

## FLEX plan for Jan 11—DRAFT

**Title:** Get ready for spring semester! Scaffolding writing assignments and using the Center for Academic Support

**Led by:** Alex Sterling, Sandra Mills

**Day:** Thurs Jan 20

**Time:** 10 am to noon

**Description:**

Get ready for spring semester! At least half of this workshop will be free work time for you—with help available. Faculty of all disciplines are welcome.

1) **Introductions**

2) **Handout: help plan + English sample.**

3) **Make a Student Help Plan for your course or department.** Think about what you do and what you'd like to do in making sure that all of your students know how to get help outside of class (and sometimes in class). Do you have student tutors available for your course? Do your students use the reading and writing consultants? Do your students use office hour and/or The Professor is In?"

a. **Gover a sample—English.**

b. **...which leads to the purpose of the thing, bringing your dept together, thinking about how to improve...**

c. **10 minutes to write yours—for your course, maybe just what you want to do for this semester—or for your dept.**

4) **Work on planning the writing assignments you will assign this semester: how to scaffold so that you effectively guide your students through the process of writing a major paper.** This part is a continuation of the "Breakout Session" we did at the end of August on designing and scaffolding writing assignments.

a. **Get handouts: 2 chapters from Bean, maybe a sample scaffolding plan, 4 steps for revising, words for prompts handout in Johns stuff.**

b. **Review Bean (237-8), key concepts like lengthening the writing process.**

i. **Goals/essential things:**

1. **Make sure they truly understand the task and what it's for.**

2. **Teach them something about the process for working on it.**

3. **Jumpstart their thinking somehow.**

4. **Lengthen the writing process, especially prewriting and revising.**

5. **A bit of feedback somehow before the final draft (Office hr/the Core visit, due-date before the final draft, peer review, models feedback)**

c. **Work on a plan—how? Template ideas:**

i. **Prewriting, writing, revising, proofreading—a little help for each phase**

ii. **Week 3, week 4, week 5, week 6—using Bean, maybe plan 15 mins of classtime each week for scaffolding plus what they have to do for HW—such as write a proposal or outline, steps for working on it...**

d. **Worktime! Use computers, work, get feedback, write a plan you'll use this semester.**

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Later on—email Bean's list of scaffolding ideas to all fac as followup? General idea: shoot faculty things periodically while promoting the Core.

## Student help plan

In \_\_\_\_\_ English \_\_\_\_\_ (your department, program, or course), this is how students can get help with their work. Please send to the Center for Academic Support: [asterling@losmedanos.edu](mailto:asterling@losmedanos.edu); [smills@losmedanos.edu](mailto:smills@losmedanos.edu). Thanks!

### During class (e.g. in-class tutors or assistants):

We have a program of in-class tutors in developmental English classes. We used to have tutors in every level below Eng 100 (except ESL), but with budget cuts we now only have tutors in Eng 50, 60, and 70. Tutors are in class once a week for an hour, and having tutors is voluntary for instructors. The tutors help with critical reading in small groups, mentor the students on the essay-writing process, give feedback on thesis statements or essay outlines, give advice for adjusting to college life, and more. Ideally we have 2-4 tutors in each class, because we've found it hard to make it work with only one. Some instructors have been unsure how to use the tutors effectively, so we've started to provide more guidance for them. We want to continue developing pedagogy for in-class English tutors.

Lab time: NA

### Instructor office hour (including "The Professor is In"):

Attending office hour is really encouraged in English; students really benefit from the one-on-one, especially when working on an essay. Unfortunately, adjunct faculty (we have lots, 25 or 30 I think) don't have very good offices; many faculty share the same two cubicles. A real office or two for adjunct faculty would be a big improvement.

As for "The Professor is In", we currently (fall 10) have 3 English faculty doing an office hour a week in the Core. I think we could increase this number.

### Reading & writing consultants (for all writing assignments, help with challenging reading, reading strategies, and more):

This is a crucial resource for English, especially composition courses, and a huge proportion of students working with consultants are from English. I hope all English faculty are heavily promoting this resource to their students.

### Peer tutors, "the maroon squad" (Do you have any in your subject? If so, where do they operate?):

Because we have the consultants for reading & writing and the in-class tutors, we don't use the maroon squad in the Center for Academic Support.

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Other: We have a computer lab in CC-283 that for English, and an ESL computer lab next door. Some students go to the lab once a week as part of their English classes. Others use the lab during open lab hours.

## FLEX PROPOSAL for Jan 10

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- 1) Make a **Student Help Plan** for your course or department. Think about what you do and what you'd like to do in making sure that all of your students know how to get help outside of class (and sometimes in class). Do you have student tutors available for your course? Do your students use the reading and writing consultants? Do your students use office hour and/or The Professor is In?"
  - 2) Work on planning the **writing assignments** you will assign this semester: how to scaffold so that you effectively guide your students through the process of writing a major paper. This part is a continuation of the "Breakout Session" we did at the end of August on designing and scaffolding writing assignments.
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# How to Design Great Writing Assignments and Guide Students Through Them (Without Killing Yourself or Others)

Led by Alex Sterling with Sandra Mills and Dave Zimny  
Location: CO-300 (The Core: Center for Academic Support)

We will consider two questions:

1. How can I write an effective prompt, or writing assignment?
2. How can I scaffold? That is, how can I guide students along the way? Most importantly, how can I scaffold without (a) burying myself in rough drafts and thus neglect my personal life completely and/or commit to sleeping only 3 hours a night, or (b) risk not getting through my course content by spending so much in-class time helping students with the writing assignments.

