INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE TO
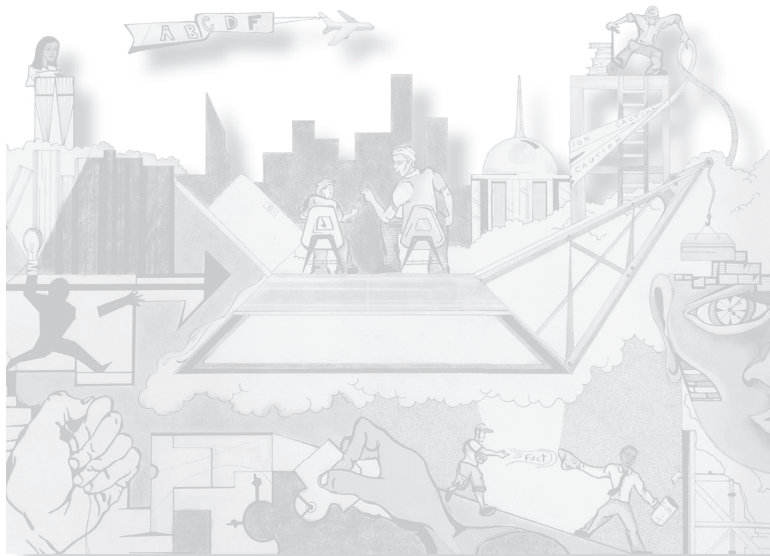
Teaching English by Design

How to Create and Carry Out Instructional Units

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Teaching English by Design: How to Create and Carry Out Instructional Units has a very concrete and specific purpose: to lead secondary school English teachers through a process for designing units of instruction that last roughly four to six weeks (or two to three weeks in a block schedule). These units are centered on a unifying concept, such as a theme, reading strategy, literary period, literary movement, literary region, literary output of a significant author, or literary genre (i.e., the epic journey, the fantasy novel, the memoir—*not* the short story, the poem, or any other highly differentiated form with no thematic continuity). Although this book has been written primarily as a textbook, I hope that experienced teachers from outside the university sphere will also find it useful.

I should acknowledge that few schools these days allow for a pure unit-oriented approach because they are subjected to continual assaults by testing batteries and other external mandates. And so I recognize that the most important lessons from this book might be that there are principles of unit design that readers can adopt and apply to their teaching situations, with concessions (however reluctant) made to the policies and pressures that provide the context for most twenty-first-century teaching.

This instructor's manual is designed to provide what I hope is a flexible approach to teaching the book. Of course, I recognize that each person who adopts it will have her own priorities, compromises, conflicts, demands, and other contingencies. Some might—as I do—use it as the sole or primary book for a methods course, making unit design the centerpiece of the class (I've been teaching methods classes since 1990). Others might wish to make unit design one among many considerations in a methods class, and therefore teach it in fewer sessions or perhaps only in one (although in my view, the fewer sessions devoted to unit design, the less clear a grasp of its principles teachers will ultimately have). Some might teach a methods class once a week for several hours; others might teach on Tuesdays and Thursdays or on M-W-F in shorter sessions. I try to accommodate everyone here, understanding that any reader will need to adapt my suggestions to his or her particular situation and purposes.

ONLINE RESOURCES

This book has evolved with my own teaching of methods classes at both the undergraduate and master's-plus-certification levels at the University of Oklahoma (1990–1998) and the University of Georgia (1998–present). Along with the book, I've developed a set of online resources that you and your students are welcome to consult as you use the book. Of special interest are the following.

The Virtual Library of Conceptual Units

The Virtual Library is located at www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/VirtualLibrary/index.html. Here, I've archived all of the units that my students have designed since 1998 in both undergraduate and master's-level methods classes. The earliest units did not follow all of the principles I lay out in *Teaching English by Design*. While solid in their own right, they are therefore not the best models for my current approach to teaching conceptual units. The more appropriate units to consult are those dated 2002 or later.

Unit Outlines

This archive is a companion to the Virtual Library and is located at www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/VirtualLibrary/Unit_Outlines.htm. Here you'll find sets of materials that would fit with a lot of potential conceptual units. They remain undeveloped in terms of unit design but suggest literature, film, music, and other types of texts that could form the basis for a unit. They further provide a set of key problems and concepts around which to design a unit and its goals, materials, and so on. These outlines often serve as the starting point for teacher candidates (TCs) who are struggling with ways to begin designing their units.

Free Books

Who wouldn't want free books? At www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/Books/Free_Downloadable_Books.htm, I've created a digital library of out-of-print books, available for downloading. Most are very compatible with the approach I outline in *Teaching English by Design*.

Book of Vocabulary Games

Among the free books is one I wrote with Cindy O'Donnell-Allen that's never been published except in this online version: *Expansions: An Online Book of Vocabulary Games* (see www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/Vocabulary_Games/ExpansionsIndex.htm). I originally developed these games for my classes at Barrington High School and Oak Park and River Forest High School (both in suburban Chicago) during my secondary school teaching career from 1976 to 1990. I tried to get them published in the early 1990s after working with Cindy on them, but the publishers turned down the project for a couple of reasons:

1. The reviewers complained that the games are competitive and competition is bad because in any competition, someone loses. In my own experiences in using the games for many years, the competition was among the students' favorite parts of the games, and since the "losers" didn't actually lose anything, they never seemed to mind much.

2. Reviewers also claimed that the games create "artificial" contexts for word usage rather than allow vocabulary development to take place "naturally" through reading and speaking for genuine purposes. Guilty as charged. But then, I participated in basketball, football, and track throughout high school, played one year of college basketball, coached high school basketball and track, and coached youth league baseball and basketball. I'm therefore comfortable with the idea that drills that emphasize an isolated part of the total game can benefit learners if such tasks provide a good simulation of a specific part of the authentic activity. Indeed, coaches who just rolled the balls out and let the kids scrimmage tended to be looked down on by their fellow coaches as lazy and ill informed, a belief that was often given credence by the process and outcome of games.

So, if you're like me and think that learning through the process of competitive games (in this case, games based on TV quiz shows that many kids are familiar with) is a great idea, you might encourage your TCs to check out this book.

Links

Over the years I've collected a lot of links that I thought my students would find useful in their teaching (and in one case, in their gardening). You'll find them at www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/Links/linksindex.html. While some are specific to Georgia (where most of my students are from and where most of them eventually teach), most should be of help to anyone interested in broadening her perspective on teaching and learning.

HOW THIS INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE WORKS

I've set up this manual under the assumption that a methods class will meet weekly for fifteen weeks, the equivalent of a typical university semester. I've also written it under the assumption that *Teaching English by Design* will be the primary book used in the class. One reason I have this luxury is that in our undergraduate program, we have a planning (i.e., methods) class, a young adult literature class, a writing class, and a reading class plus extensive field experiences that take place in the fall of the senior year, so I don't have to cram absolutely everything into the methods class alone. Our master's-plus-certification methods class is part of a program that also includes courses in teaching writing, teaching literature, teaching language, and other classes, and so again, the methods class can have a pretty specific focus without fear of leaving other important areas untaught.

Your priorities and schedule might be different. Your class might meet two to three days a week. You might teach the only English pedagogy course your students will take. You might have other favorite books you want to include in the course. If so, I think that you can adapt my schedule to yours. If, for instance, you teach a methods class two days a week, you could do *Teaching English by Design* on Tuesdays and cover other texts on Thursdays. I'm sure that there are many other ways in which you could adapt my outline to your situation as well.

OVERALL COURSE OUTLINE

The way I teach the class, the students have one primary responsibility: to design a unit of instruction that, ideally, they can use during their student teaching. I haven't always done it this way. When I first began teaching methods classes, I also had a pretty rigorous final exam that required the students to write a critique of a commercial anthology for the grade level they anticipated teaching. I also had them write a practice unit in class and design a real unit—for a grade—outside class. Over time, I realized that the more responsibilities I added to the course, the more difficulty the students had writing quality units. And so I first eliminated the final exam, which turned out to be a distraction that the students resented more than benefited from, and later cut the in-class unit, which often produced ideas that they really wished they could put in the units they were designing for a grade. Now, my class has a very clear focus, which I believe has produced more powerful units and a stronger grasp of design principles.

