in their own writing abilities had increased to at least some degree by the end of the course. It has long been my belief that one of the greatest challenges to writing is nerves; if this kind of structure can help to boost student confidence, then that is a positive result.

d) What have we learned? One of the major challenges facing the students and the TAs was timing, especially regarding the initial stage of the essay, the proposal. This was due rather early in the term, before the students had done much reading, and was mentioned sometimes as a barrier. In some of my other courses, however, I tried something similar but with a different name; instead of calling it an "essay proposal" I called it a "statement of interest"; which seemed to go down better. The TAs' ideas about incorporating different assignment stages such as a close reading

exercise were well thought of, and I shall consider tweaking the structure accordingly. We also learned the importance of good communication in the setting up of tutorial times and places! The latter has been smoothed out for the coming year. Overall, I believe that the project has been a success with potential for improvement.

e) What would you change? The course has undergone a major structural transformation in two senses: first, starting next year (2018-2019) it will be a mandatory core requirement for all English majors, whereas previously students could choose between it and ENG201. Second, it will be converted to an H course, running in the first term only, and leading to ENG203 in the second term. We anticipate a larger cohort, and have set the enrolment at 200 for next term, necessitating 4 TAs running a total of 8 tutorial sections for 12 weeks. Because we have not run this version of the course before, we are asking that full enrolment be funded.

Finally, we have confirmed that all tutorial sections will be held at reasonable times, and furthermore that all of them will be held in Active Learning Classroom Light versions, as we had hoped to achieve by this year in our initial proposal. Training the TAs in the use of ALC Lights will be part of my responsibility and covered by the DDAH. This transformation will, we hope, lend additional interactivity to the course, something that the students, in their year-end opinion surveys, mentioned as something they would have liked more of.

Because the course's structure is different, the total funding will be different (and smaller in total) albeit following the same model. I anticipate the new breakdown for hours to be as follows:

3 hours WDI training for 4 TAs = 12 hours

17 hours (5 minutes/student for 200 students) checking formative

writing portfolios for completeness

100 hours (30 minutes/student for 200 students) draft feedback

The total would be **35 minutes per student of additional support**, which is the same that this course received last year, plus the hours for WDI training, for a total of **129 hours**, or 32.25 hours per TA.

At the rate of \$42.26 an hour, that would come out to **\$5451.54**, or \$1362.89 per TA.