Crash Course: Code Switching and Writing for All Audiences

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This curriculum unit is recommended for:
English II, English IV

Keywords: Code switching, register, writing, audience, style, voice, technical writing, formal writing

Teaching Standards: See Appendix 1 for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis: "Crash Course" is a ten day, end of semester curriculum unit for English II students (although it is readily adaptable for upper level English courses as well). This plan focuses on the various types of writing students will encounter in their teenage years, including emails to friends, job application short answer questions, and college admissions essays. "Crash Course" aims to reinforce previous grammar instruction through a complex understanding of the many different purposes of language. This curriculum unit exposes students to philosophical research and statistics that explain how language is a powerful tool with which they may achieve a range of goals. As students read sophisticated informational texts, they are pushed to combine their new knowledge of language with their understanding of grammar conventions in order to master a wide variety of writing tasks. Students gain useful life skills through this unit; for example, there is an entire day dedicated to writing résumés and cover letters for different types of jobs, as there is also a day dedicated to writing college application and scholarship essays. In short, through the "Crash Course" curriculum unit, students learn the importance of thoughtful language construction in completing both low and high stakes writing assignments.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 100 students in English II.

I give permission for the Institute to publish my curriculum unit and synopsis in print and online. I understand that I will be credited as the author of my work.

Crash Course: Code Switching and Writing for All Audiences

Torrie K. Edwards

"Whether we like it or not, powerful people make value judgments about other people's intelligence based on language use. Young writers and speakers must learn that the forms of language they choose will be judged, sometimes harshly, by their audiences, and their ability to appear intelligent will be affected by their audience's opinions of their language choices…To be successful in their lives, young writers and speakers must understand what powerful people believe about language use."[i]

Content Objectives

Introduction

The unit that I have created, "Crash Course: Code Switching and Writing for All Audiences," is intended for a class of approximately twenty to thirty students enrolled in English II. This unit could also be taught to a larger class; the primary difficulty would be on the teacher's end, as he or she would have a significantly larger amount of writing to edit and grade. For a unit about writing, class size matters; because no student writes at the same skill level, differentiated instruction is necessary, and in a larger class this kind of individualized teaching is more difficult. "Crash Course," while structured around students completing the same assignments, is a unit that encourages discovery of personal writing style, while still emphasizing the importance of a skill set consistent with the expectations of specific writing tasks.

William Amos Hough High School is a large, suburban public school in North Carolina with more than two thousand students[ii]. The student body is 77.9% white[iii] and only 18.1% are considered economically disadvantaged.[iv] The school is the third wealthiest high school and sixteenth wealthiest overall in the district.[v] The demographics of our school is in stark contrast to that of the district as whole, in which 54.3% of the student population is designated as economically disadvantaged.[vi] Despite socioeconomic disparity, the graduation rate of the district as a whole has increased consistently over the past four years[vii]; however, the school in which I teach saw a 4.9% decrease in the graduation rate.[viii] Because most members of our school community are high school and college graduates, this decline in success has pushed many of them into further involvement with the school. Pressure on teachers is high, as both the district and the community demand success from our students.

Most of our students have parents who work white collar jobs and who understand the importance of learning how to write effectively and coherently; they see strong writing as

indicators of academic achievement and predictors of future professional success. Many of the students, however, have not had consistent practice for their writing. Those students come to high school lacking mastery of many necessary grammatical and stylistic fundamentals. Aside from this inconsistent background in writing skills, a large number of students are discouraged by writing; because they live in a world of Twitter and Tumblr where short messages do not require proper grammar or mechanics, students come to their secondary education resistant to extensive or formal writing tasks. Ninth grade teachers include writing instruction in their curriculum and are able to fill in many of the gaps in students' training, but English II teachers focus on more formal writing tasks to prepare students for the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) graduation project and for upper level courses.

My unit is intended for English II students, but it may be used for any level of high school English. In fact, seniors in English would be well served to review much of what I have put into this unit for their entrance to college or a career. In order to differentiate instruction for these levels, one could make minor adjustments to the length of the unit, add additional practice activities, and refocus the unit. For example, many foundations (remedial) students at Hough High School are looking to enter the workforce rather than college. With this reality in mind, one might spend an additional day working on job applications and résumé writing, rather than on college admissions essays or scholarship application essays. On the other hand, most of our Honors level students plan to attend four-year universities. A teacher could choose to allocate an additional day to those writing tasks rather than to some of the smaller tasks that honors students may master quickly.

This unit will take approximately ten days, but can easily be adapted to a teacher's specific students and needs. I have included a detailed outline of the unit that includes a timeline in the Classroom activities section of this curriculum unit. In these ten days, students will use knowledge from earlier lessons about grammar and audience as a foundation for general writing skills before we move into higher stakes writing tasks. We will start with a basic discussion about the value and power of writing and communication and end with the creation of a writing sample portfolio that highlights the students' unique strengths and styles. I hope in this unit to impress upon my students that such skills are a source of academic and political power; without writing fluency, students will not find success in the real world. Students must learn that only "through communication can human life hold meaning…Authentic thinking, thinking that is concerned about *reality*, does not take place in ivory tower isolation, but only in communication."[ix] "Crash Course" intends to teach students that how they interact with the world determines their success, and that critical communication is a key to a realistic understanding of the dynamics of social worlds. Though intended to be a short culminating unit, I will have allotted enough time to extend the unit an additional two or three days, should the students need extra scaffolding, further practice, or greater review.

Rationale

There are four reasons behind creating "Crash Course: Writing for All Audiences." The first two reasons—to prepare students for colleges and careers—focus on student growth and development. Most educators teach to provide students greater access to quality instruction that is relevant to their lives; this unit is no different, as it gives students information and enhances skills that will facilitate their plans for their post-secondary lives. The third reason for creating this unit is for vertical alignment across grade levels. The unit acts as a transition between lower grade level writing performance and upper grade communication tasks. Finally, "Crash Course" is not only beneficial to students but also good for teachers. By including this unit in their instruction, teachers will include relevant material that increases student engagement as well as improves teacher evaluation records.

College Readiness

Americans who have an advanced degree are much more likely to have and to retain jobs, and they are also often paid much more. As a result of those statistics, students are entering collegiate environments at higher rates than ever before. Although the higher education of our student population is a critical component of technological progress, increased global awareness, and economic growth, many students entered college entirely unprepared for the rigorous courses. One reason for their lack of success in their post-secondary classes is that they do not know how to write well. This struggle is in direct correlation with their inability to organize and explain their thoughts.[x] Writing is, in fact, "a tool that enables people in every discipline to wrestle with facts and ideas. It's a physical activity, unlike reading. Writing requires us to operate some kind of mechanism…for getting our thoughts on paper. It compels us by the repeated effort of language to go after those thoughts and to organize them and present them clearly."[xi] Students who have not been trained in critical thinking and critical writing, therefore, cannot formulate a coherent essay, write scientific lab reports, or even compose appropriate emails to professors. Despite anecdotal and numerical data demonstrating a decline of academic preparedness in our undergraduate population, students still believe that writing is a skill only learned in English class and then only for literature; what this unit serves to do is to teach them how wrong that notion is. Students must learn to recognize that "writing…can't be taught or learned in a vacuum…In many subjects…a literature exists—…mathematics, for instance."[xii] Because students are unable to complete basic educational and co-curricular tasks, many professors are dedicating time originally meant to cover content instead to remedying discrepancies in writing skills. As strong writing is a universal necessity for achievement in all academic disciplines, and as university professors are finding themselves dealing with the lower writing proficiencies of their student populations, the burden remains on high school teachers to improve the writing and thinking skills of our students.

