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LESSONS FOR EVERYONE FROM THE BASIC SKILLS CLASSROOM:
A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF BASIC WRITING SYLLABI

A Thesis in

Curriculum and Instruction

By

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Abstract

This two-part study provides a critical understanding of the importance of discourse in the syllabi for basic writing skills courses—courses for students who historically have been deemed as underprepared for higher education. Although the study focused on at-risk students, its implications apply to all syllabi in all courses: instructors who use a discourse of possibility in syllabi establish a more positive and productive relationship with students. The first half of the research, critical discourse analysis of 25 syllabi from a university in northeastern United States, consists of three sub-studies. The first examined how the pronouns *I*, *you*, and *we* and the noun variants *student* and *instructor* function either to convey a sense of community or to stress instructor power. The second examined how various combinations of formatted features signaled which information the instructor considered most important. The third examined how conditional statements were used to negotiate rules and accommodations. Findings of these analyses were used to generate sample syllabi for a subsequent field study, which involved a within-subjects experimental design employing two groups and a counterbalanced text. Ten students evaluated two versions of a syllabus and responded to six open-ended questions related to the course, the instructor, and the students. The findings from both the syllabi analysis and the field study provide insight on how the way the syllabi is worded mirrors the instructors' ideologies and how wording influences student perceptions—especially younger students and those with a lower grade point average. Practical pedagogical implications are that new graduate teaching assistants and new instructors should receive explicit training in how to align syllabi discourse with their teaching philosophies.

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Syllabus
by Michael True

You will teach me, first, my students,
the character of my indifference,
and the dark confusion of being young;
I will teach you, then, my students,
the hope that lies beneath the surface,
a love inherent in the nature of things.
Follow the course of it to the end of knowing;
gather the thread of it line by line.

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Genesis of the Study: Living Basic Writing and Remediation

Know that many personal troubles cannot be solved merely as troubles, but must be understood in terms of public issues—and in terms of the problems of history making.
Mills

In 1994, as a new teaching assistant (TA) in the English Department at the University of Puerto Rico Mayagüez Campus (UPRM), I was seriously concerned about doing an outstanding job for my first-year students and proving myself to my English professors. As I taught basic writing and English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, I felt honored to be able to share my knowledge with students, but even more privileged to be part of an important milestone in their lives: their first year in college. I worked hard with and for the students and made it a point to find creative ways for them to learn the material so they could do well in the course and, of course, pass their exit exams. I was feeling very confident I was doing a good job until one disturbing day. Our course cohort met for the regular monthly meeting and I, as usual, was eager to share with them what I was doing and how the students were responding. It was there that I got a piece of advice that changed my view of many things: “You shouldn’t waste your time with these kids; half of them will drop out anyway and the rest will probably end up working at Burger King or McDonalds.” There were several chuckles in the room—I was speechless and embarrassed. What should one respond? Even more, should I respond? Never mind that I was a recent graduate student: I was just a TA and had no business defending these “kids.” “It’s not fair” I thought to myself. In some way, I felt I betrayed my students, by not being able to answer, but what could I say? Not being able to stand up for them made me doubt myself as a serious educator.

As I look back, I realize that I wasn't so much embarrassed about me but about the fact that I felt they were being cheated in some bizarre way they were not aware of (or were they?) and I was an accomplice. The purpose behind the unintentional comment was for me to "lighten up" but if I did, I thought I would be taking something away from the students. Throughout the years, I have heard and read about different situations along the same line about how half of the students in courses like mine would drop out anyway and unfortunately it was true—every semester half of them either flunked or dropped out. At the end of every year the statistics were there to prove it: half of the students in the remedial English class passed their first semester and only half of those who repeated the course the second time passed it. In other words, after the first year, approximately 25 % of the students in the remedial English course were failing.

After teaching the course for several semesters, I found students confiding in me that they were embarrassed to be in the course. For them once placed in this course, they felt they were tracked and "profiled" as inferior, stupid, lazy and so on by their peers and professors. Rather than seeing the course as an opportunity, the students saw it as a punishment. Placing these students in these courses sends out the message that somehow they are responsible for their own failure; they are labeled in a way that affects their future.

I have heard my students' experiences about being marginalized, labeled, and discriminated against because they are in a remedial course, and I feel I should be capable of linking their stories to a larger theory and contextualize their testimonies with the subjectivities and ideologies of the teachers and institutions at work that push the students lower into fixed categories that potentially predetermine their scholarly and life expectations of success. As I began doctoral study, I found that I could not divorce myself from my experiences in the classroom. According to Mills (1959) "the most admirable scholars within the scholarly

community...do not split their work from their lives. They seem to take both too seriously to allow such dissociation, and they want to use each for the enrichment of the other” (p.195).

When private stories become public, there is greater potential for social change. I had the opportunity to pursue my goal and explore the issue—to comprehend it at a level beyond the personal, and to become a voice for my first-year students, particularly those in the remedial courses.

My original concern was for *my* students in *my* class; however I needed to look beyond *my* classroom, be able to put it into perspective and determine if this issue in fact warranted special attention or not. I recall several heated debates on how my department had been working with students in the remedial courses for a couple of decades, hinting that remedial education was not something new. It wasn't a temporary issue either—and it wasn't going to go away, unless of course the university began restricting admissions. While this option had been thrown out on the table for discussion several times, it was quickly dismissed as unfeasible due to the significant number of students who would be affected and the fact that the option was neither fair nor legal. Back then, two things were clear to me: first, the students in the remedial courses were there to stay and second, it was an issue that I needed to investigate so that I could understand and be able to make sound contributions that would benefit students in basic writing skills (or remedial) courses.

As I began my doctoral career, I found that several elements of my experience nagged at me: the fact that professors could verbalize their low expectations of their students; the fact that at the end of every year close to 25% of the first-year college students registered in the remedial course failed; the fact that students would open up to me about how they felt about being in the remedial course; the fact that I was unable to stand up for my students. Designing my own

research agenda gave me an opportunity to think about making a change in conditions I didn't like—but I had no clue where to begin. I started as everyone starts, with one modest step forward; from there, my research has been a long journey in which one set of questions led to another and another.

I began by trying to better understand a larger context for remedial, or basic skills, courses, so that I had a wider lens for my own research. I asked who enrolled in such classes; how many institutions and students are involved; and how much time is invested in them. The answers to these preliminary questions follow in the next section of this chapter.

I learned that remediation was in no way particular to my students in Puerto Rico as I had naively believed, since I had not yet learned to critically question my assumptions and long entrenched ideologies. However, from this information new questions surfaced. I began to wonder, for example, how long have students in need of remediation been acknowledged in higher education? And how did institutions perceive the role and value (if any) of these students? In other words, I decided to investigate their historical presence. The historical link I uncovered between the remedial student and the economy of higher education is explored in the third section of this chapter.

However, the pieces of the puzzle I was trying to put together still were not fitting, producing new questions. Although the history I read strongly suggested that remedial students appear to be valued primarily for the tuition dollars they bring with them, my own experiences clearly told me that not all professors viewed their students in remedial courses as deficient, if necessary, nuisances. In fact, several professors focused on students' strengths and designed activities to build students' understanding of how to become independent learners; likewise, they encouraged students to become critical thinkers, capable of contributing to public life. I felt

dissonance between characterizations of these students and their potential, and noticed even as I did the historical research that there appeared to be opposing images in the literature as well. Research in this area led me to two clearly contrasting paradigms in the field which have significant implications for practice and my own concerns; these are presented in Chapter 2.

With an understanding of the two paradigms, I saw the connection between a negative paradigm and the instructors' language I heard in meetings and behind closed doors that so bothered me. I thought I could see how one paradigm might produce such language and ultimately student dropouts while the other led students with emotional confidences to my door. I realized what I wanted and needed to better understand was how language linked to instructor assumptions and student performance.

I considered studying a section of a basic writing course, but rejected the idea on two counts: 1) the Hawthorne effect told me that simply by sitting in, I would disrupt normal classroom events so that what I observed would be artificially influenced; 2) my interest is not in assessing the work of any individual instructor in a classroom, but in better understanding the culture of remedial/basic education in the academy. Therefore, I opted instead to study written text, data readily available to me as a researcher, which had actually been used with students. What intrigued me was the question of whether discourse relating to the two paradigms, especially the one linked to what I heard behind closed doors, might inadvertently seep into other language accessible to students. I had discovered that my interest was primarily discourse analysis, and it occurred to me that a prime example of written language characterizing coursework is the course syllabus, where students are given what is purportedly the most important information about the course, the instructor, and expectations of them as students. Thus I began with the following as my main research question: "How might the assumptions of

the two major paradigms be embedded in the discourse of typical syllabi?” Because each paradigm casts students in starkly different positions relative to the professor, a second question immediately followed: “How are the issues of authority, rules, and power portrayed in the syllabi?” The fact that research on syllabi discourse analysis was scant gave me the opportunity to largely chart my own way; the single exception here was that some interesting work on pronouns had been done earlier. I would build on that but simply see what else appeared. As it turned out, a great deal appeared, as is detailed in Chapter 4.

As I neared the end of the study, I was driven to know still more. I felt I had learned a great deal . . . but had I? Was I really on to something new and meaningful? Or, had I simply completed an exhaustive and exhausting bit of academic analysis that had no relation to the concern for real world practice that motivated me as I began? For at least a preliminary suggestion of whether my findings might in fact relate to students’ lived experience, I took the final step of designing and implementing a modest experiment based on my results (with the not-very-modest description of a within-subjects experimental design, using two groups and a counterbalanced text). Chapter 5 presents this study and its encouraging results.

As is often the case with research, the initial framework so useful in launching me into the study and providing focus for the early chapters fell away as the results became more and more clear. The pronoun analysis I began with soon led me to hypothesize about other elements of language in the syllabus and moved beyond the two paradigms for remediation that had so concerned me when I began. As a result, the discussion in Chapter 6 and the implications in Chapter 7 are much broader than I had expected, focusing more on syllabi discourse generally rather than being bound by the remediation/developmental framework. The findings do apply there, but far more broadly than I had originally anticipated.

Basic Writers: A Significant Population

Who are These Students?

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) defines postsecondary remedial education as “courses in reading, writing, or mathematics for college-level students lacking those skills necessary to perform college-level work at the level required by the institution” (Parsad and Lewis, 2003, p. 1). While various institutions adopted other names for remedial courses, namely, “developmental,” “compensatory,” or “basic skills,” NCES classifies these courses as remedial. The terminology used to define remediation is currently debated in the field of remedial/developmental education, an issue I will discuss further in Chapter 2.

How many institutions and students are involved in Remedial Education?

NCES reports that in fall 2000, three-fourths of the 4-year post-secondary institutions offered remedial courses and one quarter of the entering student population enrolled in one. “A higher proportion of institutions offered remedial courses in mathematics (71 percent) and writing (68 percent) than in reading (56 percent)” (Parsad and Lewis, 2003, p. iii). NCES’ Fall 2000 Statistical Analysis Report provides further historical data for 1995 and 2000 in a report on Remedial Education at Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions. This most recent information and statistics on remediation and degree completion (Wirt, Choy, Rooney, Provasnik, Sen, and Tobin, 2004) indicates that between 1995 and 2000, 28% of the first year students who enrolled in institutions of postsecondary education registered in remedial courses. Based on these numbers, the report estimated that remedial students would account for 28% of total first-year student enrollment for 2004.

What does this projection mean in terms of students exactly? Knapp, Whitmore, and Miller (2007) report on Enrollment in Postsecondary Institutions “2.6 million full-time, first-time

degree/certificate seeking undergraduates” attend[ing] Title IV institutions located in the United States in academic year 2003-04” (p. 3). The exact figure for 2004-05 was 2,630,938 (p. 12) and 28% of this population would mean that minimally some 736,663 students are likely to be enrolled in remedial courses.

How much time does this translate into?

Given that one fourth of the first-year students registered in at least one remedial course and close to half of them did not earn a degree, this is no small matter (2.6 million x .28=728,000/2=364,000). Every year approximately 364,000 of the first-year students who enrolled will not earn a degree.

A snapshot of where these students go and the time they spend there is relevant at this point. Consider that in fall 2000, 28% of entering freshmen enrolled in one or more remedial reading, writing, or mathematics courses. A higher proportion of freshmen enrolled in mathematics courses than remedial writing courses (22 vs. 14%), and lower proportions in remedial reading courses (11%). Consider also the time students spent in remediation was generally limited to one year or less. “In fall 2000, a majority (60 percent) of institutions that offered remedial courses indicated that the average time a student spent in remediation was less than 1 year, about one-third (35 percent) indicated that the average time was 1 year, and 5 percent reported an average time of more than 1 year” (p. 5). This 35% increased from the 28% reported in 1995. Likewise those institutions that indicated an average of less than 1 year, dropped from 67% in 1995 to 60% in 2000. What this means is that over time students are spending more time in remedial courses. Although students receive institutional credit for these courses in such areas as financial aid, campus housing, or full-time status, remedial courses do not count toward degree completion.

Basic Writers: A Historical Dilemma

It is particularly important for educators who work directly with underprepared students at the college level to understand their historical presence in higher education. Such understanding makes it less likely that the instructor or professor will point fingers at groups, blame students for their lack of preparation, or consider students in the remedial courses a distracting problem. Remedial education is not a recent trend—it has been part of higher education since its very beginnings.

Contrary to what many believe, “there has never been a golden age in American education history when all students who enrolled in college were adequately prepared, all courses offered at higher education institution were ‘college-level’ and the transition for the students between high school and college was smooth” (Phipps, 1998, p. v). Along the same lines Boylan (1988) indicated that “the fact that a large number of students enter college underprepared for success in college-level studies is not a new phenomenon” (p. 3). Rather, it simply represents a trend that started during the very beginning of American postsecondary education, one that appears fueled mostly by economic interest as I will discuss later in this section.

From the Beginning: First Universities in the United States

Remedial education in institutions of higher education in the United States is not a recent issue; the beginnings can be traced back to 1630, when the first institution of higher education in America, Harvard College, was founded (Boylan & White, 1994). From the very day it opened its doors to the public in 1636, there was an immediate need to do remedial work with the students who were applying—they did not have the minimal skills required to do the college

work ahead of them but they did have the financial resources to pay for their education. Since elementary and secondary education were not mandatory, the students applying to the university were deemed underprepared; they did not have the competencies required to do well in the institution. When it opened, Harvard “was immediately confronted with a need for remediation among its students, a result of the fact that the language in which most learned books were written was Latin.” (p. 3). Harvard was following the European model in which most of the courses were taught in Latin yet the majority of those interested in studying at Harvard did not have any knowledge of Latin or Greek.

Other early colleges in America began to register students even though they often had only “a meager and uneven base in precollegiate education” (Clowes, 1992; p. 460). The colleges then had to develop programs for these students. According to Boylan & White (1994), “Colleges in the early 1800’s were largely self sustaining operations. This meant that anyone who had the money to attend college was able to do so without regard to preparation” (p. 4). When the country was young, the criterion for college admission was based on wealth, i.e., on whether a potential student had money and social status (Cross, 1971). From their inception, the universities needed clientele, and so they would accept all those who could pay for their education, mainly men of higher society. Harvard as well as Yale and Princeton had a static curriculum—designed for the elite who could afford it and who needed it “to maintain their station in life” (p. 2). As the number of underprepared students that registered increased, the situation got to a point where there were more students in remedial courses than students registered in regular courses. Merisotis & Phipps (2000) indicated that at the beginning of the 20th century “over half of the students enrolled in Harvard, Princeton, Yale, and Columbia did not meet entrance requirements and were placed in remedial courses” (p. 69).

Economic Incentives

The Land Grant Acts (1862 and 1890). The Morrill Acts (also known as the Land Grant Acts) provided an economic incentive to institutions of higher education which increased the number of underprepared students accepted. The signing of the first and second Morrill Acts evidenced the direct involvement of the federal government in providing financial resources and legislation to boost the growth of institutions of higher education in America. Prior to this, the government did not interfere with the private institutions of higher education. However, after the Civil War, the national economy was devastated and the federal government stepped in to provide an incentive to move from an agricultural to an industrial economy (Hurley, n.d.).

The Morrill Act, signed by President Lincoln in 1862, established Agricultural and Mechanical Arts (A&M) colleges or the Land-grant colleges in each state “to serve not only the war effort but also students whose demand for professional, technical, and business education was increasing” (Doltzer, 2003). The purpose of the Land Grant Act was to expand the number of qualified engineers and agricultural, military, and business specialists, and also to promote access to higher education for a greater variety of citizens. This act provided access to a broader range of students than ever before (Casazza, 1999). It clearly defined that the institutions established by the Land Grant Act should serve “the industrial classes” of America (Boylan and White, 1994, p. 3).

The fact that there were more opportunities for more students to access higher education presented the problem of students who were admitted with different levels of preparation Arendale (2002); what this reflected was America’s failure to develop a system of public schools that could prepare students beyond the primary grades (Maxwell, 1985).

The competition for students who could pay for their education became fierce because the institutions needed the money to pay for operational costs and faculty salaries. By 1889, 84 percent of the land grant institutions offered some form of remedial education (Arendale, 2002).

The Second Morrill Act expanded the first act to foment the establishment of land grant colleges for Black Americans. Although several institutions had already been established to educate freed slaves through the American Missionary Society, one problem they faced was that of training a generation of people who throughout the history of American education had been denied access to any form of education (Boylan & White 1994). The institutions of higher education established for the Black Americans provided “a massive, remedial and developmental education effort” (p. 7). Change in education would come slowly for the Black Americans. Arendale (2002) pointed out that in the 1850’s only 2% of the people of color were enrolled in elementary and secondary schools and by the 1880’s the number rose to 35 %. The increment contrasted greatly to 60 % unchanged enrollment of the white population during the same period.

Once the under-prepared students were accepted in the institution of higher education, they had to take college preparatory or remedial education in order to move to the higher level courses. By the 1890’s “more than half of the students enrolled at many colleges and universities were in preparatory departments” (Boylan & Saxon, 1998, p. 6). In 1865 the University of Wisconsin registered 331 students, 80 % of whom entered the preparatory program and the remaining 12 % enrolled in regular classes (Clowes, 1992). By 1889 (twenty four years later) 80 % of all higher education institutions had college preparatory programs. By the early 1900’s institutions of higher education were competing for students even if the admission standards were not met. “Over half of the students that matriculated at Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Columbia in 1907 failed to meet entrance requirements” (Maxwell, 1981).

The GI Bill of 1944. The GI Bill of 1944, signed by President Roosevelt, allowed millions of underprepared students to enter the institutions of higher education. It provided the veterans of World War II with unemployment benefits, education assistance, and low interest loans for homes, farms, and small businesses.

Although the GI bill provided opportunities for many veterans to pursue higher education, when millions of soldiers returned from the war, the truth was the institutions were not prepared to work with them at various levels, but nevertheless accepted them. The amount of monies available to the institutions of higher education was irresistible; arrangements or relaxed-admissions standards were set up in order to accept the influx of millions of veterans into the system of higher education. The total cost of the World War II education program was \$14.5 billion as a result of the passing of the GI Bill of Rights.

During the past five decades, the law has made possible the investment of billions of dollars in education and training for millions of veterans, and the nation has in return earned many times its investment in increased taxes and a dramatically changed society (*The GI Bill: From Roosevelt to Montgomery*, n.d.). For example, after WWII the Pennsylvania State University's veteran enrollment was 70 % "of the student body" (Penn State's Veteran's Organization). A second example comes from the University of Michigan which had fewer than 10,000 students prior to the war and over 30,000 in 1948. The GI Bill of Rights program ended on July 25, 1956. "In the peak year of 1947, veterans accounted for 49 percent of college enrollment. Out of a veteran population of 15,440,000, some 7.8 million were trained" including 2,230,000 in college and 3,480,000 in other schools (*History of GI Bill*, n.d.).

Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA). This act, signed by President Johnson, intended "to strengthen the educational resources of our colleges and universities and to provide financial

assistance for students in postsecondary and higher education” (“Higher Education Act,” 1965). It was a significant event in the history of institutions of higher education since this act provided access and financial support to students who had previously been excluded due to institutional discrimination because they were students of color, poor students, first generation college attendees, students whose first language was not English, and/or students with a disability. According to Cross (1976), a substantial amount of financial aid was made available to all those previously underrepresented in higher education.

As federal and state policies moved steadily and effectively toward lowering the financial barriers to a college education, financial aid to students increased 6000 percent from 1954 to 1974. The explosive growth of community colleges and open-admissions practices virtually eliminated poor educational preparation as a barrier to college access....During the 1960s college enrollments increased 124 percent. (p. 8)

As financial hurdles were removed, women, adult learners, and minorities gained access to a higher education (Higbee & Dwinell, 1998). This new type of student was generally called “nontraditional student” (Cross, 1976). Because President Johnson’s economic initiative, also known as “War on Poverty,” federally funded thirty educational programs for poor populations, institutions of higher education admitted more nontraditional students, underrepresented students and underprepared students. According to Bullock, Madden & Mallery (1990), “the percentage of 18-24 year olds attending colleges increased three fold in the 1950’s and 60’s: the number of four year colleges increased 33%; and over 60% of American 18-24 year olds continued their education after high school graduation” (p. 15). The outreach and impact of HEA would show itself further in time. With the passage of HEA institutions “admitted increasing numbers of the educationally disadvantaged, minorities, and women in need of academic support services” (Van,

1992, p. 24). Maxwell (1981) stated that by 1970, one seventh of the one half million students enrolled in colleges in US, came from poverty backgrounds (p. 11).

The period between the late 40's and early 70's "was a turbulent phase during which many historically underrepresented students were brought into postsecondary education (Arendale, 2002). This period witnessed mass experimentation with old and new developmental education activities to meet the needs of a very heterogeneous student body" (p. 92). While many non-traditional students entered institutions of higher education, the exodus was massive—many students did not persist—the institutions were not adept to work with students who had limited academic preparation (Arendale, 2002). In an effort of "keeping its policy of affirmative action and educational opportunity, the federal government provided substantial sums for financial aid, special services, and minority recruitment" (Boylan, 1988, p. 2). In exchange for the funding, the institutions of higher education would provide access and training to those "who had previously been underrepresented in higher education" (p. 3). These funding incentives largely increased the number of underprepared nontraditional college applicants and in order to deal with the influx, institutions were going back to remedial practices of the 19th and early 20th century which proved to be ineffective for this new population of "non-traditional" students.

As history shows, remedial education is not a recent trend—it has been part of higher education since its very beginnings and it will continue be an intransigent one that merits research.

Basic Writers: Their Presence Matters

In order for universities to fill their classrooms, they have been accepting students regardless of preparation. In a report to the Institute of Higher Education, Phipps (1998) pointed out that while 22% of the surveyed institutions said they did not offer any type of remedial education course, he could cite an example of an institution failing to acknowledge the presence of students in need of remediation; acknowledging them might harm the institution's reputation, in turn possibly affecting the enrollment of the very best students, i.e., those with the highest test scores, highest grade point average and strongest recommendations (Astin, 1998). A private four-year college "admits students that are clearly underprepared if they do not need financial aid so that enrollment goals can be met" (Phipps, 1998, p. 5). Underprepared students are equated to revenue: as long as they have the money they are admitted to the institution; that is, "students who need some remediation to prepare them for college are welcomed by those who recognize that postsecondary institutions need such students in order to survive financially" (Boylan & Saxon, 1998, p. 5).

That said, questions arise about how institutions of higher education respond to the continued presence of underprepared students. While some professional organizations and researchers have taken a proactive role in disseminating information about the history of remedial education (NADE, Arendale, 2002; Farmer & Barham, 2001; Maxwell, 1994; Boylan, 1987, 1988), it does not seem to reach all of the audiences that could benefit from understanding the history of the student in need of remediation at the college level. For example, a national survey done by Breneman and Haarlow (1998) on the costs of remedial education showed a lack of uniformity in the information provided by the responding institutions at various levels, mainly—but not limited to—definitions, documentation, statistics, and budget disbursement

related directly to monies received for remediation. Despite the fact that the presence of the underprepared students in remedial courses dates back to the 17th century, such inconsistencies suggest that institutions have not yet given serious attention to this population.

The trend that is evident throughout history is that this population is large enough and will remain constant enough to merit focused research attention. It is in the universities' financial interest to attend to underprepared students; even more importantly, educators are morally obligated to do our best for the students we admit without placing an unnecessary burden on them for being in a remedial course. Generally, institutions implicitly signal that somehow these students are in control of their situation, that any lack of skill is their personal and private problem. However, I believe the problem lies less with the student and more with the tradition of classifying, and forcing people into artificial categories, and then marginalizing and somehow punishing those who do not conform to some standards. As Nealon & Giroux (2003) argue "the 'subject,' unlike the self, is always understood in reference to preexisting social conditions and categories" (p. 37). They explain that there are certain "social attributes" along with their meanings in certain social situations that we just can't choose. The roles we play are predetermined and we are subject to them long before we were even around to fit the category (for example: gender, race, class, and ethnicity). In this case, the student enters the university without understanding the university culture or, for that matter, the concept of remediation. Unfortunately, the way students are perceived by other people might determine their identity as learners, and the attributes or signifiers that are connected to that perception might lead students to accept and perform the role already chosen for them—possibly to their detriment.

The Importance of Paradigm and Discourse

Students in basic skills courses are generally conceptualized in one of two ways: either as having deficiencies that need to be fixed or as having potential that needs to be nurtured. These two views, commonly known as remedial and developmental, are still discussed intensely in a debate now spanning two decades (Chapter 2 provides an in-depth discussion). This ongoing controversy is what Gee (2005) calls a Conversation (with a capital C). On the surface level, it may seem that the discussion is simply about terminology; however, that is not the case. The Conversation is about more than words—it is about the oppositional underlying assumptions the words indicate regarding students.

We seem entrapped by this language, this view of students and learning. We still talk of writers as suffering from specifiable, locatable defects, deficits, and handicaps that can be localized, circumscribed, and remedied. Such talk carries with it the etymological wisps and traces of disease and serves to exclude from the academic community those who are so labeled. They sit in scholastic quarantine until their disease can be diagnosed and remedied. (Rose, 1989, p. 210)

Not just nomenclature, but ideologies come into play. The interplay of discourse and ideology can be very intricate and to illustrate, Gee (2005) uses the following metaphor, similar to that of the chick and egg, to shed light on its complexity.

