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for

Developmental Education



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Math: The Yoga of Teaching Math
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I tell yoga students and math students the same thing: two things we all must discover: 1) I can *want* to do something, but not do it (I can want a smoke, but simply not light it), and conversely 2) I can *not* want to do something and still do it (I can not want to mow the lawn and still mow it. I do not have to act because there is desire, and I can act without the presence of desire. It's called self-discipline ... it's called self-control ... and it's called *freedom*.

I discovered the surprisingly related disciplines of math and yoga in about 1971.

I had had math and arithmetic classes all my life, of course, but I never really *discovered* math until I was already out of school. Math had always been presented to me, as it all too often is, as something I should already know. It was presented, not as a series of processes applicable to problem solving in general, but rather as just memorized steps that really seemed to have nothing to do with anything. So I memorized the steps and regurgitated them effectively enough to get a "C" or a "D" and get out of that class and move on to the next grade ... where, each time, the regurgitating became more challenging. By 1970 I had graduated college with a business degree and teacher certification. After a few months of driving around America in my hippie van, I was ready to get a job and settle down. I was hired by the Houston Area Urban League to teach science in a GED program. Suddenly someone else was hired to teach the science instead of me and I was told I had been assigned to teach math instead. Inside I was terrified. "Math?!?!?", my inner voice screamed. "Math?!?!? I can't teach math! I hate math! I can't do math!!" But I needed the job so I smiled and said, "Sure ... I'll teach math."

A few months prior to this mini-trauma I had discovered yoga. In 1971 yoga was so new in the West that all of Houston, Texas had only two yoga studios. One of those yoga schools just happened to be a couple of blocks from me in the hippie district of Montrose. I attended a free introductory lecture one Sunday afternoon and my cosmic egg was forever cracked. Within three years of participating in classes and a yoga teacher-training program I was hanging out a shingle of my own. I have taught yoga consistently since 1974. So, simultaneous, or thereabouts, to completing formal yoga studies I also found myself thrust unwillingly and unwittingly into a GED/developmental math class.

It was a moment like the old Reese's peanut butter cup commercial in which two bicyclists collide ... one eating peanut butter and the other eating chocolate ... and a new candy is born ... in this case: math and yoga. The moment the Urban League Director said, "We're going to use you in math instead ..." I implemented a yoga technique for remaining calm in a stressful moment: gentle, abdominal breathing and a relaxing of forehead muscles. And I thought, "Maybe I can do this. Other people learn math. Maybe it *is* learnable and maybe I can do it and maybe I can even present it in a way that students will find it useful, usable, practical and even ... *fun*?!?!?!"

Stathem, cont'd

Everything is a gestalt, I have learned: interrelated and interdependent. Subjects may be isolated for study, but nothing is truly separate. Some relationships between yoga and math include:

1) Yoga teaches the importance of duty and responsibility. Success in math requires a strong sense of duty and responsibility. I hold no student to a higher standard than I hold myself. What I expect from them and what they can expect from me is clearly defined at the outset.

2) Yoga teaches that life experiences are not random, but rather a purposeful flow that is the result of choices. Math continuously builds on itself with each step toward solution dependent on previous choices.

3) Yoga teaches us the importance of humor in lightening our daily load. Given the intensity of "math anxiety", perhaps no subject needs the relief of humor more than math.

4) The beauty of yoga is its practicality. All practices and techniques exist for reasons and purposes. Likewise, classroom rules relating to behavior, punctuality, cell phone usage, and common courtesy, are all based on the practicality of creating a learning environment.

5) It's all about process ... process ... process. I welcome questions relating to: "Why should I learn *this*? What does *this* have to do with real life? When will I ever use *this* in my life?" Factoring polynomials, for instance, is discovering and learning a *process* ... how to assess a situation and arrive at a reasonable conclusion. This is what math is all about. Similarly, breathing techniques of yoga relate directly to the physical work of yoga which relates directly to the mind work of yoga, which relates directly to the discovery of the True (Spiritual) Self. Process!