I have written my curriculum unit "Crash Course" for a number of reasons, the first of which being to prepare students for important writing assignments they will encounter before graduating from high school and to give them the skill base with which they can successfully enter college. These exercises range from the informal tweets and text messages that they send to more important writings like emails to teachers and college admissions essays. My unit builds upon writing and grammar instruction to help students understand how to complete these varied tasks based upon audience expectations. For example, students need to understand the difference between who might read their tweets versus who will be reading their research papers. Helping students differentiate between audiences will not only improve their writing and provide them with the skills to complete tasks like the CMS graduation project, but it will also familiarize them with the concept of switching between registers, which will be especially important when they reach college. Students who have a clear understanding of the readability levels of texts (the impact of the semantic and physical features of a text, who can read certain pieces of writing, why they might be the target audience, etc.) are consequently better equipped to write their own pieces of varying registers.[xiii] It is clear then that aside from helping students accomplish goals in high school, this unit prepares students for college writing tasks. Once in college, the matching of audience and content is especially important, because students are immersed in specialized content areas with professional, collegiate readers. By creating a unit that focuses on both writing skills and code switching, I am hoping to alleviate some of the stress college professors endure when forced to teach freshmen skills they should have learned years earlier.

Career Readiness

Another reason for writing "Crash Course" is to prepare both the students who are college bound and those entering the workforce directly for the different types of communication they will have to conduct on a daily basis. The Common Core State Standards that North Carolina has adopted specifically outlines expectations for college and career readiness:

> Students must have a strong command of the grammar and usage of spoken and written English to succeed academically and professionally…Furthermore, in the twenty-first century, students must be able to communicate effectively in a wide range of print and digital texts, each of which may require different grammatical and usage choices to be effective. Thus, grammar and usage instruction should acknowledge the many varieties in order to help students make purposeful language choices in their writing and speaking (Fogel & Ehri, 2000; Wheeler & Swords, 2004). Students must also be taught the *purposes* for using particular grammatical features in particular disciplines or texts…[xiv]

Our standards dictate that students must be prepared to use language conventions to achieve a variety of linguistic goals in both college and careers. Aside from this connection between different post-secondary paths, one can also justify teaching

grammar and writing because like many college professors who include remedial writing instruction in their courses, a number of employers have also begun to incorporate writing training in their orientations and professional development programs. In both England and the United States, companies have started "hiring trainers to help workers with their writing because English…is not being used properly"[xv] because "looseness with language can create bad impressions with clients, ruin marketing materials and cause communication errors."[xvi] In fact, a survey conducted in the United States showed that "about 45% of 430 employers…were increasing employee-training programs to improve employees' grammar and other skills."[xvii] Rather than put the onus on small businesses, which may struggle to afford this type of remediation training, or on large corporations, which may be too busy to send employees to these activities, high school teachers should provide adequate written and oral communication coaching. Reading sample résumés, corporate emails, and business proposals, as well as practicing these tasks on their own will help students become familiar with the level of expectations these audiences have for professional writing. According to Davies and Birbili, a number of studies in both England and the United States demonstrate how pervasive writing is in careers. One survey indicated that more than half of respondents wrote long documents at work, while another provided evidence that even larger numbers are feeling "an ever-increasing emphasis on the need for many different kinds of workers to write in a variety of ways."[xviii]

Students also may need to prepare to enter the growing language industry. While the majority of high school and college students are looking to careers in the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), there are a number of these positions that also include language-based responsibilities. This particular field is far more influential than many students may initially understand; indeed, it provides more than 200,000 jobs in the United States and is growing at an average annual rate of 7.4%. If those numbers are not enough to convince students of the importance of language skills, the language industry also has $15 billion in "direct economic activity" and leverages $1.5 trillion in trade in the United States.[xix] This trend is not unique to the United States. In the European Union, the language industry is a €8.4 billion industry that is predicted to grow 10% in the coming years.[xx] Aside from the clear economic benefits of participating in this growing industry, young people entering the work force must be aware of our increasingly globalized community. We are no longer a world of individual, isolated nations. We are connected to one another through global trade, shared citizenship, common values, and widespread communication technology. Without people who are linguistic experts as well as successful in their specific fields, whether that is marketing, product placement, subtitling or dubbing, translation of documents, or even outreach to local populations, a company may be at a disadvantage when compared to organizations who can connect with diverse groups of people. Because of its emphasis on audience consideration and interactive communication, "Crash Course," therefore, not only prepares students in their private linguistic development, but also provides them with the tools with which to enter this growing public industry that has place for people from all

kinds of professions.

Vertical Alignment

Students enter high school with a range of writing abilities. A few have a strong grasp on the fundamentals of grammar, mechanics, and structure; some can barely construct complete sentences or identify fragments. Ninth grade English teachers work hard to even out these skills and to send students to tenth grade English with a working knowledge of writing. Much of the focus of English I is, however, on using personal experiences as the basis for reflective writing. While that is an extremely important skill, academic writing, regardless of field, focuses primarily on analyzing research, documents, and other forms of data and information. English II, therefore, builds upon students' basic grasp of writing fundamentals and moves to more sophisticated writing tasks including research papers, document-based questions, and analytical responses to literature. This change in instructional focus is necessary because students in eleventh grade write graduation project research papers, take the SAT/ACT (both of which have writing sections), and begin taking Advanced Placement courses that require a higher level of writing competency.

Vertical alignment is an identifying quality of this curriculum unit. The unit acts as a stepping stone between the lower level writing assignments that students complete in English I and the higher stakes writing tasks that students complete as eleventh and twelfth graders. This transition unit joins the grammatical and stylistic fundamentals of English I with the self-guided research projects of English III and English IV. Without a connection between these two vastly different writing projects, students would struggle immensely with academic writing in the future. This unit serves to help eliminate that struggle and to provide the support students need in moving from underclassmen to upperclassmen.

Teacher Benefits

In our current educational climate, teachers are pressed to find relevant and engaging material for students. Student interest is central in public education. They are often difficult to please: today's high school students have grown up in a society that promotes instant gratification through technological access, encourages complete transparency of identity, and often devalues traditional educational emphases. Students were once required to have a very well-rounded academic background; now, humanities classes are slowly being cut as funding to Career and Technical Education programs and STEM programs grows. Students no longer see the intrinsic value of English and history; instead, the burden has been placed on the teacher to prove why students should appreciate the course material and take the class seriously.