Language has a magical property: when we speak or write, we design what we have to say to fit the situation in which we are communicating. But, at the same time, how we speak or write creates that very situation. It seems, then, that we fit our language to a situation that our language, in turn, helps to create in the first place. (p. 10)

In classrooms, this means that teachers' word choice both influences and is influenced by each specific classroom situation. Word choice does not happen in a vacuum; it is influenced by Discourse models (with a capital D), that is, "theories (storylines, images, explanatory frameworks) that people hold, often unconsciously, and use to make sense of the world and their experiences in it" (Gee, 2005, p. 61). Discourse models are not neutral; they are greatly implicated in politics:

By "politics" I mean anything and any place (talk, texts, media, action, interaction, institutions) where "social goods" are at stake, things such as power, status, or value knowledge, positions, or possessions. Since Discourse models embed assumptions about what is "appropriate," "typical," and/or "normal," they are, through and through, political. (p. 84)

These remedial/developmental Discourse models reflect opposing views of students and of their status. On the one hand, the view of the students with deficiencies finds them lacking something when compared to a standard (age, grade, ability, test, and so on): they are broken, abnormal, and the instructor must "fix" them—must make them more like others who are "normal." On the other hand, the view of students whose potential is still unfolding assumes that students are inherently capable, and the instructor needs only to create good growth conditions through "friendly intervention." In each of these views, the implied roles of both teacher and students are very different, with significant implications for the classroom.

Teacher perceptions affect what teachers expect of students. Likewise, the way students see themselves or understand their classroom situation affects their performance. "Once teachers form expectations, they may convey them to students through socioemotional climate, verbal input, verbal output, and feedback (Rosenthal, 1974)" (as quoted in Schunk, 2004, p. 311). The

messages the teacher thus sends are influential, because research has demonstrated “that students tend to internalize the beliefs teachers have about their ability” (Lumsden, 1997, *Do Teachers’ Expectations Affect Student Performance*, ¶2). As Raffini (1993) notes, positive teacher beliefs can have a positive effect on students: “When teachers believe in students, students believe in themselves. When those you respect think you can, you think you can” (as quoted in Lumsden, 1997, *Do Teachers’ Expectations Affect Student Performance*, ¶2).

At the same time, negative teacher beliefs can create a self-fulfilling prophecy of failure—and can harm students’ general assessment of self-worth:

Self-depreciation is another characteristic of the oppressed, which derives from their internalization of the opinion the oppressors hold of them. So often do they hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything—that they are sick, lazy, and unproductive—that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness. (Freire, 1970, p. 49)

As many as a quarter of first-year students enter basic writing skills courses with an official sign that they are lacking—basic writing skills courses often do not count for credit toward degree. Other factors also reinforce the Discourse of deficiency. For example, often the courses are taught by the least senior and least credentialed faculty, another signal that students are substandard and somehow deserve the “lesser” of whatever the university has to offer. Too often, such institutional signals result in teachers and students acting out roles embedded in a discourse which they have never consciously examined.

The ‘problem’ is that teachers often address their students in ways that try to fix who they are supposed to be, as when teachers assume that students begin at a place of ignorance, that they want to be enlightened, that they need to have certain knowledge, or that they

will benefit from certain experiences...In fact, when teachers address a fixed position and students come to assume that position, both teachers and students are merely repeating a social relationship stuck in repetition. (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 78) (as quoted in Theilheimer and Cahill, 2004, p. 7)

To help both teachers and students in basic skills classrooms move out of relationships “stuck in repetition,” teachers who model classroom Discourse most obviously and influentially need to become more aware of the effect of their choices and more skilled at voicing expectations likely to advance, not delay, their students’ achievement.

It is this need that prompts this study, which is an effort to analyze how the discourse of the most common classroom document—the syllabus—may reflect an instructor’s unspoken perceptions of basic writing students. Since students often perform the roles they are cast in, such analysis has the potential to demonstrate the implications of various discourse strategies and to help instructors choose those that promote rather than impede their goals. Chapter 2 offers a review of the related theoretical and research terrain that grounds this work.

Chapter 2: Discourse and the Basic Writer

Terminology and Ideology in Remedial/Developmental Education

Pardon me if I bristle every time I hear someone refer to what I do as remedial. My students are not sick, and they do not need to be cured. They are evolving and the possibilities are limitless. Higbee

As I learned from firsthand experience, an instructor of remedial courses who does a literature search to help understand what remediation is will soon run into a problem. Not only does the meaning of remedial education shift in different contexts, but also the term *remediation* is used interchangeably with the term *developmental education*. That is, people use different terms and they may or may not mean the same thing (Kozeracki, 2005). The use of *remedial* or *developmental* is a continued controversy and not a recent issue; thirty five years ago, Ross (1970) wrote a brief article on the differences between the two terms, emphasizing what he believed were important distinctions.

Compounding the problem is that in an attempt to clarify the confusion, some researchers and others have added more terms. For example, the authors of a report on the costs and consequences of remediation wrote: “we have intentionally chosen to refer to the compensatory education described in this report as remedial rather than developmental, even though ‘developmental education’ is the term more often used by those in the field” (Breneman & Haarlow, 1998, p. 6 online version)—inadvertently adding the new term *compensatory education* to the lexicon in their efforts to clarify. Still other researchers use terms like: “college prep,” “basic [reading/writing/math/English],” “study course,” and the list continues to grow.

This confusion in the terminology is, perhaps, not surprising since it reflects an important contemporary educational problem: “There is little consensus and understanding about what remedial education is, whom it serves, who should provide it, and how much it costs.

Consequently, this lack of fundamental information and imprecision of language often renders public policy discussions ill informed at best” (Merisotis & Phipps, 2000, p. 68).

The problem of shifting denotation is exacerbated by the fact that different terms have subtle differences in connotation that influence the substance of policy debates. In choosing one of the ill-defined terms in common use, speakers and writers unavoidably send a subtle message about the nature of the problem at hand.

Language is always metaphorical and words carry more baggage than appears at first glance....For instance, the word remedial is used by different individuals in different ways and to mean different things; and the several meanings, as well as the historical development of these, deserve some exploration. Each of the meanings involves an entire metaphor and attendant consequences. (Johnston & Allington, 1991, p. 984)

As Johnston & Allington note, it is difficult to make any real progress in thinking about policy issues without first clarifying common terms in the discourse. They provided the first step to such clarification by exploring the Latin roots of the word *remediation* and its possible definitions and metaphors. In working through the literature, I found that much work on this topic similarly focuses on Latin origins. However, I also identified a second trend among researchers, which is comparing and contrasting the terms *remedial* and *developmental* to clarify differences in their meanings.

In this chapter, I will look into both trends—looking at etymological roots and at differences in the two most common terms—starting from the typical base provided by Johnston & Allington (1991). While their work is based in the discipline of reading, it provides excellent insight into the discussion around remediation generally. As I move forward in this discussion, I will explore how the differences in meaning assigned to various terms might reveal the

underlying theoretical foundations of educators and their approach to practice. Then, I will hypothesize about how paradigmatic differences reflected in the lexicon might affect students in remedial classrooms. Such understandings are important for all those involved with remedial/developmental students because implications attached to the labels often affect students—and frequently negatively.

First Trend: Latin Roots

The dominant paradigm: the medical model. Johnston & Allington (1991) traced several possible meanings stemming from the Latin roots of *remediation*, separating its parts: the prefix and the root. As the researchers note, the Latin prefix *re* means “again.” The second part of the word, i.e., the root, *mediation*, may come from *mederi*, meaning “to heal,” indicating that one literal interpretation is “to heal again” (p. 984). This is the meaning that can be traced to “medicine” or “remedy.” Or, as they point out, it can be traced to the Latin *mediare*, suggesting some kind of mediation or intervention (p. 984). Figure 1 illustrates the two most common metaphors that derive from Latin roots.

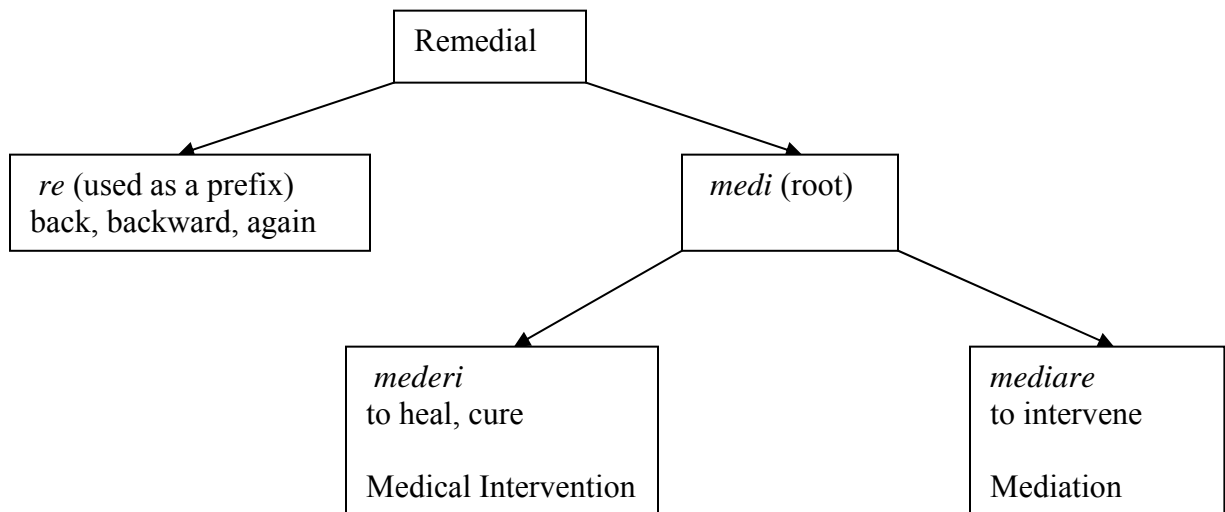


Figure 1. Two metaphors that derive from the Latin roots of remedial.

What is important to notice here is that either term can be interpreted to mean that there is a problem or a deficiency of some sort that needs to be fixed (remedied). Most commonly, this paradigm is characterized by the metaphor of medical intervention:

Of primary concern here is the term remedial with its connotations of sickness...The metaphors that have dominated our attempts to diagnose difficulties in acquiring reading proficiency were borrowed from medicine and shaped by sociology and psychology. (Johnston & Allington, 1991, p. 985)

While the authors were specifically discussing remediation in reading, their observations and the medical paradigm apply generally across disciplines.

When remediation is linked to *heal or cure*, a medical model results in which “specific weaknesses are diagnosed, appropriate treatments are prescribed, and the patient is evaluated to determine the effect of the treatment. If the treatment is inadequate, then the prescription is revised and the process is repeated” (Clowes, 1982, p. 4). In this metaphor of the medical model of remediation, the treatment is repeated until some result is obtained and if it still doesn’t work, the dosage is intensified at every stage. Johnston & Allington trace this usage as far back as reports by Morgan (1896) and Hinshelwood (1917) where they indicated their concern about “word blindness” in their patients in order to explain why the children could not read in spite of being in school. This usage, then, is a deeply ingrained historical one.

The focus in this paradigm is students’ deficiencies or weaknesses. It implies a “fixing” or “correction” of a deficit. For this reason it is associated with the medical model where a diagnosis is made, a prescription is given, and a subsequent evaluation is conducted to see if the “patient,” or the student, has been brought up to speed. If the evaluation shows

that the student needs a little more “fixing,” then perhaps another course is prescribed or, more often than not, the student is asked to refill the prescription and retake the same course. (Casazza, 1999, p. 6)

The role of the teacher is similarly prescribed in this model. As de Castell & Luke (1986) described the appearance of the paradigm in literacy, they indicated that “as a ‘professional’ the technocratic teacher is encouraged to see the educational process in medical and managerial metaphors.... Students are diagnosed, prescribed for, treated, and checked before proceeding to the next level of instruction” (p. 102).

Rose (1989) stated “the designation *remedial* has powerful implications in education—to be remedial is to be substandard, inadequate—and, because of the origins of the term, the inadequacy is metaphorically connected to disease and mental defectiveness. The etymology of the word *remedial* places its origins in law and medicine, and by the late nineteenth century the term generally fell into the medical domain.” Smith (1965) pointed out that the first person to introduce the term *remedial reading* was Uhl (1916). By 1922, less than a decade later, the term was popularized thanks to W. S. Gray’s work “Remedial Cases in Reading: Their diagnosis and Treatment” (p. 985); Johnston & Allington further added that it is also during this period that the word usage shifts to “describe not simply a state but a trait” (p. 985). What this means is that the usage of remedial shifts from remedial cases to describe remedial courses, remedial reading and finally remedial students.

Other words associated with remediation, particularly in remedial reading that advances the concept of the medical model, are *diagnosis* and *clinic*. Johnston & Allington (1991) indicated “the adjectival form, *clinical*, has come through positivistic medical science to mean ‘impersonal, sterile, and distant’ (p. 986). They also pointed out that Smith (1965) noted that

Grace Fernald established the first “clinic for remedial instruction” in 1921 at the University of California at Los Angeles, which later evolved into the Clinic School, and then became part of the University’s Department of Psychology.

The appeal of medical –remedial language had much to do with its associations with scientific objectivity and accuracy—powerful currency in the efficiency-minded 1920’s and 1930’s (Rose, 1989, p. 208). Creating an analogy to medicine would somehow validate the field of education. Lang (1930) as quoted by Rose presented a clear example of the explanation of the medical model:

Teaching bears a resemblance to the practice of medicine. Like a successful physician, the good teacher must be something of a diagnostician. The physician by means of a general examination singles out the individual whose physical defects require a more thorough testing. He critically scrutinizes the special cases until he recognizes the specific troubles. After a careful diagnosis he is able to prescribe intelligently the best remedial or corrective measures. (p. 210)

Remediation, according to the medical model suggests that there is something wrong; there is some type of ailment that needs to be cured in order for the person to function—it points to a deficit. The fact that the individual is “singled out” puts him or her in the spotlight and then these “special cases” are scrutinized to determine what is wrong or what the “specific trouble” is. The main point here is focusing on the defect, on the deficiencies thus advancing the deficit theory; the individual as a person is relegated to the shadow of the deficit. However, this view of remediation which advances the deficit theory contrasts greatly when compared to the other metaphor derived from the Latin roots of remediation—that of mediation.

An alternative view: friendly intervention. Although Johnston & Allington (1991) chose not to focus on another possible interpretation of the root *mediate*, they opened the door to another reading that becomes important in distinguishing between *remedial* and *developmental*. As they point out, Webster's Unabridged (2nd ed.) notes that *mediation* is from *mediare*, which it goes on to define as "intercession or friendly intervention, usually by consent or invitation" (p. 984). The implied roles of teacher and student are very different here. Unlike the ailing patient who must seek a cure for an illness from a doctor with specialized knowledge, the student here is on friendly terms with an ally who can be called on to help with alleviating a difficulty. In a similar vein, the Oxford Latin dictionary (1982) extends the meaning to "assuage, comfort, amend" (p. 1087c). Although it is certainly a less dominant reading, this more positive denotation, mentioned but not developed by Johnston & Allington, becomes an important component in definitions of developmental education, explored below.

Second Trend: Remedial vs. Developmental

In 1998, Breneman & Haarlow asked: "What's in a word? It depends on whom you ask. One issue we continually encountered was whether we were studying 'remedial' or 'developmental' education. In fact, we were not entirely convinced that they were not one and the same" (p. 3). Given the same kind of semantic confusion that arises in everyday situations, it seemed sensible to resort to an everyday resource: the dictionary.

Dictionary definitions. To explore the differences between the terms *remediation* and *developmental*, I consulted two dictionaries: American Heritage Dictionary (2006) and The New Oxford American Dictionary (2005). The definitions from both dictionaries for *remediation* are in Table 1 and for *developmental* in Table 2.

Table 1

Definitions of Remedial and Remediation from Two Dictionaries

Terms	The American Heritage Dictionary	The New Oxford American Dictionary
Remedial	<p><i>adj.</i> 1. Supplying a remedy.</p> <p>2. Intended to correct or improve deficient skills in a specific subject: <i>remedial reading</i>. (p. 1475b)</p>	<p><i>adj.</i> giving or intended as a remedy or cure:</p> <p><i>remedial surgery</i>. Provided or intended for students who are experiencing learning difficulties: <i>remedial education</i>.</p> <p>Mid 17th cent.: from late Latin <i>remedialis</i>, from Latin <i>remedium</i> ‘cure.’ (p. 1432a)</p>
Remediation	<p><i>n.</i> the act or process of correcting a fault or deficiency: <i>remediation of a learning disability</i>. (p. 1475b)</p>	<p><i>n.</i> the action of remedying something, in particular of reversing or stopping environmental damage. the giving of remedial teaching or therapy. early 19th cent.: from Latin <i>remediation</i> (n-), from <i>remediare</i> ‘heal, cure.’ (p. 1432a)</p>

Table 2

Definitions of Develop and Developmental from Two Dictionaries

Terms	The American Heritage Dictionary	The New Oxford American Dictionary
Develop	<p>v. 1. To bring from latency to or toward fulfillment: <i>an instructor who develops the capabilities of each student.</i></p> <p>2a. To expand or enlarge: <i>developed a national corporation into a worldwide business.</i> b. To aid in the growth of; strengthen: <i>develop muscles.</i> c. To improve the quality of; refine: <i>develops his recipes to perfection; an extra year of study to develop virtuosic technique.</i></p> <p>3a. To cause to become more complex or intricate; add detail and fullness to; elaborate: <i>began with a good premise but developed it without imagination....</i> (p. 496a)</p>	<p>v. grow or cause to grow and become more mature, advanced, or elaborate....</p> <p>■ [<i>intrans.</i>] [often as <i>adj.</i>] (developing) (of a poor agricultural country) become more economically and socially advanced: <i>the developing world.</i> ■ [<i>trans.</i>] convert (land) to a new purpose by constructing buildings or making other use of its resources. ■ construct or convert (a building) so as to improve existing resources.</p> <p>■ [<i>trans.</i>] elaborate (a musical existing theme) by modification of the melody, harmony, or rhythm.</p> <p>■ [<i>trans.</i>] Chess bring (a piece) into play from its initial position on a player's back rank. (p. 463b-464a)</p>
Development	<p><i>n.</i> 1. The act of developing.</p> <p>2. The state of being developed.</p> <p>3. A significant event, occurrence, or change.</p> <p>4. A group of dwellings built by the same contractor.</p> <p>5. Determination of best techniques for applying a new device or process to production of goods or services. (p. 496b)</p>	<p><i>n.</i> 1. the process of developing or being developed: <i>she traces the development of the novel the development of less invasive treatment.</i> ■ a specified state of growth or advancement: <i>the wings attain their full development several hours after birth.</i> ■ an event constituting a new stage in a changing situation: <i>I don't think there have been any new developments since yesterday....</i> (p. 464a)</p>

It is important to point out that the definitions of the words related to remediation more often are associated directly with education, whereas words related to development are not. In the definitions of remediation, the American Heritage Dictionary as well as the New Oxford American Dictionary emphasize deficits associated to education such as “deficient skills in a specific subject,” “remedial reading,” “learning disability,” “learning difficulties,” “remedial education,” and “remedial teaching.” Here again the medical model is evident, with its suggestion of students in need of being cured of some academic illness.

In contrast, and not surprisingly since the medical model is the dominant paradigm, it wasn't until the third edition (1992) of the American Heritage Dictionary that a dictionary linked any of the definitions of develop or developmental to education—perhaps a further indication of the strength of the medical paradigm. The word *develop* is defined as: “v. 1. To bring from latency to or toward fulfillment: *an instructor who develops the capabilities of each student*” (p. 511a). Before the third edition, The American Heritage Dictionary (1976) listed words like “potentiality,” “growth,” “strengthen,” “unfold gradually,” and “expand;” however none, were connected to education. The New Oxford American Dictionary (2005) lists words like “grow,” “to become more mature,” “advanced,” and “elaborate.” Although not all dictionaries link education and the concept of development, many educators talk naturally in terms of this paradigm. For example, teachers may note the amount of “growth” in a child, or of a child’s potential, or of “unfolding” (De Castell & Luke, 1986, p. 89). Moreover, this metaphor links to the concept of “friendly intervention,” in which there is the suggestion of positive interaction between the mediator/teacher and the student. The situation presents not an illness to be cured, but a natural state of growth that can be facilitated through good care/nurturing.

“Clarifications” from the research community. There is significant evidence that in the literature, the terms *remedial* and *developmental* are used interchangeably, though even simple dictionaries uncover two different paradigms implicit in the denotation of each term. Several researchers, often supportive of *developmental education*, have protested the conflation and have attempted to make clear distinctions.

Higbee (1996), for example, has asked “How do we want to define ourselves? Is our mission to promote the growth of students to their highest potential, or to correct a previous wrong?” (p. 1) Her questions point to the two paradigms mentioned above and detailed in Tables 1 and 2. In elaborating a definition of *developmental education*, Clowes (1982) indicated that its genesis is in the work of human development theorists who articulated a concept of development meaning “to evolve the possibilities of” or “to promote the growth of” (Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary 1964)” (p. 5).

Although their work is dated two decades apart, Ross (1970) and Rubin (1991) also provided detailed definitions of remediation and developmental. Ross, an instructor and coordinator of a mathematics laboratory at a community college, emphasized that both remedial and developmental refer to a type of instruction and insisted that there is no such thing as a remedial or developmental *student*; in doing so, he implicitly rejects the medical paradigm (Appendix A). In contrast, Rubin was part of a task force that developed a Glossary of terms for *developmental education*. Just as Ross revealed that the mediation paradigm best accounted for his orientation to remedial education, Rubin’s distinctions both fall into the medical model or deficit paradigm (students lack something). In Rubin’s model (Appendix B), a remedial student is again one who has failed to learn something, who is lacking something that should already be present. In contrast, *developmental* instruction helps students who are already at an expected

level grow into the next expected/scheduled level of expertise; it contrasts with both remedial and accelerated education (1991, p. 4-5).

By definition, remediation involves a deficit and developmental instruction doesn't. One of the most respected researchers in the field, Cross (1976), articulated a distinction in terminology she felt essential.

A more useful distinction is to be found in the *purpose* or goal of the program. If the purpose of the program is to overcome *academic deficiencies*, I would term the program remedial, in the standard dictionary sense in which remediation is concerned with correcting weaknesses. If, however, the purpose of the program is to develop the diverse talents of students, whether academic or not, I would term the program developmental.

(p. 31)

In order to establish a difference Cross emphasized that remedial related to “corrections” related to courses, whereas, developmental related more to the person. Interestingly, though Cross focused on programs, her definition of *remedial* rests on an image of the student as deficient.

Still other researchers have proposed other distinctions. Roueche & Hurlburt (1968) indicated that “‘remedial’ and ‘developmental’ are often used interchangeably, despite a subtle difference in the actual meaning of the terms. ‘Remedial’ implies the improvement of student skills in order that he might enter a program for which he is currently ineligible. ‘Developmental’ implies the improvement of skills or attitudes without reference to his eligibility for another program” (p. 454). In a further effort to clarify, as noted above, Roueche & Wheeler (1973) added compensatory to the mix of terms—as a synonym for *developmental*:

Remedial implies the remediation of student deficiencies in order that the student may enter a program for which he was previously ineligible. Typically, such work consists of

noncredit courses in English, mathematics, or study skills taken as prerequisites to credit courses. “Developmental” or “compensatory,” on the other hand, refers to the development of skills or attitudes and may not have anything to do with making a student eligible for another program. Under these latter approaches, curricular materials are frequently modified to begin credit work where the student is, and the academic calendar is modified so that the student can move at his own pace in acquiring mastery of a course. (p. 223)

Again, the link of remedial to a negative paradigm is evident, although development is apparently free of any negative stigma. Such examples illustrate the rampant confusion of voices and proposed definitions and distinctions forthcoming from the research community. Many others exist (Arendale, 2002; Miller, 1996; Clowes, 1982; Casazza, 1999; and Lundell & Collins, 1999).

It would appear that few are willing to let a related professional organization speak for the field. Rejecting entirely the medical concept, the organization has named itself the National Association of Developmental Education (NADE) and offered a clear definition of its work:

Developmental education is a field of practice and research within higher education with a theoretical foundation in developmental psychology and learning theory. It promotes the cognitive and affective growth of all postsecondary learners, at all levels of the learning continuum. Developmental education is sensitive and responsive to individual differences and special needs among learners. (Definition of Developmental Education, 2007)

Here, growth is accepted as the goal of all education, without any attempt to position students *ahead* or *behind*, without any indication that different levels of academic expertise make some

students deficient in comparison to others. Though NADE has existed for over 25 years, it apparently has not been able to significantly counter the association of the remedial/medical paradigm with remediation.

Implications for the classroom. As I mentioned earlier, although this discussion may seem to be simply about terminology that is not the case—the real issue here is to question the conflicting underlying assumptions the words signify regarding our students. Not only discourse, but ideologies influence the choices we make about what and how to teach our students. A student with deficiencies presents an instructor with the job of “fixing” him or her, of making him or her more like the others who are “normal.” A student whose potential is still unfolding, on the other hand, presents an instructor with an opportunity to nurture that potential through “friendly intervention.” The implied roles of both teacher and students are very different, no matter which word a speaker chooses to use.

The epigraph at the beginning of this chapter illustrates it succinctly: “Pardon me if I bristle every time I hear someone refer to what I do as remedial. My students are not sick, and they do not need to be cured. They are evolving, and the possibilities are limitless” (Higbee, 1996, p. 4). If educators can articulate their theoretical framework as clearly as Higbee’s response above, then we move beyond words. The way that educators speak to and of their students unveils their ideologies particularly when dealing with students who are placed at a disadvantage.

Casazza (1999) argued that getting into a battle of words won’t help; however, “words CAN be significant when they represent an approach or basic philosophy. . . . It is a mistake to look at learners who need help through a narrow lens; we are all developmental learners depending on the context in which we find ourselves” (p. 6). Here is an excellent point:

everyone at one time or another is a developmental learner: the new golfer, the new poker player, the new Spanish speaker, the new mother. This reality check allows us to place ourselves in the situation of our students. They are in our classroom because they do not know, and our role as educators is to provide them with learning opportunities and not to classify them as remedial, compensatory, or developmental students.