Another major change in my teaching came in the amount of work that the TCs turn in. Originally, I taught the process of design, and they turned in their units at the end of the semester. I've found, however, that when I give feedback throughout the course, the quality of their work and their understanding of the concepts are much stronger. I now require them to work on the unit throughout the semester, turning in segments as they write them and having opportunities to revise these efforts after receiving my feedback.

These unit segments—an inventory of student interests and skills, the unit goals and accompanying rubrics, the unit rationale, a diverse set of materials, an introductory activity, and one week's worth of instruction—are low stakes. The composite grade from each of these materials counts for 50 percent of their class grade; the complete unit itself counts for the other 50 percent. The final unit design has a slight weight advantage, so that in spite of the even percentages awarded to each "half," the final whole unit will tip the scales toward the grade assigned, which is usually higher than the composite grade for the individual segments. Often, students will get very low grades on the initial segments that they turn in but will understand the requirements better and recover to produce an excellent unit when all is said and done.

Since the whole purpose of this book and this class is to teach TCs how to design strong units, I'm much happier doing it the more work-intensive

way—that is, collecting and grading work for most weeks of the semester—even if it means that I get a little less of my own writing done. In my view, the more students who earn an A on the final project, the better I've taught the course. The grades on the individual sections that they submit might not always be As, but they usually help the students understand my expectations so that by the end, they're working up to my standards. Here, then, is the way I present the semester's task to them:

> Your grade for this class will be based on an average of two components of the course:
>
> 1. A whole conceptual unit of instruction, which is due at the end of the course and is worth 50 percent of your grade. Either individually or in collaboration with one or two other students, you will prepare a teaching unit encompassing about four to six weeks that ideally you will use in student teaching or another anticipated teaching assignment. The unit will organize literature and other texts around a concept, such as one of the following:
>
>   - a *theme*, that is, a series of texts that treat a recurring motif, such as the outcast, gender roles, war and peace, or prejudice; see, for example, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theme_(literature)
>   - a *reading strategy*, that is, an approach to reading that enables better understanding of a literary technique, such as learning how to understand narrative perspective, learning how to read ironic texts, or learning how to read poetry
>   - a *literary period* that is both significant and thematically unified, such as Victorian literature (see, e.g., http://literaryexplorer.blonde librarian.net)
>   - a *literary movement*, that is, literature produced by people with a shared philosophical or social perspective, such as realism, transcendentalism, metaphysical poets, or surrealism (see, e.g., http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literary_movement)
>   - a *literary region* in which the authors share some kind of common vision, obstacle, stimulus, or other governing perspective, such as the British Lake poets, Southern fiction, frontier literature, or the Harlem Renaissance
>   - the *literary output* of a significant author, often Shakespeare but including any author who merits intensive study
>   - a *literary genre*, that is, a set of texts with a shared structure and accompanying tropes and themes, such as the epic journey, the

fantasy novel, the picaresque novel, the memoir, science fiction (genres in this sense do *not* include the short story, the poem, or other highly differentiated forms with no thematic continuity); see, e.g., http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literary_genre.

The unit will include the following components:

- inventory
- rationale
- goals and accompanying assessment rubrics
- materials
- introductory activity
- specific lessons and activities

You will find model units available at the Virtual Library of Instructional Units, at www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/VirtualLibrary/index.html. You should download the units that are specified in the course textbook (and any others you wish to view or use) as models of good unit design. Note that units listed in red are identified as exemplary units. In addition, these units will serve as instructional tools when we go over how to produce various components (rationale, goals, and so on) of your own unit. Specific information on how to develop each of these components will be provided during the semester. *A rubric for the evaluation of this unit of instruction is available at* http://www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/rubrics/unitrubric.htm.

2. The production of four segments of this unit during the process of the course. The segments that you will turn in for individual grades, with the possibility of revising for an additional (not replacement) grade, are the following:

- rationale
- goals and rubrics
- introductory activity
- a one-week sample lesson plan

  Each of these may be revised and averaged in with the grade provided for the total of these segments. With the four different segments, each eligible for a revision, you will have between four and eight items included in this portion of your grade. Regardless of how many items you have, the averaged total of these assignments will be worth 50 percent of your grade for the course. *Rubrics for the evaluation of these segments are available at* http://www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/Rubrics/RubricIndex.htm.

I present this task during the semester's first session and make it clear that my instruction will focus on supporting my students as they learn how to design their units through the book *Teaching English by Design*, the models and other resources available on the web, my scaffolding during class, and their own support when they work in groups either collaboratively or critically.

Activities Within Each Session

I use class activities to help students learn principles of unit design in the context of broader discussions about the purpose and process of English education. Most of the sessions described here contain all or most of the following types of elements. I want each class to involve as much discussion and activity as possible—much like the type of class I encourage for use with high school students in *Teaching English by Design*. My intention in providing these discussion and activity forums is not to suggest that you should teach by recipe. Rather, it is to make available a range of possible ways to structure the classes from which you can choose to approach that week's reading and design focus. It's highly unlikely that you would do everything suggested for each class in one session. It is possible, however, that if you teach a methods class two to three times a week, you could distribute the activities across the class meetings.

The possible elements for each class include assignments (for both reading and writing) and in-class activities (reflective writing, creative writing, discussion topics, unit design activities, and field experience activities).

Assignments

Reading Assignment

This one's not too tricky. At the outset of the description of each weekly session, there are two listings: the reading for the current week and the reading for the following week. By listing both, I hope to eliminate confusion about which reading is for which week.

The readings I list are exclusively from *Teaching English by Design*. Of course, you are welcome to supplement this with additional readings. I tell the students in my own course that there's probably less reading in this class than for most college-level courses, yet there's also much more work on their end than they're accustomed to, and it's work of a different sort than they've done before. So it's reading light, work heavy as I teach the class. The nature of the reading, however, is highly practical, with the bulk of the practical work produced by them.

Writing Assignment

As the course progresses, I give writing assignments in conjunction with the readings. The students' design of their units takes place throughout the semester, with segments due at one- or two-week intervals. In addition, I give the students feedback on each segment that they turn in, and they have a chance to revise it and turn it in again the following week. This approach means that it's imperative that I return whatever work they submit the following week so that they can stay on schedule with their own writing. On those weeks that work is either assigned or due, the schedule lists the assignments that are due this week and/or due next week.

In-Class Activities

I try to practice what I preach to the greatest extent possible. Since the book promotes a constructivist approach both to unit design and to the teaching itself, I would be setting a poor example by simply lecturing on the chapter my students have read. Instead, I try to make the classes as active as possible. To help promote the students' active construction of knowledge about their teaching, I include a set of prompts for each session. How the students go about responding to the prompts might vary. They might do them individually, in small groups, or as a whole class. I suggest ways to use each of the following types of prompts as I describe them.

Reflective Writing

Reflective writing prompts introduce an open-ended topic or question that students respond to individually. As a follow-up, they offer a summary or extension of their writing to initiate a larger discussion, either in small groups or a whole-class setting. Small groups can also lead to whole-class discussions or small-group presentations of group responses.

These prompts can also be used simply as starters for small- or large-group discussions; I don't intend to pigeonhole them as writing prompts. Generally, the idea with these prompts is to introduce a provocative topic that typically parallels issues raised in the reading and have student responses serve as the basis for further discussion.

Creative Writing

The creative writing prompts are designed to take advantage of the imaginations that prospective English teachers often bring to their work. The prompts are usually based on a real situation and ask TCs to use their knowledge of classrooms to elaborate on them in ways that might be serious, witty, horrific, compelling, or in other ways consistent with their understandings of educational processes.