With "Crash Course," English teachers will be able to show students why their course

matters. English teachers already attempt to illuminate the ubiquity of writing, to explain that regardless of discipline, coherent and argumentative writing skills are necessary for success. English teachers repeat that in STEM courses, students will need to write lab reports, technical papers, or mathematical theorem propositions and that in Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses, students may create marketing projects or business proposals, both of which require convincing and sophisticated writing. Even with these clear reasons for the importance of language arts in modern public education, humanities teachers often find themselves devalued and underappreciated by students, parents, and policy makers alike. "Crash Course" rejects their notions of our waning relevance by marrying English course content with applications across fields of study. Rather than boring students with solely "Legacy" content, "Crash Course" presents students with "Future Content," content that incorporates language, politics, and sociology into the English classroom.[xxi] As students begin to see the importance of writing and English teachers' expertise, student engagement and appreciation will increase. Interested students are more respectful, put in greater effort, and in the end learn more than they would in a class they found to be irrelevant.

Another benefit for teachers in using "Crash Course" in their curriculum is the impact that it will have on their evaluation records. Teacher effectiveness is determined by their ability to engage students, to provide relevant course material, and to incorporate twenty-first skills into instruction. "Crash Course" specifically utilizes data and informational text analysis, a requirement of the Common Core State Standards, to motivate students to learn to write for various audiences. "Crash Course" also uses cross curricular writing to enable effective reasoning and argumentation skills, and to facilitate the use of sound judgments and decisions about audience expectations. The unit clearly focuses on enhancing students' twenty-first century skills while also incorporating traditional course content, thus demonstrating that the teacher is both knowledgeable in his or her subject area, and also able to adapt to changing student needs.

Objectives

The primary objective of "Crash Course" is to have students use their knowledge of English course content as well as personal reflection, consideration of audience reception, and other subject area material to engage in meaning and useful writing tasks. English II ends with the End of Course Exam, a test that focuses on reading comprehension and the ability to analyze some quality of the piece in a short constructed response. English II is also unique in that it is a clear transition year between less sophisticated analysis and upper level literary synthesis. My students are not only preparing for the EOC, but they are also getting ready for AP courses, the graduation project, the SAT and ACT, and college applications. Furthermore, student writing must reflect the higher order thinking skills that each of these academic tasks necessitates. They are also old enough to have their driver licenses and to apply for jobs. Therefore, as a result of the writing heavy concentration of English II, as well as the fact that students may be filling out job

applications, this curriculum unit asks students to practice and perform relevant and rigorous writing exercises.

Before starting the new material in "Crash Course," the first official day of the unit will be a review of important grammar and writing concepts that the students have learned throughout the semester. We will then introduce the idea of the value and power of writing to initiate a discussion about literacy skills as gatekeepers of academic and political power. Without this kind of personalized and powerful preface to a writing unit, students will be less interested in the material and thus less enthusiastic in their attempts to achieve the objective of the curriculum. In order to deepen student understanding of the intersection between communication skills and social capital, they will learn about code switching, the ability to switch between levels of formality in writing, and which audiences receive which specific writing styles. They will also read statistics and testimonies from colleges that reinforce the importance of strong writing skills in extensive and high stakes performance tasks. To emphasize further the importance of sophisticated communication, students will read research published by Educational Testing Services (ETS)/College about the correlation between SAT Writing Section Scores and college readiness and success in four year colleges.

Because the unit hopes to have students understand what makes writing important and how to change writing style based on audience, students will study and practice a variety of types of written communication. Students will progress from small writing tasks to larger and higher stakes tasks. The second day will focus on communication with people with whom we have different relationships. Depending on the connection we have with a person, how we communicate will change. To highlight this difference, students will compare tweets, text messages, and emails that they write to friends versus those written to a teacher or to a grandparent. Students should come away understanding that writing and speaking are nuanced, and therefore, one's style should (and must) change, depending on the task and audience. For supplementation of these ideas, we will move into writing activities in the professional world. Starting with job applications, résumés, and cover letters, and ending with formal business proposals, students will learn to speak to a professional, adult audience to present themselves as reliable, competent adults. Would they use text-speak in a formal writing task? How would they address prospective employers? How can they demonstrate effective persuasion in a business environment? How do various business environments differ? Does this change how we must communicate in them? These are all questions students do not seem to encounter in other courses, and thus must be answered in English class in order to facilitate growth at this pivotal moment in student development.

"Crash Course" reinforces students' understanding of stylistic choices in the final module as they move from career writing to school writing. As the unit focuses on student engagement in intentional and directed writing performance, we will continue to focus on audience and style. We will also maintain connectivity within the unit by using

our knowledge of persuasive writing from the business proposals to write student speeches. Moreover, we will revisit a previous concept discussed in our *Julius Caesar* unit: rhetoric and rhetorical devices. Students must learn that how we speak to different audiences will either convince them to do what we want or it will turn them against us. By comparing student audiences to teacher audiences to business audiences, students will be able to recognize when and where to use certain styles and types of language. The final day of the unit presents students with a completely different audience: college admissions boards. They will write college admissions essays based on whether they have achieved the objective of the unit, which they will show by applying their knowledge of the power of language, rhetoric, and audience expectations.

Background Information

Seminar

My seminar through the Charlotte Teachers Institute examined grammar in real life situations. "Grammar for the Real World" allowed me to reconsider how I taught writing to my twenty-first century English II students; it compelled me to ask myself whether it was necessary that students be able to define the (supposed) eight parts of speech or whether their ability to compose cohesive and coherent papers should be my primary concern. Before my seminar, I attempted to unite both of these concepts. Though a member of Prensky's Digital Native generation, I still value traditional instruction because I am a part of the first wave of these learners. As a result, I have used dated methods of grammar instruction in my classroom, from diagramming sentences to rote part of speech memorization. Through my seminar, I have gained the pedagogical tools necessary to separate Digital Immigrant instruction that I received from Digital Native instruction that comes naturally to me as a millennial and that will help me engage my students. As there is research that shows these young learners have different thinking patterns because of their different experiences during the cognitively formative years of their lives, my future grammar instruction will no longer include regurgitation of practically useless information; rather, I will incorporate tasks that provide them with the interactivity they crave as a result of their technological immersion.[xxii] My curriculum will focus primarily on grammar for real-life writing tasks, such as research papers, job applications, and business proposals. While they must still adhere to grammatical conventions, I no longer feel the need to force students to memorize the difference between a possessive pronoun and a definite possessive determiner. Instead, my seminar showed me to use writing tasks that emphasize the difference between colloquial speech and formal writing, use of active verbs instead of nouns to improve strength of voice, and varying sentence structures while still maintaining a connected flow of ideas.