Designed for GE and CTE faculty—anyone who assigns writing of any kind to students. We will share ideas with each other and provide resource material you can take with you.

PLEASE BRING: A copy or draft of a writing assignment you would like to give to students this semester.

1. introduction

2. Discussion in small groups  
- A. type group in sample

3. what should be on a prompt? = *sketch*  
*ideas*  
*not*  
*unshel*  
*assign*

4. give Basic packet?

→ here is what I hear 1.1 →

~~5. scaffolding~~

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5. cover as leads on study parts  
"I don't have time"

— Scaffolding = Basic 237 = *positive ideas*  
- *Sci chapter 5*  
what do I do  
if  
what might I do -  
what I do  
what I might I do  
what are the  
prompts  
i.e. I would not write.

## Evaluation Goals:

### 1. Knowledge of work:

Improve knowledge / understanding of peer tutor programs:

- a. professional development by attending conferences and or workshops as budget will allow
- b. research best practices of other peer tutoring programs

### 2. Initiative and application/Quality and Quantity of Work?

Improve collection and reporting method of peer tutoring data which is currently collected manually:

- a. Research the possibilities/realm of computer generated collection, specifically the current SARS program for this purpose, working with Dave Wahl
- b. Research the use of SARS, with Dave Wahl, to improve time worked verification for tutors

Create and implement a systemized method for observing tutors during a tutoring session as a tool for evaluation of the program, training, and tutors.

- a. Collaborate with TST
- b. Research other tutor program observations
- c. Collaborate/seek guidance from Center for Academic Support Manager (that means you Tawny)

✕ Improve on online Writing Consultation that I have already created and implemented

- a. renovate online writing portal/service

✓ Create Website pages for Tutoring Program and Professor is in Services.

✓ Outreach

Continue to meet with faculty in depts. to investigate tutoring needs and to inform them of all services available to them

- a. Meet with Student senate/student clubs to inform them about the Center services
- b. Work with tutors to create "tutor club" and act as advisor
- c. Continue to meet with and to collaborate with other depts. and faculty lead to create workshops that address student needs i.e. the transfer dept and workshops

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## Marketing

Market the Center's services with an emphasis on tutoring services through such means as flyers, the tutor newsletter, email blasts, the web pages.

Jandra - This is the stuff from the Ann Johns workshop, which we'll be following up on in August. Alex

## Designing Out-of-Class Writing Assignments: From Objectives to Assessment

A workshop presented by Ann M. Johns, PhD

Professor Emerita, San Diego State University

[www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~annjohns/](http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~annjohns/)

Los Medanos College, March 4, 2009

38-01  
-121-82209

- I. Participants' concerns and interests; objectives for the workshop
  
- II. What does the "Objectives to Assessment Process" consist of?
  - a) *Establishing objectives for the assignment:*
    - Specifically, what do you want students to learn about or demonstrate in this assignment? (Handout 1: Authentic Freshman Assignments and Objectives)
    - What are our objectives for students in terms of:
      - Values, approaches, concepts, or texts from the discipline?
      - Student skills and abilities?
      - Student attitudes or habits of mind?
  - b) *Developing effective prompts for student response*
    - What do students need to know in order to respond appropriately? (Handout 2: The Extended Writing Assignment: Questions)
    - How can we assess their understanding of the prompt?
  - c) *Modeling and instruction:*
    - How do we prepare students to complete the assignment? (Handout 3: Organizational Words in Writing Prompts)
    - How do we assist them in completing the assignment: modeling reading, analyzing model texts, paraphrasing or summarizing discussion.
  - d) *Self- and Peer Review:*
    - How do we encourage students' self-evaluation of their written work? (Handout 4: Student Self-evaluation Sheet)
    - How can we assign peer reviews of paper drafts? (Handout 5: Peer Review Sheet)
  - e) *Instructor assessment:*
    - How might we organize our scoring sheets? (Handout 6: Instructor Scoring Sheet)
    - How can we assure that students read our comments and improve their work before the next paper is assigned? (Handout 7: Student Reflection)
  
- III. Discussion, prompt sharing or prompt development.

## Handout 1: Authentic Freshman Assignments

**Geography 101:** Illegal international migration between Mexico and the United States has commanded a great deal of attention from policy makers in both countries. A sound policy needs to be grounded in an understanding of the magnitude of the flows as well as the forces that generate this form of migration. In your memo, you are to assume the role of policy analyst who is responsible for providing information and a discussion of the impacts of this migration on both countries. Additionally, you are to suggest a plan of action for the United States government to shape its immigration policy towards Mexico as well as a justification of the policy that you suggest. In addition to lectures and the textbook, draw upon at least two web-based sources for your text. *Find sources that will convince your audience!*

Instructor objectives for students:

- Students will attain a more in-depth understanding of a major policy issue in geography (“illegal international migration”).
- Students will be able to discuss and apply central concepts in geography: *flows and forces* that generate migration.
- Students will use sources from the class and credible sources from the internet to discuss the problem (creating a policy for “illegal international migration”) and suggest a solution in the form of a plan of action.
- Students will be able to use appropriate professional language in a memo, taking the role of a policy analyst.

