

Date: Jan. 9, 2014

To: Michael Vaughn, Provost
Madonne Miner, Dean of College of Arts and Humanities

From: Toni Asay, English faculty
Brooke Kelly, English faculty
Becky Marchant, English faculty

Subject: Proposal for Innovative and Creative Undergraduate Teaching

The purpose of our proposal is to request support to restructure the *online* English 0955 course. We propose to research and implement innovative technologies to update our online class to facilitate a more active and interactive learning experience for students.

The following sections provide a history of recent changes to English 0955 and present rationale for pursuing the proposed project.

Historical Context:

In 2009, the Developmental English program revised the English 0955 curriculum, articulating which knowledge and skills need to be taught across all sections of the course and developing the following course outcomes:

Students will

1. Identify the main points and supporting details in texts.
2. Summarize and paraphrase texts.
3. Identify and make logical inferences.
4. Synthesize and compare themes and details from multiple texts.
5. Organize their writing with adequate transitions and clear patterns of order.
6. Adequately credit sources for quoted or paraphrased materials.
7. Edit writing to correct spelling, grammar, and mechanical errors.

Prior to 2009, English 0955 was offered online as well as in the classroom. However, retention and pass rates for the online course were poor. Therefore, we discontinued the online course temporarily while we focused on revising the face-to-face class for National Association for Developmental Education (NADE) certification. The face-to-face revision resulted in a hybrid version of English 0955, the online component of which will be used as a basis for our revised online class

In Summer 2013, in response to student need, the Developmental English program resumed teaching 0955 online. Three faculty members individually created and taught online sections that term, modeling their courses after the revised curriculum being taught in the face-to-face 0955 classes. Subsequently, four sections of online English 0955 were taught during Fall 2013. It appears that the need for the online course exists since all offered sections filled, both in summer and fall.

Rationale:

Online sections taught prior to 2010 consisted entirely of print on a screen—assignment directions, textbooks, quizzes, etc. Students submitted coursework based on what they read.

Since English 0955 is a reading and writing class, this approach originally seemed viable. However, as Conrad (2005) indicates, a sense of community interaction such as is facilitated by synchronous and asynchronous online discussions, videoconferencing, group collaboration, etc. is essential in effective online learning. This lack of community may have contributed to students' lack of "connectedness and satisfaction." When the online course was reinstated during Summer 2013, we attempted to integrate more interactive technologies into the course. However, these attempts were limited by a lack of time and resources. Pursuing the proposed project would give us the time to research practices and evaluate available resources to improve our online course.

Depth of impact:

The new online course will focus on developing both interactive and collaborative learning. Interactive learning will include technologies such as audio/video presentations, social media, gaming, and real-time videoconferencing. Collaborative learning will include options such as online peer reviews, social media discussions with classmates and broader communities, interactive learning games, and real-time videoconferencing with tutors and instructors.

Our preliminary research has indicated that such programs as Adobe Connect, Jing, Doceri, Eli Review, and GoREACT all have potential to increase student interaction with course concepts and each other. As a component of this preliminary research, we communicated with instructors from other institutions who demonstrated how their schools use such interactive technologies in online classes.

Using best practices from current online pedagogy, students will feel greater connection with their peers, their instructors, and the broader University. The impact on students is that they will be required to engage more actively in their learning.

Breadth of Impact:

The online course will be available to both traditional and nontraditional developmental English students who require flexibility in scheduling and/or distance learning options. Over 1,100 students enrolled in English 0955 during Summer 2013, Fall 2013, and Spring 2014. Of those 1,100 students, approximately 275 students in that time period registered for the online class, which was the maximum enrollment based on the number of sections offered. We believe that the Developmental English program will be better prepared to offer more sections online once a course template has been established and additional instructors have been trained in its use. Included with this template, all interactive materials developed for the project will be perpetually available to all future instructors teaching online English 0955. If online offerings of English 0955 expand, hundreds of students each term may participate in the proposed interactive course.

The positive impact of this project will not be limited to online-only classes. Improvements in the use of interactive and collaborative technology will be extended to the online component of our hybrid face-to-face classes (approximately 45 additional sections per academic year).

Preliminary Data and Evidence:

Institutional Research provided us with the following historical data about online English 0955. In 2006-07, 2007-08, and 2008-09 respectively, 27%, 29%, and 25% of students enrolled in the third week of the online course were no longer participating in the course by the end of term. In 2013, at the end of term, 40% of online English 0955 students were no longer participating. We are troubled by this increase in attrition and feel an urgency to address it by improving the online learning environment.