Teaching Strategies

Teachers must incorporate a variety of pedagogical strategies to interest the varied

student types in their classrooms. What engages one student may not engage the next, and thus teachers are put to the task of changing their instructional techniques to reach a wide student audience. In a unit about code switching and audience reception, the idea of alternating teaching strategies for all students is especially relevant. Teachers may have in their room at the same time those who are visual learners, others who are auditory learners, and some who are kinesthetic learners. Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences was revolutionary in instructional methodology; as a result of his concern that schools primarily used "linguistic symbolization" and "logical-mathematical symbolization" for assessment,[xxiii] many alternative approaches to education and assessment have been developed over the past forty years. Although during each day it is difficult to use these various strategies that fit every individual, teachers must write lessons that incorporate many types of instruction over the duration of the unit. In "Crash Course," I utilize a number of different pedagogical methods to reach my student audience. The unit targets four separate types of learners by including logical-mathematical thinking, linguistic knowledge, interpersonal relationships, and intrapersonal reflection.[xxiv]

Some students thrive in whole group lecture formats. When introducing a topic, I often use this classroom style in order to frontload key background information and conceptual material. I employ this strategy at this point because all students need this introduction and many of them have similar questions or have questions that will help their classmates understand that content better. After a review of grammar concepts, "Crash Course" begins with educational philosophy and political commentary by George Orwell and Paulo Freire; this difficult material is best read with scaffolded discussion questions. In the whole group system, students are able to hear each other's responses and feedback to theoretical questions. Many of these students would not be able to comprehend the information without their classmates' perspectives and the guided discussion from me. Allowing students to participate in such a multifaceted conversation will help many students make cognitive leaps that they may not achieve working in small groups or on their own.

While whole group discussion of theoretical texts with scaffolded questions will help many students through different cognitive phases, there are times when students need to step outside of their familiar academic behaviors and lead their own learning. After frontloading the unit with philosophy, students will articulate personal opinions on Freire's and Orwell's arguments about liberatory education and literacy as the gatekeeper of social mobility. A Socratic seminar is one way to encourage student-led discussions that will ease the self-teaching that is valuable in a classroom. When presenting controversial, opinionated, or political information to students, having a safe space for discussion will facilitate the emergence of a well-rounded perspective that takes into account all sides of an issue. My classroom can act as a safe place while still allowing students to take charge of their learning and lead the instruction.

While discussion is an integral part of textual analysis, under the Common Core State Standard, English teachers have been charged with integrating cross-curricular content into their units. I have designed "Crash Course" specifically to be an interdisciplinary structure; that is, I have included reading analysis, but I have also incorporated non-literary writing, statistical and informational analysis, and argumentation. Through cumulative performance tasks, "Crash Course" asks students to use critical thinking skills to connect the theory or data to a practical application of rhetorical devices. The integration of content that is not traditionally English material is therefore a strategy of its own; students are pushed to make connections across disciplines and to find ways to utilize their broad base of knowledge to make the greatest impact on their academic growth and development.

Classroom Activities

Day 1: Grammar Concept Review

Before starting the new material in "Crash Course," we will begin with a review of important grammar concepts. In order to be successful writers, students need a comprehensive understanding of complete sentence structures, voice, and punctuation. We will begin with a review of fragments, comma splices, and fused sentences. We will then move onto the four sentence types (simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex). With an focus on variety of sentence types, we will also briefly consider the difference between speech and writing, and how to move between these styles of communication effortlessly. Mark Honegger cites seven major differences between spoken and written language; on this opening day of "Crash Course," we will review the most important difference between them: that writing, unlike the natural ability we have for speech, is something that must be learned. Because it does not have the same paralinguistic cues, intonation and rhythm, or situational transparency of speech, certain grammatical rules must be followed in order for writing to be clear and engaging for readers.[xxv] In a similar vein, our grammar review will also include a segment on written agency, a reminder that using active verbs rather than nouns in writing can strengthen voice. Finally, we will review punctuation concepts, such as eliminating the use of exclamation points in formal writing, and when to use commas, and how to separate related ideas with the semicolon. This first day is critical in classes that have struggled throughout the semester to retain writing instruction; for those classes who have mastered basic grammar concepts, this day may or may not be needed in "Crash Course."

Students will also receive the portfolio project assignment on the first day of the unit. In their portfolio assignment, students are required to compile each of the writing tasks they complete throughout the unit. At the end of the unit, they will submit a collection of writing samples that vary from small, low-stakes tasks like friendly emails to higher-stakes writing assignments like college admissions essays. When clarifying the parameters of the project, I will also ensure that students understand why they must

submit a portfolio. I will explain the necessity for students to engage in differentiated writing tasks and to juxtapose the various styles in order to comprehend the importance of code switching as well as to see how they have developed a unique and sophisticated set of writing competencies from repeated practice and from studying relevant research.

Day 2: Introduction to Writing for All Audiences

On the second day of the unit, students will discuss the value of communication and writing in both academic and career settings. By introducing students to statistics and studies that show the connections between writing scores and college and career success, I will enable students to answer the question *why writing*? The purpose of the unit is to have students understand that writing skills are directly linked to proficiency in a variety of other skills and to incorporate this knowledge into their daily lives. This introduction to the unit will show students how the audience for a piece of writing changes style and content. Students will examine excerpts of Freire's philosophy as well as Orwell's argument in "Politics and the English Language" that language is used to manipulate. Students will begin by looking at education and writing as liberatory, and progress to the misuse of language that Orwell cites, that "all issues are political issues" and "political language…is designed to make lies sound truthful."[xxvi] Using these excerpts on the power of writing, writing as political, and code switching, students will begin to trace the various perspectives on that initial essential question *why writing?*

Day 3: Starting Small

The third day of "Crash Course" sees students starting with small writing tasks that do not have anything at stake. Students will begin by writing tweets and text messages to friends. We will then look at different parts of those messages. For example, how were they written? Was vernacular speech used or edited English? What was the content of these messages? After this discussion, students will move onto writing the same tweets and text messages to an audience of adults like grandparents, parents, and teachers. I will ask students to consider how similar content is relayed through different styles of writing and why they felt the need to switch registers. After the initial practice activities, students will pick a topic and write a paragraph email about it to their best friends. They will then write a paragraph email about the same topic to any adult whom they admire and respect. Because many people complain that emails have become too informal, without concern for usage, spelling, and other grammatical conventions, this particular exercise with emphasize the need for formality in certain communications.[xxvii] It is in this practice that students will begin to have a tangible understanding of moving between registers.

Day 4: Writing for Jobs: Small and Large Tasks

Now that students have a basic understanding of style and audience, they will move from personal correspondence to writing for jobs. Students will either have brought in job

applications they wish to complete or I will provide them with applications from local businesses. Our focus on the fourth day of the curriculum unit will be on the short-answer questions that are on these applications. Emphasizing clarity, conciseness, and competitiveness, I will help students answer these questions, which make employers call for interviews or throw away an application.

After practicing filling out job applications, students will advance to larger writing tasks. We will first look at sample résumés and cover letters for various types of jobs (e.g., teacher, marketing executive, engineer, etc.). Then, we will look at sample job postings. After picking jobs to which students want to apply, they will use templates that I have provided to write their own résumés and cover letters. I will also remind students that their résumés must be tailored to this particular position, but also easily adaptable for other careers as well. I will demonstrate what this means by showing them how my own résumé can be altered and updated depending on the position to which I would apply.

