Background: EDITING PROFICIENCY FOR ENGLISH 111

Our SACS (Southern Associations of Colleges and Schools) reaffirmation of accreditation will take place in the fall of 2005, two years from now. SACS wants us to measure student outcomes. We need to show that we are doing what we say we are doing in our English classes. Before and after our previous visit, we determined this through end of the course common writings that we had blind graded by other instructors.

In the last several years, as a department, we piloted some instructional improvements for ENG 111 as part of our institutional effectiveness goals. Now we will once again look at student outcomes to determine whether the improvements have helped students achieve the objectives of the course. Specifically, we are addressing through the common editing the following writing objective: “express ideas clearly using standard English grammar, mechanics, and spelling”.

One of the ways of determining a student outcome is by measuring a student’s growth in the course. Instructors this summer determined the most frequent major errors to target for instruction. In English 111, we will administer an editing exercise with those major errors on it. The exercise will be graded for diagnostic purposes only, and the results will be used for determining what and how much instruction a particular class needs to meet the course’s objective. An answer sheet and an answer key are provided for ease in grading.

The errors chosen for emphasis in teaching are the following:
1. Fragments
2. Run-on sentences (fused and comma splices)
3. Pronoun agreement, reference, and point of view
4. Subject-verb agreement
5. Apostrophes
6. Spelling, including commonly confused words: there/their/they’re; where/were/we’re; it/it’s; then/than; our/are

Near the end of the semester, an exercise similar in length and types of errors will be given to students. Students will be allowed to use dictionaries for this test. Instructors will grade and determine improvement from the diagnostic test administered at the beginning of the semester. Save your diagnostic tests.

Grading:

The common editing exercise will be graded and made a part of the final grade for the course. On a 100 per cent scale, five per cent of the course grade would be reasonable. You may choose your percentage and modify it to your own grading system.

The editing proficiency will be administered to all ENG 111 classes. Please build it into your course schedules.

The exercise will be given to you on the day you are to test. A grading template will also be given to make it easy for you to grade these exercises. The dates of the tests are as follows:

Diagnostic Test: August 25 and 26
End of year proficiency: December 15 and 16.