

# Teaching Post-Secondary ESL: College Writing Courses

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## Session Goals

- **To discuss the theoretical underpinnings and research connected to SLW**
- **To present Humber's model for ESL communications courses & share experiences teaching academic writing**
- **To discuss the need for students to interact with a text and respond critically in writing using appropriate citation/documentation skills**

## Virtual Tour

<http://www.humber.ca/virtualtour/vt360/>



## School of Liberal Arts & Sciences

- English Department
- Writing Centre (ESL Services)
- English for Academic Purposes

# What's the need?

- **Increased diversity of student populations**
  - **International students**
  - **Domestic second language learners**
- **In 2010, 18% ELLs**
- **34% part of the Business School**
- **1/4 of all students in the ESL stream**
- **Second language writers have become an integral part of writing courses and programs**

# ESL SERVICES

Location: GH202 (North Writing Centre)



FALL 2012

## Conversation & Pronunciation Groups:

MONDAYS 12:00-14:00  
WEDNESDAYS 10:00-11:00  
THURSDAYS 12:00-14:00

**No appointment necessary!**

Practice speaking English!  
Improve your pronunciation!  
Build your confidence!  
Make new friends!

The Writing Centre also offers individual appointments for help in writing and grammar from **Monday to Saturday**. Our ESL specialists can also help you with reading, listening, speaking, and building vocabulary.

To schedule an appointment, visit us in **GH202**, call extension **#6258**, or book online at <http://humber.mywconline.com/>

For more information, contact Irene Kosmas at extension #4394.

**ESL**

**W** **O** **R** **K** **S** **H** **O** **P** **S**

Writing  
Centre appt.  
@ 11:30 a.m.

Drop by our  
location:  
Writing Centre  
(GH202)  
Absolutely Free!

A Series of  
Workshops: Language  
Development and  
Academic Skills

Visit the  
Writing Centre  
(GH202)  
North Campus

Test 1  
Monday  
Ch. 1-5

### **Research Skills & Academic Honesty**

Wednesday, October 3  
(GH202 14:00 – 15:00)

### **Effective Dictionary Skills**

Thursday, October 4  
(GH202 11:00 – 12:00)

### **Addressing Common Pronunciation Problems**

Wednesday, October 10  
(L212 12:00 – 13:00)

### **Addressing Common Grammatical Errors**

Friday, October 12  
(GH202 10:30 – 11:30)

### **Job Interview Skills**

Monday, October 15  
(GH202 14:00 – 15:00)

Please visit the Writing Centre (GH202) - North Campus  
to register for all or any of these workshops.

# Framework

**What does research tell us about SLW?**

# SLW: Generalizations from Research

- 1. “a second language student writer is simultaneously grappling with language acquisition and writing proficiency development”**
- 2. “second language student writers have not had adequate exposure to the English language, particularly written English”**
- 3. “their prior experience with academic L2 writing is likely to be limited”**

**(Ferris, 2009)**



# BICS vs. CALP Framework

- **Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills**
  - **acquired naturally in relatively short time**
- **Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency**
  - **includes advanced vocabulary and grammar knowledge as well as strong literacy and critical-thinking skills**
  - **much longer to acquire**

**(Cummins, 1979)**

# TESOL's Position Statement (2010)

- **Acquisition of Academic Proficiency in English at the Postsecondary Level**

**“Successful participation in academic and professional discourse communities such as business, science, engineering and medicine requires a strong foundation of very advanced language and common core academic skills. To participate successfully at the postsecondary level, learners require additional knowledge and expertise in content, specialized vocabulary, grammar, discourse structure and pragmatics.”**

# CCCC Position Statement (2009)

**“the acquisition of a second language and second-language literacy is a time-consuming process that will continue through students’ academic careers and beyond....Furthermore, most second language writers are still in the process of acquiring syntactic and lexical competence – a process that will take a lifetime”**

**So, how can we support this process at the postsecondary level?**

# Teaching COMM/ESL at Humber College

Overview

# Placement Process

- **English Placement Test (writing sample)**
- **Part of admissions application**
- **Read by a team of markers**
- **Placed in appropriate COMM or ESL course**

# English Placement Test (Writing Sample)

For Test Centre Purposes: Placement \_\_\_\_\_ (TST \_\_\_\_\_) Admission \_\_\_\_\_ (TST \_\_\_\_\_)

|                                       |            |             |
|---------------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| STUDENT NAME (Print clearly, please.) |            | STUDENT NO. |
| Last Name                             | First Name |             |
| PROGRAM                               |            | DATE        |

## DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH COMMUNICATIONS PLACEMENT WRITING ASSESSMENT

### \*\*\*ATTENTION\*\*\*

It is important that you do your **best** work on this writing assessment, for it will determine at which level you will begin your study of English communications. You will be required to take an additional English course, for example, if your writing skills are assessed as **not** college-level, which may require an additional fee.