Day 5: Writing for Jobs: High Stakes Tasks

The fifth day of "Crash Course" is an extension of the previous day; in this lesson, students will continue to practice writing for jobs, but the stakes will be much higher than simply writing a résumé. To start the class, students will review sample business proposals for a variety of projects ranging from advertising campaigns to purchasing new medical equipment. After this introduction to the lesson content, students will receive a pre-determined position at a particular company, as well as a basic job description. They will then be given projects that they must complete at their companies. For these projects, students must write business proposals, following the basic structure of the samples we have read as well as adhering to high expectations of grammatical conventions and writing style. They may also come up with their own ideas to propose to their boss (me). This day may need to be extended by one class period.

Day 6: Writing for Jobs and School: High Stakes Tasks

On the sixth day of the curriculum unit, students will review their notes on rhetoric and rhetorical devices that they took during a previous unit. Taking note of stylistic choices and argumentative techniques, students will read two political speeches (e.g., Winston Churchill's "The Sinews of Peace" and John F. Kennedy's "Inaugural Address") and analyze their persuasiveness. They will also compute the readability level of both speeches, considering why particular politicians write at a specific level in specific situations. Moving from this analysis, students will pick an issue that interests them and has a place in contemporary politics. This topic may range from students' rights to immigration reform. They will have to use rhetorical devices to convince their audience. Furthermore, they must choose the type of audience that they will have and decide upon the register they will use. For example, they should consider how they would speak to teenagers versus how they might try to persuade a group of well-educated adults.

Teachers can easily connect this lesson to initial discussions of levels of formality and audience reception. This day may need to be extended to an additional class period.

Days 7 - 8: Writing for College: The SAT Essay

On the seventh and eighth days of the unit, students will practice writing SAT essays. The SAT writing section is a strong indicator of success in the first year of undergraduate studies, and thus is heavily considered in the application process. Students will first review empirical and numerical data from ETS that explain the clear correlation of first year grade point average and scores on the SAT Writing Section.[xxviii] While the relationship between achievement on the SAT Writing Section is strong for all groups, students should also know the direct impact on their own subgroup. For example, they will see in these studies that the SAT Writing Section predicts first year undergraduate grade point average most accurately for white students and females.[xxix] Students will begin reading samples of SAT essays with varying scores, as well as looking over the rubric for expectations. Once familiarized with the expectations, students will write their first practice essay and then submit for peer review in class. While students conduct peer reviews, I will use a volunteer's essay to project on the board, where as a whole class we can talk about what is strong and what needs work. This lesson is useful in isolation and in the context of this unit, but it may also be used throughout a school year for repeated practice.

Days 9 - 10: Writing for College: Admissions and Scholarship Essays

The last two days of "Crash Course" focus on writing for college admissions and scholarships. We will start by reading testimonials from college admissions and scholarship committees about what they look for in these writing samples. We will consider how a strong application essay gives admissions committees a clear image of student identity. In order to write an essay in which their individuality shines through, students must learn how to craft a singular voice in their writing. According to Peter Elbow, voice is one way to present readers with an idea of the "true self."[xxx] He continues by noting that many readers, in fact, need to recognize an authorial voice for writing to be effective and carry meaning.[xxxi] With this introduction, students should learn that they need to start this process early so as to ensure that they submit the best possible essay for college entrance or for scholarship consideration. Students will then evaluate sample essays, identifying what parts of them fulfill or do not fulfill the colleges' or scholarship committees' expectations. Students will compare and contrast what elements exist in the two types of essays. Finally, students will use the Common Application prompt to begin their own admissions essays. This class may need another day or two for drafting, construction, and revisions of essays.

Crash Course Portfolio Project

Directions: Over the next ten days, you will complete a number of writing tasks. Each day, you will add the writing assignment to your Crash Course portfolio that will be submitted at the end of the unit. Throughout the unit, you will have the opportunity for revision of individual items in your portfolio; you must avail yourself of these opportunities to ensure that your writing meets the specifications for the individual task.

Day 1: Grammar Concept Review

Activity 1- Review definitions of sentence structures, clauses, fragments, run-ons, and complete sentences.
Activity 2- Find a partner. Using one of your cell phones, record your partner explaining his/her biggest pet peeve. Play the transcript and write it out exactly as it was stated. Switch. Both members will then write about their biggest pet peeves.
- What differences do you notice between the speech and written expression?

Activity 3- Review punctuation using "Dear John" letter found online. (http://edu.wyoming.gov/sf-docs/wyr-lessons/5_Punctuation_Matters.pdf?sfvrsn=0)
- How does punctuation placement and usage change the meaning of this text?

Day 2: Introduction to Writing for All Audiences

Activity 1- Journal Entry: Why is writing important?
Activity 2- Writing and Literacy as Political Agency. Read the excerpts from Paulo Freire and George Orwell. Revise your journal entry from Activity 1 to include quotes and concepts from these two writers.

Day 3: Small Tasks

Activity 1- Tweets and Text Messages. You will pick a friend with whom you are close and to whom you are comfortable tweeting and writing text messages. You will then choose a topic about which you will write; it should be personal, such as something that bothers you or a lifelong goal. Write 3 – 5 tweets and 3 – 5 text messages to your friend about this issue. These can be real tweets and messages or you may handwrite them.
- What kinds of language did you use? Profanity? Slang? "Proper" English?
- Do you use punctuation?
- Do you mind your grammar?

- Why did you make the language choices that you did (or was this even a conscious decision)?

Activity 2- Tweets and Text Messages. You will pick an adult you admire and respect. Revisit your tweets and text messages to your friends from Activity 1. Revise those messages so that you would be comfortable sending them to this adult.
- What did you change about your writing? Why?
- What do you think it means to "switch codes" or "change registers" in writing/speech?

Activity 3- Look back at your tweet and text messages to both your friend and adult. You will now extend your short messages to full length emails. You will write two separate emails: one to your friend and one to the adult. You must consider the following elements when constructing your emails:
- How will the writing style differ between the email to your friend and the email to an adult?
- What type of language will you avoid using in the email to an adult? Why?
- Which email feels more natural to you? Why?
- Do you follow grammar rules in neither, one, or both emails? Why?

Day 4: Writing for Jobs: Small and Large Tasks

Activity 1- Job Applications. You have brought in a job application to a business for whom you would like to work. The position may be in food service, retail, or even a professional internship; the job application simply needs to have a short answer section. First, you will draft a response to the questions. Then you will revise for grammar, voice, and punctuation.
- Who is your audience? Keeping your audience in mind, should your response be formal or colloquial?
- How can you sell yourself through your writing? What should you focus on in your answers?
- What grammatical techniques can strengthen your voice?
- How can punctuation display thought, emphasis, and clarity?