Students could do this writing individually or in groups (the latter being my preference and, I think, the preference of the students). In groups, they need to discuss the situation and their own experiences, which in my view yields more than just their story; it enriches their conception of teaching by having it mediated through discussion with their classmates. The students could then either write a conventional narrative, produce a storyboard for a film or video game, write in graphic novel form, or otherwise produce a narrative to share with their classmates.

Discussion Topics

Discussion topics should help to open up small-group or whole-class discussions. Conceivably, the students could write on them in ways similar to the reflective writing prompts prior to opening up a broader discussion, or you could simply pose the questions to them as a way to generate a discussion. An alternative would be to ask the students if they have any questions about their reading and take it from there, with the discussion topics serving as a backup plan.

Unit Design

The unit design prompts are conceived to give the students class time to generate ideas about the units they are producing for the class. They work in direct correspondence to the chapter sequence of *Teaching English by Design*. The idea is to dedicate part of the class session to work on the units while you're there to provide feedback.

I encourage the students to design their units in groups. As the Virtual Library demonstrates, most students take me up on that option. Learning unit design is very difficult, and having a peer group helps in seemingly countless ways. First, they have people with whom to discuss the different possibilities for materials, activities, major projects, and so on—and since each student has had different educational experiences and brings different abilities to the process, the discussions they have can be highly generative. Second, they learn the type of collegial collaboration that will be expected of them when they teach. Third, they get immediate and continual feedback on their interpretation of *Teaching English by Design* and other pedagogical texts they've read so that they are more likely to grasp the concepts. Fourth, the groups typically enjoy working together on a difficult task. They engage in the sort of playful experimentation that many researchers have found critical to extending understanding and generating high-level work.

While some students are able to thrive when working on their own, in my experience the group approach is an option well worth including. It also provides a scaffold as students design units for the first time, given the ways in which the students support one another in their efforts. Ultimately, on their jobs, they will probably work more individually as they design their

units at their various job sites. But at this stage of the game, the level of support that the group provides is something that my students often identify as one of the most important parts of the class.

Field Experiences

Your program may or may not require field experiences to accompany the methods class. I've included field experience topics for classes that incorporate school-based requirements. You might use these in several ways. They might provide, for instance, the basis for formal assignments that you grade; they might provide the stimulus for class discussions; they might provide the basis for field notes that students take in journals; and so on. The idea is to tie the class readings to the field experiences and help the TCs become sharp observers of students, teachers, and relationships between the two.

What follows, then, is a blueprint for a semester-length methods class for secondary school English.

Week 1

Readings

> Reading Assignment for Week 2: *Teaching English by Design*: Foreword, Preface, Chapter 1: Students' Ways of Knowing

Usually for the first session of any class, I introduce myself, set up attendance cards (three-by-five-inch cards with students' names and contact info that I use to mirror their seating choices, which helps me learn their names quickly), have brief student introductions, review the syllabus, and use the classroom Smart Board (interactive whiteboard) to orient the students to the web-based resources. Afterward, I might do any of the following to help generate a discussion for the remainder of the class.

Reflective Writing Prompt

Choose any of the sets of questions that follow and write informally in response. As part of your reflection, write about the basis for whatever beliefs you hold.

- What is English? Does it include the traditional three strands of literature, writing, and language, or should other strands (media, technology, arts, etc.) be included too?

- Does the teaching of literature come first, with language and writing covered in service of literature, or should all three (or more) strands be given equal priority and emphasis?

- Why teach English? Why require it throughout middle and high school for all students?

- What is a curriculum? Why should a curriculum include one set of materials but not others? For example, do film, art, music, and student writing belong in a literature curriculum? Why read Shakespeare instead of Stephen King? Why require courses in American and British literature but not the literature of other nations?

- Should the strands of the English curriculum be taught in separate courses, as is done in many schools, or all together in a single class?

- How do different ways of organizing and sequencing materials affect the ways in which students learn and affect what they learn?

- What do students learn when assessed in particular ways?

- How do you know when a student has learned something?

- Where does meaning reside—in texts or in readers, or somewhere in between, or perhaps in the environments in which readers learn how to make meaning?

- When students are given responsibilities for directing their learning, are teachers really teaching—and if so, what?

- To what extent should students choose what they learn about and choose the form in which they represent their learning?

- What principles should guide the assessment of student work? Should all work be assessed? Should all students be assessed according to the same criteria?

Creative Writing Prompt

Christa L. Walck wrote, "I complain about the physical space of my classroom. The ceiling is low, the chairs small and childish. Dusty chalkboards line the walls. An ancient wooden podium is forcibly chained to the Formica table. It depresses my spirit. I rearrange the chairs, the table, breaking the static rows into dynamic circles, but the whitewashed cement-block walls still weigh me down. I think I need a better stage, better props, to be a better teacher" (1997, 478). Imagine yourself as a teacher in this environment, on this "stage." What images do you see? What do the students look like as they experience the setting? What kinds of teaching and learning can take place here?

Discussion Topic

In a small group, discuss the best and worst teachers you've ever had.

- What characteristics do the exceptionally good teachers have? Is there a set of traits that characterizes all good teachers?

- What characteristics do the exceptionally bad teachers have? Is there a set of traits that characterizes all bad teachers?

Unit Design: Pick Topics

Either individually or in groups, imagine a community you would like to teach in. Then do the following:

- Characterize its people in terms of their careers, values, aspirations, and views of schooling.

- Describe the school, including its size, its curriculum, its English department, its approach to grouping (i.e., if and how it tracks students), and its overall mission.

- Think of a particular grade level you would be teaching and describe the kinds of students you'd have in your class. If the school is tracked, describe the track you would be teaching. If it's not, describe the range of students you'd find in a typical class.

- Think of an overarching concept that would guide the curriculum as a whole for the grade level or course you're envisioning.

- Within this overarching concept, identify a set of topics that could serve as the basis for instructional units.

- Exchange your community profile, school profile, grade-level description, overarching concept, and list of unit topics with those of another student or group of students, and provide each other with feedback on the appropriateness of your topics for this context.

Field Experience Observation

Get permission from a student to follow him or her around to several classes throughout the school—that is, to shadow the student as he or she goes through the routines of school. During a typical school day, what kinds of activities do students engage in? What is their primary role as students as they go across the curriculum? What frame of mind might they be in when they arrive for your class? How should your knowledge of their frame of mind affect your decisions about how to teach them in an English class?

Week 2

Readings

Chapters for Week 2 Discussion: *Teaching English by Design*: Foreword, Preface, Chapter 1: Students' Ways of Knowing

Reading Assignment for Week 3: *Teaching English by Design*: Chapter 2: Scaffolding Students' Learning Processes

Reflective Writing Prompt

Many educators believe that *getting to know their students* is essential to teaching effectively and that all good teaching starts with efforts to get students to reveal important things about themselves. Journals, memoirs, and other introspective writing are often used not just for the purpose of having students reflect on their experiences but also for the purpose of enabling teachers to learn more about their students' lives.

Some people find such reflection to be invasive. Some parents, for instance, protest strongly when teachers require introspective writing, saying that a student's personal life is of no importance in learning an academic discipline and is none of a teacher's business. Some students are very private and don't wish to produce writing on personal topics that others will read about.

Think about this tension and how you would resolve it. What is the benefit of introspective writing to the student and to the teacher? Should introspective writing be required of all students to the same degree? At what point do introspective writing assignments become invasive? Should a teacher who requires introspective writing of students also share his own introspective writing with them, and if so, how personal ought this writing be?

Creative Writing Prompt

In *Talented Teenagers: The Roots of Success and Failure*, Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, and Whalen observe the following: "In a typical history classroom where the teacher was lecturing about Genghis Khan's invasion of China and conquest of Beijing in 1215, only 2 out of 27 students were thinking about China when they were signaled. One of the 2 was remembering the meal he had when he last ate out with his family at a Chinese restaurant, and the other was wondering why Chinese men wore their hair in a ponytail. None mentioned Genghis Khan or Beijing or 1215" (1996, 196). Imagine a classroom in which teachers talk about important matters while students are thinking of something else. How might the dynamics of the class session proceed?