6) Jnana Yoga is the practice of developing intellect ... that great mental tool so crucial to worldly existence. Probably no academic practice relates more directly to development of the intellect than the study and practice of math ... even at the most "developmental" levels.

7) The role of a yoga teacher is to help direct a student to find her/his own way and direction and no longer need an instructor. Likewise, the role of any conscientious teacher is to help a student to discover his/her own mental powers and be able to travel and navigate independently.

8) The Western paradigm of teaching assumes that a student is an empty vessel who must be "filled" by a teacher ... that the teacher has and the student has not, but must get. The Eastern paradigm assumes that **both** are "filled" beings, however the student is unaware of that truth and must be guided by a teacher to help make that discovery. I find the Eastern paradigm more in harmony with maintaining student self-esteem ... and also a *truer* paradigm.

The teacher's dilemma is this: as teachers, we love to be needed ... we want to be needed ... we need to be needed. However, a teacher who is truly effective will help create a student who no longer needs a teacher! At the core of yoga philosophy is this axiom: attachment and clinging are at the root of all suffering.

Who Are You?

Making Instructional Practices More Effective by Understanding Student Characteristics

Community College populations can vary widely from campus to campus. In November of 2010, I participated in a filmed discussion panel which became part of the "ENCORE" body of training resources. These training resources have been used to help qualified retirees become community college adjunct instructors. In preparation for the panel discussion, I was asked to consider several questions, including the following:

What are the demographics of the people who take developmental classes? Where are they from? What are their circumstances?

To help answer these questions, I constructed a short, anonymous survey, and administered it to two English 0033 classes that I was teaching at the time. The students' answers were extremely helpful for the panel discussion, but also turned out to have a direct impact on efforts to improve retention rates in Developmental Writing instruction at OSU-Oklahoma City. We learned, for instance, that 20% of our Developmental Writing students (based upon this sample of two average classes) had grown up with a first language other than English, that 20% did not have computer access at home, and that 80% had graduated from high school within the previous year. We used this data to pursue development of an ESL Basic Composition class, and to add a paper-book-based alternative for the computer-based grammar exercises which are required in our Developmental Writing classes, among other changes.

We submit that similar surveys, if conducted on other campuses, would help guide instructional staff in tailoring practices that will best serve students. The better we understand who our students are, and what they deal with in order to attend school, the better we can serve them. This kind of information is an important tool in the hard work of improving retention and graduation rates on community college campuses.

Study Skills: Planning Backwards

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Introduction: As students enter college and make long term goals, it is often difficult to plan academic schedules with their limited experience of using a catalog, reading a degree plan, or visiting an advisor. This scaffolding plan walks them step-by-step through the planning process. Students complete this assignment in class as a part of a series of assignments that teach them to use a college catalog, explore the FASFA, meet an advisor, and select a certificate or degree plan. After they have done it once, they can adjust and modify it as their specific goals evolve.

Disclaimer: While this resource has been created for students enrolled in TCC's Academic Strategies course, it can be adapted for use in any institution.

Planning Backwards - A scaffolding approach to creating a degree plan

The legal size worksheet has been resized to fit into this publication.

Planning Backwards

You are here!

1. **Academic Goal**

Select One:

- Associate of Arts
- Associate of Science
- Associate of Applied Science
- Certificate Program

Major: _____

Career Goal: _____

2. **Specialized Courses**

3. **Specialized Courses Prerequisites:**

4. **General Education Courses**

English Composition	Science	Humanities	Recommended Electives
			ENGL 1003
US History	US Government	Math	Required Electives

5. **General Education Prerequisites:**

6. **Current Semester Classes**

7. **Next Semester Classes**

8. **Name**

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CWID

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Created by Kayla G. Harding for Academic Strategies ENGL 1003
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Follow this series of steps to complete the worksheet:

Step One: Academic Goal

- Indicate your academic goal by selecting a degree or certificate program.
- List a **major**. The major should be one of the **degree programs** offered at TCC.
- List a **career goal** or at least one possible job you will have with this degree.
- Print the Degree Program page from the online **catalog**. It may be helpful to copy it onto a Word document and increase the font before you print.