*I understand the importance of this essay for my English placement at Humber.*



Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### WRITING ASSIGNMENT - TIME 1 HOUR

Write an essay of approximately **300 words** on **ONE** of the topics listed below.

Express your thoughts clearly. Remember to check your work for organization, sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. **Please use a pen** and write clearly.

Dictionaries are available if you need one.

1. Describe three challenges an immigrant to Canada faces during the first few years in a new country.

OR

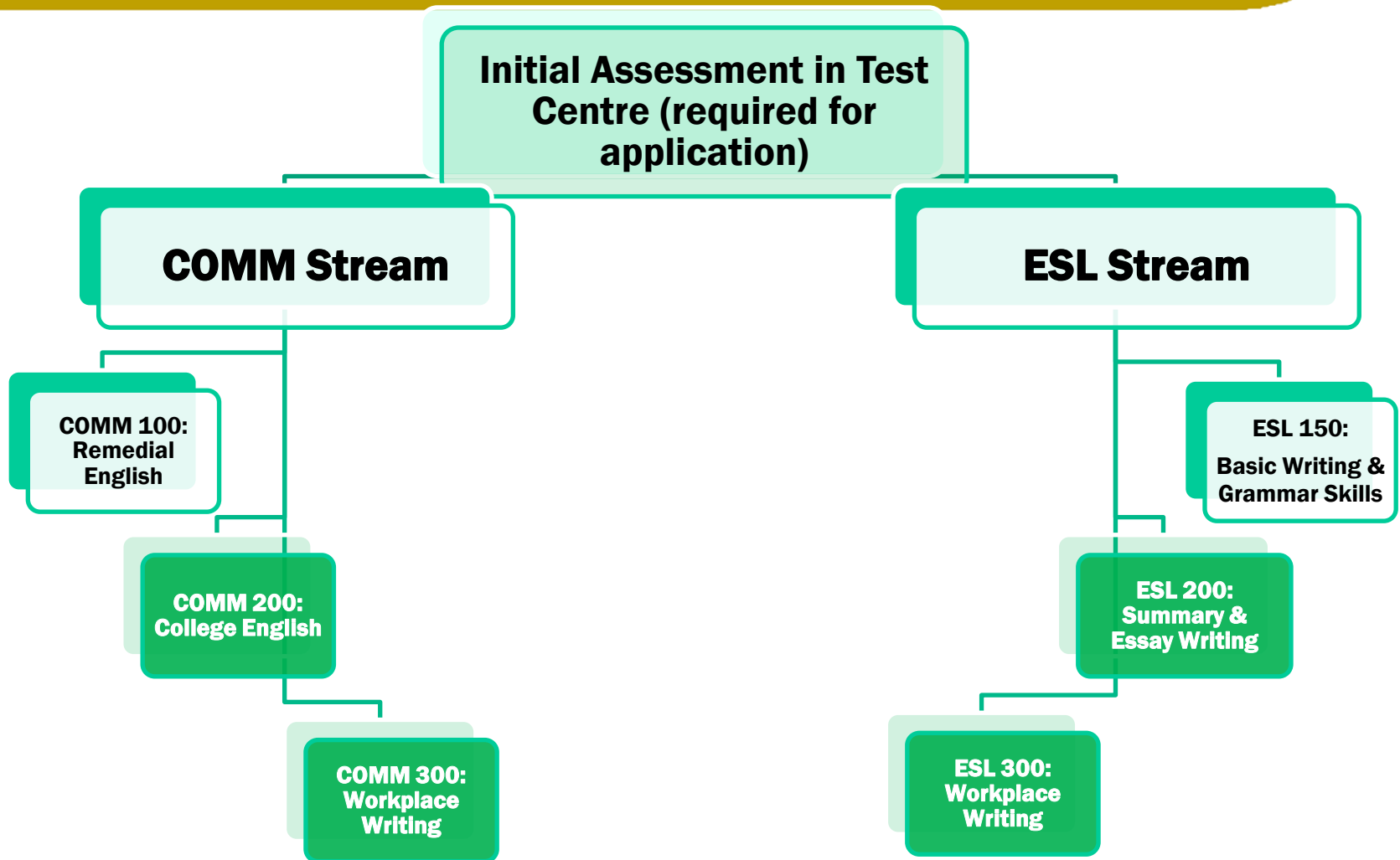
2. Discuss three activities or ways to relieve stress at work, at school, or at home.

OR

3. Choose a particular famous person (politician, author, film maker, celebrity, etc.) and give reasons why he/she is so popular.