Understanding the differences between the terms and using them deliberately and appropriately is important, but less important than being equally thoughtful about instructional method. Changing the words but leaving the instruction the same is no advance. Ross (1970) indicated “sometimes, we try to change the adjective without accepting the situation, defining it, and determining what we want to do to effect a meaningful change. By changing the words or phrases we never effect any change in the situation itself” (p. 27).

An instructor in the remedial classroom using common remedial methodology—the same kind of skill-and-drill instruction that fails many native speakers for twelve years of schooling—may accept that that his/her students have deficiencies that are difficult to cure when it is the “treatment” that is faulty. Casazza (1999) was right when she asked “What is wrong with this picture? What is wrong with a model of education that zeroes in on one aspect of an individual and assumes that represents the whole? What might be the possible effects for a student who was labeled, ‘remedial’?” (p. 6).

Bray (2001) argued that it is more important to continue the dialogue among the different college programs than continue the debate of what to call the different college activities which assist students. Determining whether they are developmental or remedial is not the real nature of the problem. Bray pointed out that underpreparation of college students is a universal phenomenon and that is the real issue to understand. Another point that she emphasizes is that

students have diverse backgrounds but they have one common need and that is the “support to enter and succeed in college” (p. 317).

This argument is also advanced by Payne & Lyman (1996), who indicated that “indeed, most of the academic, economic, and social issues that have helped define developmental education have evolved, not from within developmental education programs, but from society’s expectations of education” (p. 4). They pointed out that it is more important to understand what lurks behind the label and how the field conceptualizes its efforts rather than to focus on what some may think is an ongoing identity crisis.

The implied ideologies need to be carefully considered by educators, who may unwittingly perpetuate the status quo by not taking care to think through the discourse they adopt and to consider whether the pedagogy they embrace reflects an image of the student as being deficient or as holding precious potential. And to further my argument, I chose to focus on the discourse used in a basic writing skills course syllabus or as many refer to it, the remedial course.

Discourse in Syllabi

The Importance of Syllabi

Teachers use the written language to communicate to their students their expectations: generally this is done through the course syllabus on the first day of class. From that very first day, students are gauging the teacher, the course, and their potential for success. Much of what they decide about the course, the professor, and the probable nature of their experience in the course is based on the syllabus which outlines teacher expectations, goals, policies, and student tasks. Through the syllabus students gather information about the course content, classroom rules, and the instructor’s personality (Danielson, 1995). Students establish the base for the

“unwritten rules and expectations” from the syllabus and the way it is presented (Eberly, et al, 2001, p. 59). That is, students will read not only the words of the syllabus carefully, but also its tone and other elements of the “deep structure” that signal how the teacher perceives the instructional situation. “What we believe of ourselves and others and how we read the world is reflected through our word choice” (Gee, 2005, p. 5). As Ishiyama & Hartlaub (2002) note, “The *wording* of the syllabus itself may also affect student perception. In particular, the language used by faculty members in describing course requirements, attendance policy and other aspects of the course may influence student perceptions of the faculty member” (p. 567).

For the student in basic writing courses, signals about how likely they are to be successful are especially important. Instructor choices can make a significant difference in student perceptions. Green & Therrien, (1993) concur with Millis (1990): “including details about complicated assignments and harshly worded warnings and threats are frightening, not encouraging. While some anxiety is necessary for learning to occur, too much serves only to block the process” (Policies, ¶4). Like others, Slattery and Carlson (2005) warn that “students who read less friendly syllabi may believe that their professor does not expect them to be successful, which can create a self-fulfilling prophecy” (p. 160).

In using language, instructors cannot help but send students signals about how they define the role of “instructor” and “student” and how they understand the instructional context in general. Any linguistic message carries much more than denotation: “Speakers and writers use the resources of grammar to *design* their sentences and texts in ways that communicate their perspective on reality, carry out various social activities...and allow them to enact different social identities. We are all designers—artists in a sense—in this respect. Our medium is language” (Gee, 2005, p. 5). How the artist/instructor uses this medium of the syllabus to

influence student perceptions and likelihood of success is—or should be—a concern of any educator who wants to ensure basic skills classes help advance, rather than defeat, the students in them.

Research on Syllabi

Most work on syllabi to date has been on how to construct a syllabus, especially on what it should include (Altman, 1989, 1992; Diamond, 1989, 1998; Grunert, 1997; Hockensmith, 1988; Leeds, 1992; Matejka and Kurke, 1994; McKeachie, 1986; Parkes and Harris, 2002; Smith and Razzouk, 1993; Woolcock, 1997). Approaches vary from step-by-step guides, to checklists, to workshops which include exercises and additional references, to websites hosted by universities providing a wealth of information on syllabus construction. Although there are several articles, books and on-line resources, there are few empirical studies of syllabi (Becker and Calhoun, 1999; Eberly, 2001; Parkes, Fix and Harris, 2003; Garavalia, Hummel, Wiley, and Huitt, 1999; Ishiyama and Hartlaub, 2002).

Such research typically compares syllabi within an institution or across several institutions (universities and community colleges), academic fields or levels (undergraduate and graduate) to determine what information was either included or excluded. For example, Eberly et al. (2001) carried out a descriptive study which focused on which components were included in the syllabi. In contrast, Parkes, Fix, and Harris (2003) carried out a related study which focused on the components or elements that were left out. Garavalia et al. (1999) focused on faculty and student perceptions of 10 general categories of syllabus components to determine which category's inclusion was more important to each group. The results showed that instructors' and students' perceptions of the importance of several components were disparate, that is, each group rated several components differently. Other research focused on classroom

socialization and performance, course expectations, the effect of change from the syllabus on student grades, and students' perceptions of the instructors.

In one study, researchers examined the contents of the syllabi to determine its characteristics and how it conveyed university goals and the objectives of general education, and in which ways the syllabi conveyed an implicit contract (Eberly Newton, & Wiggins, 2001). The study was conducted in Oakland University, a mid- sized Midwestern state university. The researchers collected a total of 145 syllabi for the academic year 1997-1998; these syllabi represented 90 % of the courses required to fulfill the general education curricular requirements. The three researchers used descriptive qualitative design and each researcher analyzed one third of the 145 syllabi collected. The findings showed that the syllabi had various roles. "Yet, we found very little evidence that the syllabi developed the implicit contract that guides teacher/student interactions. If we think of the syllabus as the springboard for the course experience, it needs to make more explicit the responsibilities of the instructional interaction" (p. 68). In the study of the syllabi content, not all of the syllabi contained some of the basic information which is required, for example, the instructor name, the course number and the section number. Another finding was that technology was rarely mentioned as a way to contact the course instructor or access course information.

In a second study, researchers explored how students and faculty rated the importance of the syllabi components and what each group perceived as important components (Garavalia, Hummel, Wiley, and Huitt, 1999). An initial pilot study was carried out with 72 faculty members and 83 undergraduates in order to create the formal survey which consisted of 39 items to be rated on a five-point Likert scale. The 242 students received a pencil and paper version while the 74 faculty surveyed through electronic mail. The mean averages showed that both groups did not

perceive the importance of the components equally. For example, in the “Instructor Data” category while students rated “home phone” 3.6, faculty rated it 1.9 (the lowest item rated). On the other hand, the “Papers/Projects” category’s mean average was higher for students than faculty. And while students rated “Withdrawal Policy” category with a M= 4.3, faculty only rated it with a M=3. 1. It is important to point out that faculty “rated it as the least important of the categories” (p. 9). Both students and faculty rated the “Grading Policy” category relatively high and it was the highest rated by faculty. Both students and faculty rated “exams” fairly high. Students’ ratings of “Grading Policy” and “Exams” were not only both the highest but a tie.

In a third study, researchers focused on issues of power (Theilheimer and Cahill 2004). The researchers analyzed 17 course syllabi from early childhood education courses. The researchers collected syllabi from all three levels: undergraduate, masters, and doctoral level.

“The authors found that the way in which professors write about their teaching in their syllabus serves to build relationships between themselves and their students. Yet tensions remain to be continually negotiated, tensions between the role of gatekeeper and coach, between challenge and comfort, and between the social expectations that professors and students hold of themselves and each other.” (p. 4)

Little attention, however, has been paid to specific language used in syllabi. One example explored how power and authority were negotiated. In order to do this, Baecker (1998) focused on the use of pronouns in the course syllabus. The second example is how the wording of a syllabus affected students’ perceptions of their instructors (Ishiyama and Hartlaub, 2002). The researchers examined how positive/reward-focused language as opposed to negative/punishment-focused language affected students’ willingness to approach the course instructor. Among the recommendations, the researcher indicated that faculty members should

be “sensitive to the wording of syllabi with younger students, who are more likely to be intimidated by wording couched in punishing terms” (p. 569).

In this first study of discourse, the researcher analyzed the use of pronouns (*I*, *you*, and *we*) in the course syllabus and how theory and practice collided by focusing on how power and authority were negotiated (Baecker, 1998). The researcher analyzed fifteen syllabi from an English Composition course at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The syllabi were from both TA’s and full-time instructors. The researcher hypothesized the pronoun usage would be fairly balanced between first and second person (*I/you*), 50/50 or even 60/40. However, the results showed none of the syllabi were balanced regarding pronoun usage and *you* was the most frequent pronoun used. Expanding the work, Baecker incorporated *we*, and hypothesized a balanced syllabus would have one third each of *I*, *you* or *we*. The findings showed *you* and its possessives were still used the most. The percentages range from an average of 55 to 82 %. The usage of *I* was scarce (9% to 30%). Baecker pointed out that “some instructors went to extraordinary lengths not to use pronouns at all, especially in the section labeled ‘Requirements,’ as though papers and exams would write themselves.” The researcher also indicated that many of *we*’s used were “false or coercive *we*’s and not *we*’s of genuine community.” Another interesting finding was that syllabi that were full of *I* ‘s were also full of *never*’s , *must*’s, and *no exceptions*. This study offered important groundwork for my own study.

A second study by Ishiyama and Hartlaub (2002) investigated how the discourse used in syllabi influenced the students’ perception of the instructor and his or her approachability. Two groups of 44 students each assessed a hypothetical instructor; they reviewed a sample syllabus from an introductory political science class and answered a questionnaire. Each group received an identical questionnaire except for the way the course requirements were phrased—one used

rewarding terms and the other punishing terms and both groups were administered the questionnaire by the same person. Ishiyama and Hartlaub indicated that “most studies, however, have not directly examined how subtle differences in the wording of syllabi affect student expectations” (p. 568).

The first section of the questionnaire asked five questions; among them: “Based on the information in the syllabus, do you think you would be comfortable talking to this professor outside of class? Based on the information in the syllabus, please rate how difficult you think the class would *be*?” (p. 568). They also asked if the participant would be inclined to take the class. The second section of the questionnaire asked demographic questions (gender, race, year in college, and GPA). The study showed that students who were less willing to approach the instructor were in their first or second year which contrasted with third and fourth year students. The researchers also found that students with a higher GPA were more sensitive to the wording; in this case, students with GPA’s higher than 3.00 “generally differentiate between the punishing and rewarding language” (p. 569). Although the researchers do not make claims of the effect of syllabi wording on retention, they indicate that students’ perception of faculty and their approachability might play an important role when deciding to stay in school or not.

Another study focused on students’ willingness to seek support from the instructors if the syllabus contained an explicit clause that offered help to students outside of the classroom (Perrine, Lisle, and Tucker. 1995). One hundred and four students who were taking either a psychology course or psychology statistics in a state university in the Southeast participated in the study. The students were asked to read two brief psychology course syllabi and a statement from the instructor. One statement was supportive while the other was neutral. The students rated

each syllabi on how likely they would be to seek help from that instructor for six different academic problems, identified in an earlier study.

In analyzing results, the researchers looked at the effect of student age and class size. The most significant finding was that researchers had posed that younger students, that is, those under 25, “would be less likely to express willingness to seek help from an instructor than would older students, independent of support condition” (p. 47). To their surprise, there wasn’t a significant difference between older and younger students and the supportive condition; however, the opposite was true of the neutral condition. Lacking the supportive aspect in the syllabi and statement, younger students were less willing to find help for four of the six problems (“understanding the textbook, low grade on the first exam, ineffective study skills, and trouble understanding a major topic”) (p. 48). For the problem of receiving a low grade on the first exam, younger students expressed less willingness to seek help in both the neutral *and* supportive syllabi.

The findings suggest that students expressed more willingness to get help if the syllabus included a supportive clause. The age factor was crucial in this study since older students indicated they would seek help, regardless of which clause was in the syllabi, but not the younger students. In order to help younger students, the researchers recommend that course instructors should encourage their students to seek help outside of class by stating it clearly in the syllabi. The researchers also claimed that it is not clear if the students who expressed willingness to find help would actually do it—an inherent limitation of any study relying on self-reports.

Rationale for a Study on Syllabi Discourse

As educators we “need to know why we do what we do, and we need to say these things aloud” (Lundell and Collins, 1999, p. 4). Yet, in syllabi, the core course document, such self-

awareness is far from the case: “For a document that assumes such central importance in the classroom, the syllabus has been largely ignored in the literature. Probably no other contract we will ever encounter is drafted with so little attention paid to language” (Baecker, 1998, p. 61). The discourse used by educators to speak to and of their students unveils their ideologies, and yet much of such language and ideology remains unexamined. “We always actively use spoken and written language to create or build the world of activities, identities, and institutions around us. However, thanks to the workings of history and culture, we often do this in more or less routine ways” (Gee, 2005, p. 10). It is important to get past this routine and stop to examine the pedagogical practices or discourses used—including the image of the student.

It is especially important to consciously attend to the discourse used in basic writing skills courses where a positive self-image is especially vital for students who might doubt themselves as successful learners. Since the syllabus is an important document in classroom discourse, it merits special care, as Slattery and Carlson (2005) urge: “In introducing the syllabus, we must counter ingrained beliefs ‘that [students] are powerless to affect what happens to them; that hard work will not pay off; that success is due to luck, and failure is due to circumstances beyond their control’ (Walvoord and Anderson, 1998, p. 16)” (p. 159). The unexamined messages sent out to new students should not be treated as a minor detail.

Although the importance of syllabi discourse seems to be emphasized by several researchers (Baecker, 1998; Slattery and Carlson, 2005; Walvoord and Anderson, 1998), discourse is one of the variables in syllabus analysis that has been overlooked in related research. For example, in the descriptive analysis of the syllabi mentioned earlier, Parkes, Fix, and Harris (2003) examined close to 120 variables; however, among those variables, they made no

reference to language or discourse as a possible variable to examine. The omission is typical despite the assertions in the literature that syllabus discourse is essential and needs careful study.

Discourse analysis of syllabi can be especially useful to create critical consciousness of discourse (phrases, pedagogies, or policies) embedded in the course syllabus which might send mixed, or negative, messages to students. “The need to conduct syllabus analysis becomes evident when we recognize the multiple uses of syllabi in higher education and the changing perception of the role of syllabi in educating students” (Eberly, Newton, and Wiggins; 2001; p. 57). The need to have better information on and models of syllabi is especially acute for new instructors: “Few empirical studies are available for new course instructors, fresh from training or newly arrived from the field setting, on the desirable and useful components of college course syllabi” (Garavalia, et al., 1999, p. 14). Critics increasingly realize how neglected syllabi construction has been:

We may be forced to accept the idea that nothing substantial drives syllabus construction. Syllabi are passed from one generation of faculty to the next with the established format, adhering to the departmental tradition and/or custom. With the whirlwind of responsibilities surrounding the initiation of new faculty and development of new courses, syllabus construction becomes a minor task. Yet the importance of syllabi and their presentation on the first day of class cannot be understated (Hansen, 1991). It stands to reason that the effort instructors put into the syllabus is likely to be related directly to the value students place on the syllabus as a learning tool. (Eberly, et al., 2001, p. 71)

I can list several reasons to justify my research. However, at this point I will limit them to the two most relevant. First, researchers in the field concur on the importance of syllabi

construction and its use as a learning tool and they also agree that the research on syllabi discourse is scant; this study is an attempt to contribute to the body of literature on syllabi discourse. Second, I have a personal commitment to the students in basic writing skills courses. This work's opening narrative is not just a story of a harmless anecdote; it is really about the opportunity I missed to challenge and question ideologies. While I don't intend to excuse my silence, I now realize that I was unequipped—I didn't have the tools I needed; I lacked the theory that could ground and hold up my point of view to take a stand and speak up on behalf of my students. However, it is time for me to shift my focus from a personal issue to a public concern, that is, to a larger forum where other students in basic writing skills courses, besides those at UPRM, will benefit from this research.

Through this research, the analysis of typical syllabi of the basic writing skills course, I identify information that has potential use in professional development efforts for graduate students, new teaching assistants, new instructors—and for more experienced instructors bound by unexamined habit as well. I strongly believe that part of any pedagogical training should include reflection and critical analysis of Discourse models present in the syllabi in order to uncover embedded ideologies or misconceptions that are never questioned and which might inadvertently not only affect the learning environment but also might harm an instructor's first teaching experience. What follows then is the theoretical framework that will ground and guide my own research.

Theoretical Framework

This study falls fully within the theoretical realm of critical discourse analysis (CDA). One of the most salient characteristics of CDA, according to van Dijk (1993), is that it moves

beyond discourse analysis simply as the study of form, meaning and mental process; it explores beyond these to uncover the relationship of power to other structures of interactions and relations of power and their functions in society and culture (van Dijk, 1998). The theorist whose work most informs this study is Gee (2005). “In D/discourse analysis we are not interested in specific analyses of data just in and for themselves. A D/discourse analysis must have a point” (p. 8). He argues that the data cannot be simply described for the sake of admiring “the intricacy of language” but instead the main objective should be:

- (a) illuminating and gaining evidence for our theory of the domain, a theory that helps to explain how and why language works the way it does when it is put into action; and
- (b) contributing, in terms of understanding and intervention, to important issues and problems in some “applied” area (e.g., education) that interests and motivates the researcher. (Gee, 2005, p. 8)

Rather than simply pointing out frequencies and categories of specific forms in a text, for example, a researcher using CDA must closely examine contexts, links to social groups, and power relationships. Such analysis can offer significant insight into how discourse promotes *Otherness*, an apt categorization for the “basic skills” student often considered abnormal/substandard. Merely presenting the data is not enough; the analyst must unpack the data to allow readers to comprehend the power issues the researcher is trying to highlight—otherwise it is not analysis, but “underanalysis” (Antaki, Biling, Edwards, and Potter 2003). The analysis I will undertake will seek not only to identify various components of Discourse identified, but also to link them to the social relations generated by various forms—which will, in turn, inform practice and practitioners.

Critical discourse analysis focuses on the analysis of speech or text to expose relations of power and inequality. “CDA should deal primarily with the discourse dimensions of power abuse and the injustice and inequality that result from it” (van Dijk, 1993, p. 252). One way to approach CDA would be to focus on “*the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance*” (p. 249). In critical discourse analysis dominance is when elite institutions or groups exert their social power, in turn producing social injustice or political, cultural, class, ethnic, racial and gender disparities.

In order to investigate what properties of texts play a role in reproducing power, it is important to examine the style, rhetoric, or meaning of texts for strategies that aim at the concealment of social power relations, for example playing down, leaving implicit or understanding responsible agency of powerful social actors in the events represented in the text (van Dijk, 1993). For this study, I also chose to look at conditionals to determine how rules and accommodations are negotiated as I detail in the next chapter.

Because both argumentation and storytelling will be influenced by each person’s beliefs and experiences, ideology is embedded in such texts. The way people see others and the world around them is influenced by their theories. “Ideology...[is] a social theory which involves generalizations (beliefs, claims) about the way(s) in which goods are distributed in society” (Gee, 1996, p. 21). To illustrate, one group (the dominant or the oppressed) will present an argument or theory based on their own experiences and in doing so, their ideologies will surface as something that makes perfect sense to them because they have experienced it—but they might not be aware of this. Ideology also involves attempts to hide or deny negative attributes and highlight the positive ones while pointing out the *Other’s* negative attributes and hiding the positive ones. In analyzing the text of argumentation and storytelling, the analyst must disclose

what appears to be “positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation” (van Dijk, 1995, p. 157).

The self-presentations or presentations of the other might include common sense assumptions which are not obvious at first glance. Fairclough (1989) defined ideology as rarely challenged “‘common sense’ assumptions which are implicit in the conventions according to which people interact linguistically, and of which people are generally not consciously aware” (p. 2). For example, the dominant group might naively question or even scorn the fact that the *Other* does not take advantage of the same opportunities as those which the dominant group has access to. The assumptions are based on beliefs, ideas, or experiences that make sense for the dominant group, regardless of how alienated the same beliefs, ideas, or experiences may be for the *Other*. Common sense leads the dominant group to believe that if they have access to opportunities, so does everyone else. However, that is not the case. For example, a reference to “welfare queens” embeds a positive self-presentation of the dominant group (responsible workers) in contrast to the negative *Other* (lazy freeloaders). In this study, I explore common sense beliefs, which at first gloss are not apparent, but nevertheless are there.

Those in positions of power fail to understand that their perception of reality comes from and supports their positions of power (Gee, 1996). As the dominant group, they have access to a variety of privileges not available to everyone else and eventually come to take their privileges for granted and make assumptions based on their privileges. However, when well-intentioned decisions are made based on these faulty assumptions, they may not be beneficial, and may in fact harm the group they intend to serve. Through critical discourse analysis, I intend to examine the underlying ideologies permeating syllabi and unmask ways in which language rests upon common-sense but power-based assumptions (Fairclough, 1989).

In such an analysis, and as the researcher, it is appropriate for me to reveal my own stance in these social relationships. Certainly, my topic choice was influenced by my perceptions, values, and beliefs. My personal investment in this topic is not a neutral one as I explained earlier. Any instructor who glances over the syllabi may think that the discourse is more or less acceptable, or common for a syllabus of a basic writing skills course. However, in this study, I intend to uncover the implicit, to challenge misinformation and myths, and to expose underlying ideologies which might pass disguised as common sense to many. I firmly believe that it is important to study language in order to help create consciousness of the relation between language and power and to make clear how this relationship can help perpetuate oppression.

The authors of the syllabi are language users and members of a group and as such speak, write, or understand according to a specific social position, generating what is known as social reproduction. The emphasis here is that they are part of a group or “institution” and they act as a group or whole according to what is expected of them in that particular social group. Since I am focusing on the discourse of the group and not on the discourse of an individual, the particular approach of critical discourse analysis that I use in this study is ideological, based on van Dijk’s (1995), which allows the social and the discourse to come together in order to reveal how they relate to each other. In other words, this approach involves “linking “the ‘surface’ of talk and text to ‘underlying’ ideologies, [is] a process fraught with complexities and contradictions” (p. 142).

According to van Dijk, the way in which the members of an “ingroup” identify themselves and those similar to them will tend to be positive, whereas those who are considered the “outgroup,” will be viewed in a negative way. This representation of the self and the *Other* is

systematic and follows a pattern. The members of the ingroup will not only describe themselves in positive terms but also they will deny, mitigate, or hide negative actions or attributes of their group. Likewise, the members of the ingroup will not only describe the members of the outgroup in negative terms but also they will deny, mitigate, or hide positive actions or attributes of the *Other*.

How my intentions translated into the research projects reported in this document is detailed in the following chapters.

Chapter 3: Methodology for the Syllabi Analysis

Research that produces nothing but books will not suffice. Kurt Lewin, 1946

Research Questions

This research consists of two related studies—an analysis of syllabi and a field study based on the results of the syllabi analysis. This chapter reports on methodology for the first of these studies, the syllabus analysis, which has as its central questions: How might the assumptions of the two major paradigms be embedded in the discourse of typical syllabi? And how are the issues of authority, rules, and power portrayed in the syllabi?

As noted in the previous chapter, the theoretical foundation for the syllabi analysis lies in Critical Discourse Analysis. CDA is a recursive process; in order to establish different categories, levels, and other classifications, questions are asked throughout each stage of the research. The recursive nature of CDA allowed me to probe the data constantly and ask more questions of the emerging categories. The order in which I report the data does not necessarily represent the same order in which I worked with it.

Syllabi Data Collection

For this first part of the study, I collected syllabi of a Basic Writing Skills English course from a multi-campus, four-year university in Northeastern United States which offers basic writing course on twenty of its campuses; this allowed for syllabi from large campuses and from smaller campuses while limiting the scope of the study to one institution and one course.

To gather the syllabi, I identified 71 different instructors for the first semester and 20 different instructors for the second semester from the Schedule of Courses for the academic year 2005-2006. The combined lists yielded 80 potential participants (11 instructors were listed in

both semesters). Through the university's online directory, I obtained e-mail addresses for 73 (91%) of the potential participants. Preliminary data online from 73 potential participants' titles showed the following categories: one tutor, 24 lecturers, 21 instructors, 5 wage staff, 8 assistant professors, 3 associate professors, one professor, and 11 without a title or inaccurate title (for example, some were identified by department in lieu of their title). Information on their highest degree earned or their ranks was not readily available for all participants. It was not always clear when instructors were teaching assistants (graduate students), part-time adjuncts, fixed-term personnel, or professors with rank. What was clear, however, was that the syllabi represent a variety of teaching personnel and that the majority are not tenured or tenure track (which itself suggests an institutional perspective that students in these courses are in some way inferior, not worthy of professorial attention).

For the first stage of data collection, I sent an electronic message to the 73 potential participants; only one message returned as undeliverable. I encouraged participants to submit either an electronic copy or hard copy of their syllabus (Appendix C). To increase participation, I urged them to delete or block out any identifying information on the syllabus. Of the 72 requests, 17 (24%) answered, representing 11 of the 20 campuses.

The second collection strategy was an on-line search of the course for the academic year 2005-2006. I downloaded only those syllabi which I did not already have, obtaining 8 additional syllabi for a total of 25 syllabi (equivalent to a 35% return rate). The additional eight syllabi represented four additional campuses, for a total representation of 15 out of 20 campuses (75%).

Data Analysis

Identifying Categories for Analysis

Syllabi analysis was informed, first, by previous work done on pronouns. Although I was clear about the procedure to follow in that area, once past it other possibilities had to be identified using an open mind. The first task was to read through all syllabi to develop an overall sense of them. As I read and reread, I found the process tedious because they all seemed more or less similar regarding their structure, tasks, and rules. It was a bit disheartening until I got to one syllabus—I actually felt good about reading it. At this point I stopped to ask: Why would I feel excited about a class that I am not going to take? I had to question my feelings. Why would I feel happy when all the while I was gloomy reading through the syllabi? What did this instructor write that made me react in a positive way to this particular sample?