**Political Science 102:** You will be required to write TWO short papers of approximately 3 pages each (typed, double-spaced). For each paper, you must find an article from a newspaper, magazine, and/or website that relates to the topics that will be discussed the day your assignment is due. **YOU MUST DISCUSS THE COURSE READINGS IN YOUR PAPER** and use them to analyze the articles. In addition, be prepared to talk about these papers in your discussion sections. In order to write these papers, you must be following politics in the news. **PAPERS SHOULD NOT EXCEED THREE PAGES AND ARE DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS.**

I have broken up these assignments by last name. For example, on a certain day, those whose last names start with A-D will turn in papers. Please include the name of your GA and the number of your discussion section on the front page of your paper and **ATTACH THE ARTICLE TO THE PAPER WHEN YOU TURN IT IN.** These papers are designed to help you see the relationship between course material and current political events, to review the readings and lectures, and to help you to develop writing skills. Each paper will be assessed on the following criteria:

1. Reference to, and evidence of, understanding the course material,
2. Your ability to draw on examples from current political events, AND
3. Your writing skills. **Remember:** Poor grammar, bad spelling and incoherence will result in a lowering of your grades.

NO late papers will be accepted without a valid letter documenting illness or some other emergency.

**News links:**

<http://nytimes.com>

<http://www.thenation.com> (This has a decidedly left-wing slant.)

<http://www.nationalreview.com> (This has a decidedly right-wing slant.)

Instructor objectives for students:

- SWBAT thoroughly understand the course material from the lectures and textbook by referring to this material in their papers.
- SWBAT demonstrate, both in their short papers and in discussions, their grasp of the relationships between the class material and current political events.
- SWBAT acknowledge the different viewpoints (“slants”) that their sources represent.
- SWBAT summarize and paraphrase the class material and the information from the sources.
- SWBAT head their papers appropriately.
- SWBAT write in academic, grammatical prose.
- SWBAT turn in their papers on time---at the beginning of the class on the assigned date.

## Handout 2: The Extended Writing Assignment: Questions

If your writing assignment is to be completed outside of class, you have time to reread your class texts and lecture notes, complete additional research, and to draft, revise, and edit your paper. But first, you need to fully understand the instructions for the assignment. Answering these questions will help you to determine what the assignment prompt tells you--- and what it doesn't.

- 1) What are the instructor's goals for students when assigning this paper? What am I to learn, consider, or be able to do when I've finished it?
- 2) What do the assignment instructions say about the genre in which I am to write? Is it an essay? If so, what does an essay look like in this class? Is it another kind of paper, like a critique or proposal? Do I know what this type of paper looks like?
- 3) How should the paper be organized? Should it look like a paper for an English class? Or should it look more like a science paper, with headings? (This will depend upon the genre, among other things.)
- 4) Who am I to be as the writer? A student? Or someone else?
- 5) Who am I writing to? The instructor? If so, what does the instructor think is important?
- 6) What do I know about the content or argument that the paper requires? What concepts or ideas would be important to mention?
- 7) How should sources be used? What kinds of sources, or data, are acceptable? How many sources are required? Should the sources be analyzed? Synthesized?
- 8) How long should the paper be? Are there minimum and maximum lengths?
- 9) What referencing style is preferred (or required) by the instructor, if any? Are there other specifications, such as font size?
- 10) How will the paper be graded? What elements, or criteria, are most important? Will papers be graded down if they are late? By how much?

What other questions do I have about the paper?

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### Handout 3: Organizational Words for Writing Prompts

1/2

The following words are commonly used as **organizational words** in writing prompts for both in-class writing ("examination essays") and out-of-class assignments. This page will help you to interpret them.

Note to teachers: This will also help you to design different types of prompts to use for classroom practice.

**Analyze:** Examine carefully to determine why. Separate or distinguish the elements of anything complex. Break the idea into parts, and explain the various parts.

**Assess:** Examine critically, and estimate the merit, significance, or value.

**Compare/Contrast:** Point out how things are similar and how they are different. [Sometimes, "compare" means both "compare and contrast."]

**Criticize/Critique:** Discuss the good and bad elements in a text, a film, or something else.

Give evidence to justify your claims.

**Define:** Give the meaning of something with enough detail to show you understand it.

**Describe:** Explain or write about; put in words a picture or an account. Tell how something looks, how something happened. Include how, where, who, and why.

**Diagram:** Make a drawing or outline of something, and label its parts.

**Discuss:** Give reasons with details. Explore from different perspectives.

**Effect:** Whatever is produced by a cause; a result.

**Enumerate:** Count off or list examples, reasons, causes, or effects-one by one.

**Evaluate:** Using evidence, discuss the strengths and weaknesses.

**Explain:** Make clear or interpret the reasons why something exists or is happening.

**Identify:** List and explain.

**Illustrate:** Make the point or idea clear by giving examples.

~~**Interpret:** Give the meaning of, use examples and personal comments to make clear.~~