Please turn over this page and begin your essay

# COMM or ESL



# Curriculum Overview

## **COMM 100/ESL 150**

- **Extended paragraph writing; focus on sentence skills**

## • **COMM 200/ESL 200**

- **College English/Essay writing**
- **Argumentation, Persuasion, Summaries and Essays**
- **Reading and Writing (and grammar review)**

## • **COMM 300/ESL 300**

- **workplace writing skills : emails, letters, reports**



# COMM vs. ESL

**Content basically the same, but teaching approach and support are different**

- **COMM stream has more specialization**
  - **essay writing, tech writing, writing for the health sciences, community services etc.**

# Differences

## COMM

- English Faculty
- Textbooks/materials for NS – first year college
- 3 hours per week
- 30-35 students per class
- Criterion sheet for evaluating writing

## ESL

- TESL trained Faculty
- ESL texts/materials written for NNS needs
- 4 hours per week
- 25 students per class
- Adapted criterion sheet for grammar & style

# COMM 200 Criterion Sheet

| CRITERION SHEET<br>COMM 200<br>ESSAY   | Fail<br>(Below 50%) | Fail<br>(50% - 59%) | Pass Minimum<br>(60% - 69%) | Pass with Some<br>Distinction<br>(70% - 79%) | Pass with<br>Excellence<br>(Above 80%) |             |            |     |       |       |       |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|-------------|------------|-----|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>STRUCTURE</b><br>20%  |                     |                     |                             |  |  |             |            |     |       |       |       |
| <b>Beginning Paragraph</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sets tone and captures readers' interest</li> <li>establishes context of argument or exposition</li> <li>contains focused thesis statement</li> </ul>  |                     |                     |                             |  |  |             |            |     |       |       |       |
| <b>Middle Paragraphs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use topic sentences effectively</li> <li>develop distinct ideas relevant to thesis</li> <li>present ideas in logical order</li> <li>use transitions appropriately</li> </ul>   |                     |                     |                             |  |  |             |            |     |       |       |       |
| <b>End Paragraph</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provides closure</li> <li>goes beyond restating the thesis</li> </ul>  |                     |                     |                             |  |  |             |            |     |       |       |       |
| <b>SUPPORT</b><br>40%  |                     |                     |                             |  |  |             |            |     |       |       |       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>contains consistent, coherent and sustained development of thesis</li> <li>maintains unity throughout the essay</li> <li>develops thesis using appropriate writing strategies</li> <li>provides specific, concrete details and examples</li> <li>provides thoughtful, convincing and innovative discussion of the topic</li> <li>includes relevant use of readings where appropriate</li> </ul> |                     |                     |                             |  |  |             |            |     |       |       |       |
| <b>STYLE</b><br>10%  |                     |                     |                             |  |  |             |            |     |       |       |       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>diction and tone appropriate to audience</li> <li>precise, clear language ; no slang, wordiness, clichés, jargon, or colloquialisms</li> <li>sentence variety</li> </ul>  |                     |                     |                             |  |  |             |            |     |       |       |       |
| <b>GRAMMAR AND MECHANICS</b><br>30%  | SS                  | Frag                | RO                          | CS   | VT                                     | VF          | SVA        | POV | Other |       |       |
| Major Errors -3%   | SP                  | Punc                | Apos                        | D/M<br>Mod                                   | Pro<br>Ref                             | Pro<br>Case | Pro<br>Agr | Art | Prep  | //ism | Other |
| Minor Errors -1%   |                     |                     |                             |  |  |             |            |     |       |       |       |
| <b>TOTAL / 100 =</b>   |                     |                     |                             |  |  |             |            |     |       |       |       |