Discussion Topic

To what extent is multimedia composing appropriate in an English class? How would you justify multimedia composing if it were opposed by students, parents, colleagues, or administrators?

Unit Design: Select a Topic

Each of the following works of literature has been banned from at least one school, library, or other public place. What do you think is the basis of the banning of any of these books? Would you teach any of them in your classes? Why or why not? How would you justify your teaching of your selections to an angry parent or timid administrator—that is, how would you provide a rationale for books from this list that you would want to teach?

1984 (George Orwell)

A Clockwork Orange (Anthony Burgess)

A Farewell to Arms (Ernest Hemingway)

All the King's Men (Robert Penn Warren)

An American Tragedy (Theodore Dreiser)

Appointment in Samarra (John O'Hara)

As I Lay Dying (William Faulkner)

Brave New World (Aldous Huxley)

Can Such Things Be? (Ambrose Bierce)

Catch-22 (Joseph Heller)

Decameron (Boccaccio)

Deliverance (James Dickey)

From Here to Eternity (James Jones)

Go Tell It on the Mountain (James Baldwin)

I, Claudius (Robert Graves)

Invisible Man (Ralph Ellison)

Leaves of Grass (Walt Whitman)

Little Red Riding Hood

Lolita (Vladimir Nabokov)

Lord of the Flies (William Golding)

Lysistrata (Aristophanes)

Native Son (Richard Wright)

Origin of Species (Charles Darwin)

Point Counter Point (Aldous Huxley)

Portnoy's Complaint (Philip Roth)

Sister Carrie (Theodore Dreiser)

Slaughterhouse Five (Kurt Vonnegut)

Sons and Lovers (D. H. Lawrence)

Sophie's Choice (William Styron)

Soul on Ice (Eldridge Cleaver)

Studs Lonigan (James T. Farrell)

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (Mark Twain)

The Call of the Wild (Jack London)

The Catcher in the Rye (J. D. Salinger)

The Grapes of Wrath (John Steinbeck)

The Great Gatsby (F. Scott Fitzgerald)

The Lorax (Dr. Seuss)

The Naked and the Dead (Norman Mailer)

The Rainbow (D. H. Lawrence)

The Sun Also Rises (Ernest Hemingway)

The Three Little Pigs

Tropic of Cancer (Henry Miller)

Twelfth Night (William Shakespeare)

Women in Love (D. H. Lawrence)

Field Experience Observation

In the school you're visiting, pay careful attention to the students. What are they like? Where do they come from? Does the school regard them as all having the same needs or as having needs that vary according to their individual and cultural differences? In what ways are the students' home and community values taken into consideration in providing them with an education? To what degree are school policies and operations based on an understanding of the particular students enrolled in the school? What are the consequences of the school's approach for the education of the students?

Week 3

Readings

Chapter for Week 3 Discussion: *Teaching English by Design*: Chapter 2: Scaffolding Students' Learning Processes

Reading Assignment for Week 4: *Teaching English by Design*: Chapter 3: Alternatives to Teacher-Led Discussions; Chapter 4: Planning the Whole Course

Reflective Writing Prompt

Think about your own experiences with writing and/or speaking. In school, have you been encouraged to use writing or speaking as a tool for exploring ideas? What have you learned from your experiences of writing or speaking in school? What of your experiences with writing or speaking outside school? How does your use of writing or speaking outside school compare with your use of it in school? Are there differences in the kinds of learning that have resulted from the writing and speaking you've done in and out of school?

Creative Writing Prompt

Stephen King wrote, "I have often wondered about two things. First, why high school kids almost invariably hate the books they are assigned to read by their English teachers, and second, why English teachers almost invariably hate the books students read in their spare time. Something seems very wrong with such a situation. There is a bridge out here, and the ferry service is uncertain at best" (Campbell 1997, 54). Imagine a situation in which teachers and students hate each other's literary selections. How would their differences play out in a classroom?

Discussion Topic

When you were in middle and high school, did your teachers tend to teach the subject or teach the students? How did the teachers' emphasis affect your success in school? How did this emphasis affect the success of the whole range of students? In general, how did your teachers' emphasis affect students' engagement with school and their learning?

Unit Design: Examine Lessons in Model Units

In a model unit (http://www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/VirtualLibrary/index.html) of your choice, look at the author's design of lessons. What is the purpose of the lessons? What kinds of scaffolding do the lessons entail? How are the lessons related to the unit's goals and assessments? To what extent do the lessons involve constructive activity by the students? How do the individual lessons contribute to the students' overall growth and learning in terms of the unit concept? How would you assess the sequencing and relationship of the individual lessons relative to one another? Who's building whose building?

Field Experience Observation

Observe a class in which students are engaged in literary discussion. If possible, observe small-group as well as whole-class discussions. Make note of the following:

- What is the purpose of the discussion? Who is in control of the topic and direction?
- What kinds of contributions do the students make to the discussion?
- If students are not contributing, what are they doing instead?
- What would you estimate is the degree of participation among students as a whole?
- What conclusions can you draw about your observation of this discussion?

Week 4

Readings

> Chapters for Week 4 Discussion: *Teaching English by Design*: Chapter 3: Alternatives to Teacher-Led Discussions; Chapter 4: Planning the Whole Course

> Reading Assignment for Week 5: *Teaching English by Design*: Chapter 5: Goals for Conventional Writing Assignments; Chapter 6: Goals for Unconventional Writing Assignments.

Reflective Writing Prompt

Think back to literary discussions you've been involved in throughout your education. For the most part, whose interpretation counted? To what degree did discussions resemble jam sessions? How were students treated when they offered interpretations or responses that were different from those of the teacher? What were the consequences of these processes on the ways you learned to think about literature?

Creative Writing Prompt

A true story: I supervised a first-year teacher in a small Bible Belt town who, during the troop buildup prior to the Gulf War in 1991, refused to put her hand over her heart during the daily Pledge of Allegiance. When her students asked why, she said that it was because she opposed conformity, and pledging the flag could lead to the kind of conformist state that Hitler established in Germany.

Imagine how this incident played out, considering the reactions of students, parents, administrators, school board members, and other community members to this teacher's statement.

Discussion Topic

What is the purpose of a discussion about literature? Do college English classes and secondary school English classes share the same purposes, and should they be conducted with the same processes? Why or why not?

Unit Design: Select Materials

Begin to zero in on a focus for the unit you will design for the class. Think of a set of possible materials to include in the unit, keeping in mind the

constraints that exist in the setting you're envisioning. Try to include several selections from each of the following categories:

poetry

short story

novel

drama

fable/myth/parable

song

film

essay/nonfiction

art

It is possible that you have chosen a topic that won't allow for examples in all areas. A unit on William Faulkner, for instance, will be limited to novels, short stories, and essays. In most cases, however, you will be able to find selections for each category.

Field Experience Observation

Do one of the following:

1. Observe the class of another teacher. Make observational notes on the following:

- the frequency of teacher talk versus student talk (length of time, number of contributions, length of contributions)

- the kinds of questions teachers ask (uptake, predetermined, open-ended, informational, etc.)

- the direction of the discussion (toward a preconceived interpretation, free-flowing, etc.)

- the purpose of teacher contributions (to get students to elaborate, to lead to a particular interpretation, etc.)

Draw inferences about what students are learning from taking part in the discussion and about what they will be able to do on their own as a result of their participation.

2. Audiotape or videotape your own teaching, and play back the tape. Make observational notes on the following:

- the frequency of your talk versus student talk (length of time, number of contributions, length of contributions)

- the kinds of questions you ask (uptake, predetermined, open-ended, informational, etc.)
- the direction of the discussion (toward a preconceived interpretation, free-flowing, etc.)
- the purpose of your contributions (to get students to elaborate, to lead to a particular interpretation, etc.)