**Justify:** Give reasons for your claim (in an academic argument)

**List:** List without details.

### Handout 3: Organizational Words for Writing Prompts

2/2

- Outline:** Make an organized listing of the important points of a subject. [This outline does not always have to look like the formal outline you may write for your English papers.]
- Prove:** Support a claim by giving evidence and reasons.
- Relate:** Show the connections between things or how one thing causes another.
- Respond:** State your overall reaction (response) to the content, and then support your response with specific reasons and examples, referring back to the reading.
- Solve:** Come up with a solution based on given facts and your knowledge.
- State:** Give the main points in brief, clear form.
- Summarize:** Organize and bring together the main points, keeping out personal opinions.
- Support:** Back up the statements with evidence.
- Synthesize:** Pull together "parts" to make a "whole"-this requires looking for common attributes among the parts in order to link them together.
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#### Handout 4: Student Self-Evaluation Sheet (based on the geography prompt)

**To the students:** Writers who want their papers to be read (and evaluated well) read, review, plan, draft, revise, edit---and then go through the process again.] Report below on what you did as you worked on your first draft. Be honest and self-critical.

1. What did the prompt ask me to do? [List below what you know about the elements required in the prompt.]
    - What is the topic of this paper?
    - In what genre is the response?
    - How is the response organized, that is, what should I include?
    - Who am I to be in the prompt? What does this mean about the language I use?
    - Who am I writing to?
    - What concepts am I to include from geography?
    - What sources am I to use from the class?
    - What were my web sources? How do I know that they are reliable and convincing for the audience?
    - When is the paper due? Does the instructor accept late papers?
    - What else do I know that will help me with my response to the prompt?
  2. How did I plan my writing? [Include a copy of your writing plan.]
  3. What was my writing process? [Record what you did first, second, third... And include the dates when you started and approximately how many hours you devoted to the paper each time you worked on it.]
  4. What problems did I face as I worked on this paper? [For example, did you have trouble finding the appropriate sources from the class or on the internet? Did you have problems finding blocks of time to think and write? ]
  5. What successes have I had so far? [For example, were you able to read and/or write with some confidence? Did you ask for help from an expert---and get it?]
  6. What will I consider and/or do as I complete my next draft?
  7. What problems will I need to overcome as I complete this draft?
  8. What questions do I have of the instructor, the course material, or my fellow students?
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### Handout 5: Peer Review Sheet

Name of the student writer \_\_\_\_\_ Name of the peer reviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Carefully read your peer's paper and score it from 1-5 (five is highest), using the criteria for scoring listed below. These criteria will appear again on the instructor's scoring sheet when you turn in your final paper.

Criteria	Score	Comments
Use of memo form		
Required organizational elements		
Language use: Professional /academic register		
Addressing the audience		
Inclusion of concepts		
Appropriate use of classroom sources		
Appropriate outside sources—and their use		

What are the strengths of this second draft, particularly compared to the first draft?

\_\_\_\_\_

How could the next version be improved? \_\_\_\_\_

Handout 6: Instructor Scoring Sheet (again based upon the geography assignment)

1/2

To the students: This paper is worth 100 pts. Forty-five of these points are based upon your completion of the steps in the writing process; fifty-five points are possible for the final version of the paper.

Process Scores

Criterion	Possible points	Points awarded	Comments
Writing plan (date)	5		
Draft 1: Self-evaluation	10		
Draft 2 (date)	5		
Evaluation of a Peer (date)	10		
Final paper (on required date)	5		
Reflection	10		
TOTAL Points for the Process	/45		

To the students: This paper is worth 100 pts. Forty-five of these points are based upon your completion of the steps in the writing process; fifty-five points are possible for the final version of the paper.

## Final Paper Scores

Criteria	Possible points	Score	Comments
Use of memo form			
Required organizational elements			
Language use: academic/professional register			
Addressing the audience			
Inclusion of class concepts			
Appropriate use of classroom sources			
Appropriate outside sources—and their use			
Other			
<b>Total score for the final paper</b>		/55	

## Handout 7: Student Reflection

**To the student:** You have now completed an extended writing assignment for your geography class. One of the purposes of this assignment is for you to deepen your learning, about the class, about your writing, and about yourself. Hand in this reflection with all of your written work related to the assignment. Be sure that every one of your papers is headed correctly, and turn them in with the paper numbered #1 on the top:

1. Your writing plan
2. Draft 1
3. Self-evaluation written after Draft 1
4. Draft 2
5. Your evaluation of your peer
6. Reflection
7. Your final paper (be sure to have the date in the heading and indicate that this is the final!)

**Answer the following questions in your reflection with complete sentences. Provide full answers:**

1. What did you learn about geography from this assignment?
  2. Why do you think this particular assignment was made in this class?
  3. What did you learn about searching for sources on the internet?
  4. What did you learn about yourself as a student? What are your strengths as a student? What do you need to work on?
  5. What did you learn about yourself as a reader, listener/note-taker, and/or writer? What are your strengths? What do you need to work on?
  6. Did you ask for help from someone as you wrote this paper other than your peers in peer review? What kind of help? From whom? What did you learn from requesting help?
  7. What will you do differently when you are assigned another paper? What will you continue doing?
  8. If you were the course instructor, what would you do to a) make the assignment more interesting? b) Make it easier to understand? c) change the writing process? d) or....
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## Handout 8: Plagiarism and Assignments That Discourage It

1/2

Concerns about plagiarized papers in college used to be connected to a filing cabinet at the fraternity house. Those days seem nearly quaint in light of how widespread the problem has become. Students learn how to use computer programs and the Internet at an early age. Many report that they were not corrected in high school when they copied text from a Web site into a paper without citing the source. No wonder some of them come to college feeling puzzled about the fuss surrounding plagiarism.