TCC Home › Programs and Courses › Catalog 2012-2013 › Degree & Certificate Programs 2012-2013

Step Two: Specialized Courses

- List the **course number** (Example: ENGL 1113) for all **specialized courses** recommended for your degree or certificate program.
 - Be sure to include the asterisk (*) which indicates that a class has a **prerequisite**.

Step Three: Specialized Course Prerequisites

- Use the online catalog to look up each class that has a **prerequisite** (*pre-req* for short; say “pre-reck”). List the specialized course prerequisites on the space provided. You may notice that several classes may share the same **pre-req**.
- Use the **General Education** (*Gen Ed* for short) list¹ to select appropriate courses.
 - Check to determine if some of your specialized course pre-reqs may be used as Gen Ed requirements.
 - Notice that Academic Strategies (ENGL 1003) is a Recommended Elective. So you have already met that Gen Ed requirement.
 - The Planning Backwards worksheet accommodates the standard 37-hour gen ed plan. If your certificate or degree program has a different set of gen ed requirements, adjust it accordingly. You may use the back of the page.

Step Four: General Education Courses

- List the course number for all General Education courses you plan to take.
 - Be sure to include the asterisk (*) which indicates that a class has a prerequisite.

Step Five: Gen Ed Prerequisites

- Use the online catalog to look up each class that has a prerequisite. List the general education prerequisites on the space provided. You may notice that some classes may share the same prerequisite or **proficiency requirement**.
- Also, list any developmental courses you must complete to meet proficiency requirements.

¹ The generic 37-hour Gen Ed Page is provided to guide students to select general education courses.

¹ Students complete the My TCC Plan for Success – Educational Planning Worksheet in this unit to plan for advised enrollment

Harding, cont'd

Step Six: Current Semester Schedule

- List the course numbers for all courses you are taking this semester.
- Review the classes you have listed in the Planning Backwards page. Highlight any classes you have already completed.

Step Seven: Next Semester Schedule

- Starting with Gen Ed courses, list the next few courses you must complete to reach your goal.
- Use the completed worksheet to complete the EPW², visit an advisor, and enroll in classes.

Study Skills: Contemplative Studies in the Strategies Classroom

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A new buzz around college campuses involves a topic many educators first heard in the 1960s: contemplative practices (i.e. meditation, yoga, and visualization exercises). Educators and neuroscientists are publishing articles in record numbers concerning the importance of teaching these critical concepts as part of a college degree program. According to Rick Repetti in his article from *New Directions for Community Colleges* (Fall 2010 issue) titled “The Case for a Contemplative Philosophy of Education,” community colleges are especially in need of adding contemplative strategies to college classes. Meditation and yoga are merely practices for “mindfulness,” or “nonjudgmental attention to the features of present-moment experience such as breath, bodily sensation, and thought. It is the antidote to mindlessness—the characteristic of scattered attention and the main problem for most community college students” (9). Repetti makes a strong case for including these practices in the community college classroom:

No matter what the focal point is, focusing the mind collects disbursed mental energy and directs it. As the research reviewed . . . will show, the meditative mind cultivates a variety of traits essential to flourishing in community college, including self-regulation, intrinsic curiosity, attentiveness, focus, equanimity, responsiveness, and centeredness. (9)

Even if our students receive minimal exposure to contemplative practices in *Academic Strategies*, we have planted a seed for a life-changing practice that these students can explore and further develop on their own.

Contemplative Exercises for the Classroom

Candle Exercise: Begin class on time while students are still getting settled. Light a candle and have students stare at it for 2 full minutes, making a mark on a piece of scrap paper every time they let any thought (or noise) distract them from the flame. Next, walk students through a 1-minute breathing exercise (available On-line, or the one I wrote for class is at the end of this handout.) Have students do the candle exercise again. Next, take a count of the number of marks for the first and second times. Students will reduce marks after a focus exercise by as much as half or more. (NOTE: This exercise is a great one to introduce the memory chapter).