I carefully scrutinized this syllabus, but nothing special jumped out at first glance. It had no obvious formatting except for capital letters in the headings and subheadings, and the very last two sentences read, “GOOD LUCK IN YOUR WRITING! GOOD LUCK IN THIS COURSE AND YOUR OTHER COURSES!” Then, I noticed that this syllabus contrasted with the others because its formatting appeared to highlight positive information. Upon a closer look, I found other text highlighted: “DON’T DO IT!” in reference to plagiarism. However, I had passed this formatting by earlier—it was only the positive statement that caught my attention. This contrast intrigued me so I began to read the syllabi again, but this time focused on the formatted information. This process led to the analysis of formatting features and the findings are detailed below. They include an identification of format features commonly used (bold, underline, and so on) and at what level they were applied: individual words, phrases, sentences,

and paragraphs. They include as well analysis of syllabi segments that also commonly contained formatting: headings, subheadings, course outline, and the narrative.

Again, this was a recursive process. Although I present the findings in a linear organization, they came from a messy process of asking questions, probing, and reclassifying throughout.

Analyzing within Identified Categories

Regarding the data from the syllabi, there are two levels for analysis: the surface structure and the deep structure. The first, surface structure, refers to such features as the number and percentages of various pronouns; formatting; and the number and categories of conditional sentences (*If x occurs, then y will follow*). Surface analysis provides information on usage, revealing habits, patterns, and idiosyncrasies.

The second level of analysis, deep structure, probes for implicit messages embedded in form; for example, pronoun and noun use embed information about authority vs. community. Formatted text as well as conditional sentences embed information about what is important and to whom. In other words, analysis of deep structure focuses on whether and how signifiers of the remedial and/or developmental paradigms are embedded in the text. The meanings embedded at the sentence level can be categorized, manipulated, and tabulated as well.

Using the Seven Building Tasks and Tools of Inquiry

Gee (2005) argues that “whenever we speak or write, we always and simultaneously construct or build seven things or seven areas of ‘reality’ In turn, since we use language to build these seven things, a discourse analyst can ask seven different questions about any piece of

language-in-use” (p. 11). In Table 3 below, I list Gee’s questions, which he called “building tasks” (p. 11)

Table 3

Seven Building Tasks of Language

Task	Discourse Analysis Question
Significance	How is this piece of language being used to make certain things significant or not and in what ways?
Activities	What activity or activities is this piece of language being used to enact (i.e. get others to recognize as going on)?
Identities	What identity or identities is this piece of language being used to enact (i.e. get others to recognize as operative)
Relationships	What sort of relationship or relationships is this piece of language seeking to enact with others (present or not)?
Politics	What perspective on social goods is this piece of language communicating (i.e., what is being communicated as to what is taken to be “normal,” “right,” “good,” “correct,” “proper,” “appropriate,” “valuable,” “the way things are,” “the way things ought to be,” “high status or low status,” “like me or not like me,” and so forth)?
Connections	How does this piece of language connect or disconnect things; how does it make one thing relevant or irrelevant to another?
Sign systems and knowledge	How does this piece of language privilege or disprivilege specific sign system (e.g., Spanish vs. English, technical language vs. everyday language, words vs. images, words vs. equations) or different ways of knowing and believing or claims to knowledge and belief?

Source: Gee, 2005; p. 11-13

The guiding questions provide a framework for analyzing deep structure. Additionally, Gee (2005) also proposed “tools of inquiry” (social languages, intertextuality, Conversations, and Discourses) to allow the analyst to spell out intuitions and specify the situated meaning of the lexical items.

“Situated meaning” is a “thinking device” that guides us to ask certain sorts of questions. Faced with a piece of oral or written language, we consider a certain key word or a family of keywords, that is, words we hypothesize are important to understanding the language we wish to analyze. We consider, as well, all that we can learn about the context that this language is both used in and helps to create or construe in a certain way. We then ask several sorts of questions...Our questions to the questions posed...are always tentative. (Gee, 2005, p. 70)

The analysis presented in this research includes: pronouns as key words or a family of key words, which might signal something about the roles of teacher/student; formatting, which might signal something about what the instructor deemed important; and conditionals, which might signal something about the instructors’ rules, negotiations, and accommodations.

The following paragraphs detail methodology at each level of analysis.

Pronoun Analysis

The surface analysis of pronoun usage determined the frequencies of *I*, *you*, and *we* in each syllabi, following the path laid out by Baecker (1998). I used the *find* feature in Microsoft Word and color-coded each pronoun by using the *replace* feature. When replacing each pronoun with a highlighted one, the program indicated how many were replaced; however, the numbers

were not accurate since the parameters varied due to a period or a comma. Therefore, I used Word's numbers as a baseline but went through each syllabus manually to correct errors.

I summarized totals for each pronoun at the bottom of each page, added the subtotals and verified them several times. Besides the pronouns, I noticed that some instructors used *student* and *instructor* more often than they used the pronouns. Therefore, I expanded on Baecker's work and incorporated these words into the analysis as well, since they both refer to the third person rather than first and second.

Additionally, I generated a spreadsheet on Excel with the frequencies and percentages of pronouns in each syllabus for further analysis (Appendix D).

Formatted Information in the Syllabi

The formatted text I discovered indicated that the instructor emphasized text he/she considered important and this seemed worth analyzing since it could unveil patterns that could help answer the research questions. Since there was no previous research to inform me, I emulated some of the steps from the pronoun analysis; that is, I went through each syllabus (electronic version) page by page and copied the formatted information onto a table (arranging them by syllabi). However, a second look at the data in the tables revealed that it was very inconsistent since there were words, parts of sentences, whole sentences and whole paragraphs which had different types of formats. Also there was a variety of format features; single formatting and several combinations were used throughout the syllabi (for example double and triple formatting). I manipulated the data in the table and added extra columns to describe the data in an effort to make sense of it. After several attempts and much scrutiny I figured out that there were several ways to organize the data. First, there were different levels of formatting:

word, phrase, sentence, and paragraph within the narrative. However there were words and phrases formatted in headings and subheadings as well as in tables. Another observation was that not all syllabi had formatted narrative; rather the format was limited to headings and subheadings or tables. This process led to the analysis of formatting features and the findings detailed below. They include an identification of format features commonly used (bold, underline, and so on) and at what level they were applied: individual words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs. They include as well analysis of syllabi segments that also commonly contained formatting: headings, subheadings, schedule or course outline, and the narrative. Another step in the process was to determine the meanings of the sentences in the narrative with formatted text and classify the meanings into categories which were mostly similar to the categories found in the conditional sentences.

Conditional Sentences or If Clauses

Originally, my first idea to examine how rules were negotiated was very straight forward and simplistic. I would explore the use of negatives, that is, the occurrences of *no* or *not*, as well as words that ended in *n't* and words with the following prefixes: *im*, *un*, and *dis*. My assumption was that these words would reveal something about the rules and other relationship arrangements in the classroom. However, it didn't work as I illustrate in Chapter 4. The words in isolation proved less significant than the type of sentence they were embedded in.

Nevertheless, this first search for negatives revealed a pattern: many of the sentences were conditionals. Rather than focusing on the negatives, I switched my focus to the conditional statements and examined information on rules, negotiation, and accommodations. Again using the *find* feature in Word, I searched for all sentences containing *if* and copied them onto a table,

arranging them first by syllabi. I then read through all of the sentences to determine if in fact all of the sentences that contained an *if* were conditionals. Once that was clear I did a second and third reading and penciled in one word that would describe the meaning of the sentence—these would later become categories. I discussed each sentence with another research to determine if the meanings could be collapsed or regrouped. From this discussion sixteen meanings were collapsed to nine categories which are defined and discussed further in Chapter 4.

Limitations of the Study

The scope of the syllabus analysis was limited to a basic writing skills course in a four-year multi-campus institution in Northeast United States. As is true with qualitative/quantitative (mixed-methods) research in general, there is no guarantee that results will generalize widely, in this case to other basic writing courses in other universities. Since the two paradigms governing basic writing courses have been well established, however, it is more likely that findings will generalize widely than that they won't.

Also, and again like other qualitative/quantitative methods, discourse analysis of syllabi is only a snapshot of a single element in the larger picture of classroom dynamics. Both the language used to construct the syllabi and the language used to analyze and present the findings of this study are influenced by the course instructors' and the researcher's experiences, beliefs, knowledge, and theoretical framework. The work is constructivist, and as such, makes no claims to have captured the "reality" of language, classroom, or experience. As Gee (2005) himself notes: "First humans *construct* their realities, through what is 'out there' beyond human control....Second, just as language is always reflexively related to situations so that both make each other meaningful, so, too a discourse analysis, being itself composed language, is

reflexively related to the ‘language-plus-situation’ it is about” (p. 113). He explains that

Discourse models

Are always oversimplified, an attempt to capture some main elements and background subtleties, in order to allow us to act in the world without having to think overtly about everything all at once. In this sense, they are like stereotypes, though we should keep in mind that all theories, even overt theories in science, are simplifications of reality that are meant to help us understand complicated realities by focusing on important things and leaving out some of the details. (p. 61)

All of this is to say, simply, that this study intends to offer potentially useful information that neither pretends nor seeks to be an accurate representation of some externally “true” reality.

Presentation of the Findings

Chapter 4, which follows, contains findings from the surface analysis of syllabi with minimal discussion. However, these findings informed the field study reported in Chapter 5, in the ways discussed there. A full discussion of findings from deep structure analysis of both studies in Chapter 6. Finally, the implications for practice and further research, appear in Chapter 7.

Chapter 4: Findings of the Surface Syllabi Analysis

The syllabus lets us help students think of themselves as insiders in the strange world built by academics. Collins

This chapter presents findings of the surface analysis of the syllabi, demonstrating patterns in the use of pronouns, formatting and conditionals in the sample of 25 syllabi. A full discussion of the deep structure analysis, findings and implications appear in Chapter 6

Pronoun and Noun Variant Analysis

The use of *I*, *you*, and *we* is called “pronominal reference.” The pronominal references I explore in this study are those used in the context of the classroom. However, I also considered the use of the “full noun phrase variants,” that is, *student(s)* and *instructor* (van Dijk, 1995, p. 151). To explore signals pronouns send about power, I followed the study by Baecker (1998) which in turn drew on earlier work indicating two categories for the pronouns: pronouns of power and pronouns of solidarity (Brown and Gilman, 1970). Baecker also pointed out that Bing (1994) identified “ambiguous linguistic markers, which blur the distinction between power and solidarity and, in fact, allow power to be expressed as solidarity” (p. 58). She further explained that the pronoun *we* can be used in both ways, to communicate “solidarity or community and as a mean to coerce the audience into behavior that benefits the speaker” (p. 58-59). In the syllabi, the speakers are the instructors and I describe their pronominal references by determining how many times each pronoun was used in each syllabus, along with the occurrences of *student(s)* and *instructor*, considering whether their uses seem to convey a sense of community (solidarity) or instead a sense of power and authority.

Further discussion of signals about power—the deep structure analysis of pronoun use—will be found in Chapter 6.

Pronouns

The surface structure analysis of the pronouns yield the following: there were a total of 1,075 pronouns; *I* accounted for 200 (19%); *you* accounted for 794 (74%); and *we* accounted for 81 (7%). (See Table 4)

Table 4

Pronoun Usage

	Totals	Percentage	Range	Mean	Mode (per syllabus)	Median
Pronoun usage <i>I</i>	200	19%	0 to 44	8	0	5
Pronoun usage <i>you</i>	794	74%	0 to 118	31.8	5 and 34	29
Pronoun usage <i>we</i>	81	7%	0 to 15	3.2	1	2
Total Pronoun usage	1075	100%	0 to 164	43	9 and 44	36

The total pronoun usage per syllabus ranged from 0 to 164 (mean = 43; mode = 9 and 44; median = 36). The most common pronoun used was *you*, which accounted for 74% of all pronoun usage. The next most common was *I*, which accounted for 19% of all pronouns; the least used was *we*—the pronoun that most signals community.

The following table shows the frequencies for the pronoun usage overall. Regarding mode, the highest number of times a pronoun (*we*) was used was six; in other words, six syllabi used it once. The next highest mode was five for *we* also; that is, five syllabi used *we* three times. And in the *I* pronouns the mode was five, that is, five syllabi used no *I*'s.

Table 5

Frequencies for Pronoun Usage per Syllabi

<i>I</i>	F	<i>you</i>	f	<i>we</i>	f
0	5	5	3	1	6
3	3	34	3	3	5
9	3	0	2	2	4
2	2	35	2	0	3
5	2	11	1	4	3
7	2	15	1	7	2
8	2	16	1	11	1
1	1	18	1	15	1
4	1	19	1		
21	1	20	1		
24	1	25	1		
26	1	29	1		
44	1	32	1		
		44	1		
		49	1		
		62	1		
		65	1		
		84	1		
		118	1		

A closer examination of the six instances where *we* was used once follows in Table 6. In the first example (Syllabus 001), the sentence is under the Academic Integrity Policy section. Here the instructor seemed to give the student the benefit of the doubt and proposed to serve as a mediator in order to avoid major problems with plagiarism. There is an invitation to initiate a learning community. Likewise, in Syllabus 007, the instructor explained what the critiques were and how students were required to do them after he/she explained the process. The *we* in this statement also refers to the class as a learning community. Along the same line, in Syllabus 010, the sentence is embedded in a paragraph which speaks to the student as someone who is already a writer and needs to “employ [their] your writing skills in the arena of academic discourse, the kind of writing done in colleges and universities” (p. 2). In this case the instructor acknowledges that the student is part of the community, a novice of a sort, but nevertheless a legitimate member of the community.

In Syllabus 002, the sentence is under the Grades section, and the instructor clarifies that “The following are standard grade definitions for college level writing” (p. 2). This is what Gee (2005) defined as intertextuality; in this case, the instructor is using another “voice” to justify the grading criteria. In other words, he did not establish the criteria; he was following the criteria that a higher authority had already established. Again, in Syllabus 012, the sentence is a quote from the Official University Pamphlet of Academic Responsibilities and Faculty Expectations of Student. This is another example of intertextuality. In this case the instructor is using the voice of a higher authority to convey the message. Although it refers to expectations, I do not consider it as creating community rather; it establishes authority through another voice.

And finally, in Syllabus A06, the sentence is in a paragraph where the specifics of course assignments are explained. The rules for handing in on time are specified and the *we* the

instructor actually refers to is how he/she will move forward regardless if the students are able to keep up or not; in this case it is a false *we*, since the student has no say in this matter.

Table 6

Examples for Community, Intertextuality, and False We's

Syllabus	Sentence	Section	Category
001	We will discuss how to credit and paraphrase sources, in order to avoid the appearance of plagiarism.	Academic Integrity Policy	Community
007	If you miss a critique session (you can see them on the course calendar—every time a rough draft is due we will have a critique), your grade on that paper drops one half grade.	Critique	Community
010	We will be focusing on “skills’ in a wider sense: on developing an understanding of audience and purpose; on engaging in the writing process; on composing multiparagraph expressive and persuasive essays using ideas and details purposely and coherently.	Course Description	Community
002	Insight is average, language is typical, and the paper may have a few more errors in mechanics than we expect from a good or exceptional paper.	Standard Grade Definitions	Intertextuality
012	...We assume that you will put your academic schedule ahead of other activities such as employment and entertainment.”	from a manual	Intertextuality
A06	The papers will be progressively more difficult as we move through the semester and master new skills.	Assignments	False We

To summarize, the six syllabi which had only one *we* can be classified as follows: syllabi 001, 007, and 010 are *we's* that encouraged establishing a community (invitation, guidance, and acknowledgement of students as writers). Two of the syllabi (002 and 012) were

coercive *we*'s and clear examples of intertextuality. And, syllabus A06 contained a false *we*; the student does not negotiate the difficulty level of the papers; this is something that has been set previously by the instructor.

Moving from examining frequencies among the total sample of syllabi to frequencies within individual syllabi, the pronoun used most within a single syllabus was *I*, which accounted for 22% of total use—or 44 out of 200 instances, suggesting a possible focus on the instructor's authority. The second highest use in a single syllabus was *we*--15 out of 81, or 19% of all instances, suggesting a possible effort to build community. The highest number of total pronouns in one syllabus was 15%, or 164 out of 1075 total instances. Interestingly, this particular syllabus accounted for the highest percentages of both *I* and *you*, again suggesting a focus on authority. While there was one syllabus with no pronouns at all (appearing to erase people from the course), there was also a syllabus with 164 pronouns; four syllabi had no instances of *I*, one no instances of *you*, and two with no *we*. A table with the summary of the syllabi analysis data is in Appendix E.

Noun Variants

As I mentioned above, besides the pronominal references, I examined the noun variants, in this case *student(s)* and *instructor(s)*. For this part, I did not take into account any of the nouns that were part of a title or header, or that functioned as an adjective. A table with the summary in Appendix F shows the noun variant distribution by syllabi. Some syllabi contain only the third person plural *students*, while other syllabi use singular and plural forms.

Instructor was used as third person singular in all but one syllabus, which I excluded from the analysis because it referred not to the author of the syllabus but to any or all of the students'

instructors (“... avoid being careless and overly casual when you write to your instructors” (Syllabus #003).

Regarding *student* as third person singular, there were 50 references; the range per syllabus was 0 to 6 (mean=2; mode=1; median=2). *Students*, as third person plural, was referenced 171 times, three times more than the singular form, perhaps suggesting that students were considered an undifferentiated mass rather than a collection of individuals. For *students*, the range per syllabus was 1 to 29 (mean= 7; mode=4 and 6; median=6). When the totals for both nouns, *student* and *students*, are combined, the syllabus with the highest percentage use accounts for 14% of total usage.

Regarding *instructor*, there were 53 references, ranging per syllabus from 0 to 10 (mean=2; mode=0 and 2; median=2). The syllabus with the highest percentage of *instructor* instances accounted for 19% of all usage. Six syllabi made no reference to *instructor*, while one syllabus referenced it ten times.

Formatted Information in the Syllabi

This part of the syllabi analysis identifies the occurrences of different format features in each syllabus except for the following: formatted text used to list book references, URL's or web sites, acronyms, and course abbreviations (ENGL). In other words, the analysis focuses on information in which formatting was optional. The surface structure analysis for the formatted features will be limited to identifying the types and combinations of formatting, different format levels, and segments of syllabi with formatting. The descriptions, frequencies, and explanations of each are presented in table format. The deep structure analysis focuses on meaning in the narrative and includes some examples with detailed discussion.

Surface Analysis

Combination of format features. Regarding the format features, some text was formatted with only one feature while other text was formatted with two, three, or even four format features. While some syllabi made scarce use of the formatting features, other syllabi made use of several of the various combinations at the sentence level and paragraph level. Table 7 illustrates the different format features used in the syllabi analysis.

Table 7

Formatting Feature Types in the Syllabi Analysis

Single	Double	Triple	Quadruple	Other
bold	bold & caps	bold, caps, & underline	bold, italics,	text box
underline	bold & underline	bold, caps, & italics	underline, & asterisk	cartoon
caps	caps & underline			shaded text
italics	bold & italics	bold, underline, &	bold, italics,	prompt
font size	bold & larger font	exclamation mark	underline &	another language
font type	caps & larger font		exclamation mark	tables
font color	asterisk & bold	bold, italics, &		
bullets	bullets & bold	exclamation mark		
asterisk	bullets & underline			
exclamation mark	bullets & italics	asterisk, bold, & exclamation mark		

Although the exclamation mark is technically a punctuation mark, because it was used to emphasize text I incorporated it as a format feature. My first inclination was not to consider it; however, when I tabulated its use, I found an eight-page syllabus with 23 exclamation marks,

ranging from zero to seven per page. Two paragraphs contained three exclamation marks each and two other contained four each, so that just four paragraphs accounted for 14 (nearly half) of all uses. Of the 23 instances, 7 included a negative. The following examples are quoted directly from the syllabus (original formatting):

(NO www!)

(You can't become a better writer without frequent practice!)

You CANNOT make up missed warm-ups!

(Do not skip class to finish an essay! Plan ahead!)

Use Times New Roman or another 'basic' font – nothing fancy or unusual!

Don't do it!

Being late is not an excuse for being absent!

Although these seven statements included a *no* or a *not*, only the two underlined statements can be classified as warnings. The rest of the sentences with the exclamation marks were to encourage the student. For the sake of brevity, I will only provide three examples:

The ability to write clearly and thoughtfully in English will serve you well in all your courses at University Campus (and your career and life after college!)

Be a confident writer who is comfortable (and happy!) writing in a variety of academic and nonacademic settings.

We are all learning together—we need your brain during every class!

The remainder of the sentences go along the same line. The use of the exclamation mark in this syllabus was to encourage the student. A metaphor that comes to mind would be that of a “cheerleader,” regardless of the gender of the instructor.

Besides the exclamation mark, I have included tables as another format feature. I included them because they were used to highlight specific information throughout the syllabi, for example grading policies, scales, or rubrics; distribution of participation points; and the course calendar, due dates, tentative schedule, course outline, or schedule of assignments. I classified as tables any information organized in columns regardless if they were ruled or not.

Different format levels. Regarding the format levels there were four: word, phrase, sentence, and paragraph level. Across all syllabi, the most notable format feature occurred at the paragraph level, with 12 out of 25 syllabi containing bulleted material. I will return to this feature momentarily, but first will note the most common format feature across levels, used in three of the four, was the bold type (16). Also, more formatting types were used at the sentence level (26) than at any of the other three. See Table 8 below.

Table 8

Format Features and Levels

	Word level	Phrase level	Sentence level	Paragraph level	Totals
Bold	5	5	6		16
Caps	3	2	1		6
Italics	3	3	1	1	8
Underline	4	1	2		7
Bullets				12	12
Asterisk		1	1	1	3
Exclamation mark			3		3
Different font size				1	1
Different font type		1		1	2
Different font color				1	1
Highlighted (shaded text)			1		1
Bold & caps	1	2	2		5
Bold & underline			2		2
Bold & italics			1	1	2
Bold & larger font			1		1
Asterisk & bold			1		1
Bold, caps, & italics		1			1
Bold, italics, & underline			2		2
Asterisk, bold, & exclamation mark			1		1
Bold, Italics, Underline, & Asterisk			1		1
Totals for levels	16	16	26	18	76

A closer look at bullets shows that they were used for objectives, requirements, grading scales, point allocation, participation, assignments, portfolios, different tasks, things students need, student principles, teacher responsibility, and cheating. Although the use of bullets might seem trivial to illustrate the instructor's paradigm, an example taken from two syllabi in the sample illustrates their potential impact. In one, bullets highlight five responsibilities the *instructor* has to students before listing what is expected of them, indicating mutually responsive relationship. The other syllabi, in contrast, uses bullets to highlight ten possible ways for students to be accused of plagiarism (conscious or not), highlighting students' possible missteps. Both examples are in Appendices F and G.

Formatted segments of the syllabi. Besides the four levels, three segments of the syllabi were also frequently formatted: headings, subheadings, and the schedule or course calendar. The purpose of formatting these parts was to make it easier for student to find especially important information. These headings and subheadings are also known as graphic organizers. Table 9 illustrates the format features that were used in the different parts of the syllabi.

Table 9

Formatted Segments in the Syllabi

	Heading	Subheadings	Schedule	Total Formatting
Bold	13	18	11	42
Caps	5	6	6	17
Italics		3	3	6
Underline		4	2	6
Bullets			1	1
Asterisk		1	2	3
Exclamation mark			1	1
Different font size	1	2	2	5
Different font type			1	1
Different font color			1	1
Highlighted (shaded text)			1	1
Bold & caps	2	2	5	9
Bold & underline		2	3	5
Caps & underline		2	2	4
Bold & italics	1			1
Bold, caps, & underline	1	2		3
Totals for levels	24	42	38	

In the table above, the bold format feature stands out across all syllabi, appearing in 18 out of 25 syllabi to format subheadings and in 13 out of 25 to format headings. The part of the syllabi receiving the most different types of formatting was the course schedule or calendar; across the 25 syllabi, 14 different types of formatting were used in that segment. Two examples illustrate the possibility for significant contrast.

The first is a syllabus that contained five different format features for the schedule section: caps and bold for the headings; italics and caps for the topics; bold for the dates and work due; bold and caps for important information; and, italics for the description of a task. Each format feature had a specific purpose, and it was used consistently throughout the course schedule table so that format consistently identified a certain type of information.

The second example is a course schedule in table format also which contained six different formats: larger font size for the week number and the dates; caps (for the due date of the big project and a day no classes would be held); bold (for an important in-class activity), italics (title of books); different font type, size, and color for information on the class activity, instructions, and points allotted. At first glance it looked impressive; however, it was not consistent. The instructions were in the regular print, or in a smaller blue font. The points allotted were in regular print, in red but a different font type, or a smaller blue type font. There was a day when the class would not meet and it was not capitalized. The formatting features used were creative but not consistent, so that rather than helping the student navigate information they were obstacles to easy comprehension.

Deep Structure Analysis

Of the 25 syllabi collected, ten showed formatting only in special features for headings and subheadings; in course outlines or schedules; and in bulleted information. In other words, ten syllabi had no formatting in the narrative text while 15 syllabi did apply formatting at the sentence, phrase, and/or word level. Within the narrative, single, double, or triple formatting occurred. I identified each formatted sentence to determine its meaning or purpose in each syllabus. I then classified each sentence into one of the seven categories for each syllabus and summarized the information by syllabi as shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Total Syllabi for Format Purpose

Warning	Notification	Encouragement	Instructions	Command	Recommendation	Request
9	6	5	3	2	1	1

This means that of the fifteen syllabi, nine—two-thirds—had words, phrases or whole sentences that emphasized a warning or threat (negative messages). Only five syllabi of the fifteen syllabi emphasized encouragements (positive messages). The formatting features for each category are broken down in Table 11.

Table 11

Format Feature Type and Purpose of the Message

Purpose	Single	Double	Triple	Total
Warning	20	6	1	27
Notification	8	2		10
Encouragement	4	2	1	7
Command	6	3		9
Instructions	7	1		8
Advice	2			2
Request		1		1

The interplay of features, format level, and meaning can be demonstrated in two ways: through several disconnected examples illustrating various categories, or through a selected syllabus page. Since the following analysis of conditionals will provide examples by category, here I will consider a syllabus page.