Activity 2- Résumés. Using http://www.resumetemplates.org, you will create a résumé that highlights your academic, service, and extracurricular achievements in a way that will help you secure a job or internship in the field that interests you most. This website is an excellent resource for templates as well as anecdotal advice on creating the ideal résumé. You may also peruse the website and make a combination résumé that best fits your needs. When writing your résumé, make

sure to maintain clarity, credibility, parallel structure, consistency, appearance, and voice.

Day 5: Writing for Jobs: High Stakes Tasks

Activity 1- You and two classmates will form a small business. You must determine what field your company occupies. When you have decided upon your field, I will give your company a business scenario in which you must write a proposal to secure a particular client who could make your company hundreds of thousands or even millions of dollars. When writing your proposal, take these questions into consideration:
- What style of writing demonstrates your qualifications as a professional who is highly qualified and highly educated?
- How will you use language to show your capability and strengths? How can you use language to allow your voice to come through in your proposal?
- What kind of language must you avoid in your business scenario?
- Is the coded language you used for your business proposal appropriate for all business proposal scenarios? Why or why not?

Day 6: Writing for Jobs and School: High Stakes Tasks

Activity 1- Rhetoric, Audience, and Persuasion. Using your notes on rhetorical devices, you will read and analyze different political speeches for their efficacy.
- How do stylistic choices like repetition, parallel structure, and rhetorical impact persuasiveness?
- Who is the audience for the speech? Use the readability index calculator found at http://www.readability-score.com.
- Considering the audience for the speech, as well as the use of rhetorical and stylistic devices, what is the meaning or purpose of the speech?

Activity 2- Write Your Own Speech. You will pick a topic that is relevant in modern politics; it can include anything from healthcare reform to capital punishment. You will write a two-minute speech arguing a particular aspect of this issue.
- Who is your audience?
- How might your speech (both written and oral delivery) change depending on the audience?
- What rhetorical and stylistic devices will make your speech persuasive for your particular audience?

- Should your speech (written, oral, or both) adhere to strict grammar rules? Why or why not?

Days 7 - 8: Writing for College: The SAT Essay

Activity 1- Review the SAT Essay rubric. Then, read the SAT prompt projected on the Promethean Board. You have twenty-five minutes to complete your essay.
- Who is your audience?
- What kind of grammar must you use with this audience?
- What types of speech must you avoid with this audience?
- How important is voice in this type of essay?

Activity 2- Find a partner and peer-edit each other's SAT essays based on the rubric provided by http://sat.collegeboard.org/scores/sat-essay-scoring-guide. When you have returned each other's essays, you will discuss the changes and revise your essay.

Activity 3- After participating in the whole class revision of a classmate-volunteer's SAT essay, return to your essay second draft. What changes that were made to your classmate's essay that you could also make to your own essay? Revise and rewrite your essay.

Days 9 - 10: Writing for College: Admissions and Scholarship Essays

Activity 1- Writing Your College Application Essay. You will write your college application personal statement. Using the current Common App prompt options, you will begin the process of writing for college admissions. As you write, you should not only follow the parameters set forth by Common App, but also the codes of writing we have covered until now.
- Who is your audience?
- What kind of writing style must you use?
- What kinds of speech must you avoid using in a college application essay?
- What details should you include in order to make yourself appealing to an admissions committee?
- What will make your voice strong and make you stand out as an applicant?

Resources

Bibliography for Teachers and Students

Baron, Dennis. "The New Technologies of the World." In *What's Language got to do with It*?, edited by Keith Walters and Michael Brody, 98 – 100. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005.

Baron's short article details the how written and oral communication developed with the advent of computers and other mobile electronic technology from the mid 1970s to present day. Baron's article traces the impact that technology, especially email, web pages, and instant messaging, has had on language construction and formality.

Burridge, Kate. *Blooming English: Observations on the Roots, Cultivation, and Hybridization of the English Language*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Blooming English describes how the English language has changed around the world, in particular in the United States. Burridge, a British author, explains how English has evolved over the past millennium and the significance this language development has on the global community.

CMS Child Nutrition Services. "CMS Economically Disadvantaged Students." *CMS Planning Services.* October 2012. Accessed October 27, 2013. http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdepartments/StudentPlacement/PlanningServices/Documents/October%202012%20EDS_by%20percentage%20final%20sort%20by%20school%20and%20EDS.pdf

This document provides demographic data by school type (elementary, middle, high).

CMS School Improvement Plans. "William A. Hough High School 2012 – 2013 School Improvement Plan Report." *CMS School Improvement Plans, CMS Office of Accountability.* September 2012. Accessed October 27, 2013. http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/boe/School%20Improvement%20Plans%202012/Northeast%20Zone/312%20-%20William%20A.%20Hough%20High.pdf

This document is William A. Hough's School Improvement Plan, which also includes important demographic data unique to the school rather than the whole district.

Davies, Chris and Maria Birbili. "What Do People Need to Know about Writing in Order to Write in Their Jobs?" *British Journal of Educational Studies* 48, No. 4 (2000): 429 – 445. Accessed October 25, 2013. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1555893

"What Do People Need to Know about Writing" discusses the kinds of writing tasks utilized in the work world. Davies and Birbili explore the importance of writing, from small tasks such as memos, to larger tasks like conduct codes and letters to clients.

Elbow, Peter. "Voice in Writing Again: Embracing Contraries." *College English* 70, No. 2 (2007): 168 – 188. Accessed October 25, 2013. http://jstor.org/stable/2572259

Peter Elbow's article focuses on student writing and how teachers can help students become effective writers. Elbow considers how students need to develop their own voice in writing, while also being wary of the rhetorical consequences of stringently adhering to a constructed identity through voice.

"EU language industry worth '8.4bn euros.' " *Euractiv*. November 30, 2009. Accessed October 25, 2013. http://www.euractive.com/culture/eu-language-industry-worth-84bn-news-223163

This article provides numerical data to support a growing language industry in a part of the world experiencing significant economic duress. "EU language industry" presents a number of different fields in which language experts are employed in order to show the growth and impact of this thriving industry in the European Union.

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition*. Translated by Myra Bergman Ramos. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group Inc., 2000.

Pedagogy of the Oppressed is Freire's manifesto of how to teach a population of uneducated masses. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* considers preexisting theories of education, where teachers act as the experts, and contrasts them with liberating educational techniques, where the classroom is a space of co-instructional development.

Gardner, Howard and Thomas Hatch. "Multiple Intelligences Go to School: Educational Implications of the Theory of Multiple Intelligences." *Educational Researcher* 18, No. 8 (1989): 4 – 10. Accessed October 25, 2013. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1176460

Gardner and Hatch's article outlines the educational impact of Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences. The article explains the different intelligences as well as provides methods of alternate instructional techniques to accommodate those of varying abilities.

Geng, Gretchen. "Investigating the Use of Text Messages in Mobile Learning." *Active Learning in Higher Education* (2012). Accessed May 19, 2013. http://alh.sagepub.com/content/14/1/77

Geng, an Australian researcher, considers the positive effects of using cellular technology in the classroom, at both the secondary and post-secondary level. While she admits to needing further studies to support her claims, her findings support the idea that technology-based communication is a rather regimented area of grammar and writing.