In 2006-07, 2007-08, and 2008-09, respectively, 57%, 54%, and 59% of students passed the online course (with a grade of “C” or better). In 2013, 45% of students passed. We attribute this pass-rate decrease, in part, to the increased rigor of the English 0955 curriculum resulting from the 2009 course revision for NADE certification. Another likely factor is the lack of time and resources to build the new online class effectively. We want to be able to offer the online class to a larger segment of developmental English students in the future, but before this is possible, the course needs to improve in both retention and pass rates. We believe that these rates will increase with a more interactive and collaborative course.

Okojie, Olinzock and Okojie-Boulder (2006) and Chih-Hsiung Tu (2005) have demonstrated that traditional online teaching has used technology mainly for presentation and storage. Teachers present print information online, students read and use that information to create responses, students use the online technology to submit the responses, and then teachers store responses and associated grading online. These researchers argue that technology fails to achieve its potential in this model and that it should be used as a vehicle to create interactions. Edwards-Groves (2012) indicates that “today’s students thrive on the interconnected utility of technology, creativity, social interaction and connections with community as they are actively engaged in what has been described as a participatory culture.” Murray (2012) demonstrates that even text-based discussions, such as are currently available through Canvas, can be more productive when conducted through social media. Accordingly, we see a need to present students with many more sensory and interactive options for learning than were historically available to them under the traditional online teaching structure of the former English 0955 course.

Measurement:

We will compare retention and pass rates of past online ENGL 0955 classes with those of the new template course, for a quantitative measure of the course improvements. To measure student progress in achieving the course outcomes listed above (page 1), we will integrate the outcomes into assignment rubrics to be marked when coursework is graded. To gain a qualitative assessment of the course, we will use questionnaires to survey students at the end of Fall 2014 semester--when the course revision would be implemented--to learn such information as why they took the class online, their overall satisfaction with the class, their impression of the technologies used (what they felt was effective, what was not as effective), etc.

Accountability:

The following table indicates our proposed tasks and timeline.

Task:	Begin:	Complete:
<p>Explore available technologies and research best practices in mobile and online learning.</p> <p>As part of this research, a member of our group will participate in the Blended Learning course offered during Spring 2014 by the Teaching and Learning Forum. Throughout Spring 2014, we will meet weekly to discuss our research findings and their applicability to the project.</p>	Jan. 2013	Apr. 2013
<p>Meet with online Developmental English instructors.</p> <p>From instructors of online ENGL 0955, we will gain further insights into what is currently being done in the course.</p>	Feb. 3	Mar. 7
<p>Research what other universities are doing with their online learning.</p> <p>We will interview colleagues who teach at other universities to learn what technologies they are successfully using in their online reading or writing instruction.</p>	Mar. 10	Apr. 4
<p>Compare information from our research with current English 0955 online practices. Determine which interactive technologies to implement in the course.</p> <p>We will discuss the culmination of our research and finalize decisions about which technological elements to build into the revised online course. We estimate that we will need to meet one full-day per week or two half-days per week to assimilate all of the research and create a plan for implementing technologies.</p>	May 12	May 30
<p>Meet with staff at WSU Online to discuss options for implementing technologies we are researching.</p> <p>We will use WSU Online as a resource for advice, facilities, and training.</p>	Feb. 2013	Aug. 2013
<p>Adapt the curriculum based on our research.</p> <p>We will create the online English 0955 course template in Canvas including the interactive course materials we have determined will be best to use. Possibilities include video-lesson libraries, social media integration, video-interactive conferences with instructors and tutors, learning games, etc. We anticipate</p>	Jun. 2	Aug. 14

working two full days per week on this part of the project.		
Prepare assessment mechanisms for the project. Create rubrics for coursework, and integrate course outcomes into the rubrics. Prepare an end-of-course survey for student response. Integrate it into the course (extra credit) to ensure a high level of response.	Jul. 28	Aug. 14
Implement and assess the revised online English 0955 course. Prior to Fall 2014, we will share the online course template with all instructors scheduled to teach online English 0955. Beginning Fall 2014, all online instructors will teach the course as established by the template. All instructors will give the end-of-course survey within the final three weeks of class. Once the semester is complete, our proposal group will gather outcomes data from assignment rubrics and pass/fail and retention data from Institutional Research. We will compare pass/fail and retention data against data from previous online 0955 classes.	Aug. 15	Dec. 30

Costs:

Many of the software applications and much of the equipment for this project are already available for our use in Lampros Hall or through the TLF or through open source platforms. Thus, we estimate software/equipment purchases will be negligible. The main costs of the project will be salary and benefits for the three faculty working on the proposed course revision. We estimate that, over the project timeline, from January to August 2014, our group members will commit the same amount of time (or more) to this project as we would commit to preparing and teaching six credit hours each. At the adjunct rate, six credit hours of teaching is reimbursed at a rate of \$5400.00. For this reason, our budget is \$15,000, sufficient to pay \$5000 in salary and benefits to each person engaging in research, creating and assembling the course materials, structuring the Canvas template course, and conducting the project assessment.

References:

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