An assignment such as, "Write a 15-page paper on Dante's *Inferno*" or "write a 10-page paper on the financial failures of the Stock Market in 1987" is unfortunately an invitation, especially for students who are short of time, to go to the Web where papers that suit the requirement can be purchased for \$40 to \$70 on sites such as Schoolsucks and Termpapers. Sadly, these sites even offer papers on demand, written by freelancers to fulfill a specific assignment.

In some courses, instructors locate a free student paper from their discipline on the Web and ask their students to read it and critique it as a small-group activity in class or as a threaded discussion on a class Web site. This exercise lets students know that you're aware of what is available, and it gives them a chance to be thoughtful about the actual quality of the free papers.

Instructors can lessen the temptations of students to commit fraud by avoiding traditional assignments. The two chief methods of doing so are to use the activities and conversations in your own class as a basis for assignments or to use novel assignment structures.

The first type depends upon stretching the assignment to two or more phases. Link activities and discussions from the classroom to small tasks that may, if it suits you, become part of larger assignments.

Another technique to employ is that of scaffolding, a term connected to Lev Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development. Scaffolding requires the instructor to guide a student to what the student is learning, "engage students' interest, simplify tasks so they are manageable, and motivate students to pursue the instructional goal" (Riddle & Dabbagh, 1999). Essentially, the teacher needs to mediate between the student and the task to keep the student attached to and believing in the project. With such involvement from both sides, the likelihood of plagiarism decreases dramatically.

Here are a few additional ideas.

Assign teams to interview each other on course readings or assignments and prepare an appropriate summary.

Use pairs to "pass the baton." Create an assignment with two parts. Have one student complete part one, then have the student pass it to his or her partner, who must rely on what the first student did, to complete part two. You might also have the students switch roles for another pair of activities. The pieces can, of course, be modified according to the goals of different assignments and to a variety of media.

Some methods for creating alternative assignments would be to

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\* Ask students to interview a local person regarding actions or policies relevant to your course content.

\* Ask students to write a dialogue between two people they have been studying.

\* Ask students to create a list of paragraphs, quotes, or sample problems from sources you give them or sources you tell them to locate. Such a task resembles an annotated bibliography, but instead of the typical forms of annotation, students will locate



Alex's  
notes

Ann Johns 3/4/10

There is not one kind of  
writing, CT, reading

Goals 4 my SS in 10 yrs: They can

- evaluate arguments in real life contexts;
- read with a lively mind
- write coherently in whatever way they need to
- Evaluate themselves in ways that foster growth in their lives

Reduce the quantity - 3 philosophers  
instead of 12.

Apply theory - hard to do.  
Students need to see the structure  
of a text, + conceptual vocabulary.

What kinds of arguments are  
made in this discipline?  
What kinds of evidence count?

Eng → Teach hedging! "It would  
appear that ..."

Marilyn Sternglass - vernaculars,  
code-switching, grammar ...

Focused  
writing

Know your framework, your most important goals when making your assessments.

See Blue packet - assessments  
w/ missing instructions, 2nd page,  
(Geo 101, Polisci 102)

get these

Books: Decoding the Disciplines: Helping SS learn Disc Ways of thinking - by Pace and Middendorf

Hjortshoj, K: The Transition to College Writing

Quick assessments:

focused listing

minute paper

defining features matrix

concept test or concept map

background knowledge probe

one sentence summary

AVID College Readiness Writing Guides

by Johas

AJ claims that we have to teach the/or students how to do a writing assignment/reading in a discipline-specific way,

Focus on core concepts relate everything to them, make them explicit.

Idea: show important main claim vs. details by taking a text and enlarge the main ideas, and details small.

(Core followup idea - bring assignments for feedback.) Flex.

Ask honors students for feedback on GE writing assignments

Predatory, Purpose-Driven reading: give steps.

Collect writing assignments for the Core

Pro-template.

ajohns@cox.net

John Trip.

GE / The Core (AVID Flex in Aug)

writing assignments across

the disciplines.

Led by Sterling & CO.

read books summer, present w/ Karl

for ...

Scott's  
Assignment

Online HW 5: "The Ethical Implications of a Telescope"

Due Week 8, Fri., Mar. 12  
10 points

This article was taken directly (with editing by Scott) from the sources below.

ARTICLE:

A group of universities plan to build the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT), which would be a telescope with a mirror about a hundred feet across, which would make it the most sensitive telescope in the world. The group has selected the mountain of Mauna Kea on Hawaii Island as the place to build the observatory. Construction would start in 2011.

They want to use the site because of its excellent atmospheric conditions, low average temperatures, very low humidity, and the opportunity to work with other existing observatories that are already on Mauna Kea.

But some Native Hawaiians oppose the TMT on Mauna Kea, saying that the sacred summit has enough telescopes as it is, and that education through desecration isn't really education at all. Mauna Kea is a sacred mountain to the Hawaiians and a unique desert alpine habitat for endangered Hawaiian plants and animals.