Honegger, Mark. *English Grammar for Writing*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005.

English Grammar for Writing explains the necessities for teaching grammar for writing in a classroom. This short text includes traditional ideas of sentence structure and idea organization, but also pushes back against traditional linguistic categories (e.g., parts of speech, diagramming sentences, etc.). Honegger also includes a section detailing dialects and rejecting systematic judgment of these purportedly inferior language systems.

Kobrin, Jennifer L., Brian F. Patterson, Emily J. Shaw, Krista D. Mattern, and Sandra M. Barbuti. *Research Report No. 2008-5: Validity of the SAT for Predicting First-Year College Grade Point Average.* New York: The College Board, 2008.

This study provides numerical data for the validity of the SAT in predicting first year college grade point average. The report also provides data by subgroup.

Lindblom, Kenneth and Patricia A. Dunn. "Analyzing Grammar Rants: An Alternative to Traditional Grammar Instruction." *The English Journal* 95, No. 5 (2006): 71 – 77. Accessed October 25, 2013. http://www.jstor.org/stable/30046592

Lindblom and Dunn present an interesting alternative to traditional grammar instruction. After explaining the importance of grammar instruction in the classroom for the purpose of writing, the authors offer an engaging grammar activity: analyzing grammar rants by writers like Dear Abby and Bill O'Reilly.

Lewis, Thomas. "Notes on Punctuation." In *What's Language got to do with It*?, edited by Keith Walters and Michael Brody, 98 – 100. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005.

"Notes on Punctuation" is a comical essay that demonstrates in its construction important rules of punctuation, including why not to use an exclamation point, when to use a semicolon rather than a period, and the proper way to use quotation marks.

Mattern, Krista D., Brian F. Patterson, Emily J. Shaw, Jennifer L. Kobrin, and Sandra M. Barbuti. *Research Report No. 2008-4: Differential Validity and Prediction of the SAT*. New York: The College Board, 2008.

This study provides numerical data for the validity of the SAT. The report also provides

data by subgroup.

Mencken, H.L. *The American Language: An Inquiry into the Development of English in the United States*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1980.

Mencken's text outlines the evolution of the English language with a particular eye on the Americanization of speech and writing.

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers. *Common Core State Standards.* Washington, D.C.: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief School State Officers, 2010.

The Common Core State Standards explain in great detail the expectations for student achievement in various academic areas including writing, reading, and math. Literacy is a key element in the standards.

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction." Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate 2012 – 2013: Preliminary Results, August 7, 2013." *CMS Office of Accountability.* August 7, 2013. Accessed October 27, 2013. http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/mediaroom/Documents/CMS%20Graduation%20Rate%20PPT%20August%208%202013.pdf

This document provides information about Charlotte Mecklenburg's graduation rate. Data by subgroup is included.

Orwell, George. "Politics and the English Language." *Literary Cavalcade* 54, No. 5 (2007). Accessed May 19, 2013. https://ezproxy.lib.davidson.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=606189&site=ehost-live

Orwell's essay elucidates how language is used to gain political agency. The language available to make sense of one's political world itself is a power structure that labels people and groups as powerful or powerless. Orwell uses his essay to promote an ideal of writing in which clarity and certain aesthetics are valued more than linguistic paternalism.

Pikulski, John J. "Readability." *Eduplace*. 2004. Accessed October 25, 2013. http://www.eduplace.com/state/author/pikulski.pdf

"Readability" is a text written as a sales pitch for Houghton Mifflin educational materials. This document, however, includes insight on the problems of readability indexes and lexile levels, and offers a solution to determining proper reading level of texts for students.

Prensky, Marc. "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants." *On the Horizon* 9, No. 5 (2001).

Presnky coins the terms "Digital Natives" and "Digital Immigrants" to depict the divide between educators who did not grow up with current technology (e.g., computers, smart phones, etc.) and students who use these devices naturally. He makes a case for the biological differences between these two groups in order to support changing instructional methodology to accommodate these new learners.

---. "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants, *Part II:* Do They Really *Think* Differently?" *On the Horizon* 9, No. 6 (2001).

A continuation of "Digital Native, Digital Immigrants," "*Part II*" further explicates the cognitive processes digital natives use in making sense of the world around them, as well as how teachers can better serve these students through active participation in their technological world.

Rosenthal, Jack. "So Here's What's Happening to Language." In *What's Language got to do with It*?, edited by Keith Walters and Michael Brody, 98 – 100. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005.

"So Here's What's Happening to Language" explores the impact of widespread literacy through internet and email communication. Rosenthal explicates the need for some adherence to the old rules of writing for clarity and credibility, but also advocates for a change in what defines formal writing.

Shellenbarger, Sue. "This Embarrasses You and I*: Grammar Gafffes Invade the Office in an Age of Informal Email, Texting and Twitter." *The Wall Street Journal,* June 20, 2012. Accessed October 25, 2013. http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702303410404577466662919 275448#

Shellenbarger's *Wall Street Journal* article presents a clear argument about the impact of poor grammar and writing on companies. Through anecdotal information, Shellenbarger demonstrates the link between the decline in professionalism and inept grammar amongst employees. Her article also includes data showing how many businesses are investing in training programs for newly hired employees based on grammar and writing.

"The Language Industry and Careers in the 21st Century: A Response to the Today's Show." *Association of Language Companies*. November 1, 2012. Accessed October 25, 2013. http://www.alcus.org/news/careers_pr.cfm

The Association of Language Companies responded on its website to a *Today Show* segment on the growth of the language industry. The positive review was coupled with

numerical data showing the magnitude and extent of this still-growing field of study.

Wyse, Dominic. "Grammar. For Writing? A Critical Review of Empirical Evidence." *British Journal of Educational Studies* 49, No. 4 (2001): 411 – 427. Accessed October 25, 2013. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3122362

Wyse explores the various research on whether or not explicit grammar instruction is helpful or detrimental to writing skills. In "Grammar. For Writing?," Wyse provides readers with a number of sources that find that most explicit grammar instruction is in fact a hindrance to improving writing. With this knowledge, educators, curriculum developers, and policy makers must change their methods in teaching grammar and writing.

Zinsser, William. *Writing to Learn*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988.

Writing to Learn supports writing across the curriculum. In his text, Zinsser explains why teachers of all subject areas must teach writing. Some of his reasons include: writing is cross-curricular and does not occur in the vacuum of the English classroom, English teachers need relief from the pressure of being the writing teachers, and writing must be practiced. Most importantly, Zinsser cites student interest. He explains that when students can write across the curriculum, they are likely to find something about which they write that interests them; once they see that writing can be interesting, they are more likely to work hard to do their best, following the important steps of the writing process and actually learning from their mistakes through personalized feedback.