Draw inferences about what students are learning from taking part in the discussion and about what they will be able to do on their own as a result of their participation.

Week 5

Readings

Chapters for Week 5 Discussion: *Teaching English by Design*: Chapter 5: Goals for Conventional Writing Assignments; Chapter 6: Goals for Unconventional Writing Assignments

Reading Assignment for Week 6: *Teaching English by Design*: Chapter 7: Responding to Student Writing

Assignment Due Week 6

Goals and rubrics (see rubric at www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/Rubrics/goalsrubric.htm)

Reflective Writing Prompt

When you were a middle and high school student, how often did you see an overarching purpose for the English classes you took? To what degree did your classes involve you in conversations that developed across the units of study? What were the consequences of the degree of continuity you found in the English classes you took as a student?

Creative Writing Prompt

Flannery O'Connor once said, "In most English classes the short story has become a kind of literary specimen to be dissected. Every time a story of mine appears in a Freshman anthology, I have a vision of it, with its little organs laid open, like a frog in a bottle" (1969). Imagine such a literary dissection. How would it take place? What would students and teachers find? What would they overlook? How would teacher and students experience it?

Discussion Topic

What are the consequences of using different overarching concepts to unify a whole course? Which combinations of overarching concepts might work well together? In addition to the overarching concepts identified in chapters 5 and 6 of *Teaching English by Design*, what might be worthwhile ways to unify a whole course curriculum?

Unit Design: Identify Culminating Texts

Previously, you began thinking about a whole course curriculum and particular units within it. For this curriculum, identify a set of culminating texts that students might produce in conjunction with the year's overarching themes. Present them as follows:

- In language addressing the students, write a description of the text that students will ultimately produce.
- Explain its relationship to the course emphasis.
- In bulleted items, present the specific requirements for successfully producing the text.

Field Experience Observation

Look at the curriculum for a whole course in the school you are visiting. What is the overarching concept of the curriculum as a whole? In what ways does it promote a conversation that connects and extends each unit within the curriculum? What are the consequences of using this concept as the guiding issue for the course of study? If there is no identifiable overarching concept, what unifying principles can you identify in the curriculum as a whole? What are the benefits of learning English through this unifying principle?

Field Experience Observation

In the school you are visiting, how would you describe the assessments on a continuum from conventional to alternative? What does this approach to assessment tell you about the assumptions held in the school about teaching and learning? What are the consequences of this approach on how students are deemed to be capable and incapable? How equitable is the school's approach to assessment—that is, to what extent does it provide avenues for success for the whole range of students enrolled in the school?

Week 6

Readings

Chapter for Week 6 Discussion: *Teaching English by Design*: Chapter 7: Responding to Student Writing

Reading Assignment for Week 7: *Teaching English by Design*: Chapter 8: Why Conceptual Units?; Chapter 9: The Basics of Unit Design

Due Today

Goals and rubrics (see rubric at www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/Rubrics/goalsrubric.htm)

Reflective Writing Prompt

Choose one of the following topics and write on it:

1. In a society composed of countless cultural groups with distinct histories and identities, how can we include the voices and experiences of all or most of our various cultures? If we strive for multicultural inclusion, which of the myriad groups should we single out for our students to be exposed to? Should our selection be driven by race, religion, ethnicity, continent of origin, region within the United States, political values, or some other source of determination? If we choose according to one of these criteria, on what basis do we then choose the voices from within each group?

2. Should the potential offensiveness of a work be a consideration in our selection process? Is the profane and racially inflammatory language of James Baldwin's *Blues for Mister Charlie* a sufficient reason not to use it in the classroom? Are the persistent use of the word *nigger* and the overwhelmingly bigoted views of the characters in *Huckleberry Finn* good reasons for students not to read it?

3. Should the particular moral, social, or political values imparted through a text be a consideration in our selection process? For example, should the antibusiness values of Charles Dickens' *Hard Times* work against its selection? And should the context of instruction determine the volatility of the values? For instance, does the pro-environment ideology of Dr. Seuss' *Lorax* make it an unacceptable book in an area dependent on the timber industry but acceptable in the Grain Belt? Does the anti-Christian theology of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* exclude it from the curriculum in the

Bible Belt but make it acceptable in more pluralistic areas? Should we seek to teach texts in a values-neutral way in the classroom and thus focus on literary merit rather than ideology, or is doing so simply a different ideology? Should the question of values be of greater or lesser importance than the literary merit of a work, or is it even possible to disentangle the two? For that matter, is it possible to define *literary merit* so that there is consensus among all of a community's stakeholders and participants?

4. Should the potential community response to particular topics enter our consideration of what to include in the curriculum? How does the prostitution in *Sister Carrie* affect our thinking as curriculum builders? Should the communist sympathies of Richard Wright in *Native Son* discourage its inclusion in the curriculum in a conservative community? How do we justify the inclusion of *Romeo and Juliet* when teen suicide is a crisis?

5. Should we seek to achieve a balance of positive and negative images in the depiction of various cultural groups? If we have our students read Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, for instance, should we attempt to balance the oppression with an uplifting story of African American accomplishment, such as Colin Powell's *My American Journey: An Autobiography*?

6. Should we choose texts that are often misunderstood because of the author's use of sophisticated literary techniques, such as ironic distance between the author's views and those of the speaker, as found in Swift's *A Modest Proposal*? In particular, should we exclude texts such as Faulkner's *Light in August* where the speaker expresses racist views?

7. Should the author's personal life matter? Should we exclude Ezra Pound because he was a Fascist and anti-Semitic? Or Shakespeare because of the negative portrayal of Jews in *The Merchant of Venice*? Should Coleridge be eschewed because he smoked opium? Should we read Lillian Hellman, even though she was unfaithful to her husband and smoked and drank heavily? Should Martin Luther King's plagiarism and extramarital affairs make him persona non grata in the English class? Should Patrick Henry's ownership of slaves lead us to eliminate him as a voice of liberty?

8. Can a member of one cultural group authentically write about the experiences of another? Can white authors authentically depict Native American characters? Can a Cheyenne-Arapaho male authentically depict life from the perspective of a Winnebago woman? Can a middle-class African American write an authentic story about life

in the hood? When writers do depict characters from other cultures, how do we evaluate their work for inclusion in the curriculum?

9. At what point do our selection principles become censorship, given that any effort at inclusion inevitably results in the exclusion of something, and any kind of exclusion is based on some kind of discrimination?

10. If we involve students in curriculum planning or allow them to read books entirely of their own choice, can we sidestep these issues?

11. Can we solve any and all of these problems by providing an appropriate instructional context for the literature we use in our classroom? In other words, can we teach any problematic text in such a way that it can be a potentially valuable experience for any student? Or are some texts prohibitively problematic, particularly in certain communities? We might assume that the profanity, sex, drugs, and violence in John Updike's *Rabbit Redux* would invite parental protest in many communities. But might books such as *Little Women* also cause a commotion in communities with a great sensitivity to women's issues?

Creative Writing Prompt

A true story: I was observing a high school class not long ago in which the text under discussion was Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. The class was about two-thirds white, one-third black. Some students had complained about the language of the book, including the profanity and the use of, as one girl called it, "the N word." The teacher opened a discussion of the book's language and why they considered it offensive. The class was divided on the question of the book's offensiveness. One white boy persistently said that the students should be mature enough to handle the language and should get over it if they were offended. Several black students and one white girl said that they found the N word offensive and didn't like the book.

The teacher said that she understood why they might not like the language, but that the book was a classic and was worth reading. The students shouldn't allow the presence of one word to ruin their appreciation for the rest of the book. The book, if anything, showed the ignorance of the characters who used the N word. After continuing with this line of reasoning, she moved along to the next lesson.

Write this story from the perspective of one or more students in the class. How do they experience the discussion? How do they feel about the

book during and after the discussion? What kinds of contributions might they make to the discussion, and how would the teacher respond to them?