The opponents of the TMT say that Mauna Kea's public lands are being exploited by foreign nations, corporations, and the University of Hawaii, who are seeking to profit from telescope construction on the summit at the expense of its unique natural habitat, pure drinking water, and sacred cultural resources. They say that the existing telescopes have contaminated the ground water and destroyed 90% of the natural habitat. Dozens of telescope and support structures already cover the mountain top, built without the consent of Native Hawaiians and local communities. The TMT would require building additional roads, parking lots, and office buildings; and, it would require bulldozing the summit's last pristine ridge. The TMT facility would be larger than all the current telescopes on the summit combined.

Paul Neves of KAHEA, the Hawaiian Environmental Alliance, says, "The University wants to gate the road to Mauna Kea, the road was paid for by taxpayers, it's a public road. The University wants to require Hawaiians to get a permit to worship. Mauna Kea belongs to Ke Akua [God], they cannot lock the people out of the temple. Even if Hawaiians could get a permit, it would mean they couldn't bring their non-Hawaiian friends and ohana [family] to ceremony. This is discrimination! Who is the University to say who can and cannot worship?"

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On the other hand, other native Hawaiians have been working to gather support for the TMT in the hopes that Mauna Kea would be selected, for the jobs that it would offer and the community benefits that it would fund.

Richard Ha, owner of Hamakua Springs farm, has been supportive of TMT from the beginning.

"The implications are huge. I think in the terms of education, the ability to uplift our people," he said.

"We have the opportunity to expand the minds of our keiki [children] with the funds that TMT has committed to our community. Education is the great equalizer," Ha said referring to \$1 million that will be given to educational programs on Hawaii Island annually as a community benefits package. Higher education will also see a benefits package.

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

Write two pages, MLA format, to answer the following questions.

#### QUESTIONS:

1. What is the controversy that is the source of conflict (what are the facts of the case)? Who are the contending parties? What are their conflicting moral values and what goals do they want to see realized?
2. Explain the moral and ethical implications of building the TMT. Explain why astronomers and some Native Hawaiians think that building the TMT would be an ethical thing to do. Explain why some other Native Hawaiians say the construction would be an unethical thing to do.
3. Below are listed the 16 ethical principles of science from Online HW 3. Which (if any) of these ethical principles apply to this situation? Explain. Do you infer that there are ethical principles that either side uses that are not part of the list below? Explain what you think those principles are, and use examples from the article to support your explanation.

#### SOURCES:

Ka Wai Ola. "Mauna Kea selected for Thirty Meter Telescope." Office of Hawaiian Affairs. <[http://www.oha.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=981&Itemid=225](http://www.oha.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=981&Itemid=225)>  
"Defend Mauna Kea's Last Pristine Plateau." KAHEA, The Hawaiian Environmental Alliance <[http://salsa.democracynaction.org/o/2699/p/dia/action/public/?action\\_KEY=1129](http://salsa.democracynaction.org/o/2699/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=1129)>  
"Defend the Sacred Summit of Mauna Kea." KAHEA, The Hawaiian Environmental Alliance <<http://kahea.wordpress.com/2009/02/18/defend-the-sacred-summit-of-mauna-kea/>>

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## ETHICAL PRINCIPLES OF SCIENCE:

Here are the 16 ethical principles of science that we learned about in Online HW 3

### Honesty

Strive for honesty in all scientific communications. Honestly report data, results, methods and procedures, and publication status. Do not fabricate, falsify, or misrepresent data. Do not deceive colleagues, granting agencies, or the public.

### Objectivity

Strive to avoid bias in experimental design, data analysis, data interpretation, peer review, personnel decisions, grant writing, expert testimony, and other aspects of research where objectivity is expected or required. Avoid or minimize bias or self-deception. Disclose personal or financial interests that may affect research.

### Integrity

Keep your promises and agreements; act with sincerity; strive for consistency of thought and action.

### Carefulness

Avoid careless errors and negligence; carefully and critically examine your own work and the work of your peers. Keep good records of research activities, such as data collection, research design, and correspondence with agencies or journals.

### Openness

Share data, results, ideas, tools, resources. Be open to criticism and new ideas.

### Respect for Intellectual Property

Honor patents, copyrights, and other forms of intellectual property. Do not use unpublished data, methods, or results without permission. Give credit where credit is due. Give proper acknowledgement or credit for all contributions to research. Never plagiarize.

### Confidentiality

Protect confidential communications, such as papers or grants submitted for publication, personnel records, trade or military secrets, and patient records.

### Responsible Publication

Publish in order to advance research and scholarship, not to advance just your own career. Avoid wasteful and duplicative publication.

### Responsible Mentoring

Help to educate, mentor, and advise students. Promote their welfare and allow them to make their own decisions.

### Respect for colleagues

Respect your colleagues and treat them fairly.

### Social Responsibility

Strive to promote social good and prevent or mitigate social harms through research, public education, and advocacy.

### Non-Discrimination

Avoid discrimination against colleagues or students on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, or other factors that are not related to their scientific competence and integrity.

### Competence

Maintain and improve your own professional competence and expertise through lifelong education and learning; take steps to promote competence in science as a whole.

### Legality

Know and obey relevant laws and institutional and governmental policies.

### Animal Care

Show proper respect and care for animals when using them in research. Do not conduct unnecessary or poorly designed animal experiments.

### Human Subjects Protection

When conducting research on human subjects, minimize harms and risks and maximize benefits; respect human dignity, privacy, and autonomy; take special precautions with vulnerable populations; and strive to distribute the benefits and burdens of research fairly.