Before beginning, I will reiterate that my intent here is not to pass judgment on a practice or instructor. This analysis takes the syllabus out of context—I do not know instructor, or how the syllabus is presented to the students. That is a limitation to this work, though I believe potential insights make the work worthwhile in any event. The page comes from a syllabus section titled “*Format for Submitting Work,*” and I will go through it one paragraph at a time, focusing on the formatted sentences. The complete page is in Appendix H. For the purpose of this analysis, *sentence* denotes the complete word group from initial capital letter to period; *phrase* denotes any partial group of words within the sentence, even if it constitutes an independent clause.

Paragraph one (quoted below) begins with formatting at the sentence level (bold) and double formatting at the phrase level (caps and bold) to give a command or direct order. Sentence two has single formatting at the phrase level (italics) again for a command. Sentence three has single formatting at the word level (caps) and it is advice. The formatting is repeated again at word level in sentence four but this time in a stern manner for emphasis.

Work in this class MUST BE TYPED and must use the following format. First of all, *do not use a cover page.* Instead, put your name (for obvious reasons), my name (so that if the work gets lost, people will know who to return it to), the course and section number (standard practice), your e-mail address (in case I have questions and want to contact you), and the date (standard practice) in the upper RIGHT corner. I don’t care where other

teachers have wanted such information; I want it in the upper RIGHT corner and I expect to find it there. In other words, it should look like this.

The second paragraph has single formatting at the phrase level and double format to emphasize a command: “—**do not use a really large or small font.**” The third paragraph has double format in the first sentence at the phrase level to emphasize a command: “**DO NOT NEGLECT TO NUMBER THE PAGES.**” The third sentence has single formatting at the phrase level to emphasize a command: “**Staple the pages together in the proper order—**” and the fourth sentence also has single formatting at the phrase level. It is a command (the specific instructions on what not to do) is formatted in caps. “I want the pages fastened with a staple, not a paper clip, and whatever you do, **DO NOT FASTEN THE PAGES TOGETHER BY FOLDING THEM IN SOME ELABORATE WAY.**”

The fourth paragraph begins with a formatted sentence with double formatting at the word level and phrase level. This sentence is a command: “**PROOFREAD your work carefully—don’t just use the spell-checker-BY READING IT ALOUD AFTER YOU PRINT IT OUT; I guarantee you will catch typos you didn’t find when reading the document on a computer screen.**” The second sentence has double and triple formatting features at the phrase level: “**AFTER YOU FIND THOSE ERRORS, *CORRECT THEM, AND PRINT OUT A NEW DRAFT.***” Again the instructor is giving specific instructions; however, they are a direct order or command.

The instructor’s paradigm is evident through the formatting used for the text in the syllabus. What the formatting shows is that obedience is stressed more than anything else through a series of harsh commands. Gee (2005) invites the analyst to ask if the information

could be presented in an alternate form and the answer is yes. I will come back to this example in the last chapter.

Conditional Sentences or If Clauses

My initial hypothesis that most sentences with the negatives would convey a negative message related to rules, negotiation, or accommodations proved wrong as I will demonstrate in the following two tables. Table 12 shows examples of sentences containing *no* and the prefixes *un* and *dis*.

Table 12

Contrast of Neutral and Negative Conditionals Found in the Syllabi

Neutral message	Negative message
1. If you have an unavoidable circumstance that requires you to come late or leave early, please provide me with an explanation after class. (#A07, p. 5)	3. If you are absent from peer review sessions, you lose the six points, no matter what your reason for being absent might be. (#008, p.6)
2. If no one answers, leave a message on my voice mail. (#005, p. 2)	4. If your behavior in class disrupts the learning environment, you will be asked to leave. (#004, p.5)

The first and second examples in the first column one are neutral messages: a polite request and instructions. The third and fourth examples have negative outcomes: both are warnings followed by the sanction or punishment. Table 13 shows examples of sentences containing *not* and prefixes *un* and *dis* again, but this time conveying a positive message.

Table 13

Contrast of Positive and Negative Conditionals Found in the Syllabi

Positive message	Negative message
<p>1. Allowances can be made if you communicate with me in advance, much as you might contact an employer if you are unable to get to work. (#012, p. 2)</p> <p>2. You would not be here if you did not have the ability to conceptualize and organize ideas, to perform complex thinking, but you are unfamiliar with the world of formal writing for a variety of reasons. (#014, p.1)</p>	<p>3. If the document has multiple pages, DO NOT NEGLECT TO NUMBER THE PAGES. (#003, p. 2)</p> <p>4. In other words: <u>If you hand in another persons writing as if it were your own work, your dishonesty will be documented with the University Campus and, depending on the severity of the offense, you will receive an 0 for the assignment or an F for the course.</u> (#004, p. 4)</p>

In the first column both examples are positive. In the first example, the instructor is providing options for negotiation; in the second example, the instructor is encouraging the student. In the second column, both examples are negative. The third example is a direct order or a command; however, given the caps and bold for added stress and emphasis, one would think the instructor could be yelling out an order. The fourth example is negative also: it is a warning followed by a clear description of the sanction or punishment if the condition is met.

After understanding that the negative words or prefixes are not what made the statements negative ones, rather the message conveyed through the conditional statement, I shifted my focus. I extracted and organized all conditional statements, then read them for meaning until categories emerged. After discussing them with another researcher I collapsed them into a final set and wrote clear definitions for each, as illustrated by Table 14.

Table 14

Nine Categories for Classifying Conditionals

Category	Parameters
Encouragement	When the instructor encourages the student to get help from the instructor or come to the instructor's office and ask questions or invites the student to speak up in class. There is no obligation implied here.
Negotiation	It is about flexibility, another opportunity or option to meet during or outside of office hours; it is about recuperating lost work or lost points due to some event. Something is at stake and the instructor is willing to help. The student is not obligated to do it.
Advice	It is a good word on how to be careful. The instructor tells the student to do something that would be good or might benefit him/her; a tip. Whatever the student does is optional.
Polite request	When the instructor uses the word <i>please</i> to make a request related to accommodation or instructions on how to do something. The student is expected to do it but not obligated.
Notification	It is used to communicate information about something, just so you know—a reminder, or an announcement. Again, the student may or may not do anything with the information, but it is there, just in case.
Suggestion	It is an invitation to seek help elsewhere; it is about possible options or alternatives for the student but not necessarily coming from the instructor. The students are encouraged to go somewhere else to get the help they need.
Instructions	They are related to a task; the steps the student needs to take to do something, or how to do it. For example: go to a website; call this telephone number; or visit a specific office, writing center or computer lab. This is not optional, it is expected that if the condition is met, the student must comply with the action that is stated.
Command	This is a direct order and the student is requested to do it immediately, as soon as possible, or promptly. There is no flexibility, no option here for the student.

Category	Parameter
Warning	When something bad happens if the condition is met or not met. The action will be a punishment that includes but not limited to deducting points, getting no points, receiving an F in the assignment or the course, getting expelled from the class, getting a written or oral notice of the charge, and/or getting referred to a higher authority or Judicial Affairs for due process. It involves any type of threat or admonishment and generally the outcome is final and firm. There is no flexibility whatsoever nor are there any options for negotiations of any sort.

A summary of the conditionals by category and syllabi are in Appendix I. The conditionals in the 25 syllabi totaled 180, with the average per syllabus ranging from 1 to 24 (mean = 7.2; mode = 8; median = 6). The same information is summarized in Table 15.

Table 15

Number of Syllabi and Sentences in Each Conditional Category

Category	Total Syllabi With Category	Total Conditional Sentences	Percentage of Total Conditionals
Polite request	18	28	16%
Warning	17	45	25%
Notification	15	29	16%
Instructions	13	32	18%
Negotiation	9	9	5%
Suggestion	8	11	6%
Encouragement	7	13	7%
Advice	5	9	5%
Command	4	4	2%
Total		180	100%

The category found most in all syllabi was the Polite Request, that is, of the 25 syllabi, 18 had a polite requests (72%). The next category found most across syllabi was Warning with 17 out of 25 syllabi (68%) followed closely by the Notification category with 15 out of 25 (60%).

Although the Polite Request category was the most common, the highest number of conditional sentences overall was in the Warning category with 45 out of 180 (25%). What this means is that relatively few syllabi used warnings relatively often. Regarding the Negotiation category, nine syllabi had one negotiation conditional sentence each, a contrast to the warning

category which averaged 2.65 warnings per syllabus. Warnings, threats, and sanctions were more common in the conditionals than negotiations.

Table 16

Frequencies for the Warning Category

Conditionals per syllabi	1	2	3	4	6	8
Frequency	7	3	2	3	1	1

A closer look at the Warning category yielded the following information regarding the averages: range = 1 to 8; mean = 2.65; mode = 1; and the median = 2. The mode indicates that of the 17 syllabi with conditional warnings, 7 had only one. Of these, five concerned Academic Integrity. They had the following quote or something very similar: “Students charged with breach of academic integrity will receive due process and if the charge is found valid, academic sanctions may range, depending on the severity of the offense.” The university requires, and provides a boilerplate for this section, producing what Gee (2005) calls intertextuality. The instructor uses the voice of a higher authority for the warning. When these ten instances of intertextuality are subtracted from the total of number of Warnings, the remaining total of 35 warnings is still the highest category when compared to the others, as Table 15 shows.

These warnings stipulated disciplinary actions or sanctions if the student failed to comply with the rules set for attendance policy, tasks or assignments, and behavior as detailed in Table 17.

Table 17

Types of Warnings

Type of Warning	Description	Total	Percentage
Attendance	-absences	18	40%
	-tardiness		
	-not in the classroom		
Academic Integrity Policy or Plagiarism	-quoted from the University	10	22%
	-instructor's version of the policy		
Tasks	-missing assignments	10	22%
	-handing in late		
	-not including the rough drafts		
Behavior	-disrupting the class	7	16%
	-allowing cell phone to ring		
	-doing work for another class		
	-not following instructions		
	-not participating in class		
		45	100%

Returning to the more general categories of positive, neutral, and negative statements, the nine specific categories for classifying conditionals can be resorted on that basis, as presented in Table 18.

Table 18

Classifying the Conditionals into Positive, Neutral, or Negative

Positive Conditionals	Neutral Conditionals	Negative Conditionals
Encouragement = 13	Polite request = 28	Command = 4
Negotiation = 9	Notification = 29	Warning = 45
Advice = 9	Suggestion = 11	
	Instructions = 32	
Total positive = 31 (17%)	Total Neutral = 100 (56%)	Total Negative = 49 (27%)

If we exclude the neutral category and focus on the positive conditionals and negative conditionals, a relative emphasis on the negative is evident.

Conclusion

This chapter detailed a number of features that varied widely across syllabi and generated several messages to students about the instructor’s view of the classroom situation. Some of these findings are put to use in the field test described in the next chapter. How the many parts combine to send large messages to students will be discussed at length in Chapter 6.

Chapter 5 Methodology and Findings for the Field Study

A transformation is underway in American higher education, shifting the focus away from what faculty members teach to what students learn—the shift calls for changes in how we think about the courses we teach, how we design students' learning experiences, and how we articulate our expectations of our students and ourselves. Diamond

Analyzing syllabi was only the first step of this research, as noted earlier. However, the data from the three elements of the syllabus analysis made me realize syllabi discourse analysis actually gave me a hypothesis: that certain kinds of discourse habits, largely taken for granted by instructors generally, can prove discouraging to students—and maybe not just students in the basic writing skills course as I originally thought. So my research actually amounted to a second part, a field study, in which I do a preliminary exploration of this hypothesis with information that stemmed from the elements of the syllabus analysis. The fact that the participants were regular students and not students from a basic writing skills course or a remedial course reinforces the idea that the findings go beyond basic writers. This second part of the research is within subjects experimental design, using two groups and a counterbalanced text.

Once discourse features reflecting either a remedial/authoritative or a developmental/coach-like stance with students were identified, I conducted a modest field study to see if manipulating some of these elements even mildly might affect student expectations for instructor behavior and their own success in the class. Ten students were asked to read two different syllabi--modified in small parts according to findings of the discourse analysis--and then asked a series of questions about their impressions. Details on the methodology for this study follow, as do findings.

Methodology

Participants

For this study, I requested permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the Office for Research Protections (ORP) and it was approved. In order to identify participants, I asked several instructors teaching first and second year students at one of the satellite campuses for few minutes in their classes to recruit volunteers. I made it clear to students that there would be no compensation of any kind for volunteering, except for the experience of participating in a research study. Although I originally planned to recruit a minimum of at least 25 participants, 40 volunteered and ten actually took part.

Of the ten participants six were male and four female; ages ranging from 18 to 20 years old. The average age was 19; the median 19, and the mode 19. Half of the participants were from education: Secondary Education in Math, Special Education, Music Education, World Studies Education, Elementary Education; the other half represented Media Studies, Commercial Tourism Management, Retail Management, Undergraduate Studies, and Criminal Justice. Six participants were in their second semester, one in his/her third semester and three in their fourth semester. Their GPA's ranged from 2.9 to 3.86; mean = 3.34; mode = 3.0 and 3.47; median = 3.40. The students in this study ranged from average to above average. All of the participants' first language was English. The purpose of this question was to make sure that there was no language interference.

In the initial phase of planning this study, the possibility of interviewing students in the basic writing course came up as an option. However, it was quickly dismissed for several reasons. First, students in the basic writing course might feel that their participation in the study was obligatory, or that if they declined to participate it could somehow affect their grade.

Second, since they are first year students they are probably not familiar with research and may feel uncomfortable with the questions in the survey. Their answers might be directed to what they think their instructor would like to hear, although their instructor would not see their responses. And third, I was interested in seeing how regular students responded to the syllabi. This may mean that the results cannot be generalized to the basic writing skills course; however, it provides valuable insight and a venue to conduct further research. I did not question if the participants had taken the basic writing course during their first year because analyzing the possible import of such data it is beyond the scope of this study.

Syllabi for the Study

Based on the findings from the Syllabi Analysis, I constructed a basic three-page syllabus by combining sections of the syllabi I collected and editing out identifying information. I tried for a draft that was fairly neutral overall, and then made small adjustments to create two similar versions with differences that the syllabi analysis suggested might affect student perceptions (pronouns, formatting features, and conditionals). Both syllabi were the same except for changes in section number, formatting, pronouns, minor word substitutions, and statement variations in four different parts of the syllabi. For the sake of clarity and simplicity, I will refer to the versions as Syllabus A (intended to reflect an authoritative stance) and Syllabus B (intended to reflect a coach-like stance). Appendix J shows the changes applied to the base syllabus (with the variations for Syllabus B in brackets). Because these changes are integral to the study, the following paragraphs detail them.

First, Syllabus A featured no formatted headings or bullets (which help the reader process the text efficiently). Moreover, two of the headings were stated in a negative form: *Plagiarism* in lieu of *Academic Integrity* and *Absences and Tardiness Policy* in lieu of *Attendance Policy*.

Additionally, in Syllabus A, I substituted the majority of pronouns *I* and *you* for *the instructor* and *the student* or *students* (along with the corresponding possessives *your* and *their*). The difference here is that Syllabus A speaks in third person about some impersonal students and instructors, while Syllabus B addresses the reader directly through use of the second person. Finally, each version had sentences or phrases added or word changes in four parts of the syllabus: Contact Information, Course Description, Academic Integrity Policy and Attendance Policy as illustrated in Table 19.

Table 19

Differences in Syllabus A and Syllabus B

Part of the Syllabus	Syllabus A ¹	Syllabus B
Contact Information	[no statement]	<i>Email is the best way to contact me between class meetings.</i>
Course Description	Please note that this class has a unique feature at University State: to pass the class you must pass the final exam.	Please note that this class has a unique feature at University State: to pass the class you must pass the final exam for which you write a timed essay using the skills you will develop during the semester's work.
Attendance Policy	As noted above, regular attendance is required. Students' grade may be lower for poor attendance, down to and including "F," (This is University policy). You are required to attend class regularly and promptly. <i>Habitual tardiness will not be tolerated.</i>	As noted above, regular attendance is required for you to do well; therefore, to encourage you to attend; I reserve the right to lower your grade for poor attendance, down to and including "F," (as University policy permits). You also need to arrive on time. <i>Habitual tardiness will not allow you to benefit fully from the 10-minute warm ups that will enhance your skills.</i>

Part of the Syllabus	Syllabus A	Syllabus B
Attendance Policy	Students should develop the habit, early in their college career, of professionally managing their attendance, appointments, and assignments; it's a survival skill. ENGL 004 depends on students' presence and participation every day	I hope that this policy will help you develop the habit, early in your college career, of professionally managing your attendance, appointments, and assignments; it's a survival skill. To help you pass the exit exam, ENGL 004 depends on your presence and participation every day
Plagiarism/ Academic Integrity Policy	<i>Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course.</i> Any student who violates the academic integrity policy of UC can go before the Academic Integrity Committee	Any student who violates the academic integrity policy of UC can go before the Academic Integrity Committee. <i>We will discuss how to credit and paraphrase sources correctly, in order to avoid the appearance of plagiarism.</i> If you are ever in doubt, see me

ⁱ *Note.* This table shows the sentences with the original formats.

Regarding conditional sentences, both syllabi had two neutral conditionals: a suggestion (in the Attendance Policy section) and a polite request (in the Disability disclaimer); in addition, Syllabus B had a positive conditional (in the Academic Integrity section).

As I indicated in Chapter 4, a suggestion is an invitation to seek help elsewhere; it is about possible options or alternatives for the student, but not necessarily in the form of help from the instructor. In this experimental syllabi one suggestion conditional emphasizes two things: the student should find out what he/she missed during an absence and that there is a time constraint (“by the next meeting”). These stipulations make the alternate form of help—another student—

more appealing, since student schedules are often at odds with professors' office hours. "If an absence is unavoidable, it is the students' [your] responsibility to determine what work they [you] have missed by consulting the instructor or a classmate before the next meeting." The pronouns in the brackets were used in Syllabus B.

The second conditional was a polite request, as I had defined earlier: when the instructor uses the word *please* to make a request related to accommodations or instructions on how to do something. For this conditional no changes were made; both syllabi had identical sentences: "If you have a disability-related need for modifications or reasonable accommodations in this course, please inform the instructor or contact Disability Services, 202 Student Services Building, (987) 654-1212, as early in the semester as possible."

The third conditional was added to Syllabus B only. It was an encouragement, which I had defined previously as: when the instructor encourages the student to get help from the instructor or come to the instructor's office and ask questions or invites the student to speak up in class. A note on the conditionals: contrary to the findings in syllabi analysis which showed that warnings were the most common type of conditionals used, especially in the Academic Integrity Policy section, I opted to include the only encouragement I found for this section. In other words, this conditional sentence is a positive one: "If you are ever in doubt, see me."

While the differences in both syllabi may seem substantive and so perhaps obvious, one of the participants wrote in the comments: "Were the syllabi the same? They seemed very similar." Despite the changes made, on a first reading the syllabi seemed similar on a superficial level—and yet, as will be seen, the differences had an impact.

Regarding the formatting: in Syllabi A and B it was limited to italics to highlight information in four sentences in the syllabus; and in Syllabi B bold for the graphic organizers

(subheadings). Although some of the formatting in the instructors' syllabi was obvious, that is, three different formatting in a word, four in a sentence, and up to five in a paragraph, I intended to test a more subtle formatting, similar to what Ishiyama and Hartlaub (2002) did in their study. I chose two examples to illustrate my point (See Table 20). The first example illustrates a subheading with four different format features (bold, underline, italics and an asterisk). And the second example illustrates formatting at the paragraph level using various combinations: one sentence with underline, and the following with bold, underline, and caps. Notice the focus is on the negative. This contrasts to what the participants read in Syllabus B, where the focus is on the consequences of the students' action or choice.

Table 20

Instructors' Syllabi Format Contrasted to Sample Syllabi

Instructor's Syllabus	Syllabus B
<p><i>*Attendance and Class Participation.</i> Because writing process exercises and group activities will be central to this course, regular attendance is particularly crucial. Attendance will be taken at every class. Students may miss a total of three meetings without penalty. Note that Friday attendance will also impact UNIV 5 grade. Subsequent absences will lower student's participation grade.</p> <p>You must be on time for class so that you can write your daily warm-up! You CANNOT make up missed warm-ups!</p>	<p>Attendance Policy</p> <p>As noted above, regular attendance is required for you to do well; therefore, to encourage you to attend; I reserve the right to lower your grade for poor attendance, down to and including "F," (as University policy permits).</p> <p>You also need to arrive on time. <i>Habitual tardiness will not allow you to benefit fully from the 10-minute warm ups that will enhance your skills</i></p>

Questions for the Participants

This qualitative study was a survey which consisted of six open-ended questions for the participants to answer after reading each syllabus. Although the questions might overlap somewhat, they aimed to elicit information on the following three components: the course, the instructor, and the student.

1. What is your first impression of this course?
2. What is your first impression of this instructor?
3. How do you think this instructor views students in this course?
4. What predictions might you make about your relationship with this instructor?
5. What would you do if you found that you were struggling in this course?
6. Can you imagine asking this instructor for help? Why or why not?

Questions one and five were related to the course. However, the answers to the fifth question shed light on the student/instructor relationship. Questions two and four were directly about the instructor. And, question three referred to the students in general while question six referred to the participant as a member of the hypothetical class. Again, the answer to the sixth question would reveal information on the student/instructor relationship.

Procedure

The survey was piloted with four colleagues before presenting it to the students; their reactions indicated that the alternative syllabi, similar as they were, still generated different reactions in readers and were suitable for this study.

I spent three days in a borrowed campus office so that students could meet with me at their convenience. When students came in, I greeted them, explained the consent process, and

collected signed consent forms (Appendix K). Participants then filled out a profile which requested gender, age, major, number of semesters in college, grade point average (GPA), and whether English was their native language. (This information is summarized in Appendix L).

Syllabus A and B were counter balanced for student readings: that is, participants coded with an odd number read Syllabus A first and students with an even number read Syllabus B first. When the participants finished reading the first syllabus, and without referring back to it, they answered the above questions in writing: When they finished answering the questions, I gave them the second version of the syllabus to read and repeated the process. Once they finished, I thanked them and asked them to answer one final, optional question about the research which six chose to answer. (“Do you have any questions, comments, suggestions, or recommendations about the syllabi or this research?”) After transcribing their written answers, I sorted the data by participant and by questions to facilitate comparing the data (Appendices M and N).

Findings

The following answers are excerpts taken from the participants' responses to survey; the asterisk next to each an answer indicates which syllabi the student read first.

Questions Related to the Course

Table 21

Question #1: What is your first impression of this course?

Student	Syllabus A	Syllabus B
001	*Developmental English Course	-Prepare struggling students
002	-Very heavy workload, fast paced -the instructor's way or the high way	*Many many writing assignments
003	*A large amount of writing, a lot of work	-One that will benefit me
004	-Very difficult	*Introductory course for struggling students
005	*Extremely difficult	-The work has to be done
006	-Tough class with a lot of work	*Difficult course
007	*Demanding but will benefit from it	-Benefit from it
008	-Great introductory course -will teach students the correct way	*Great introductory course for writing
009	*Great help for improving writing skills	-Works on the basics of writing and communication
010	-Difficult (insecure)	*Difficult (confident)

Seven out of ten participants' impression of Syllabus A was that the course involved a lot of work or was very difficult regardless if the students saw it first or not. Notice the use of the intensifiers for Syllabus A: very heavy workload, fast paced, a large amount, lot of work, very difficult, and tough class. Three answers (#1, #8, and #9) seemed very similar for both syllabi.

Table 22

Question #5: What would you do if you found that you were struggling in this course?

Student	Syllabus A	Syllabus B
001	*contact my advisor -then my teacher	-go to the teacher
002	-figure out the situation myself -ask a friend who might be able to help me	*write an email to see what I'm doing wrong
003	*probably try visiting her office -also try the student help center	-first the instructor -then the writing center
004	-drop it -retake it in the summer or following semester -go to the writing center instead	*ask the instructor for advice on how to improve
005	*go to the teacher -get a tutor before failing	-go to the teacher right away
006	-go to the instructor	*go to the instructor for help
007	*go straight to the instructor resolve failing grade	-go straight to the instructor
008	-go to the instructor -hope he would do all he could to help me.	*most definitely go to the instructor -would completely ask for help
009	*visit the instructor -get help I need with him or the writing center	approach through email depending on my schedule
010	-approach the teacher	*meet with the teacher

Although this question asks about the course, the answers reveal student/instructor relationship. For Syllabus A, eight participants said they would go to the instructor for help and two of the answers (#3, and #8,) revealed some hesitance: “probably,” “hope.” Two of the participants would contact someone else first: advisor, or a friend and the other participants

mentioned other options as well: student help center, writing center, and a tutor. Only one participant (#4) would avoid the instructor altogether by dropping the course and take it some other time. All of the participants, without any hesitation at all, would contact the instructor for Syllabus B.

Questions Related to the Instructor

Table 23

Question #2: What is your first impression of this instructor?

Student	Syllabus A	Syllabus B
001	*Takes the course very seriously	Better than the first one. Syllabi softer message
002	-very serious about the writing course -did not offer to help people	*very willing to help the student
003	*average professor -make sure students learn -concerned about Univ. rules genuinely concerned about student	-wants to get the students prepared -willing to help the students -willing to help students who are struggling
004	-not friendly at all -unwilling to help students -give them challenging work to see who can handle it. -intimidating, standoffish	*very approachable
005	*strict but accommodating -great person out of class but strict in class	extremely helpful and kind
006	-bossy -very demanding of the students	*strict, expects a lot from the students.

Student	Syllabus A	Syllabus B
007	*well-organized and professional	-really cares about the student -so willing to teach
008	-willing to help if you report to him -students pretty much on their own -seems very intense	*there to teach the students -has a lot to offer students -this one in particular wants to help students
009	*concerned about whether or not students learn about writing.	-more willing to give help -more willing to give students help -is understanding of the needs and events in students' lives
010	-strict	*-is more willing to help

All of the participants had kind words for the instructor in Syllabus B and half of them mentioned the “willingness to help.” Some of the participants who read Syllabus B first had harsher words for the instructor in Syllabus A: very serious, bossy, very demanding, and very intense. Participant four seems to be the one most threatened by the instructor in Syllabus A and the descriptors are the harshest: “not friendly at all, very intimidating and standoffish.”