Discussion Topic

In your experiences as a student, on which occasions have you been consulted in the development of the curriculum? How do you feel that your involvement, or lack of involvement, affected your motivation and engagement with the course? To what degree do you think that students ought to be involved in deciding what they will study?

Unit Design: Identify Possible Goals

Identify a set of possible goals for the unit you are designing. Keep in mind that you should avoid the temptation of including too many major assessments in a single unit. You should instead focus on a few tasks that students can do well and that you can teach them how to do within the time limits of the unit.

For now, identify a small set of goals. Include both conventional and alternative forms of assessment. You needn't write out complete assignments at this point. Later, you will narrow down your list and provide details for those that you intend to include in your unit.

Field Experience Observation

For a class you're observing, look through the anthology used for the class. If you look at the beginning of the book, you'll find the book's editors, writers, and compilers. Does the group represent a broad spectrum of American society? Is it important for the book to be produced by people from diverse backgrounds? Why or why not?

Now look through the book. To what extent does the anthology try to represent different cultural groups? What images does it consistently present of various groups?

Look at the kinds of assignments required of students. To what extent do they ask the students to engage with the kinds of issues raised in Chapter 7 of *Teaching English by Design* or other issues that you find important? Observe the teacher's use of the book. To what extent does the teacher follow the anthology's teaching script? In what ways do the students engage with the text, the class, and the teacher? To what extent does this engagement affect (1) the classroom or school community and (2) the students' identity with their home cultures?

Week 7

Readings

Chapters for Week 7 Discussion: *Teaching English by Design*: Chapter 8: Why Conceptual Units?; Chapter 9: The Basics of Unit Design

Reading Assignment for Week 8: *Teaching English by Design*: Chapter 10: Your Unit Rationale

Assignment Due Week 8

Goals and rubrics revisions (see rubric at www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/ Rubrics/goalsrubric.htm)

Reflective Writing Prompt

In your own education, did your teachers teach you how to do the things they were assessing you on? What were their assumptions about their role as teachers? In their approach, what responsibilities did you have as a student? What was the overall effect of this approach on your learning? What have you learned from your own schooling that you can apply to your approach to teaching?

Creative Writing Prompt

Calvin Trillin once said, "As far as I'm concerned, 'whom' is a word that was invented to make everyone sound like a butler" (http://thinkexist.com/ quotes/calvin_trillin). Imagine a classroom in which everyone spoke impeccable English. How would a typical classroom discussion sound?

Discussion Topic

How have the process, product, and purpose of learning been handled in schools you've observed? What reasons do teachers cite for the kinds of attention that they give to each? How do you evaluate their approach to process, product, and purpose?

Unit Design: Prepare Rubric

For one of the unit goals that you have identified, prepare a scoring rubric. This rubric should clearly distinguish among the kinds of performances acceptable for each of the five grades possible (A, B, C, D, F).

Field Experience Observation

In a school you're visiting, note the frequency with which students ask questions, and note the type of questions they ask. What do the amount and kind of questions they ask tell you about their understanding of how school works? What do their questions tell you about the teacher's beliefs about the process of education?

Week 8

Readings

> Chapter for Week 8 Discussion: *Teaching English by Design*: Chapter 10: Your Unit Rationale
>
> Reading Assignment for Week 9: *Teaching English by Design*: Chapter 11: Outlining a Unit

Due Today

Goals and rubrics revisions (see rubric at www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/Rubrics/goalsrubric.htm)

Assignment Due Week 9

Rationales (see rubric at http://www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/Rubrics/rationalerubric.htm)

This class will be largely devoted to supporting students' writing of their unit rationales. And so while there are other options listed, I would concentrate my own energy on the unit design prompts listed for this class meeting.

Reflective Writing Prompt

In your experiences as a student, how has your most useful and meaningful learning taken place? What kinds of classes have you found to be the least interesting, challenging, and transforming? Based on this reflection, how can you conduct your English class so as to make it interesting, challenging, and transforming for your students?

Creative Writing Prompt

Envision a teacher who deliberately leaves free time at the end of every class. During this time, she talks informally with students about their lives outside class. Imagine what these conversations are like and how they affect the quality of the remainder of the class.

Unit Design: Look at Rationales

Select three units from the list of model units (http://www.coe.uga.edu/ ~smago/VirtualLibrary/index.html) and read the rationale for each. Decide the following:

- which *justifications* the rationale relies on and how appropriate they are
- what the teacher's main *claims* are
- how effectively the teacher supports each claim with persuasive *evidence*
- how effectively evidence and claims are *warranted* (i.e., how clearly the author explains why the evidence supports the claim)
- whether the teacher could have provided different, more persuasive reasons for teaching the unit
- whether the teacher anticipates disagreements (*counterarguments*) with the rationale and provides a *rebuttal* for them
- whether, if you were a skeptical school board member or other stakeholder, you would be persuaded that this was a good unit to teach
- on the whole, what the strengths and weaknesses of the rationale are, and how it could be written to be more persuasive (in other words, generate a set of criteria for deciding what is included in a persuasive rationale.)

With these criteria in mind, you should now begin to provide a rationale for your own proposed unit. While there is no single procedure for writing a rationale, there are some kinds of planning you might want to try. Keep in mind that ultimately you will be producing a persuasive piece of writing, so however you proceed, you should think in terms of coordinating a set of related claims that support a general thesis, each backed up by some kind of evidence.

Unit Design: Plan a Rationale

1. One way to start writing a rationale is by informally generating ideas. You might do this in a variety of ways:
    - participating in a small-group discussion, taking notes as needed
    - freewriting (i.e., writing down ideas quickly without concern for how your writing looks or sounds; the purpose is to use the

process of writing as a way to think, rather than to produce a formal piece of writing that someone else will judge)

- taking notes, either in some categorical form (outline, cluster) or in random form

2. Once your ideas are on paper in some form, you should then begin to organize them in some way. You could organize them alone or with a group of peers. This step might include

- inductively seeing if any themes emerge from what you've written down

- seeing which kinds of justifications you have produced

- seeing if you can associate particular claims with particular kinds of justifications

- seeing if the claims follow any kind of pattern or stand in relation to one another

- discussing or thinking further about inconsistencies or gaps in your initial effort and revising accordingly

- creating a new outline in which you organize your ideas

3. With your justification(s) and claims established, you should then think of how to support your claims, considering the following:

- what type of evidence (research, anecdote, personal experience, statistics, etc.) is available

- how persuasive these different kinds of evidence will be to different constituents

- where you might go to find evidence that effectively supports your claims

- what particular evidence will support your claims

4. At this point you need to take some time to go out and find the evidence necessary for supporting your claims. Some could come from your university course work. If you have taken courses in educational foundations or educational psychology, for example, you might know of research that would support various arguments. Your English courses might provide information on the cultural or literary significance of some topics. You might need to gather other supporting evidence from new sources.

5. While gathering evidence, you should be thinking of ways that people could disagree with your argument and thinking of how you could counter these disagreements. By addressing these concerns

in your rationale, you can short-circuit possible challenges to your teaching decisions.

Unit Design: Write Your Rationale

Remember that you are writing a persuasive essay, something you probably have years of experience in doing as a student. Keep in mind your audience for your rationale: an irate parent, a skeptical department chair or principal, the president of the board of education who has received a complaint. Your rationale should provide a defense of your teaching that will make it clear that you've thought through the issues, know what you're doing, and know why you're doing it.

You should have a lot of information assembled to inform your rationale. You should also have a set of criteria for a good rationale that you developed from analyzing those in the Virtual Library of Instructional Units. Make sure that you apply these criteria when using this information as the basis for your rationale.

You may wish to ask another person to read and respond to your rationale so that you have some feedback. It's always beneficial to find other readers to help you see how somebody else constructs meaning from your prose. Your other readers can take the perspective of a skeptical parent or school board member and provide rebuttals that can help you strengthen your argument.