Visualization Exercise: Do a 2-minute presentation on the benefits of using visualization and relaxation exercises to quiet the mind. Next, go to a YouTube video on visualization and have students participate: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3c2jiWscwa4> In this five-minute video, the professor describes a lemon, and students’ mouths will water as they listen to the video. Most students will find that they salivated at the mere image of tasting a lemon. The power of thought is driven home with this exercise. At the end of this video the professor provides tips for using visualization to create health and success in life. OR: Have students watch this video explaining

“The One-Minute Meditation”: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F6eFFCi12v8>
concentrating on breathing techniques to focus the mind.

SENSORY AWARENESS EXERCISE AND MEDITATION

Put your feet flat on the floor. Imagine a string running from your feet, through your spine, and out the top of your head, aligning your entire body. As you inhale, imagine the air creating little pillows between each vertebrae along your spine. Breathe, in and feel your spine expanding, and exhale, and feel all tension leave your back, neck, and shoulders. Relax, and breathe deeply from your belly, exhale and relax. Become aware of your body. Feel the clothing on your shoulders . . .

- Feel the clothing on your shoulders. . .
- Feel the pressure of your back against the chair.
- Feel your right hand.
- Feel your left hand.
- Feel your right thigh.
- Feel your left thigh.
- Feel your right foot.
- Feel your left foot.
- Feel the air enter your nostrils and concentrate on the air moving through the membrane. Now feel it leave your nostrils as you exhale. Inhale, exhale, and feel all your muscles relaxing.

REPEAT this list two more times.

Sit in the stillness. Notice how your thoughts have drifted away, leaving a spaciousness in your mind. Breathe in and see the calm space inside you expand even more. Your mind is a clean slate, nothing exists in its spaciousness; if thoughts intrude in the silence, escort them to the gate, wave goodbye, and smile. Feel yourself spreading out on the quilt of your mind, lean back, rest your head on a feather pillow, and think of nothing but the open sky of your mind.

Now, open your eyes and we're going to complete the candle exercise again.

Quick Write for End of Class:

Quieting the mind is a tool you can use to manage stress and angst in college and in your life. Jot down the physical sensations (at least 5-6) you experience when you enter a classroom to take a test. Next, jot down the physical sensations you felt right after the meditation exercise. Which sensations will place you in a better mindset to take an exam?

Writing: Who is It? Applying the Historical Significance of Pronoun Antecedent Agreement with Songs, Pictures and Food

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the history and pedagogy of pronoun antecedent agreement. This exploration is completed through an investigation of existing literature and the presentation of a lesson plan designed for Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology remedial college students in the developmental English class, Fundamentals of English. According to Fawcett (2003) pronoun antecedent agreement ranks sixth in a list of the top ten grammar errors, and pronoun antecedent agreement errors plague my developmental English students. The literature review investigates the grammatical question about using plural pronouns with indefinite singular antecedents. Specifically, the literature review explores the argument about how to correct sentences with errors in pronoun antecedent agreement. After investigating how to correct pronoun antecedent agreement errors, suggestions for writing sentences with clear pronoun agreement are offered. Lastly, a two-part lesson plan is presented to introduce both the prototypical and non-prototypical elements of pronoun antecedent agreement.

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

I. Literature Review

Research Question “What is the historical significance to the pedagogy of pronoun antecedent agreement, so the research may aid in the instruction of using plural pronouns to modify indefinite singular antecedents?”