Table 24

Question #4: What predictions might you make about your relationship with this instructor?

Student	Syllabus A	Syllabus B
001	*no fear of instructors	-get along fine
002	-it would be very formal -just go to class do the work and leave	*open to a productive relationship
003	*I would get along great	-one I would be able to agree with
004	-not have any sort of relationship	*be close with this instructor
005	*love/hate relationship	-positive relationship with mutual respect
006	-harder to build a relationship	*a friendly one
007	*get along fine with the instructor	good friends with this teacher
008	-don't know if I would personally get along -respect his class rules and wishes	*definitely get along
009	*office hours are not enough but the instructor is trying	-more open, could have a closer relationship
010	-decent -not as good and comfortable	*good relationship -knows how to handle college-aged students without looking down to them

Students who read Syllabus A first indicated the relationship would be all right; however, if they read Syllabus B first, they showed some resistance: very formal, harder to build one, not sure if they'd get along, not as good and comfortable. I would like to highlight two answers

(from participants 8 and 4). The first one, when the participant indicates “respect his class rules and wishes,” gives the impression that the instructor might make capricious requests. The second one, “not have any sort of relationship,” seems pretty drastic, without any possibility of benefiting the student ever. The student has defined a boundary.

Questions Related to the Students

Table 25

Question #3: How do you think this instructor views students in this course?

Student	Syllabus A	Syllabus B
001	*struggling students	-regular college students that need a little bit more help
002	-expected to keep up	*with respect
003	*as regular students	-wants to prepare the students for the rest of their college life -wants them to learn to be on time
004	-inferior -student may have a tough time succeeding	*as equals, without student success the instructor won't succeed
005	*as true beginners	-as adults
006	-view them as themselves	*as employees -work laid out and expected to be done -show up and be on time
007	*student will benefit from it.	-as people who should want to benefit themselves
008	-respect the students if they respect him	*people who really want to learn
009	*positive view of its students	-is understanding of their needs
010	-negative view, anticipates some of them will fail	*positive outlook, students will be successful

Participants who read Syllabus A first indicated that students were viewed “as struggling students,” “regular students,” “as true beginners,” “students who would benefit,” and “positive view.” When they read Syllabus B, their reactions were “regular students-need a little bit more help,” students who need help, “as adults,” “should want to benefit themselves,” “understands their needs.” Reactions to Syllabus A tended to focus more on the student as a learner while the reactions to Syllabus B shifted to focus more on the “needs” of the student.

Participants who read Syllabus B first indicated that students were viewed “with respect,” “as equals,” “as employees,” “as people who want to learn,” and “as positive and successful.” These answers contrast with their reactions to Syllabus A : “expected to keep up,” (as if the instructor thinks they are slow); “inferior, students might have a tough time succeeding” (seems like the instructor thinks they don’t have what it takes for this course); “as themselves,” “ respect them if they respect him,” (as if the instructor is waiting for the students to act up and jump into action very quickly); “negative view, anticipates some of them will fail,” (pessimistic view, ready to fail them even before they start). As a member of the “ingroup” (students), the attributes ascribed to the instructor are negative as the “Other” (van Dijk, 1993).

Table 26

Question #6: Can you imagine asking this instructor for help? Why or why not?

Student	Syllabus A	Syllabus B
001	*yes,	yes, I wouldn't let myself just fail.
002	-no	*yes, she says those who need help should seek it
003	*yes- seems very willing to help her students	yes, she would be the first person
004	no, rather ask another student	*yes, best person to ask
005	*yes...but I would be nervous	Yes -helping students is the main priority

Student	Syllabus A	Syllabus B
006	-yes I want to better my grade	*yes, I would do anything in my power to better my grade
007	*yes	yes, it would be easier seeing how the teacher seems so nice.
008	yes, feel a little intimidated at first, but the instructor is there to help	*without a doubt -I would always go to the instructor.
009	*yes	yes, I could by the tone of the writing I would not hesitate to ask for help.
010	yes, no matter how strict or not friendly	*yes, easy to approach

Students who saw Syllabus A first, said yes and commented on the kindness or approachability of the instructor in Syllabus B: “she would be the first person,” “helping students is the main priority,” “it would be easier seeing how the teacher seems so nice,” “I could by the tone of the writing, I would not hesitate to ask for help.”

Of the students who saw Syllabus B first, two indicated they could not imagine asking Instructor A for help, and the two who answered yes (#8, and #10) indicated some resistance; however, they justified their answers. Participant #4 preferred to ask another student.

Summary

Although the differences between the syllabi were slight, the implicit messages in the Discourse registered with students as positive or negative—students felt welcomed or not, in opposition to or in alignment with the instructor; more or less willing to engage with the instructor over questions about course content. The final discussion in the next chapter will expand on the findings of both studies as well as their implications.

Chapter 6 Discussion

In the end, discourse analysis is one way to engage in a very important human task. The task is this: to think more deeply about the meanings we give people's words so as to make ourselves better, more humane people and the world a better, more humane place.
Gee

I began my report of this research with a personal anecdote about an event that haunted me and that prompted me to ask myself more questions and harder questions every time I reflected on it. One of the initial questions whether students in my classroom were the only ones perceived as “remedial”--that is, if only students in my basic skills courses were perceived as people who needed to be fixed, and as people who would have to settle for menial jobs if my course didn't fix them. I posed this question to myself as a historical one and found that in fact, it wasn't a situation particular to *my* students in *my* class but part of something larger and pervasive. The historical dilemma narrated in Chapter 2 gave me the perspective I needed to view this as a public issue and not as a personal problem. As Gee (2005) indicated, “the Discourses we enact existed before each of us came on the scene and most of them will exist long after we have left the scene. Discourses, through our words and deeds, have talked to each other through history, and, in doing so, form human history” (Gee, 2005, p. 27). Given that I had (have) a personal investment in the topic, I set out to turn it into my research project so that I might understand more about the perceptions, and linguistic manifestations of those perceptions, that affect the experiences of students in basic skills courses or remedial courses. However, as the results became more and more clear, I must admit that the initial framework which I used to focus on a specific population in hopes of finding evidence of the two opposing paradigms, dropped away and the study emerged to become about syllabi discourse generally. As I

mentioned in the first chapter, I began with pronoun analysis and this led me to hypothesize about other elements of language in the syllabus and away from my original concern of discourse in the remedial classroom. With this in mind, the findings, discussion, and implications I discuss in this chapter apply to a broader educational setting as well as to basic skills writing courses or remedial courses in a broader sense.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provided the tools and structure I needed to answer my research questions. I have already detailed the process of surface analysis of the syllabus texts. To explore deep structure—how the surface structure embeds meaning and what those meanings might be—I returned to Gee’s work (2005) to guide my interpretation. He suggest that critical discourse analysts employ “four tools of inquiry...[to] analyze...specific instances of language-in-use”; these conceptual tools are: “social languages, Discourses, intertextuality, and Conversations.” (p. 20).

Social languages are “different styles or varieties of language for different purposes” (p. 20). An example from the syllabi analysis would be when the instructor changes from formal or technical language to everyday language or even language you might use with a close friend. To illustrate, from one syllabus: “Just buy the freakin’ stapler and USE IT!” This language is not formal, nor typical of a formal document. The social language here is everyday language—like that of a friend. I need to point out again that these interpretations are tentative: to provide more definitive interpretations such language would have to be considered in the context of the classroom, when the instructor is discussing the syllabus with the students. Otherwise, it could mean different things to the different readers. Still: this analysis provides some general insights and points, even if the style and meaning assigned to specific examples might be altered in context.

The second tool of inquiry is Discourses with the capital “D.” It refers to the other “stuff” besides language that people use to build identities (p. 20). In a nutshell, “You can’t just ‘talk the talk,’ you have to ‘walk the walk’ as well” (p. 21). If the instructor wants to be recognized as an instructor, he/she has to be able to “combine and integrate language, actions, interactions, ways of thinking, believing, valuing, and using various symbols, tools, and objects to enact a particular sort of socially recognizable identity” (p. 21). Of the 73 instructors contacted for the first part of this research, 51 appeared not to be tenured or tenure track; that is 70% were lecturers, instructors, wage staff, and tutors; only 11 of the 73 (15%) appeared to be tenured or tenure track. Many of the instructors were in temporary teaching situations, including graduate students who might as relative newcomers to the classroom be concerned with establishing authority. In such situations, it would not be surprising if the Discourse of a new teaching assistant went a bit overboard on the language of authority in order to get the necessary recognition and respect. This is precisely what I did as a new TA: I looked for the recognition from my former professors as well as from my students. The key to Discourse is “recognition” in order to pull it off.

Whatever you have done must be similar enough to other performances to be recognizable. However, if it is different enough from what has gone before, but still recognizable, it can simultaneously change and transform Discourses. If it is not recognizable, then you’re not “in” the Discourse. (p. 27)

A person who is simultaneously a student and an instructor might easily rely heavily on early teaching models of instructor as expert authority, seeking recognition from the students in presentation of his or her self as a serious and strict educator (especially if they are very young, and female). As Baecker (1998) points out, for the new TA “the syllabus is...one of the first

places we assert our authority as teachers” (p. 59). A new instructor in an untenured position might experience the same internal pressure to establish authority.

The third tool of inquiry, intertextuality, refers to situations when two types of texts are used; it is a cross-reference to another text or type of text, when “...written text alludes to, quotes, or otherwise relates to, another one [text]” (p. 21). This worked in two different ways in the syllabi— specifically in the Academic Integrity Policy section. For example, when the instructors want to be perceived as good or kind, they tended to shift the blame to the institution and justify that they are forced to include the disclaimer in the syllabus as part of their job requirement. The second example is when instructors want to assert themselves as an authority and use the “voice of authority of the institution” to enforce their rules on Academic Integrity as well as all the other rules they come can up with. Intertextuality taken to the extreme can manifest itself as if the authority has been bestowed upon the instructors for them to use as they please.

The fourth tool of inquiry is Conversations with the capital “C.” It is about a theme or debate that has been the focus of much talk and writing in some social group and that influences interpretation of language (p. 21). In this research I brought into the discussion the debate or Conversation on the two paradigms of remedial versus developmental education in order to make clear my understandings and interpretations of each one so that you can see where I stand as a researcher. My position is not a neutral one; therefore, being up front and clear will allow readers to understand how it influences the way I manipulate and interpret the data as well as how I present the findings and make recommendations.

Each of these areas offers some insight into the discussion I offer in this chapter.

Discussion of the Syllabi Analysis

This discussion, which reflects an analysis of deep structure and the ways in which various elements interact to generate meaning, is based on the Seven Building Tasks presented in Chapter 4 but which I will present again here for easy reference. They are questions relevant to language-in-use (Gee, 2005), and they allowed me to investigate not only my original questions but new ones emerging from the research process.

- *Significance. How is this piece of language being used to make certain things significant or not and in what ways?*
- *Activities. What activity or activities is this piece of language being used to enact (i.e. get others to recognize as going on)?*
- *Identities. What identity or identities is this piece of language being used to enact (i.e. get others to recognize as operative).*
- *Relationships. What sort of relationship or relationships is this piece of language seeking to enact with others (present or not)?*
- *Politics. What perspective on social goods is this piece of language communicating (i.e., what is being communicated as to what is taken to be “normal,” “right,” “good,” “correct,” “proper,” “appropriate,” “valuable,” “the way things are,” “the way things ought to be,” “high status or low status,” “like me or not like me,” and so forth)?*
- *Connections. How does this piece of language connect or disconnect things; how does it make one thing relevant or irrelevant to another?*
- *Sign systems and knowledge. How does this piece of language privilege or disprivilege specific sign system (e.g., Spanish vs. English, technical language vs. everyday language,*

words vs. images, words vs. equations) or different ways of knowing and believing or claims to knowledge and belief?

Pronouns

The second research question: How are issues of authority, rules, and power portrayed in the syllabi? In other words, what might the pronouns *I*, *you*, and *we* suggest about power arrangements in the classroom? I posed questions of relationship and what the pronouns seek to enact. The analysis explored whether there was any particular way instructors in the basic skills writing course addressed their students, and if so, what it might mean. More specifically, I asked whether and how might an instructor, consciously or not, use pronouns either to help build a sense of community or to affirm his or her authority over students. Analysis using Gee's Building Tasks led to the following insights.

The pronoun used the least was *we* (only 7% of the total pronouns). Of the 25 syllabi, 13—roughly half--had two or fewer instances of *we*. A closer look showed that while some of the instances indicated community, others instances of intertextuality (the institutional voice) and others a false *we*. The lack of this pronoun—or its perversion into a false version, suggests to students that the classroom will not be a collaborative community where the instructor works with students, but rather is a domain the instructor dominates. Power is not shared, but resides in the resident authority.

The pronoun used overall the most was *you* (74%), which stresses that the responsibility of the workload in the course rests on the student. Baecker (1998) stated “pronoun usage mirrors actual power relationships in the classroom, where the bulk of the work falls on the student but the teacher retains the gatekeeper role” (p. 60).

The cases where zero pronouns were used sets the stage for a very formal relationship. When the student is referred to in third person, he/she is alienated both from the classroom community and from the instructor. Likewise, when the instructor refers to him/herself as the *instructor* and not as *I*, distance between the actors is increased by the stress on institutional rather than more personal roles. The situation provokes the question of how students are addressed. In one case no pronouns appeared, and neither did the noun variant *instructor*; only *student* or *students* were used. This particular syllabus seemed rather cut and dried; however, more than generic, it felt like it had been “sanitized.” The classroom is a community of persons, why then are students addressed in third person, as the “other,” as if they were not there—as if they didn’t exist in any personal sense. The instructor establishes the identities through pronoun and noun usage.

The pronoun analysis shows that as Baecker (1998) said, “we should keep in mind that our students are unlikely to be fooled by false claims of community. They are well aware of who will be doing the work and who will be doing the grading. If we want to establish a real community within our classroom, we need to do it honestly” (p. 61).

Insights from the pronoun analysis are connected to the other two elements (formatting and conditionals) in the next sections. I had hoped that the three elements together would provide a clearer view of the answer to my “big picture” research question: How might the assumptions of the two major paradigms be embedded in the discourse of typical syllabi?

Formatted Information in the Syllabi

The formatting in the syllabi was used to emphasize certain information; to make it prominent for the student to see. Through the use of single, double, triple, quadruple format features and the use at various levels: word, phrase, sentence, and paragraph, the instructor made

certain things significant. While formatting was used in several parts of the syllabi, in the narrative part of the syllabi, the most prominent use was to warn or threaten students, reinforcing the common pronoun message that the identity of the instructor is the sole authority in the classroom, on a higher plane and significantly distant from the student/s.

Rather than emphasize a learning community, instructors emphasize who is in charge; and in order to assert their power, they do this by warning students of the consequences of their actions if they do not obey. Although some syllabi use formatting to convey other messages, for example encouragement, they are fewer. The relationship that is emphasized most through the formatted features is that of obedience. The formatting in the syllabi communicates to the students that there is one right way to do things correctly in the classroom--which is the instructor's way. In order to make sure the student complies, warnings and threats are used and some are justified through intertextuality by using the "voice" of a higher authority. Overall, the formatting in the syllabi showed that the negative things in the syllabi were relevant. Whether or not that was the intention is not clear.

An additional strategy from Gee (2005) proved useful for this data. He indicated that: "one device that helps us think about what something means is to ask in what other ways it could have been said or written. Once we see that alternatives existed, we can ask why the person said or wrote it as they did and not in some alternative way" (p. 15). I asked this question of the sample syllabus page I examined in Chapter 4 (page 78; original sample page appears in Appendix H), which presented format for submitting work to the instructor. Below is the same information presented in alternative format, as Gee suggests. This alternative seems easier to read and to use, with less formatting, no intimidating language, and a focus on the specific steps the student needs to follow. Only form, not content, has been changed.

Table 27

Format for Submitting Work

Format	Double check
<input type="checkbox"/> Typewritten	<input type="checkbox"/> No cover page
<input type="checkbox"/> Heading – upper right hand corner	<input type="checkbox"/> Staple the pages together
Your Name	In proper order
Dr.....	
Engl 004	No paper clips
Your E-mail Address	
Date	Do not fold your paper
<input type="checkbox"/> Title of your work centered	Do not use an industrial stapler
<input type="checkbox"/> Skip six lines after the heading	<input type="checkbox"/> Proofread your work carefully
<input type="checkbox"/> Text	<input type="checkbox"/> Use the spell-checker
<input type="checkbox"/> Skip three or four lines after title	<input type="checkbox"/> Print your work
<input type="checkbox"/> Double-spaced	<input type="checkbox"/> Read it out loud
<input type="checkbox"/> One-inch margins	<input type="checkbox"/> Correct the errors
<input type="checkbox"/> Font: Times New Roman or	<input type="checkbox"/> Print out a new draft
Garamond	
<input type="checkbox"/> Font size: 12 point	
<input type="checkbox"/> Number the pages (insert page number)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bottom of page (manually)	

This analysis has obvious implications. For students new to the university—as many in basic skills courses are—a first experience with a syllabus that stresses commands and obedience with formatting that nearly bludgeons the student with the need for compliance can be discouraging, if not disheartening. Such stresses imply the instructor expects the worst of students, who may already be doubting their ability to succeed if placed in a basic skills course. If the instructor believes that the student has potential and can do the work, a more neutral and

helpful format will not only help the student comply more effectively but also allows the student to see what is wanted and to perceive the instructions as straightforward and easy to comply with.

Two suggestions for practice follow from these observations. First, if the instructor's intention is to come across as very demanding and authoritative, then emphasizing the appropriate text would do as long as it is done deliberately. By the same token, if the emphasized text does not reflect the instructor's teaching philosophy, then it only serves to confuse the student because of the mixed messages. The discrepancy of what is written and what the student perceives in the classroom might cause some students unnecessary stress. Perlman, McCann and McFadden (1999) offer the following advice: "try to write syllabi that are as brief and focused as possible, but that communicate the nature of your course to students in a clear and understandable manner. The better your students understand the purposes and procedures of your course, the more likely they are to enter enthusiastically into the learning partnership you offer them" (p. 24).

Conditional Sentences or If Clauses

The conditionals in the syllabi are used to communicate rules, negotiations, and accommodations the student should be aware of. That there are certain rules that must be followed in the classroom and they are established by the instructor. The rules are clearly stated, and if they are not followed there are consequences and/or sanctions. These messages also confirm the identity of the instructor as authority. He/she sets the rules and makes clear how students will be affected if they don't comply.

While nine different categories of conditionals were found throughout the syllabi, if those considered neutral were removed, overall there were more negative conditional statements than positive. The relationship that is enacted with others is that of dominance, warning, and punishment. The sign system that is privileged here is that of warning and threats over encouragement and negotiation in the classroom.

“Scolders” give brief descriptions of content and lengthy sets of instructions detailing what will happen if a student comes in late or leaves early, hands in a paper after a deadline, misses an exam, fails to follow the rules for margins and double-spacing, does not participate in class discussion. The scolders often sound more like lawyers than professors. (Rubin, 1985, p. 56)

The university encourages the use of Academic Integrity statements in the syllabi. Through the voice of a higher authority, the instructor informs students of certain rules and the sanctions. However, some instructors kept the institutional “voice” as they moved forward to discuss other rules in the syllabi. This reminded me of what Bing (1994) stated: All cultures have either covert or overt power structures (p. 47). When instructors keep the institutional voice to carry out overt warnings and threats, there are very serious power issues going on.

Through the pronouns, formatting, and conditionals I see that most often the instructor who appears in these basic skills syllabi seems condescending. With so much emphasis placed on warnings and punishment, the message that is being sent is that the instructor has a preconceived notion about the students as cheaters, lazy, and irresponsible—that is why all of these rules are stated in the syllabus in the first place. This would be what van Dijk (1995) called “negative other-presentation” (p. 157). The image of the student that is conjured comes from the

instructors' own experiences and the ideologies are there, engrained, but not visible to the instructor because it makes perfect sense to him/her. The only way to make them visible is by asking questions to unveil habits that might harm students. By the same token, when students read the syllabus do they feel they are being labeled as cheaters, lazy, or irresponsible?

Discussion of Field Study

As I mentioned earlier, students for the modest field study were sampled by convenience; that is, I did not target students in the basic writing skills course since the findings of the syllabi analysis allowed me to move beyond the remedial/developmental paradigm, therefore, I wanted to see how a typical student might react to the altered syllabi.

Several of my observations in my earlier analysis pointed out Participant #004. She seemed apprehensive about the instructor in Syllabus A. A closer look at her profile (Appendix L) revealed that besides being the youngest participant, she also had the lowest GPA (2.9). This brings up some important concerns. Of the ten participants, she is the one that would most benefit from getting an instructor's help; however, the way the syllabus was constructed generated a mental barrier for her, one that wouldn't permit her to approach the instructor for help. Even more, she was the only participant who said she would drop the course.

Although, I cannot reach any definite conclusion, this student mirrors somewhat the students in the basic writing skills course. They are young and like Participant #004, their GPA might not be the very highest. I reiterate that this study is only a descriptive study and since I only have ten participants I cannot say anything conclusive. However, if a similar study is done with a larger pool of students then the findings would probably be more telling. Perrine, Lisle and Tucker (1995) explained "The findings suggests that younger students are more reluctant to

seek help from an instructor when they are unsure about the instructor's willingness to give that help" (p. 50).

Other insights come from the group as a whole. Of the ten participants, five chose to make an optional comment. Together, these comments suggest that syllabi significantly shape student perception on a first reading.

Participant	Comment
001	I felt better reading the second one (Syllabus B). I like the use of the bullets, and the slight word changes made the stress of the class seem softer. That way the students go into the class with a nice clear mind.
002	I think syllabi scare students and the more personal, the better I like it when I get the impression that my professors want a relationship with their students.
005	Were the syllabi the same? They seemed very similar.
007	I think that this survey was interesting because I do get a first impression from a teacher's syllabus.
009	Both syllabi were well written and put together. Second one offers more explanation and detail about class.

Chapter 7 Implications

Higher education shall not be higher by virtue of serving the rich, the well-born, the academically able and advantaged, or those destined to fill the academic ranks; rather, it shall be “higher” because it takes an adult or near adult beyond his present level toward a fuller realization of his powers to be. Soldwedel

Pedagogical Implications

While some conclusions may apply to the remedial/developmental paradigm, several obvious conclusions can be drawn here which focus more on syllabi discourse and apply to a broader educational area. The first is that instructors should attend carefully to what they say and how they say it in their syllabi, especially with the least experienced students: “College faculty may need to put extra effort to convince younger students to seek help outside of class” (Perrine, Lisle, and Tucker, 1995, p. 50). Instructions should be simple; unnecessary harsh words and threats should be avoided; formatting should be used to make it easier for students to navigate the syllabus and easily locate information they need.

In short, to avoid inadvertently discouraging students, especially the most fragile students not only in basic skills courses but in other courses as well, great care should be taken to construct a syllabus that encourages students and helps them know how to succeed. In the process of conducting this research, I accidentally learned that these rather simple and superficially obvious points have relevance far beyond the basic skills classroom and inexperienced instructors. An anecdote is, I think, relevant and revealing.

One evening while chatting with my neighbor (also a Ph.D. student and a TA) about my preliminary findings which I presented at a Student Research Conference at Harvard, she gasped and said, “My goodness, I’ve never stopped to question my syllabus practices. I do that! I highlight all of the bad stuff so they know what not to do!” To her dismay, she only focused on

the negative, out of habit. She realized she did have the option to focus on the positive. She said, “Now, I have to go back and read it again with new eyes and make changes.”

Moreover, after the presentation of my research in progress at Harvard, several of the people from the audience came up to me and said that they were either guilty of doing the same in their syllabi or as a student had taken a basic writing course and had a syllabi focusing on all of the things they couldn’t do: “all of the bad stuff.” Several professors in the session said they would have to go back and see what they could do to change this practice they never stopped to think about.

My research suggests that anyone interested in helping others improve their practice might take the following steps:

1. Create awareness of how unquestioned practices regarding syllabi construction at the lower level courses might impact students who are at the university for the first time and are not familiar with the dynamics of academia.
2. Expand the information on syllabi construction to include the discussion and illustration of discourse and ideology embedded in the text through the three elements presented in this study (pronouns, formatting, and conditionals).
3. Provide TA’s and new instructors with hands on information that may guide them to critically unpack a generic syllabi and reconstruct it tailored to their teaching philosophy—representative of who they really are as educators.
4. Begin a new Conversation on neglected areas of the syllabi and what can be done about it.

Implications for Future Research

Additional research is needed regarding syllabi. For example, a similar study employing Critical Discourse Analysis of syllabi in a higher level writing course can be done to explore power relationships and ideology and how they might affect students. One element to consider in the study would be the instructor's position or rank, specifically to explore if there is any particular discourse associated to the position held.

A similar research can be done and vary the institution, for example a two-year college or community college and compare the results to see if they differ in any way. Another possible study could be done with the remedial courses in general (math, biology, chemistry, etc.) to determine if the paradigm is evident across disciplines.

Most importantly, however, there is a need to explore the impact of the remedial paradigm upon student perceptions and performance. The field study suggests students *are* affected by what they read, and that their initial perceptions may well have important consequences for their later behavior in such critical areas as a willingness to seek help from the instructor. More work is certainly needed to deepen understanding of how the two paradigms evident in Discourse about basic skills affect student success.

This research began with the questions: How might the assumptions of the two major paradigms be embedded in the discourse of typical syllabi? And how are the issues of authority, rules, and power portrayed in the syllabi? However, the first question disappeared because students in the remedial classroom are just like any other student. They are NOT a special breed as the negative paradigm suggests; they are worthy of respect and responsive to a respectful discourse which is why the implications then are broader than I had expected.

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Appendix A

Ross' (1970) Definitions of Remedial and Developmental

Terms	Remedial	Developmental
~Instruction	<p>Instruction (during the progress of a course or study of a body of material) in acquisition of basic <i>prerequisite</i> skills which are essential for eventual success in the course. This implies that acquisition of these skills is not included in the objectives of the course.</p>	<p>Instruction designed specifically to assist the student to reach a stated goal. (In my mind, all courses should, therefore, employ developmental instruction.)</p>
~Course	<p>Does not exist.</p>	<p>Any course taught by an instructor who has accepted the preceding definition of developmental instruction, and whose course is organized about the concept of assisting students to reach stated goals</p> <p>A course taught by an instructor who has adopted the definition of developmental instruction and has integrated this type of instruction into his teaching philosophy.</p>

Terms	Remedial	Developmental
~Student	Does not exist. This nullification of a loose term is accomplished by changing the emphasis from the student to the type of instruction the student is receiving relative to the course in which he is enrolled. A student having difficulty might be described by some specific learning disability term—such as brain damaged, trainable, educable, etc., but not remedial.	