Field Experience Observation

In a school you're visiting, observe a teacher, or a set of teachers, from a discipline other than English. In your observations, try to identify the following:

- what the teacher considers to be knowledge
- how the teacher teaches that knowledge
- how the students are asked to show what they know
- what the students learn through the process of showing what they know
- how the teacher grades the students' products
- the degree to which students are in the flow of learning

If possible, interview the teacher, using questions based on your observations, with the goal of understanding the teacher's view of knowledge and how students best develop and reveal it.

Week 9

Readings

Chapter for Week 9 Discussion: *Teaching English by Design*: Chapter 11: Outlining a Unit

Reading Assignment for Week 10: *Teaching English by Design*: Chapter 12: Setting Up the Construction Zone

Due Today

Rationales (see rubric at http://www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/Rubrics/rationalerubric.htm)

Reflective Writing Prompt

If you were to grade the national public school system, what grade would you give it? What would be the basis for your assessment?

If you were to grade the middle or high school you attended, what grade would you give it?

What would be the basis for your assessment?

Discussion Topic

How do different classroom arrangements affect the opportunities that students have for learning? How are learning processes different when instruction is provided through lectures, whole-class discussions, small-group discussions, project-oriented learning, drama, and other vehicles?

Unit Design: Refine Your Focus

You have thus far identified overarching concepts and goals for the course. You have also identified possible materials and goals for a single unit of study.

At this time, you will refine your unit plan to identify the goals that will suggest an appropriate instructional design. To refine your unit, do the following:

- Reconsider the materials you originally selected, reducing your list to a set that you can reasonably teach within the time limits of your unit.

- Identify a small set of *culminating texts* that students can produce. Producing these texts should allow your students to meet the unit goals. For these culminating texts
    - make sure that you are using both conventional and unconventional forms of assessment
    - make sure that the goals are consistent with the overarching concepts of the whole course
    - identify a set of bulleted criteria for each text that will help you outline your teaching responsibilities, help your students understand their responsibilities, and help you develop an assessment rubric
- Identify a small set of *in-process texts* that students can produce. Producing these texts should allow your students to meet the unit goals. For these in-process texts
    - make sure that they help students work toward the unit goals and culminating texts
    - identify a set of bulleted criteria for each text that will help you outline your teaching responsibilities, help your students understand their responsibilities, and help you develop an assessment rubric

When you are done, exchange your work with other students and critique one another's plans. Use this feedback for further refinement of your unit design.

Field Experience Observation

In the school you are visiting, what kinds of background knowledge do the teachers include in their instruction when introducing new ideas? Through what kinds of classroom processes do teachers orchestrate students' accessing or acquisition of this knowledge (e.g., lecture, activity, discussion, etc.)? What does a teacher's approach to background knowledge suggest about her assumptions about teaching and learning?

Week 10

Readings

> Chapter for Week 10 Discussion: *Teaching English by Design*: Chapter 12: Setting Up the Construction Zone

> Reading Assignment for Week 11: *Teaching English by Design*: Chapter 13: Introductory Activities

Assignment Due Week 11

Rationale revisions (see rubric at www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/Rubrics/rationalerubric.htm)

Reflective Writing Prompt

To what extent do you agree with the construction metaphor as a way to think about teaching and learning? What is the basis of your beliefs? Can you think of a different metaphor that would describe your beliefs better? If so, try to extend this metaphor as far as you can.

Creative Writing Prompt

Jane Tompkins wrote,

> In my mind's eye I keep seeing rows. Rows of desks, running horizontal across a room, light yellow wooden tops, pale beige metal legs, a shallow depression for pencils at the far edge, and chairs of the same material, separate from the desks, movable. The windows—tall and running the length of the classroom—are on the left. Light streams through. . . . The scenes are all mixed together—grade school with graduate school—but always the windows along one side of the room, and always the desks in rows.

Imagine yourself in this environment. How does schooling unfold in a setting of this sort?

Discussion Topic

In the school you are visiting, where does teaching generally fall on the continuum from transmission to constructivism? What are the consequences for students of the approach you've observed?

Field Experience Observation

In the school you are visiting, what are the expectations for teachers in terms of instructional planning? Are they expected to have plans? If so, how detailed are the plans expected to be? How closely are they expected to follow the plans? Are they expected to write their own plans or follow the plans provided by their commercial textbooks or district curriculum? Are their plans reviewed formally (e.g., by an administrator)? What are the consequences of the teachers' approaches to planning for student learning? Can you distinguish one lesson from another, and see how the lessons fit within overall unit goals?

Week 11

Readings

> Chapter for Week 11 Discussion: *Teaching English by Design*: Chapter 13: Introductory Activities

> Reading Assignment for Week 12: *Teaching English by Design*: Chapter 14: Down and Dirty: Daily Planning

Due Today

Rationale revisions (see rubric at www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/Rubrics/rationalerubric.htm)

Assignment Due Week 12

Introductory activity (see rubric at www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/Rubrics/introrubric.htm)

Reflective Writing Prompt

Think back on your own learning as a student. To what extent were you encouraged to draw on your personal life as a way of understanding schoolwork? What do you feel the consequences were on your learning? What does the extent to which you were encouraged to think about your personal life tell you about your teachers' assumptions about the purpose of schooling?

Discussion Topic

In the school you are visiting, what is the classroom arrangement? Who decided on this arrangement? What kinds of interactions does it encourage, and what kinds does it discourage? What assumptions about knowledge are suggested by the classroom arrangement? What assumptions about authority are suggested by the arrangement? What alternatives for classroom arrangement are possible in this setting? What consequences might follow from alternative approaches to arranging the classroom?

Unit Design: Design Introductory Activity

Using the procedures outlined in Chapter 13, design an introductory activity for the unit you are planning. When you are done, exchange your introduc-

tory activity with another student or group of students for feedback on its appropriateness for your unit focus.

Field Experience Observation

In a school you are visiting, find out how teachers organize instruction. What is the basis for this organization? What reasons are given for organizing it in this way? How do students appear to respond to and learn from this means of organization? How do teachers appear to feel about it? What are the benefits of and drawbacks to this means of organization?

Week 12

Reading

Chapter for Week 12 Discussion: *Teaching English by Design*: Chapter 14: Down and Dirty: Daily Planning

Due Today

Introductory activity (see rubric at www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/Rubrics/introrubric.htm)

Assignment Due Week 13

One-week lesson plan (see rubric at www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/Rubrics/One-weekrubric.htm)

Reflective Writing Prompt

What metaphor would you use to describe your beliefs about teaching, learning, and schooling? Try to extend your metaphor as far as possible.

Discussion Topic

The following form letter has been distributed to parents in communities with highly conservative social and political values. What are your thoughts on the concerns it raises about children's education? How would you teach within the confines of these concerns?

I am the parent of _____ , who attends _____ School. Under U.S. legislation and court decisions, parents have the primary responsibility for their children's education, and pupils have certain rights, which the schools may not deny. Parents have the right to assure that their children's beliefs and moral values are not undermined by the schools. Pupils have the right to have and to hold their values and moral standards without direct or indirect manipulation by the schools through curricula, textbooks, audio-visual materials, or supplementary assignments.

