

# Content Teachers' Perceptions of Content-based ESL Writing Assignments

Lara Ravitch

Research on Community College Students and Programs

Bailey, Ravitch, ter Mate-Martinsen, Lewis, Santos

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# Assignment Development

- Problem-based
- Project-based
- Content-based
- Chickering & Gamson (1987)
- Student interests
- Content-area objectives

Major	Career Goal	Concurrent Courses
Pharmacy 2 English 3 Nursing 10 Criminal justice Business 3 Education 2 Engineering Art No Answer 13	Nursing 14 Pharmacy 4 CIS 2 Engineer Business 3 Undecided 4 Television Fashion Designer Teacher 2 Interior designer Doctor 2 Architect Law enforcem't 2	Chemistry 19 Economics 3 Math 14 CIS 4 Humanities 6 History 6 Business 2 Art 2 Social Science 4 Choir 2 Fitness Criminal Justice Child development

# Objectives

- Develop an understanding of the scientific method and its use (investigative processes)
- Interact and collaborate in problem solving exercises
- Summarize research
- Evaluate ethics
- Retain, comprehend, analyze, and synthesize new information
- Ability to read critically and understand context
- Develop a specific research question or thesis, determine necessary subtopics, support, etc.

# Assignments

Fall 2003 – International problem analysis

Spring 2004 – Ethical problem analysis

Fall 2004 – Values and Politics analysis

Spring 2005 – Discipline-based assignments

# Content Faculty Perceptions

## Methods

- Distributed survey
  - Thinking, reading, writing skills
  - Content knowledge
  - Similarity to discipline assignments
  - 2-3 professors where possible
- Follow-up emails
  - Explained points of clarity
- Follow-up interviews
  - Developed new assignments

# Content Faculty Comments

## ➤ International Problem Paper

- *Strongly Agree*
  - Thinking skills
  - Reading & writing skills
  - Content knowledge
- *Agree*
  - Similar assignments in content courses
    - No step-by-step process
    - No drafting

# Content Faculty Comments

## ➤ Ethical Problem Papers (Biology)

- *Strongly Agree*
  - Reading & writing
    - Appropriate writing style
    - Good use of terminology
  - Thinking skills
  - Content knowledge
    - Topics are relevant

# Content Faculty Comments

## ➤ Ethical Problem Papers (Social Science)

- *Strongly Agree*
  - Reading & writing
  - Thinking skills
- *Concerns*
  - Content too advanced
  - Students don't have adequate critical thinking
  - Step-by-step process may help with these

# Content Faculty Comments

## ➤ Values & Policy Analysis

- *Agree*
  - Reading & writing skills
  - Thinking skills
- *Concerns*
  - Assignment too complex
  - Model topic too complex
  - Better to do simpler assignment

# Discipline-based Projects

## ➤ Literature

- *Strongly Agree/Agree*
  - Reading, writing, thinking, content knowledge
    - “Analysis, creative responses, making connections”

## ➤ Biology


- *Strongly Agree*
  - Reading, writing, thinking, content knowledge
    - Report genre

# Discipline-based projects

## ➤ Business

- *Agree/strongly agree*
  - Thinking, reading & writing skills
- *Concerns*
  - Case study would be more appropriate
  - Follow up – Enron case study design

# Conclusion

- Overall: impressed & appreciative
  - No support in content classes
  - Too complex?
  - Our role
- 

# Works Cited

Chickering, A. and Gamson, Z. F. (1987).  
Seven principles for good practice in  
undergraduate education. *AAHE Bulletin*.  
March 1987.