### Above Proficiency—A grade—Writing Criteria

Writing is exceedingly well-organized, reflecting very long and careful thought about the prompts. It is also exceptionally clear, and precise. The writing is written at the university level without any weakness in spelling, grammar, and variations in sentence structure and length along with elegance and style.

### G.E. SLO 4 Assessment Criteria

Identify the ethical implications of issues within a particular disciplines.

Explain the moral and ethical implications of various actions in response to an issue.

Articulate and analyze conflicting moral values and ethical implications within an issue and a particular course of action.

## GE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME 4: ETHICS OF KNOWLEDGE

*At the completion of the LMC general education program, a student will consider the ethical implications inherent in knowledge, decision-making and action*

### Explanation

The knowledge within a discipline embodies values and poses ethical questions which suggest possible consequences for the future. By directly addressing the obligations which can arise from that knowledge, students will learn there are always issues of “what should be (or should have been) done?” in any field of study. Considering these aspects will lend to the students’ understanding of the significance and impact of knowledge on present and future societies.

### Proposed assessment criteria

A student who considers the ethical implications inherent in knowledge, decision-making and action will demonstrate the ability to:

- a. Identify the ethical implications of issues within a particular discipline.
- b. Explain the moral and ethical implications of various actions in response to an issue.
- c. Articulate and analyze conflicting moral values and ethical implications within an issue and a particular course of action.

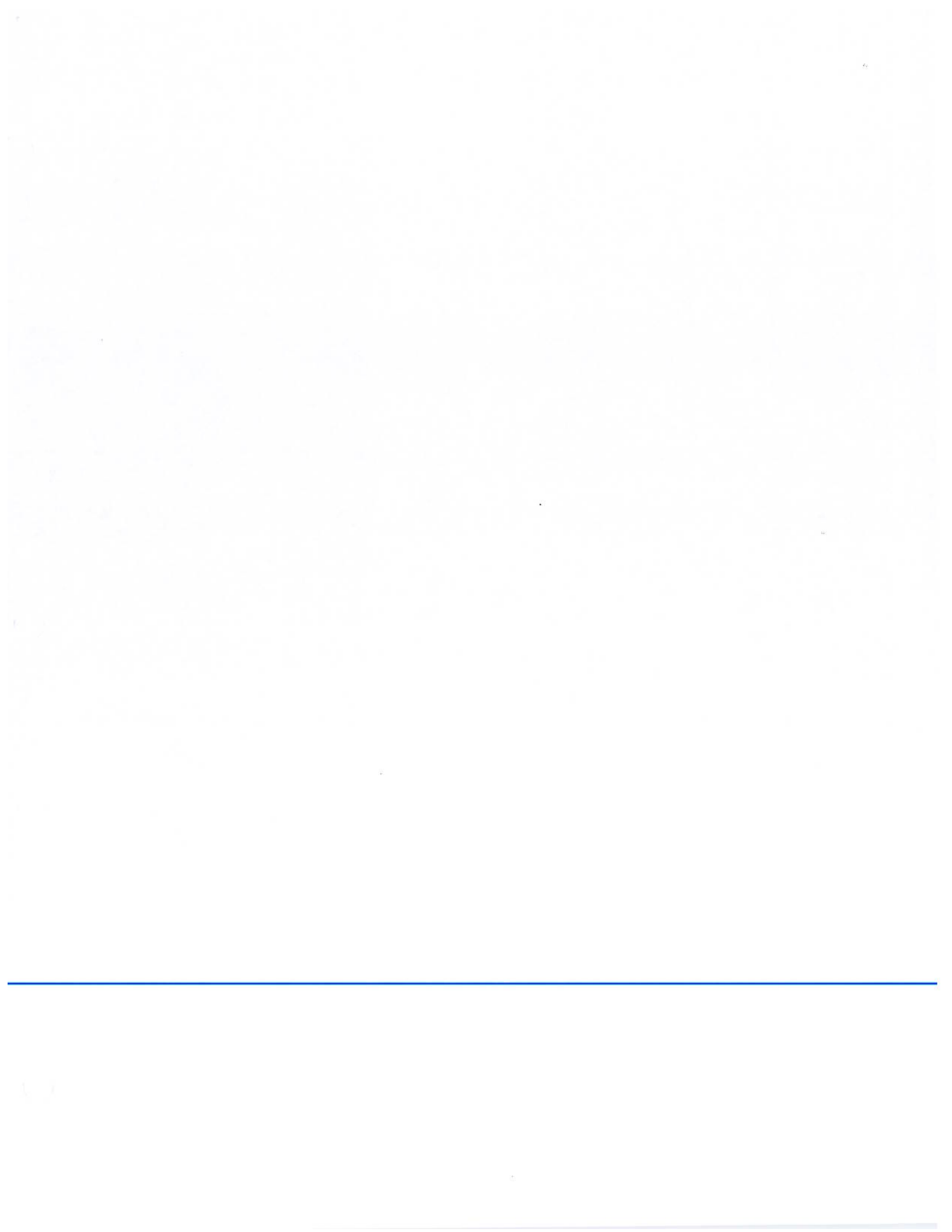
### Illustrations and examples for integration of the goal into courses

A literature course focusing on the work of Charles Dickens might explore the moral dilemmas raised when writing child labor laws or vagrancy laws.