Accordingly, I hereby request that my child be involved in NO school activities or materials listed below unless I have first reviewed all the relevant materials and have given my written consent for their use:

- psychological and psychiatric examinations, tests, or surveys that are designed to elicit information about attitudes, habits, traits, opinions, beliefs, or feelings of an individual or group;
- psychological and psychiatric treatment that is designed to affect behavioral, emotional, or attitudinal characteristics of an individual or group;
- values clarification, use of moral dilemmas, discussion of religious or moral standards, role-playing or open-ended discussions of situations involving moral issues, and survival games including life/death decision exercises; death education, including abortion, euthanasia, suicide, use of violence, and discussions of death and dying;
- curricula pertaining to alcohol and drugs;
- instruction in nuclear war, nuclear policy, and nuclear classroom games;
- anti-nationalistic, one-world government or globalism curricula;
- discussion and testing on interpersonal relationships; discussions of attitudes toward parents and parenting;
- education in human sexuality, including premarital sex; extramarital sex, contraception, abortion, homosexuality, group sex and marriages; prostitution, incest, masturbation, bestiality, divorce, population control, and roles of males and females; sex behavior and attitudes of student and family;
- pornography and any materials containing profanity and/or sexual explicitness;
- guided fantasy techniques; hypnotic techniques; imagery and suggestology;
- organic evolution, including the idea that man has developed from previous or lower types of living things;
- discussions of witchcraft, occultism, the supernatural, and Eastern mysticism;
- political affiliations and beliefs of student and family; personal religious beliefs and practices;
- mental and psychological problems and self-incriminating behavior potentially embarrassing to the student or family;
- critical appraisals of other individuals with whom the child has family relationships;
- legally recognized privilege and analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
- income, including the student's role in family activities and finances;
- non-academic personality tests; questionnaires on personal and family life and attitudes;

- autobiography assignments; log books, diaries, and personal journals;
- contrived incidents for self-revelation; sensitivity training, group encounter sessions, talk-ins, magic circle techniques, self-evaluation and auto-criticism, strategies designed for self-disclosure (e.g., zig-zag);
- sociograms; sociodrama; psychodrama; blindfold walks; isolation techniques.

The purpose of this letter is to preserve my child's rights under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (the Hatch Amendment) to the General Education Provisions Act, and under its regulations as published in the Federal Register of September 6, 1984, which became effective November 12, 1984. These regulations provide a procedure for filing complaints first at the local level, and then with the U.S. Department of Education. If a voluntary remedy fails, federal funds can be withdrawn from those in violation of the laws. I respectfully ask you to send me a substantive response to this letter attaching a copy of your policy statement on procedures for parental permission requirements, to notify all my child's teachers, and to keep a copy of this letter in my child's permanent file. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely, _____

Copy to: School Principal
           Child's Teachers

Unit Design: Plan Week 1

Plan the first week of instruction for your unit. It needn't be for the first week of school. Your first week's plan should include the following:

- some kind of inventory for assessing students' knowledge and needs
- evidence that the instruction is clearly tied to your unit goals
- instruction in procedures for reaching the unit goals
- the establishment of classroom routines
- daily plans, including the amount of time anticipated for each episode

Field Experience Observation

1. In the school you are visiting, what are the expectations for students? What assumptions underlie these expectations? How are these expectations communicated to students? How does the school respond to students who do and don't meet these expectations?

2. In the same school, what are the expectations for teachers? What assumptions about good teaching underlie these expectations? How are excellent teachers rewarded? Is there any effort to address problems with the teaching of those who are not believed to be excellent?

Week 13

Due Today

One-week lesson plan (see rubric at www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/Rubrics/One-weekrubric.htm)

Assignment Due Week 14

Introductory activity revisions (see rubric at www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/Rubrics/introrubric.htm)

Reflective Writing Prompt

Think back to your own education. How was the grammar or language instruction handled? What do you see as the purpose of the grammar or language instruction you received? How would you evaluate the effectiveness of the approach used to teach it? What were the effects of this instruction on the whole range of students in your classes? What were the assumptions behind the grammar or language instruction you received?

Creative Writing Prompt

A true story: A middle school has what the teachers call the Opportunity Room. The Op, as students call it, is where they are sent when they misbehave. For the most part, they are punished with writing. At least one student is always covering the chalkboard with repeated writing of "I will not throw the garbage can at the teacher" or whatever else the student might have done.

    Imagine this student in your class when you give a writing assignment. How might the process unfold?

Discussion Topic

How should a teacher work with unmotivated students? Is it a teacher's responsibility to motivate a student? What are the various causes of disengagement from school? How might they be addressed?

Unit Design: Plan Week 2

Plan the second week of instruction for your unit. Your plan should include the following:

- continuity from Week 1's instruction
- evidence that the instruction is clearly tied to your unit and course-long goals
- instruction in procedures for reaching the unit goals
- classroom routines
- daily plans, including the amount of time anticipated for each episode

Field Experience Observation

Observe a classroom, looking for students who are disengaged or disaffected. Report and reflect on the following:

- In what ways do they show their lack of interest in school?
- How do they respond to the class structure?
- How do they affect the engagement of other students in the class?
- What might be the source of their disengagement or disaffection?
- Is there a way to change the environment or type of activity to help increase their engagement?
- If not, how might the teacher conduct the class so as to modify the effects of their disengagement?

Week 14

Due Today

Introductory activity revisions (see rubric at www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/Rubrics/introrubric.htm)

Assignment Due Week 15

Completed unit (see rubric at www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/Rubrics/unitrubric.htm)

Reflective Writing

The April 1994 issue of the National Council of Teachers of English journal *College English* included an article that caused quite a ruckus among writing teachers. In "Fault Lines in the Contact Zone," Richard E. Miller reported on an incident that took place in a California community college in which a student wrote a paper for an open-ended class assignment. The assignment, taken from a widely used college composition textbook, asked students to write a report on some incident of group behavior. Miller described the paper as follows:

> One [student] responded with an essay detailing a drunken trip he and some friends made to "San Fagcisco" to study "the lowest class . . . the queers and the bums." The essay recounts how the students stopped a man on Polk Street, informed him that they were doing a survey and needed to know if he was "a fag." From here, the narrative follows the students into a dark alleyway where they discover, as they relieve themselves drunkenly against the wall, that they have been urinating on a homeless person. In a frenzy, the students begin to kick the homeless person, stopping after "30 seconds of non-stop blows to the body," at which point the writer says he "thought the guy was dead." Terrified, the students make a run for their car and eventually escape the city. (392)

The assignment never specified that the students needed to write about something that the teacher would like. And as it turned out, the student knew that the teacher, who was gay, would find it offensive. The student himself came from Kuwait and held a culturally learned contempt for homosexuals.

The assignment in the book assumed that students were good people and would write about legal, morally acceptable behavior. Because there were no cautions against writing hatefully about an offensive action, the

student produced an essay well within the acceptable boundaries of the assignment.

If a student turned in a paper like this to you, how would you evaluate it, and would you take any action beyond the evaluation?

Discussion Topic

These are some questions my UGA colleague, Mark Faust, asks preservice teachers about literature discussions:

- What are literature discussions discussions of? Or: What do we talk about when we talk about literature?
- What are literature discussions for?
- What counts as an appropriate topic for a literature discussion that takes place in school?
- What should teachers do to start literature discussions?
- What should teachers do during literature discussions?
- What should students know in order to participate in literature discussions?
- How do teachers know what students know, and how should this knowledge affect a teacher's role in literature discussions?
- Does a teacher's role depend on what students know?
- Does a teacher's role depend on what kinds of things students say?
- Is there any obligation for the class to stay on topic? If so, how do you know when you're off topic? Whose topic is it that you're off?

Unit Design: Plan Week 3

Plan the third week of instruction for your unit. Your plan should include the following:

- continuity from Week 2's instruction
- evidence that the instruction is clearly tied to your unit and course-long goals
- instruction in procedures for reaching the unit goals
- feedback from both students and teacher on initial drafts of work that uses criteria similar to those that will be used in formal assessments

- continued establishment and development of classroom routines
- daily plans, including the amount of time anticipated for each episode

Field Experience Observation

How compatible is the approach to teaching outlined in *Teaching English by Design* with the teaching you've observed in a school you're visiting? What are the advantages and disadvantages that you see to teaching in the ways you're observing in a school? How do they compare with the advantages and disadvantages that follow from the approach outlined here?

Week 15

Due Today

Completed unit (see rubric at www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/Rubrics/unitrubric.htm)

For the final class meeting, students give presentations on their units and provide ways to share their units with their classmates.

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