Materials for Classroom Use

Reading Material

The scholarship from Freire, Orwell, Zinsser, and Honegger, as well as the statistical reports released to the public from various institutions and ETS are central to my unit. Students today need both a theoretical understanding of a topic as well as tangible data to back up philosophical claims; therefore, they must have both cerebral theory and numerical evidence to understand the importance of this "Crash Course" unit.

Samples and Templates

One of the primary goals of this unit is for students to end English II with writings that they will use and continue to work on in their academic and career futures. Students will leave tenth grade English with their first completed résumés, adaptable cover letters, and the first draft of their college admissions essay for the Common Application. In order to facilitate the creation of student writing portfolios, we must have samples of well-written essays and poorly-written essays. We must also have examples of résumés and cover

letters, as well as templates for these documents that vary depending on career field (i.e., humanities versus engineering résumés).

Job Applications

Students will practice completing the short answer questions on job applications in order to understand how to tailor their writing to specific employers and to recognize the expectations these businesses have for future employees. We will use sample job applications from companies such as McDonald's, Starbucks, and Old Navy.

SAT Writing Prompt

In preparation for college writing tasks, students will complete practice essays from the SAT Writing Section. These prompts will be official released prompts from ETS so that students can see the exact format of the prompt, including the background paragraph and then the actual assignment question.

Implementing Common Core Standards

L.9-10.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Through the unit, students will develop grade-level competence with standard English grammar in writing and speech. The unit is designed to reinforce and push mastery of this skill by connecting previous explicit grammar instruction with various writing tasks.

L.9-10.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

In "Crash Course," students will combine previous instruction of grammar conventions with low and high stakes writing tasks. Students will also reinforce grammar and mechanics knowledge through consistent revision of writing assignments.

L.9-10.3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

Students come to this unit having already had direct grammar instruction. This unit focuses on different applications of language. By using relevant assignments and incorporating twenty-first century skills, "Crash Course" shows students how language may be constructed differently to achieve different specific goals. With a more nuanced understanding of how others use language and grammar to a particular end, students can be more effective communicators in various writing and speaking tasks.

W.9-10.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

As students come into the curriculum unit with a base of grammar knowledge, we also focus on reinforcing those skills through practice in the unit. Students then spend "Crash Course" reading research about the significance of language construction in politics, academic achievement, and real-world success. Finally, students apply their knowledge of writing development, organization, and style to a variety of tasks and audiences, ranging from friendly emails to college application essays.

[i] Kenneth Lindblom and Patricia A. Dunn. "Analyzing Grammar Rants: An Alternative to Traditional Grammar Instruction," *The English Journal* 95 (2006): 72, accessed October 25, 2013, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30046592.

[ii] CMS School Improvement Plans. "William A. Hough High School 2012 – 2013 School Improvement Plan Report." (North Carolina: CMS Office of Accountability, 2013).

[iii] CMS School Improvement Plans, "William A. Hough School 2012 – 2013 School Improvement Plan Report," 3.

[iv] CMS Child Nutrition Services Nutrition. "CMS Economically Disadvantaged Students." (North Carolina: CMS Planning Services, 2012), 3.

[v] CMS Child Nutrition Services Nutrition, "CMS Economically Disadvantaged Students," 7 – 9.

[vi] CMS Child Nutrition Services Nutrition, "CMS Economically Disadvantaged Students," 4.

[vii] North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. "Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate 2012 – 2013: Preliminary Results, August 7, 2013." (North Carolina: CMS Office of Accountability, 2013), 3.

[viii] North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. "Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate 2012 – 2013." (North Carolina: CMS Office of Accountability, 2013).

[ix] Paulo Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition.* Translated by Myra Bergman Ramos. (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group Inc., 2000), 77.

[x] William Zinsser. *Writing to Learn*. (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), 205.

[xi] Zinsser, *Writing to Learn,* 49

[xii] Zinsser, *Writing to Learn,* 23

[xiii] John J. Pikulski. "Readability." (Delaware: Houghton Mifflin, 2004), 2, accessed October 25, 2013, http://www.eduplace.com/state/author/pikulski.pdf.

[xiv] National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers 29

[xv] Chris Davies and Maria Birbili. "What Do People Need to Know about Writing in Order to Write in Their Jobs?" *British Journal of Educational Studies* 48 (2000): 429, accessed October 25, 2013, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1555893.

[xvi] Sue Shellenbarger. "This Embarrasses You and I*: Grammar Gaffes Invade the Office in an Age of Informal Email, Texting and Twitter," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 20, 2012, accessed October 25, 2013, http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702303410404577466662919275448.

[xvii] Shellenbarger, "This Embarasses You and I*."

[xviii] Davies and Birbili, "What Do People Need to Know about Writing in Order to Write in Their Jobs?," 432 – 433.

[xix] "The Language Industry and Careers in the 2st Century: A Response to the Today Show." *Association of Language Companies,* November 1, 2012, accessed October 25, 2013, http://www.alcus.org/news/careers_pr.cfm.

[xx] "EU language industry 'worth 8.4 bn euros.' "*Euractiv,* November 30, 2009, accessed October 25, 2013, http://www.euractiv.com/culture/eu-language-industry-worth-84bn-news-223163.

[xxi] Marc Prensky. "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants." *On the Horizon* 9 (2001), accessed October 25, 2013, http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20-%20Digital%20Natives,%20Digital%20Immigrants%20-%20Part1.pdf.

[xxii] Marc Prensky, "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants, *Part II*: Do They Really *Think* Differently?" *On the Horizon* 9 (2001), accessed October 25, 2013, http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20-%20Digital%20Natives,%20Digital%20Immigrants%20-%20Part2.pdf.

[xxiii] Howard Gardner and Thomas Hatch, "Multiple Intelligences Go to School: Educational Implications of the Theory of Multiple Intelligences." *Educational Researcher* 18 (1989), 5, accessed October 25, 2013, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1176460.

[xxiv] Gardner and Hatch, "Multiple Intelligences Go to School," 6.

[xxv] Mark Honegger. *English Grammar for Writing*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005), 3 – 12.

[xxvi] George Orwell. "Politics and the English Langauge." *Literary Cavalcade* 54 (2002).

[xxvii] Dennis Baron. "The New Technologies of the World." *What's Language got to do with It?,* ed. Keith Walters and Michael Brody. (New York: W.W.Norton & Company, 2005), 143; Jack Rosenthal. "So Here's What's Happening to Langauge." *What's Language got to do with It?,* ed. Keith Walters and Michael Brody. (New York: W.W.Norton & Company, 2005), 128.

[xxviii] Jennifer L. Kobrin et al., *Research Report No. 2008-5: Validity of the SAT for Predicting First-Year College Grade Point Average*. (New York: The College Board, 2008), 5.

[xxix] Krista D. Mattern et al., *Research Report No. 2008-4: Differential Validity and Prediction of the SAT.* (New York: The College Board, 2008), 3.

[xxx] Peter Elbow. "Voice in Writing Again: Embracing Contraries." *College English* 70 (2007), 170 – 171, accessed October 25, 2013, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2572259.

[xxxi] Elbow, "Voice in Writing Again: Embracing Contraries," 176.