Appendix B

Rubin's (1991) Definitions of Remedial and Developmental

Terms	Remedial (p. 9)	Developmental (p. 4-5)
Definitions	<p>instruction designed to remove a student's deficiencies in the basic entry or exit level skills at a prescribed level of proficiency in order to make him/her competitive with peers.</p> <p>COMMENT: The assumption is that students have already been taught (or at least been exposed to learning), but that the teaching was not effective and must be repeated.</p>	<p>1: in the normal/expected sequence of learning.</p> <p>Usually used in counter distinction to accelerated and/or remedial learning. Use of the term in college education assumes/takes cognizance of the notion that there is a gap between "high school" and "college" that needs to be filled in for many students.</p> <p>The claim is, thus, that these students need to learn skills they have not previously been taught (in high school) and that the fault is not with their ability, but with their preparation. Compare with REMEDIAL, a term that suggests that skills <i>have</i> been taught, but not learned (or not learned <i>correctly</i>), and that therefore, the student must be <i>re</i> taught. Remedial instruction may be a tool used in a developmental program. The use of the term developmental in education has its origins in psychology, which, in turn, took it from medicine. Development is defined as the process of growth, unfolding, activation, etc. Thus, expected "normal" growth is developmental. In medical terms, there can be developmental "delay," as well.</p> <p>2: instruction designed to improve student's competencies in the basic skills areas and allow increased mastery over the student's environment to facilitate effective learning and communication.</p>

Terms	Remedial (p. 9)	Developmental (p. 4- 5)
~Courses		<p>1: any course or series of courses designed to build upon existing skills in order to prepare students for more advanced academic work.</p> <p>2: any course organized according to the principles of cognitive and student development and designed to promote both affective and cognitive development.</p>
~Education		<p>1: a sub-discipline of the field of education concerned with improving the performance of students.</p> <p>2: a field of research, teaching, and practice designed to improve academic performance.</p> <p>3: a process utilizing principles of developmental theory to facilitate learning.</p>
~Educators		<p>1: educational professionals who work in programs designed to enhance the academic and personal growth of students.</p> <p>2: educational professionals who employ the principles of cognitive and affective development in designing and delivering instruction.</p>
~Programs	<p>a group of courses and/or activities to help learners needing remediation to achieve basic skills in their identified deficit area.</p>	<p>1: an organized system for delivering instruction, academic support, and personal development activities to college students.</p> <p>2: any program designed according to the principles of developmental theory for the purpose of promoting intellectual and personal growth.</p>

Terms	Remedial (p. 9)	Developmental (p. 4 & 5)
~Reading Programs	<p>1: college reading programs designed for those students who have not yet mastered the basic decoding and comprehension skills necessary to begin effectively reading college level tests.</p> <p>2: specialized reading instruction for students who do not meet entry or exit levels of a prescribed proficiency.</p>	<p>1: reading instruction in which the primary purpose is to build upon existing reading skills.</p> <p>2: any reading instruction at the college level that is not remedial and includes the study skills and strategic learning devices necessary to handle college level material efficiently and effectively. Most college students would find this instruction beneficial since they have not been systematically exposed to a process for studying.</p>
~Students	<p>students who are required to participate in specific academic improvement courses/programs as a condition of entry to college.</p>	<p>1: students assessed as having potential for success if appropriate educational opportunities are provided.</p> <p>2: students who, while meeting college admissions requirements, are not yet fully prepared to succeed in one or more introductory courses.</p>

Appendix C

Letter to Basic Writing Skills Course Instructors

February 23, 2006

Dear _____,

Will you please take five minutes to help me try to improve teacher-student communication? I ask only that you send me a copy of your Basic Writing Skills (Engl 004) course syllabus with your identifying information deleted or blocked out. I have interest and expertise in developmental education, and I am researching positive communication in developmental classrooms. I would be happy to share the results, if you like.

If possible, please e-mail an electronic copy to me at rjr107@psu.edu. However, if you prefer, you may send it to:

Rosa Roman-Perez
Doctoral Candidate
College of Education
The Pennsylvania State University
238 Chambers Building
University Park, PA 16802

The scope of my research involves only discourse of syllabi so no identifying information or personal information on instructors who provided the syllabi is relevant to the study. No information on the course number, name of the university or the name of the campuses, names of those who provided the data for this study will be disclosed.

While it is possible that at a later time I might hope to ask some follow up questions, please be sure that simply sending the syllabus does NOT commit you to any further participation in this study. If you will simply send your syllabus, I will be very grateful.

I will like to thank you for your time and if you are interested in the results of my research, please let me know and I'll be sure to share them with you. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (814) 769-9443 (Cellular) or at (814) 862-0199 (Home).

Sincerely,

Rosa Roman-Perez
Doctoral Candidate
C&I, Language and Literacy Program

c: Dr. Patricia H. Hinchey
Doctoral Advisor

Appendix D

Syllabi Analysis Data

Syllabi	Pages	%	<i>I</i>	%	<i>You</i>	%	<i>We</i>	%	Totals: <i>I, You, We</i>	Percent Total Pronouns
001	13	8%	3	2%	35	4%	1	1%	39	4%
002	5	3%	0	0%	19	2%	1	1%	20	2%
003	9	6%	44	22%	118	15%	2	2%	164	15%
004	9	6%	5	3%	49	6%	7	9%	61	6%
005	4	3%	7	4%	35	4%	2	2%	44	4%
006	2	1%	4	2%	15	2%	2	2%	21	2%
007	5	3%	8	4%	32	4%	1	1%	41	4%
008	8	5%	26	13%	65	8%	11	14%	102	9%
009	3	2%	9	5%	25	3%	2	2%	36	3%
010	16	10%	24	12%	62	8%	1	1%	87	8%
011	12	8%	21	11%	84	11%	4	5%	109	10%
012	3	2%	3	2%	29	4%	1	1%	33	3%
013	3	2%	2	1%	11	1%	0	0%	13	1%
014	7	5%	8	4%	44	6%	7	9%	59	5%
015	10	6%	9	5%	34	4%	15	19%	58	5%
016	4	3%	0	0%	20	3%	4	5%	24	2%
017	4	3%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Syllabi	Pages	%	I	%	You	%	We	%	Totals: I, You, We	Percent Total Pronouns
A01	7	5%	7	4%	18	2%	3	4%	28	3%
A02	4	3%	0	0%	5	1%	4	5%	9	1%
A03	2	1%	2	1%	5	1%	0	0%	7	1%
A04	5	3%	3	2%	16	2%	3	4%	22	2%
A05	3	2%	0	0%	0	0%	3	4%	3	0%
A06	3	2%	9	5%	34	4%	1	1%	44	4%
A07	8	5%	5	3%	34	4%	3	4%	42	4%
A08	6	4%	1	1%	5	1%	3	4%	9	1%
Totals	155	100%	200	100%	794	100%	81	100%	1075	100%

Appendix E

Noun Variants: Student(s) and Instructor

Syllabus	Student	Student/s	Total	Percentage	Instructor	Percentage	Total NV	Percentage
001	3	29	32	14%	2	4%	34	12%
002	5	7	12	5%	3	6%	15	5%
003	2	3	5	2%	0	0%	5	2%
004	4	7	11	5%	0	0%	11	4%
005	1	1	2	1%	1	2%	3	1%
006	3	9	12	5%	2	4%	14	5%
007	1	6	7	3%	2	4%	9	3%
008	1	3	4	2%	5	9%	9	3%
009	0	6	6	3%	0	0%	6	2%
010	2	4	6	3%	2	4%	8	3%
011	6	5	11	5%	5	9%	16	6%
012	2	8	10	5%	0	0%	10	4%
013	1	8	9	4%	1	2%	10	4%
014	1	10	11	5%	0	0%	11	4%
015	1	10	11	5%	3	6%	14	5%
016	0	6	6	3%	3	6%	9	3%
017	6	11	17	8%	0	0%	17	6%

Syllabus	Student	Student/s	Total	Percentage	Instructor	Percentage	Total NV	Percentage
A01	2	7	9	4%	1	2%	10	4%
A02	2	4	6	3%	4	8%	10	4%
A03	2	3	5	2%	3	6%	8	28%
A04	1	4	5	2%	2	4%	7	3%
A05	2	5	7	3%	2	4%	9	3%
A06	1	5	6	3%	1	2%	7	3%
A07	0	6	6	3%	10	19%	16	6%
A08	1	4	5	2%	1	2%	6	2%
Totals	50	171	221	100%	53		275	

[Note: have to double check percentages, Excel rounded off and they exceed 100%]

Appendix F

Sample Page from Syllabi on Academic Integrity Policy

Example #1: Bulleted text

Academic Integrity Responsibility

ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITY:

As your teacher, I promise to:

- adhere to syllabus policies for all students
- stay with the schedule descriptions as closely as possible. Changes to the schedule will be posted on line and announced in class. Changes will allow you more time, not less.
- return or respond to major assignments within two weeks
- apply the standards and requirements detailed in the assignment descriptions on all work
- abide by the grading scale listed in the syllabus and detailed in course materials online

Students at the University Campus are expected to abide by and conduct themselves with integrity, both personal and scholarly, adhering to The University Campus Principles:

- I will respect the dignity of all individuals within the University Campus Community.
- I will practice academic integrity.
- I will demonstrate social and personal responsibility.
- I will be responsible for my own academic progress and agree to comply with all University policies.

Appendix G

Sample Page from Syllabi on Academic Integrity Policy

Example 2: Bulleted Text

The following practices constitute, for the purposes of this policy, violations of Academic Integrity.

Cheating:

Using a crib sheet; preprogramming a calculator; using books or notes during a closed book exam, etc.

Copying on a Test:

Looking at another unsuspecting student's exam and copying; copying in a complicit manner with another student; exchanging color-coded exams for the purpose of copying; passing answers via notes; discussing answers in exam, etc.

Plagiarism:

The fabrication of information and citations; submitting others' work from professional journals, books articles papers, and the Internet; submission of other students' papers or lab results or project reports and representing the work as one's own; fabricating in part or total, submissions and citing them falsely, etc.

Acts of Aiding or Abetting:

Facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others; unauthorized collaboration of work; permitting another to copy from one's exam; writing a per for another; inappropriately collaborating on a home assignment or exam without permission or when prohibited, etc.

Unauthorized Possession:

Of examinations, through purchase or supply; stealing exams; failing to return exams on file; selling exams; photocopying exams; buying exams; any possession of an exam without the custodian's permission, etc.

Submitting Previous Work:

Submitting a paper, case study, lab report or any assignment that had been submitted for credit in a prior or concurrent course without the knowledge and permission of the instructor.

Tampering With Work:

Changing one's own or another student's work product such as lab results, papers, or test answers; tampering with work either as a prank or to sabotage another's work.

Ghosting:

Taking a quiz, an exam, performing a laboratory exercise or similar evaluation in place of another; having another take a quiz, an exam, or perform an exercise or similar evaluation in place of oneself, etc.

Altering Exams:

Changing incorrect answers on graded exams or other forms of evaluation when they are passed back to students for in-class review; changing the letter and/or numerical grade on a test, etc.

Computer Program Theft:

Electronic theft of computer programs, data or text belonging to another, etc.

In addition to the above violation categories, there are, for the purposes of this course, the following: In a composition course, most of the possible violations fall under the "Plagiarism"

category identified by the University. We will spend significant time in-class studying what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it, and all in and out of class writings will be evaluated according to that standard. If at any time you are confused about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask!

A student caught committing any of these violations will be subject to a sanction ranging from a documented official warning to failure of the course. In extreme cases, or in the case of more than two previous violations, students may be subject to formal university disciplinary action. A student has the right to contest an instructor's accusation and/or sanction and may seek a hearing before the College Academic Integrity Committee.

Appendix H

Sample Page from Syllabi to Illustrate Format Features, Format Levels, and Meaning

Format for Submitting Work

Work in this class MUST BE TYPED and must use the following format. First of all, *do not use a cover page*. Instead, put your name (for obvious reasons), my name (so that if the work gets lost, people will know who to return it to), the course and section number (standard practice), your e-mail address (in case I have questions and want to contact you), and the date (standard practice) in the upper RIGHT corner. I don't care where other teachers have wanted such information; I want it in the upper RIGHT corner and I expect to find it there. In other words, it should look like this:

Your Name
Dr.....
Engl 004
Your E-mail Address
Date

Skip about six lines and center the title of your work (note: that means that you must give your work a title); skip three or four more lines and begin typing the work, double-spaced. Use standard one-inch margins and a common, easily legible font like **Times New Roman or Garamond in 12-point—do not use a really large or small font**. It is extremely unprofessional—and unwise as well, since it shows that you are not properly concerned with the impression your work makes on your audience—to turn in something with messed-up margins or print, or with a font so busy that people can't focus on what you've actually written.

If the document has multiple pages, **DO NOT NEGLECT TO NUMBER THE PAGES**. If you can't get the computer to print the numbers, write them neatly in ink at the bottom of each page. **Staple the pages together in the proper order**—I get very cranky if I have to take your work apart and re-order it. I want the pages fastened with a staple, not a paper clip, and whatever you do, **DO NOT FASTEN THE PAGES TOGETHER BY FOLDING THEM IN SOME ELABORATE WAY**. Just buy a freakin' stapler and **USE IT**. I do not read or give credit for work containing multiple pages that is not stapled, and I except the staple to be neat and **safe**. Do not use one of those industrial-strength staplers designed for extremely large documents—the ends of the staples are often quite sharp, and being scratched by one can be quiet painful. I reserve the right not to give credit for work that causes me bodily harm or injury.

PROOFREAD your work carefully—don't just use the spell-checker-BY READING IT ALOUD AFTER YOU PRINT IT OUT; I guarantee you will catch typos you didn't find when reading the document on a computer screen. AFTER YOU FIND THOSE ERRORS, CORRECT THEM, AND PRINT OUT A NEW DRAFT. While you might invite friends to dinner in order to serve them a next recipe you want to try out, still you would not offer them food that isn't finished; likewise, the fact that you are sharing your work with your instructor and classmates in order to get feedback on it does not mean that if you do miss once or two typos your work will be penalized. It does mean that you are expected to exert every effort to see that

your work is free from errors of grammar, spelling, usages and punctuation. Submitting work that has not been carefully proofread makes you look lazy, ignorant and selfish.

Appendix I

Table of Conditional Sentences or If Clauses by Categories

Syllabus	If Clause	Category
003	Thus, rather than planning to miss class five times, you should plan to be present so that if you must miss class because of some emergency, you don't end up flunking. (p. 2)	Advice
003	If you are so busy or disorganized that you must miss more than five class meetings, you should reconsider your decision to enroll in this course. Excessive tardies can also hurt your grade. (p. 2)	Advice
003	Instead, put your name (for obvious reasons), my name (so that if the work gets lost, people will know who to return it to), the course and section number (standard practice), your e-mail address (in case I have questions and want to contact you), and the date (standard practice) in the upper RIGHT corner. (p. 5)	Advice
008	If there is material you don't want me to read, tape a blank piece of paper over that portion and write on it, "Please don't read this." (p. 5)	Advice
011	If the lab is your main access to computers and the Internet, be sure to factor the necessary time there into your schedule. (p. 5-6)	Advice
011	If you must miss a class, partner with your classmates to stay up to date. (p. 7)	Advice
A03	Part of my job is to introduce you to correct citation skills in order to avoid this crime, because if you are caught plagiarizing, you risk failing the course. (p. 1)	Advice
A06	If you find that you can not get to class on time, perhaps you should take the class again, at a more convenient time. (p. 2)	Advice

Syllabus	If Clause	Category
002	If you miss class, make sure you get the assignment from another student, or the instructor, as soon as possible. (p. 4)	Command
002	If you must be absent, contact me by phone or email immediately. (p. 4)	Command
003	If the document has multiple pages, DO NOT NEGLECT TO NUMBER THE PAGES. (p. 5)	Command
	...if you can, or immediately afterwards. (p. 2)	Command
001	If you're ever in doubt, see me. (p. 5)	Encouragement
001	If you're starting to feel overwhelmed in the course, come see me before it's too late to catch up. (p. 6)	Encouragement
001	Ask in class if you have questions about upcoming assignments. (p. 9)	Encouragement
001	Email instructor if you have questions or concerns about your own fulfillment of assignments. (p. 9)	Encouragement
005	COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is based on the simple concept that if you can feel and see and hear and respond, then you can write. (p. 1)	Encouragement
008	Beyond that, because of the intensive nature of college work, if you miss classes, you will soon get behind and will have great difficulty catching up. (p. 4)	Encouragement
008	As a positive incentive for you to maintain regular and timely attendance, you will get a bonus of 10 points toward your commitment grade if you are physically present and on time for every class session. (p. 4)	Encouragement
008	You will get a bonus of five points if you lose no points for absences. (p. 4)	Encouragement
009	I would encourage you to see me in my office about your writing if you have questions, concerns, problems, etc . (p. 2)	Encouragement
013	Consider using the services of the Center for Academic Achievement if you need extra help with assignments. (p. 3)	Encouragement

Syllabus	If Clause	Category
014	You would not be here if you did not have the ability to conceptualize and organize ideas, to perform complex thinking, but you are unfamiliar with the world of formal writing for a variety of reasons. (p. 1)	Encouragement
016	If you do miss a class, you should do the required reading (as listed on syllabus) and copy a classmate's notes. (p. 2)	Encouragement
016	Ask me for any handouts from that day, and ask me if you have and specific questions from the reading or the notes that you looked at. (p. 2)	Encouragement
001	Always give credit to the sources of ideas, even if you put them in your own words. (p. 5)	Instructions
001	If instructor is ever delayed, wait fifteen minutes before leaving, and proceed with homework as outlined on the syllabus. (p. 6)	Instructions
003	If you can't get the computer to print the page numbers, write them neatly in ink at the bottom of each page. (p. 5)	Instructions
004	If you need help with brainstorming, be sure you've thought about the assignment before your meeting. (p. 6)	Instructions
004	If you want to work on a later stage of the writing process, make sure you have brainstorming or a draft ready to take to your tutorial. (p. 6)	Instructions
005	If no one answers, leave a message on my voice mail. (p. 2)	Instructions
005	If you do not use Microsoft word at home, do a "Save as" in RTF (rich text format). (p. 2)	Instructions
008	So, if the weather is bad, but the campus hasn't canceled, check any of those sites.(p. 1)	Instructions
008	If you are absent, you must turn in a completed "Absence Memo"(included at back of this syllabus). (p. 4)	Instructions

Syllabus	If Clause	Category
008	3. I prefer that final copies of all papers be typed or word-processed; however, if you do	Instructions
	hand write your final copy,	Instructions
	a. Use a blue or black pen (not a pencil).	Instructions
	b. Be careful not to overlap letters or to make decorative loops on letters.	Instructions
	c. On narrow-ruled paper, write only on every other line.	
	d. Make all your letters distinct. Pay special attention to a, e, i, o, and u—five letters that	Instructions
	people sometimes write indistinctly.	
	e. Keep your capital letters clearly distinct from your small letters. You may even want to	Instructions
	print all the capital letters.	
	f. Make commas, periods, and other punctuation marks firm and clear. Leave a slight	
	space after each period. (p. 7)	
008	Skip a line (or two spaces if typing) between the title and the first line of your text. (p. 8)	Instructions
008	If you must break a word, break only between syllables. (p. 8)	Instructions
008	9. If you are typing, remember that a dash is two hyphens on your keyboard, unless your	Instructions
	keyboard has a dash on it.(p. 8)	
008	10. If you use a word processor, use a plain type face (no italics or fancy faces, please), and	Instructions
	use 12 pt. type. (p. 8)	
009	If you do attend one of the tutoring sessions, be sure to go prepared with assignment	Instructions
	sheets, drafts of papers, returned papers, etc. to work with. (p. 3)	
010	When you are responding to the readings, I would like you, if you possibly can, to	Instructions
	post your response before class, so I can have a chance to read your postings before I	
	come to class. (4)	
011	If University Campus goes on weather delay or cancellation, you can find	Instructions
	out by tuning in a local broadcast station or by calling 987.654.3210 for a	
	recorded message. (p. 9)	

Syllabus	If Clause	Category
011	If the University or I delay or cancel class, especially for weather, work may be turned in late only according to procedures that will be announced on the course site online at the time the decision to delay or cancel class is announced. (p. 9)	Instructions
016	Any material quoted, paraphrased, or summarized from a published or unpublished source must be placed in quotation marks (if appropriate) and cited. (p. 3)	Instructions
A01	If you know you will need to miss class for official University Campus activities or medical, family, or religious reasons, communicate with me promptly. (p. 1)	Instructions
A01	Note on School Closing Information: To find out if classes need to be cancelled or delayed due to inclement weather, you may call 222-987-6543 , check the University Campus homepage, or tune in to various local broadcasts on radio or television. (p. 1)	Instructions
A02	If you must miss a class, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor through email to explain the reason for your absence, and it is your responsibility to hand in assignments and to keep up with the coursework. (p. 3)	Instructions
A04	If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to <i>get</i> the assignments and complete missed work. (p. 2)	Instructions
A07	If an absence is unavoidable (excused or unexcused), it is your responsibility to determine what work you have missed by consulting the instructor or a classmate before the next meeting. (p. 2)	Instructions
A07	If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get the assignments and complete the work. (p. 2)	Instructions
A07	If your cell phone or pager does ring during class, you will be asked to leave class immediately and will be counted absent for that day. (p. 5)	Instructions

Syllabus	If Clause	Category
A08	Read Campus email everyday to be notified if I'm not well or must cancel for some reason or if you're not well and cannot make it to class on a critical day. (p. 3)	Instructions
001	If my office hours don't work for you, I'm willing to arrange another time. (p. 6)	Negotiation
007	*you are welcome to make arrangements with me if you cannot complete an assignment on time. (p. 2)	Negotiation
009	I have tried to arrange office hours at a generally convenient time, but if you are unable to come by during regular office hours, we can set up a conference by appointment. (p. 2)	Negotiation
011	If you know ahead that you must miss class on a day an out-of-class assignment is due, we can arrange for you to turn the work in early if you notify me at least a class day ahead. (p. 4)	Negotiation
012	Allowances can be made if you communicate with me in advance, much as you might contact an employer if you are unable to get to work. (p. 2)	Negotiation
015	<i>if you notify me early, we may be able to work out reasonable, fair alternatives for completing course work. (p. 3)</i>	Negotiation
017	If a student has a disability-related need for modifications or reasonable accommodations in this course, it is the responsibility of the student to first obtain a University accommodation letter confirming the disability and suggesting appropriate remedies. (p.2)	Negotiation
A01	It will be your responsibility to meet with me either before or after any excused or unexcused absence to arrange for make-up (if possible) of any missed work. (p. 1)	Negotiation
A03	If you foresee a problem in handing an assignment in on time please contact the instructor in advance to discuss. (p. 1)	Negotiation

Syllabus	If Clause	Category
A04	If an emergency arises, you must let me know before the assignment is due , which means before class, and we can make necessary adjustments for you. (p. 2)	Negotiation
003	Staple the pages together in the proper order-I get very cranky if I have to take your work apart and re-order it. (p. 5)	Notification
003	This does not mean that if you do miss one or two typos your work will be penalized. (p. 5)	Notification
004	Class work includes the daily writing warm-up, and brainstorming, notes and drafts if they are due that day. (p. 3)	Notification
006	If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get the assignments and complete the work. (p. 1)	Notification
006	You must also have a passing grade even if you pass the exit exam in order to qualify for English 15. (p. 2)	Notification
007	If you fail the final I will tell you that you must take English 004 again. (p. 3)	Notification
007	If you passed, but there we still some problems, I will recommend that you take English 015, but that you also take English 005. (p. 3)	Notification
007	If you did just fine, I will tell you to go on and take English 015. (p. 3)	Notification
008	Class cancellations - If the University cancels for any reason, you will be informed by radio, television, and the campus web page (www.univ.edu). (p. 1)	Notification
008	If I have to cancel, I will put a message on my voicemail, on the campus web page, and I will try to email you no later than 7:00 a.m. (p. 1)	Notification
008	If I have to cancel classes for any reason, I will send a class list email before 8:00 a.m., and will put a message on my office answering service. (p. 6)	Notification
011	All of what goes on in class is important; if it weren't, we wouldn't have class. (p. 7)	Notification
011	However, be aware that I may hold your cell phone or pager during tasks, even if you are on call. (p. 8)	Notification

Syllabus	If Clause	Category
011	If I have to be absent on short notice, I make effort to email you as soon as I know. (p. 9)	Notification
011	However, you are held to the standards of academic integrity even if we have not directly discussed details. (p. 10)	Notification
011	No exceptions: If you are absent on a day a quiz, test, or other task is offered, you have lost the opportunity to take it. (p. 11)	Notification
011	If an electronic device is required for testing, it must be the approved by the instructor or proctor. (p. 11)	Notification
011	Free tutoring is available to everyone, even, if;you don't register for English 005. (p. 12)	Notification
012	The effectiveness of a piece of writing is weakened if the intended readers must stop and start to correct, mentally, errors in punctuation, usage, syntax, and word choice. (p. 2)	Notification
013	This syllabus may be revised if necessary at the instructor's discretion. (p. 3)	Notification
015	If a student has a disability and wishes an accommodation for a course, it is the student's responsibility to obtain a University letter confirming the disability and suggesting appropriate accommodation. (p. 4)	Notification
016	If you miss class, you will certainly miss opportunities to learn, and you may also miss a quiz or graded activity. (p. 2)	Notification
016	While some quizzes are listed on the syllabus, if there is not one listed on a given day, that does not guarantee that there will not be one. (p. 2)	Notification
A01	If I need to cancel class due to some emergency or due to inclement weather that may not close University, I will e-mail the class list if I know early enough to make that practical. (p. 1)	Notification