A political science course might look at the values and ideals held by various sides involved in the controversy over constructing racially balanced voting districts.

An art course might discuss the obligations which arise when addressing government funding of the arts.





You replied on 11/9/2010 4:56 PM.

## Sterling, Alexander

**From:** LORI A. SALEM [lsalem@temple.edu]  
**To:** Eodice, Michele A.; Sterling, Alexander  
**Cc:** Mills, Sandra  
**Subject:** RE: Summer Institute Reunion at IWCA/NCPTW  
**Attachments:**

**Sent:** Tue 11/9/2010 3:44 PM

Hi Alex and Sandra (and Michele who is stuck in the airport),

It's so nice to hear from you! The reunion at IWCA was very fun -- nice to hear how/what people have been doing.

Using course grades to demonstrate WC effectiveness is possible, and admins often find that kind of data convincing. But it's also trickier than you think to use course grades to create a valid assessment. (There are a whole bunch of reasons for that, but here's one. We have the idea that the WC "improves" students' writing, so students who come to the WC should get "better" grades. But better than what? They don't necessarily earn better grades than students who don't come to the Writing Center because students often come to the WC precisely because their writing skills are weaker. So a direct comparison between users and non-users might show that users get lower grades, even if, in fact, the students had learned a lot in their tutoring sessions.)

This doesn't mean that you shouldn't try to do a grades-based thing. But usually it means that you need to work with someone who knows statistics (eg. someone from your institutional research office, if you have one) because you'll need to be able to manipulate the grades-based data to wrest a valid comparison out of it.

Here's an example of a grades-based effectiveness study that we did that might work for you. (Just to give you a sense of what might be involved.)

In our Center, we generally get a significant chunk of users from a few key classes. eg. students from the University's two required first-year composition courses comprise around 20% of our usage. So we designed a study that compared students from those courses who used the Center to students from those courses who didn't use the Center.

But we didn't compare the two groups directly to each other, for the reason I outlined above. Instead, we used a measure that our university developed called a "predicted grade." It's a statistical technique that makes an amalgamation of each student's high school grade point average, SAT scores, and a few other things, and uses that to predict how the student will perform in freshman-year courses. In our study, we compared the writing center users' predicted scores in first-year composition with their actual scores. And separately, we compared non-users' predicted and actual scores. We found that Writing Center users performed better than predicted (to a statistically significant degree), while non-users performed exactly as predicted.

You could do a study like this if you had a cohort of students who all came for tutoring help from the same course. You might not have a formal "predicted" score (although your institutional research folks might have created one for other purposes). But if you don't, you could probably use other available measures (like their SAT scores, or placement tests, on their own, as a predictive device.).

If you could also differentiate between students who saw "consultants," vs. students who saw "student tutors," you could run the study separately for the two groups, to see if the consultants create more improvement.

Anyway, that's just an example, and there are other ways to do this. I'd be happy to talk about this on the phone if you want. (Do you use skype, by any chance?)

Best,  
Lori  
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Dr. Lori A. Salem  
Assistant Vice Provost  
Director, Temple University Writing Center  
215-204-0709  
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From: Eodice, Michele A. [mailto:[meodice@ou.edu](mailto:meodice@ou.edu)]  
Sent: Tuesday, November 09, 2010 5:43 PM  
To: 'Sterling, Alexander'; LORI A. SALEM  
Cc: Mills, Sandra  
Subject: RE: Summer Institute Reunion at IWCA/NCPTW

Alex, I am stuck in an airport...so let me think about this and get with Lori too...I think we might have some suggestions.

M.

From: Sterling, Alexander [mailto:[asterling@losmedanos.edu](mailto:asterling@losmedanos.edu)]  
Sent: Tuesday, November 09, 2010 3:28 PM  
To: Eodice, Michele A.; LORI A. SALEM  
Cc: Mills, Sandra  
Subject: RE: Summer Institute Reunion at IWCA/NCPTW

Hi, Michelle and Lori: Wish I could have made that reunion! Sounds fun. Hope you're both having a good semester.

I have a question for you about assessment. My colleague Sandra and I (at Los Medanos Community College in Pittsburg CA) want to do an assessment in which we try to demonstrate the academic effectiveness of our Center for Academic Support.

Two things we know already: 1) if we have our numbers right, attendance at our center is higher than ever! ☺  
2) When we've done student satisfaction surveys (of our consultants) in the past, they are so glowingly positive that we learned very little from doing them.

So our center seems to be very effective, but we don't have proof that it works academically—like, students who use our service have better grades than those who don't, and the service caused that. Budget cuts are hitting us, and though we seem to have strong support from the administration, we could use more evidence to support ourselves, both to maintain services during hard times and to argue for expanding services in the future.

We have both consultants (mostly faculty, who focus mainly on writing--our older and more established program) and student tutors (recently centralized under our roof, who mostly specialize in content areas where they excel). The consultants are very expensive compared to the student tutors, so part of this is that we want to be able to justify the expense of the consultants.

We would appreciate any advice you have to offer about this, or any resources you could point us to. Talking about it on the phone might be really useful, and more efficient than email. If that sounds good, let us know your # and when are good times to call.

Thanks!!

Alex Sterling  
Center for Academic Support faculty lead  
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