# ESL 200 Criterion Sheet

| NAME:   |                      |                       |                         |   |                                 |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| <b>CRITERION SHEET<br/>ESL. 200 ESSAY<br/>Minimum 400 words, double-spaced</b>  | <b>Fail<br/>0-49</b> | <b>Fail<br/>50-59</b> | <b>Pass<br/>Minimum</b> | <b>Pass with<br/>Some<br/>Distinction</b> | <b>Pass with<br/>Excellence</b> |
| <b>ORGANIZATION 20%</b>   |                      |                       |                         |   |                                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* standard essay format, including title &amp; any necessary documentation</li> <li>* <b>beginning paragraph</b> in which introductory sentences capture readers' interest and thesis statement introduces topic and controlling idea</li> <li>* <b>body paragraphs</b> that have topic sentence, stay on topic, connect ideas logically and use appropriate transitions</li> <li>* <b>concluding paragraph</b> that concludes logically and appropriately</li> </ul>  |                      |                       |                         |   |                                 |
| <b>DEVELOPMENT 20%</b>  |                      |                       |                         |   |                                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* body paragraphs that                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ support and explain main ideas</li> <li>▪ include specific details/examples/facts</li> <li>▪ provide thoughtful, convincing, and innovative discussion of the topic</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |                      |                       |                         |   |                                 |
| <b>STYLE &amp; VOCABULARY 10%</b>   |                      |                       |                         |   |                                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* precise, clear, idiomatic language</li> <li>* word choice: <b>WC</b></li> <li>* sentence variety</li> </ul>  |                      |                       |                         |   |                                 |
| <b>GRAMMAR &amp; MECHANICS 50%</b>  |                      |                       |                         |   |                                 |
| <p><b>Major errors: – 2 marks per error</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* verb tenses: <b>VT</b></li> <li>* verb forms: <b>VF</b></li> <li>* subject-verb agreement: <b>SVA</b></li> <li>* singular/plural: <b>#</b></li> <li>* sentence structure: <b>SS</b></li> <li>* parallelism: <b>//sm</b></li> <li>* unclear sentences: <b>?</b></li> <li>* word form: <b>WF</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Minor errors: – 1 mark per error</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* spelling</li> <li>* capitalization</li> <li>* articles</li> <li>* prepositions</li> <li>* punctuation</li> <li>* pronouns</li> </ul> |                      |                       |                         |   |                                 |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">                     Maximum deduction of 15 marks for minor errors.                 </div>  |                      |                       |                         |   |                                 |
| <b>TOTAL / 100 =</b>  |                      |                       |                         |   |                                 |

# Typical ESL 200 Assignments & Tests

- **Summary of a Reading**
  - **Paraphrase, using signal phrases**
- **Citation / Documentation Skills**
  - **APA**
- **Essays (multiple drafts, feedback and revisions)**
  - **Cause/Effect**
  - **Contrast**
  - **Argumentation/Persuasion**
- **Editing Tests**

# Final Proficiency Exam - Essay

- **Students must be eligible to write (60% or higher)**
- **Departmental exam evaluated on PASS/FAIL basis**
- **Double-blind marking process**

## COMM/ESL 250 Upgrading

- **Semester of one-on-one instruction for students who fail final proficiency exam**

**FORM B**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**ESL. 200 FINAL PROFICIENCY ESSAY**

**Winter 2012**

Time: Three periods

**INSTRUCTIONS**

**CHOOSE ONE OF THE TOPICS LISTED BELOW.**

Write a well-organized, well-developed essay of 350-400 words, double-spaced, using a blue or black pen. **NO PENCILS, PLEASE.** Your paper will be marked for organization, development, style, and grammar and mechanics. A dictionary is permitted.

Do not worry about writing a good copy; make changes on your first draft so that you can spend more time editing your work for grammar and spelling problems.

Make sure you fill in the information at the top of this test paper and hand in the following, in this order:

1. this sheet (on top)
2. your composition
3. rough work

**Reading: "Bonding Online: Websites As Substitute Communities"**

**TOPICS**

1. Explain the main reasons some college students overuse the Internet.
2. Explain the effects that spending too much time using the Internet can have on a college student's life.
3. Contrast an on-line learning environment, such as Blackboard, with a traditional classroom environment.
4. Argue whether new social media have **OR** have not created a better community.

# Future Directions

- **Move away from modes based essays**
- **More argumentation/persuasion and reading critically**



# Considerations for Classroom Instruction

- **Understand assignment specifications and audience needs**
- **Generate or gather ideas for writing**
- **Present/organize content for a variety of genres/assignments**
- **Incorporate ideas from other authors/texts/sources into own writing**
- **Give and receive feedback to and from peers and utilize feedback from others (peers, teachers, tutors)**
- **Manage time throughout writing process to think about, revise and edit work**
- **Look critically (for revision) and carefully (for editing)**

# Preparing ESL Students for “Real” College Writing

**“students at two-year colleges are being challenged to write at quite a sophisticated level. Writing assignments across the disciplines...require extensive critical thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation.”**

- **How can ESL instructors best support their students for the types of writing tasks that they will most likely encounter in their disciplines?**
- **What steps can faculty take to assist their students in this process?**

**(Carrol & Dunkelblau, 2011)**

# Final Comments/Questions?



# Questions for Reflection & Discussion

- **Should college-level L2 writers always be mainstreamed with L1 peers, or should separate sections be available to them? Who should choose?**
- **For large-scale writing assessment, who do you think should grade L2 students' text – L2 specialists only, or a combination of readers? Why?**
- **Some teachers and researchers believe strongly that presenting students with a “formula” for writing is always counterproductive. What is your view on this issue?**