A. Argument For Plural Pronouns with Indefinite Singular Antecedents

1. Historical Evidence – famous authors

a. famous authors including Malory, Swift, Defoe, Shelley, Scott,

Kipling, Stevenson, Shaw and Shakespeare used plural pronouns with indefinite singular antecedents (Sklar, 1988)

b. writers ignored pronoun antecedent agreement rule “because the rule never reflected usage” (Sklar, 1988, p. 416)

Christian, cont'd

2. Historical Evidence – textbooks

- a. “as antecedents of [indefinite] pronouns they have been and still are used as plural words when the sense demands a plural” (Pooley, 1974, p. 86).
- b. prior to 18th century there was no rule for pronoun antecedent agreement; grammarians identified errors in pronoun usage as violations, not rules (Sklar, 1988)

3. He/She Construction and Sexist Language

- a. “phrasal constructions such as *he or she* is unattractive” (Balhorn, 1994, p. 473)
- b. in 18th century generic masculine *he* was applied for all singular agreement (Sklar, 1988)
- c. the generic masculine *he* was applied because “the masculine is more worthy than the feminine” (Sklar, 1988, p. 415)
- d. “to treat all of the [singular] indefinites as identical – and all of them as meaning a person – is simply wrong...*person* and *everybody* are not the same (Kolln, 1986, p. 102)

B. Argument Against Plural Pronouns with Indefinite Singular Antecedents

1. Prescriptive Rules

- a. “pronouns must agree in number with the subject noun (the antecedent) to which they refer. If that noun is singular, the pronoun must be singular; if that noun is plural, the pronoun must be plural” (Fawcett, 2003, p. 227).
- b. “It is...oxymoronic [to use] a singular *they*” (Kearns, 1994, p. 417).

2. Contradictions in Historical Texts

- a. “to rely on...authorial use of two hundred years ago as guides to making decisions in current writing is to rely on an external reality rather than on thoughtful decisions on the part of the writer” (Walker, 1994, p. 472).
- b. “if we allow *they* to be either singular or plural for the purposes of pronoun agreement, what do we do about subject-verb agreement?” (Hacker, 2004, par. 5).

C. Consensus between Perspectives

1. “it is clear that no simple analysis of the singularity/plurality of indefinites and *they* will suffice” (Zuber and Reed, 2004, p. 475)
2. suggestions for writers include “mak[ing] the antecedent, plural, restructure[ing] the sentence using *who*, switch[ing] from third person to first person...drop[ping] the pronoun or repeat[ing] the noun” (Hacker, 2004, par. 10-12)

Christian, cont'd

II. Lesson Plan: Pronoun Antecedent Agreement

A. Lesson Plan Part One: Definite Antecedents (Human Subjects)

1. Prototypical lesson that teaches the recognition of antecedents and the pronouns (gender and number are known)
2. uses student volunteers, imperative statements, class discussion, and food

B. Lesson Plan Part Two: Indefinite Singular Antecedents (Human Subjects)

1. Non-prototypical lesson that addresses the quandary of choosing pronouns to modify indefinite singular antecedents
2. uses songs, pictures, sample sentences, group work, class discussion and food
3. offers methods for correcting sentences with pronoun antecedent agreement errors

III. Conclusion

A. John Fell, an eighteenth century grammarian, defined grammar by saying, "It is certainly the business of a grammarian to find out, and not to make the laws of a language" (Sklar, 1988, p. 410).

C. Students learn:

1. Historical rationale for applying grammar rules
2. "Grammar tolerance" through the use of songs, pictures, team work, and discussion

Writing: “A Summary of Thinking”

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As my first Writing II assignment, this exercise introduces the following concepts: annotation; vocabulary; hierarchical ordering—topic idea, primary and secondary support; line of reasoning and audience analysis; MLA document format; formal introduction of author, source, and credentials; summary; and writing skills emphasizing sentence structure, transition, coherence, organization, grammar, and punctuation. Bloom’s categories of thinking—knowing, comprehending, analyzing, and applying—provide an overarching pedagogical structure.

