

Attachment 1

CONCLUDING REMARKS FROM ENGLISH CONTENT TEAM

The Nature of Scholarship: What Students Need to Know

The tradition of scholarship is built upon the notion that seeking knowledge benefits both the personal and the greater good. When students come to college, they enter a community of scholars working toward these ends. Actively engaged in seeking and constructing knowledge, the members of learning communities succeed when they learn to further their own understanding. Scholars build upon their prior knowledge, and they use their learning to challenge their own previously held beliefs to investigate the knowledge of others, and add to it. The learning community of higher education is vibrant, and simultaneously local, global, historical, and interdisciplinary. Students recognize the importance of others, both inside and outside of the university, in the process of learning.

Scholars realize that higher education is not solely about preparing for a career; they are motivated by the desire to discover and understand. Scholarship is informed by informal and formal processes of inquiry, discovery, application and sharing. As new scholars, successful students gain not only information in coursework, but also knowledge through research, trial and error, intellectual risk-taking and the sharing of tested and supported results. Reading critically and writing effectively are most often the means to testing and sharing these new ideas.

The pursuit of knowledge in college also means working with topics and readings sometimes difficult to discuss in high school. Discussions regarding race, ethnicity, class, gender, and power are fully integrated across the college curriculum, and it is important that that new scholars willingly take on these challenges. Effective college students interact thoughtfully with people from other races and cultures as well as with people who have different beliefs and commitments. Scholars work across these differences and try to learn about themselves and others. These interactions are substantive and provide a basis for further inquiry and discovery. In this way, scholarship can be transformative: changing students, communities, disciplines. At the same time, scholarship provides us with histories and traditions on which we continue to reflect and build, and thus from which we continue to learn. Engaged students enter these dialogues with care and minimal nervousness or reluctance, for they recognize the shared benefit of dialogue.

Higher education is a culture with values, norms, habits, and standards. Succeeding in this new culture requires persistence, a tolerance for ambiguity, and an ability for self-reflection and awareness. One of the key goals in higher education is to understand the structure of academic disciplines and subject areas.

College-level course work provides new scholars with the opportunity to engage with and practice the language and ways of knowing within and across specific academic fields. Dedicated scholars acquire not only content area information, but also the skills necessary to pursue further knowledge by reading critically and writing articulately, thus becoming life-long learners.

Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning

One of the major missions of higher education is to construct and disseminate knowledge. As participants in this construction of knowledge, students of all backgrounds are expected to participate in a global learning community. Entering college, students benefit from being aware of their cultural positions and identities as they relate to the rest of the world in multiple learning communities. Since learning occurs within the context of the learner's background experiences and knowledge, culture must be addressed within the learning environment. Students need to encounter learning experiences that provide opportunities to learn how knowledge is constructed within cultural frameworks (Gay, 2000).

Entering college students are expected to be willing to examine their own cultural positions and identities as they relate to the rest of the world. This enables them to experience a wide range of emotions, including discomfort and joy, generated by the authentic engagement with people different from themselves. Students are encouraged to work with the conventions of academic English while integrating their unique expressions within those evolving conventions. Ultimately, the heart of college readiness is the ability to communicate across culture, race, and multiple Englishes (The Place of World Englishes in Composition: Pluralization Continued, A. Suresh Canagarajah, June 2006). Students have to talk to and learn from each other as well as from new texts and contexts. Therefore, reading a wide range of texts representing a broad variety of cultures and perspectives must be an integral part of students' classroom experiences. In addition, students need time for engaging dialogue surrounding the information and ideas presented in the college learning environment.

Successful students must feel comfortable in the global village of the 21st century. In assisting students' learning in preparation for college success, developing an awareness of world Englishes is useful in composition. Working within this context as students prepare for the post-secondary world helps them to develop an internationalist perspective capable of understanding the study and teaching of written English in relation to other languages and to the dynamics of globalization" (English Only and U.S. College Composition, Bruce Horner and John Trimbur, 2002). Students must develop an appreciation of the structures of all world languages. Canagarajah claims that "...rather than developing mastery in a single 'target language,' students should strive for competence in a repertoire of codes and discourses. Rather

than simply joining a speech community, students should learn to shuttle between communities in contextually relevant ways” (2006).

Most composition theorists agree that students, both native and non-native speakers of standardized English, benefit from an exposure to a variety of written forms of language. Students learn to move among different language codes and are capable of making conscious language choices, one of which is “correctness.” On-going engagement with a variety of discourses, much of which should be academic, increases students’ linguistic strength and flexibility. In college, successful students shuttle between communities in contextually relevant ways. In moving toward the long-term goal of full acceptance for all varieties of English, students should be encouraged to work with the conventions of academic English as an additional, privileged variety, integrating their unique expressions within those evolving conventions.

The Use of Technology

Technology is an essential tool of modern communication. In college students continually need to update their technology skills: searching for information, assessing its credibility, and its ethical impact. Additionally, skills in using software programs in word processing, database, multi-media, and web pages round out a technologically savvy student.