Knowing & Comprehending

- 1. Reading assignment:** I provide copies of Patrick Sullivan’s “An Open Letter to Ninth Graders”¹ for students to read at home. They are to circle all unfamiliar words and write their definitions in the margin.
- 2. Reading quiz:** I give a three to five question quiz to emphasize the need to complete homework. I also walk around the room, checking the handout for vocabulary annotations. A simple record of yes/no or zero/check teaches students that homework counts.
- 3. Vocabulary:** My hope is to encourage students to love words. For this reason, I do not include vocabulary words in reading quizzes. We review the unfamiliar vocabulary in class and discuss the parts of speech. I provide examples of the multiple ways in which a word can be used in different senses and sentences. I explain the difference between moving a vocabulary word from knowing (memorization) to comprehending and applying, i.e. comprehending such that students own the word and can apply it correctly.

Analyzing & Applying

- 4. Main idea:** Students work in groups to come to consensus on the author’s main idea. Groups write their main ideas on the board and class discussion determines the most accurate analysis.

NOTE: Students tend to think the main idea is the part of the essay with most of the writing, a strategy that often confuses a major support idea for the author’s main idea. In the analysis for the main ideas, I ask students to start with the title. For instance, if the title is a question, the writing may answer that question. In addition, students examine the title’s tone and subject as clues to the main idea. I also tell my students that explicit main ideas are often located in the introduction or the conclusion or in both places simultaneously. Students block off introductions and conclusions to visually focus their analysis.

5. Line of Reasoning: While in groups, students examine the text for topic ideas that answer specific audience questions. Students block off topic ideas and marginally note the questions they answer. Typically, these questions begin with *who what, where, when, why, and how*. This part of the exercise provides the thinking and development foundation for later student writings. Groups report and the class arrives at a consensus as to how the support structure develops.

6. Schematic: Students are often unfamiliar with hierarchical ordering. The box below represents the relationships between and among the main idea, topic ideas and primary and secondary support. Of course, this is a simplified template of the more complex craft of writing. For example, students quickly learn that a topic idea may be developed through an extended illustration or example; another topic idea, developed through contrast or an analogy. The purpose of the schematic is to help students understand coherence—what goes with what. In this way, students see the inherent ordering of the sentences on the page.

A. Main idea

I. *Topic Idea*

Primary support

secondary support
secondary support

Primary support

secondary support
secondary support

II. *Topic Idea*

Repeat process of identifying topic ideas, primary and secondary support

Applying

7. MLA document format: The most effective strategy I've found for the MLA document format is to teach it step-by-step in class. TCC writing labs have step-by-step instructions that I provide to the students. We work through handout together with me asking, "What next," "What next?" In this way, students read and articulate the steps as they implement them. If handouts are unavailable, the web has multiple sites for MLA document format.

Colglazier, cont'd

Analyzing & Applying

8. Formal introduction of author, credentials, source, and main idea: I provide a template for the first sentence of the summary: In “An Open Letter to a Ninth Grader,” Patrick Sullivan, co-editor of *What is “College-Level” Writing?*, asserts specific skills and attitudes are essential for college preparation. Having students change the verb “asserts” and the language of the main idea encourages ownership of the sentence while providing a template that meets the requirement of this type of formal introduction.

9. Short summary: Following the introductory sentence and using their annotated text, students are asked to translate their audience-related questions into statements that embody the writer’s topic ideas. In this assignment, primary and secondary supports are not included in the summary design, but are noted only as a matter of hierarchical order. Using transitional elements below, students incorporate phrasing to reflect their own organization of the author’s support strategies:

strongest	most effective	begins	initiates
moderately	moderately effective	follows	furtheres
another, additionally, moreover	another, additionally, moreover	another, additionally, moreover	another, additionally, moreover
weakest	least effective	concludes	finally

Whenever possible, steps 8 and 9 are done in a computer classroom. During document creation and summary writing, I assist students on revision and editing to improve the final product.

10. Review and critique: I review the completed summaries individually or in small groups to address sentence editing, grammar, punctuation, and other writing skills. With a class period of an hour and twenty minutes, this initial assignment—chock full of large concepts—usually takes three class periods for a group of 15-20 students.

(1) <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/academe/2009/JF/Feat/sull.htm>

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