Syllabus	If Clause	Category
A01	If I need to cancel class the morning of class, I will call the appropriate campus office and a notice will be posted in our classroom. (p. 1)	Notification
A04	If you do not have a draft on the day it is due, you forfeit the points for the draft/ workshop. (p. 2)	Notification
A06	If you miss class unexpectedly, you are still responsible for the material that was covered during your absence. (p. 2)	Notification
A07	If any cases of academic dishonesty occur in ENGL 004, each case will be evaluated on an individual basis. (p.4)	Notification
A08	If campus is on compressed schedule, our class will run on regular schedule, along with all classes that meet after 3pm. (p. 3)	Notification
001	If you have a disability-related need for modifications or reasonable accommodations in this course, please inform the instructor or contact Disability Services as early in the semester as possible. (p. 1)	Polite request
001	If you have a special circumstance requiring your device be audible and/or visible, please speak to me to discuss an accommodation. (p. 4)	Polite request
003	If you have questions about grades at any time during the semester, please see me. (p. 2)	Polite request
003	If you have a situation that makes it difficult for you to arrive on time, please discuss it with me. (p. 2)	Polite request
003	Also, if you have a hotmail or yahoo account that doesn't provide your real name in the return address spot, please provide your real name as quickly as possible in the message. (p. 3)	Polite request
003	Please see me <i>well in advance of the due date</i> if you wish to request an extension. (p. 4)	Polite request
004	<i>However, if you are late, please come to class!</i> (p. 5)	Polite request

Syllabus	If Clause	Category
005	If you must miss a class for a legitimate reason, please let me know in advance, (p. 2)	Polite request
006	If you have an appropriate excuse for an absence (such as illness, death in the family, etc.) please communicate the circumstances to me. (p. 1)	Polite request
006	If there are any questions, please refer to the specific paper's handout or ask me. (p. 2)	Polite request
006	Please note that if you choose not to follow this format, your grade will be negatively affected. (p. 2)	Polite request
006	Finally, please don't hesitate to ask if you have a question. (p. 2)	Polite request
009	If you do have a serious or extended illness or other such situation, please contact the Director of Student Services, who will send a memo to all your instructors informing them of your situation. (p. 2)	Polite request
009	Please find someone in class with whom you can exchange phone numbers or e-mail addresses to get this information, or contact me if necessary. (p. 2)	Polite request
010	If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please talk to me as soon as possible. (p. 5)	Polite request
011	If you are qualified emergency personnel and may be on call during class time, please notify me through course email what agency you work for; include daytime contact information for your direct supervisors. (p. 8)	Polite request
013	No late work will be accepted after one week unless there are extenuating circumstances. Please contact me as soon as possible if this is the case. (p. 3)	Polite request

Syllabus	If Clause	Category
015	<i>If you have a long-term personal issue that may prevent you from completing course requirements as designated on the course schedule, please discuss your situation with me (p. 3)</i>	Polite request
015	If sudden events prevent your attendance, please contact me as soon as possible to avoid penalties and arrange to submit work. (p. 3)	Polite request
016	If you have a disability related need for modifications or reasonable accommodations in this course, please inform the instructor or contact Disability Services, 987-654-3210, 123 North Building as early in the semester as possible. (p. 3)	Polite request
A01	If at any time you are confused about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask! (p. 3)	Polite request
A02	If you have a disability-related need for modifications or reasonable accommodations in this course, please inform the instructor or contact Disability Services, 123 North Building, (987) 654-3210, as early in the semester as possible. (p. 1)	Polite request
A03	If you have a disability related need for modifications or reasonable accommodations in this course, please inform the instructor or contact Disability Services at the 123 North Building, as early in the semester as possible. (p. 2)	Polite request
A04	If you have a disability related need for modifications or reasonable accommodations in this course, please inform the instructor or contact Disability Services, 123 North Building, as early in the semester as possible. (p. 3)	Polite request
A06	If you know ahead of time that you have to be absent on a certain date, please meet with me to make arrangements about missed material. (p. 2)	Polite request

Syllabus	If Clause	Category
A06	If you find you must miss class on the day a major assignment is due, please find a way to get it to me by class time on that same day. (p. 2)	Polite request
A07	If you have an unavoidable circumstance that requires you to come late or leave early, please provide me with an explanation after class. (p. 5)	Polite request
A08	If any student has a disability that would interfere with his or her education, please communicate with the instructor so that the university can provide each student with fair and equivalent opportunities for an education. (p. 3)	Polite request
002	If the matter is not resolved, the student may request a hearing with the Commonwealth College Committee on Academic Integrity at the campus. (p. 3)	Suggestion
004	If you have a disability-related need for modifications in this course, contact Mrs. Blank at 123 North Building. (p. 6)	Suggestion
007	If you have a disability-related need for modifications in this course, contact both the instructor and 987-6543, the Director of the Learning Center located on the first floor of the North Building. (p. 2)	Suggestion
009	I may also refer you to the Learning Center if I believe such additional work would be appropriate. (p. 2-3)	Suggestion
010	In writing this essay, you need to paraphrase and to quote from these editorials, and you can do more research on the Web if you like. (p. 7)	Suggestion
011	If you do not have your own computer, you can access the course site in the open lab at Computer Center. (p. 4)	Suggestion

Syllabus	If Clause	Category
011	If you encounter a personal or family emergency that will require your absence from all your courses for a period of time longer than a day or two (for instance, for hospitalizations or jury duty), you should contact the Registrar's office for information on University policies that may allow you to delay your work but still finish courses. (p. 6)	Suggestion
011	If you have not already taken and passed English 005, I recommend you register for it now and go to the CAA to schedule your time with the tutor. (p. 12)	Suggestion
016	If you do not have your own computer, the college has public computers for your use in the Student Computer Labs and the University Library. (p. 1)	Suggestion
016	If you do not know how to create, save, and print a document on the computer, please visit a Computer Help Desk in the Student Center or University Library for a schedule of workshops. (p. 1)	Suggestion
A02	If you are not sure how to cite material in your paper, check with the instructor. (p. 4)	Suggestion
002	If charged with academic dishonesty, students will receive written or oral notice of the charge by the instructor. (p. 3)	Warning
003	<i>Nota bene:</i> You will NOT earn above a B if you are not actively involved in class discussions, no matter how faithful your attendance or brilliant your writing. (p. 2)	Warning
003	More than five absences will result in failure of the course unless they involve something like extended hospitalization. This is true even if the absences involve situations that might be considered "excused" absences in high school. (p. 2)	Warning
003	If you miss an assignment or a deadline because you didn't check your email for a week, that is your problem, not mine. (p. 3)	Warning

Syllabus	If Clause	Category
003	I won't be sympathetic if you miss five classes, promise you won't miss any more, and then end up being absent on an important day because your alarm didn't go off/ your car wouldn't start/ you caught a cold. (p. 2)	Warning
003	(Even letting your cell phone ring, if it happens more than once, can hurt your grade-turn your cell phone OFF before coming to class.) (p. 4)	Warning
003	Any incident of plagiarism will be grounds for failure of the course , and if I feel it appropriate I reserve the right to pursue further disciplinary action. (p. 4)	Warning
004	Ten points will be deducted for papers that do not have rough drafts, brainstorming and outside sources (if used) attached. (p. 3)	Warning
004	Students charged with a breach of academic integrity will receive due process and, if the charge' is found valid, academic sanctions in this course will range, depending on the severity of the offense, from a 0 for the assignment to an F for the course. (p. 4)	Warning
004	In other words: If you hand in another persons writing as if it were your own work, your dishonesty will be documented with University Campus and, depending on the severity of the offense, you will receive an 0 for the assignment or an F for the course. (p. 4)	Warning
004	If your behavior in class disrupts the learning environment, you will be asked to leave. (p. 5)	Warning
005	If it is not completed satisfactorily according to the library staff's specifications and by the date established by the library, I am required by the English Department to submit a grade of F for you for English 4—until you complete the project. (p. 2)	Warning

Syllabus	If Clause	Category
006	Students charged with a breach of academic integrity will receive due process and, if the charge is found valid, academic sanctions may range, depending on the severity of the offense, from F for the assignment to F for the course. (p. 2)	Warning
007	If necessary, further disciplinary action will be taken by Judicial Affairs. (p. 2)	Warning
007	If you miss a critique session (you can see them on the course calendar—every time a rough draft is due we will have a critique), your grade on that paper drops one half grade. (p. 3)	Warning
007	If you miss both critiques on one paper, the paper drops a full letter grade. (p. 3)	Warning
008	If you are absent from peer review sessions, you lose the six points, no matter what your reason for being absent might be. (p.6)	Warning
008	If you are present but do not have a rough draft for a peer review session, you will lose 3 points for that session. (p. 6)	Warning
009	Although occasional absences are sometimes unavoidable, if you miss more than three classes, your class work grade will be automatically lowered by one letter grade; (p. 2)	Warning
009	...if you miss more than six classes, you grade will be lowered by two letter grades, and so on. (p. 2)	Warning
010	You will read and critique your first drafts in peer groups (n.b. if you are absent or do not have your paper ready for your peer group session, the final grade on your paper will be reduced one letter grade). (p. 3)	Warning
011	The late policy is this: If you turn tests, paragraphs, or the essay in late (after the stated time) but within that hour, your assignment grade will drop a full letter grade. (p. 4)	Warning
011	If such an assignment is turned in later than an hour after the deadline but on the same calendar day, it will drop another full letter grade that day. (p. 4)	Warning

Syllabus	If Clause	Category
011	If you're sick and turn the work in late, it will drop in grade. (p. 7)	Warning
011	If you are not in the classroom when I take roll, you will be marked absent. (p. 8)	Warning
011	If you are doing anything other than in-class coursework for the day, you'll take an absence, and I may put you on the spot in class to explain to all of us what you're doing. (p. 7)	Warning
011	Turn your cell phones off before entering the classroom. If yours rings during class, you'll take an absence. (p. 8)	Warning
011	If you arrive late, you will not receive extra time to complete the task, quiz, test, or exam. (p. 12)	Warning
011	If any student has completed the exam and left the exam room, any student who arrives late will not be allowed to take the task, quiz, test, or exam. (p. 12)	Warning
015	In plain English: If you are discovered to have plagiarized or cheated in any other way, the instructor reserves the right to fail you for either the assignment or the course, at her discretion. (p. 4)	Warning
017	Students charged with breach of academic integrity will receive due process and if the charge is found valid, academic sanctions may range, depending on the severity of the offense. (p. 2)	Warning
A04	If you do not have an assignment the day it is due, it is a zero . (p. 2)	Warning
A04	If you miss more than 1 class, your grade will be lowered by one letter for every unexcused absence after that. (p. 2)	Warning
A05	Students charged with breach of academic integrity will receive due process and if the charge is found to be valid, academic sanctions may range, depending on the severity of the offense, in the student's failure of the assignment or the course. (p. 3)	Warning

Syllabus	If Clause	Category
A06	If you miss more than five classes (MWF schedule) or three classes (Tues, Thurs. schedule), you may have 10 points deducted from your homework grade at the end of the semester. (p. 2)	Warning
A06	If you do turn your paper in late without my approval, you may receive half the points that the assignment is worth. (p. 2)	Warning
A06	I do not encourage regular tardiness, and in fact, if you come in late repeatedly, you may be asked to leave the class and not return. (p. 2)	Warning
A06	NOTE: Any student suspected of plagiarism will be referred to the correct authority and will be subject to the applicable penalty if found guilty. (p. 3)	Warning
A07	If you have three unexcused absences, your final grade will be lowered one letter grade. (p. 2)	Warning
A07	If the paper is not handed in on the due date, you will receive an "F for that paper. (p. 3)	Warning
A07	If you have three unexcused absences, your final grade will be lowered one letter grade. (p. 4)	Warning
A08	If an absence is unavoidable (excused or unexcused), it is your responsibility to determine what work you have missed and what readings were assigned) by consulting the instructor or a classmate before the next meeting. (p. 6)	Warning
A08	If you are rude or not engaged in the class activity, you will lose points. (p. 1)	Warning
A08	If you don't attend or participate, you can't generate enough points. (p. 1)	Warning
A08	Successful and timely completion of assignments, presentations, and examinations: (submit in advance, if planned absence, or provide official documentation to excuse; late>point loss) (p. 1)	Warning

Appendix J

Syllabi A Coded with Syllabi B Information

English 004
Basic Writing Skills
Fall 2007

Meeting Time: TR 3:05-4:20 (Section 001) [Section 002]
Place: 117 Language Arts Building

Contact Information [bold] Instructor: J. Smith

Office: 303 North Building
Office hours: TR 2:00 to 3:00 and by appointment
Office phone number: (987) 654-3210

Email address: iou141@unv.edu [Email is the best way to contact me between class meetings.]

Materials [bold]

Required Texts: *Working With Ideas*, Ed. by Donna Dunbar-adorn
Quick Access (4th edition), Ed. by Lynn Troyka

Suggested: A good college dictionary and a thesaurus

Resources [bold]

Campus resources: -Writing Center, 151 South Building (first door to the left)
-Free ½ hour appointments to support each stage of the writing process. (987) 654-3234

Online resources:
Citation builder http://jerz.setonhill.edu/writing/academic/bib_builder/index.html

Course Description [bold]

English 004 is an investment for students who are serious about succeeding in college and beyond. By reviewing and practicing writing skills, students [you] develop confidence and skill in academic writing, thus creating a foundation for success in English Composition, a required course for graduation. Furthermore, English 004 is a bridge to all the written work students [you] complete in college and in their [your] professional life.

Writing courses can be particularly intense, not because the work is unusually hard but because the pace is relentless. Students [you] should expect to have homework due for every class and spend 2-3 hours *outside class* studying for each hour spent *in class*.

Please note that this class has a unique feature at University Campus: to pass the class students [you] must pass the final exam, for which students [you] write a timed essay. [using the skills you will develop during the semester's work.]

Course Objectives: [bold]

The following are the official UNIV objectives for English 004. By the end of the semester, students who engage fully in this course can expect to:

- [bullet] Understand how audience and purpose influence a writer's choices
- [bullet] Flexibly employ the basic processes of writing—planning, inventing, composing drafts and revising them
- [bullet] Develop multi-paragraph expository and persuasive essays
- [bullet] Arrange ideas purposefully and coherently
- [bullet] Use supporting detail based on personal experience and outside materials
- [bullet] Demonstrate increased competence with varied sentence structures
- [bullet] Understand and apply the basic conventions of syntax and mechanics
- [bullet] Proofread competently and prepare acceptable manuscripts

Along with these objectives, my personal goal is to help students [you] become more confident as a writer, reader and thinker, and to work with students [you] to develop the skills and confidence for success in English 15 and their [your] overall college career.

Absences and Lateness Policy [Attendance Policy] [bold]

As noted above, regular attendance is required. [for you to do well; therefore, to encourage you to attend,] Students' grade may be lower [I reserve the right to lower your grade] for poor attendance, down to and including "F," (This is University policy). [(as University policy permits).] You are required to attend class regularly and promptly. [You also need to arrive on time.] *Habitual tardiness will not [allow you to benefit fully from the 10-minute warm ups that will enhance your skills.] be tolerated.* Absences will be excused at the discretion of the instructor. Excused absences generally are limited to illness (documented), family emergencies, and University sponsored events that conflict with class meeting time. If an absence is unavoidable, it is the students' responsibility to determine what work they have missed by consulting the instructor or a classmate before the next meeting.

Students should [I hope that this policy will help you] develop the habit, early in their [your] college career, of professionally managing their attendance, appointments, and assignments; it's a survival skill. [To help you pass the exit exam,] ENGL 004 depends on students' [your] presence and participation every day.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments [bold]

Page # 1 in the [your] Course Packet is an outline of the day-by-day plan for our course. Assignments and readings are to be completed before coming to class on the day for which they are assigned, unless, of course, they are listed as in-class activities. This schedule is subject to change according to the class needs that may emerge; the instructor [I] will communicate all changes verbally and in writing (either by a class handout or an e-mail message to the entire group).

Plagiarism [Academic Integrity Policy] [bold](From University Campus Academic Policy 33-00)

“Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at The University Campus, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Consistent with this expectation, the University’s Code of Conduct states that all students should act with personal integrity, respect other students’ dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts.

Academic integrity includes a commitment not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and compromise the worth of work completed by others.”

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course. Any student who violates the academic integrity policy of UNIV can go before the Academic Integrity Committee. [We will discuss how to credit and paraphrase sources correctly, in order to avoid the appearance of plagiarism. If you are ever in doubt, see me.]

Note to students with disabilities: [bold] University Campus welcomes students with disabilities into the University’s educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for modifications or reasonable accommodations in this course, please inform the instructor or contact Disability Services, 202 Student Services Building, (987) 654-1212, as early in the semester as possible.

Appendix K

Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: Pedagogy of Potential: Identifying Discourse Models of Remediation/Development in Basic Skills Writing Course Syllabi

Principal Investigator: Rosa I. Roman Perez,
102 Ikenberry Hall, White Course,
University Park, PA 16802
(814) 862-0199 rir107@psu.edu

I would like to invite you to participate in a modest study conducted as part of my dissertation in the College of Education at the Pennsylvania State University at University Park. Only first and second-year undergraduate students (at least 18 years of age or older) with at least two semester's experience as full-time students will be asked to participate. You may stop at any time, if you wish not to proceed.

1. Purpose of the Study: The intent of this research is to better understand how first-year students might react to the course syllabus.
2. Procedures to be followed: You will be asked to read two basic writing skills course syllabi and respond to six (6) open-ended questions after reading each one.
3. Benefits: By providing insight into how students react to the course syllabus, you may help faculty and other program personnel to make improvements that better align with the interest of first-year students in basic courses.
4. Duration: The survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes.
5. Statement of Confidentiality: I will ask for information on your gender, age, GPA, major, number of semesters in college, and whether or not English is your first language. No information that could possibly identify you as an individual shall be requested. Your sheets will be coded with a control number and the only person with access to your handwriting is me. I will work with a typed version of your answers and store your hand-written answers in a file cabinet under key in my home office until the dissertation is submitted and approved.
6. Right to Ask Questions: You can ask questions about the research. The persons can answer your questions or concerns:
Rosa I. Roman rir107@psu.edu or her advisor,
Dr. Patricia H. Hinchey pxh12@psu.edu,
Office: 201 Dawson, PSU at Worthington Scranton
120 Ridge View Avenue, Dunmore, PA 18512
Office Telephone number: 570/963-2594
7. Voluntary Participation: You do not have to participate in this research. You can end your participation at any time by telling the person in charge. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.
8. Completion and return of the survey is considered your implied consent to participate in this study. Please keep this form for your records.

Appendix L

Summary of Participant Information

Control	Gender	Age	Major	Semesters	GPA	English	Time
001	M	19	Undergraduate Studies	2	3.2	yes	16:49
002	M	20	Elementary Education	4	3.47	yes	25:00
003	M	19	Secondary Education/Math	2	3.86	yes	32:33
004	F	18	Commercial Tourism Management	2	2.9	yes	21:00
005	F	19	Special Education	2	3.0	yes	11:30
006	M	20	Criminal Justice	3	3.47	yes	16:17
007	M	19	Music Education	4	3.48	yes	19:50
008	F	19	Media Studies	4	3.33	yes	20:00
009	M	19	World Language Education	2	3.00	yes	20:40
010	F	19	Retail Management	2	3.69	yes	21:39

Appendix M

Participant Answers to Field Study Questions

Participant 001

Syllabus A	Syllabus B
1 My first impression is that although this course is a developmental Eng course to prepare students for Eng 115, the instructor takes it very seriously.	1. Again it's a course designed to prepare struggling students for Eng 115 and the rest of college life.
2 That he/she takes this course very seriously and promptly.	2. I feel that this instructor is better than the first one. The syllabus seems to have more of a softer message.
3 I think maybe as struggling students that need help.	3. He views them as regular college students that need a little bit more help in writing.
4. Me personally, I don't fear many instructors I feel I have a good personality in the classroom.	4. I think I would get along fine.
5. I would contact my advisor, then my teacher.	5. I would go right to the teacher!
6. Yes, I could ask for help. I wouldn't let myself just fail the course.	6. Yes, I could again I wouldn't just let myself fail.

Comments:

I felt better reading the second one (Syllabus B). I like the use of the bullets, and the slight word changes made the stress of the class seem softer. That way the students go into the class with a nice clear mind.

Participant 002

Syllabus A	Syllabus B
1 That this course will be a very heavy workload on students and they will be expected to keep up.	1. My first impression of the course was that the semester would include many, many writing assignments.
2 That the instructor is very serious about this writing course and the class will be very fast paced with students expected to keep up.	2. My first impression of the instructor was that he/she takes this course very seriously and would not hesitate to drop your grade if you are not following the terms of the syllabus.
3 As regular students who are there to take the writing course and improve their writing skills that will be needed in other college classes.	3. The instructor seems to view students in this course with respect but at the same time understands that he students do need help developing skills as a writer.
4. I think the relationship would be very formal. Just going to the class, doing the work and the leaving.	4. It seems to me that the instructor is open to having a productive relationship with the students. He/she mentions a few times that communication is going to be used in this class and offers to help them.
5. I'd probably try to figure out the situation my self also ask a friend who might be able to help me in the course.	5. I would write an e-mail or talk to the professor to see what I'm doing wrong and what I could do to improve.
6. I couldn't picture asking the instructor for help. The syllabus was just written in away that it seemed to me it was the instructor's way or the high way. He/she did not offer to help people learn to properly cite a source as the syllabus required to avoid plagiarism charges. Also the instructor did not say why tardiness would not be accepted (such as a warm up activities.)	6. I could imagine asking the instructor for help because he/she mentions that they are always accessible through some means of communication and those who need help should seek it.

Comments:

I think syllabi scare students and the more personal, the better I like it when I get the impression that my professors want a relationship with their students.

Participant 003

Syllabus A	Syllabus B
1 I think that this course is going to involve a large amount of writing. With homework everyday, it seems that there will be a lot of work for class, both in class and out.	1. This course seems to be one that is for my benefit. I can see that I definitely need to be on time for class to use the warm-up time to help improve my writing.
2. I think that the instructor seems to be an average professor. The instructor seems to be concerned with following the university rules and also with making sure the students learn the required material. Since she allows the student to have ½ appointments with her for each different topic, she seems to be genuinely concerned with the students learning and improvement in writing.	2. This instructor seems very willing to help the student. The instructor wants to help the student help themselves. I also see the instructor as a woman.
3 I think that the instructor views students as people she can teach something to. She doesn't see her job as just coming and teaching. It is more of something that she really enjoys. I think this makes her have a good view of the students.	3. This instructor wants to get the students prepared for the rest of college and life. She wants the students to learn to be on time and that will help them in class and in life.
4 This seems to be an instructor with whom I would get along great. She is a professor who is genuinely concerned with students learning and improving, and that makes her very agreeable to me.	4. This instructor is one with whom I would be able to agree with. I think that she would be great and very easy to get along with.
5. I would probably try visiting her in her office (303 North Building) and see if she could help me with the ½ hour appointment time. I would also try the student help center that was mentioned	5. I would first ask her for help and then try the help center. I believe she would be the type of professor who would be willing to help the students who are struggling in her classes.
6. Yes, she seems to be the kind of professor that would be very willing to help her students. I would feel very comfortable asking for help.	6. Yes, she would be the first person I would ask for help.

Comments: No

Participant 004

Syllabus A	Syllabus B
1 This course seems very difficult. Student may have a tough time succeeding in this course.	1. This course seems like an introductory course. It would probably be offered to incoming freshman who struggle with writing.
2 The instructor does not seem very friendly at all. He also seems like he is unwilling to help with any problems the students may have with this course.	2. The instructor appears to be very helpful. It also seems like they want their students to be successful in this course.
3 The instructor views students as inferior. He wants to give them challenging work in this class in order to see who can handle the work.	3. The instructor views students as equals, without the student's success, the instructor won't succeed.
4. I would not have any sort of relationship with this instructor. I would rather ask another student if I had a question.	4. I would be close with this instructor. They seem very approachable.
5. If I was struggling in this course, I would probably drop it. I could then retake it in the summer or the following semester.	5. If I was struggling in this course, I would ask the instructor for some advice on how to improve.
6. I would not ask the instructor for help. He seems very intimidating and standoff-ish. I would actually go to the writing center instead.	6. I would ask this instructor for help because success seems to be important to them. If I am having trouble, the instructor would be the best person to ask for help.

Comments: No

Syllabus A	Syllabus B
1 That it will be an extremely difficult course with a strict instructor but the work will have many benefits.	1. That the work has to be done but the teacher is understanding.
2. The instructor is strict but accommodating	2. extremely helpful and kind
3. as true beginners.	3. as adults
4. Love hate relationship. Great person out of the class but strict in class.	4. Positive relationship with mutual respect.
5. Go to the teacher and get a tutor before there is a chance of failing.	5. Go to the teacher right away.
6. Yes, because even though it's a hard teacher it seems like he wants the students to do well but I would be nervous	6. Yes, they seem like helping students is the main priority.

Comments: Were the syllabi the same? They seemed very similar.

Syllabus A	Syllabus B
1. Similar to the first course I read, it seems to be a tough class with a lot of outside assignments.	1. The course seems to be difficult. A lot of assignments and outside work is required.
2. The instructor seems bossy. As well as very demanding from the students	2. This instructor, I feel, really wants to help the student any way he can. He wants the student to do better.
3. I think the instructor just views the students as themselves.	3. I believe the instructor views the students more as employees. The work is laid out and is expected to be
4. I think it may be harder to build a relationship with the instructor.	done. Also the students are expected to show up and be on time.
5. I would go to the instructor for help.	4. I think the relationship can be a friendly one. The
6. Yes I can imagine asking for help, because I would want to better my grade.	instructor offers meetings, so I think I can take that time to get help, and build a relationship.
	5. I would go to the instructor for help.
	6. Yes I can imagine asking for help. I would do anything in my power to better my grade.

Comments: No.

Participant 007

Syllabus A	Syllabus B
1 The course seems demanding but I feel that I would benefit from taking it.	1. That I will really benefit from this course and that I will be missing out on not only a good course but a teacher that wants to help me.
2 The instructor seems well organized and professional.	2. This instructor seems to really care about the student and wants his/her students to learn and benefit from his/her class.
3. I believe the instructor views his/her students with respect but expects work out of them.	3. I think this instructor sees his/her students as people who should want to benefit themselves.
4 I think I would get along fine with this instructor.	4. I think I would become good friends with this teacher seeing how they seem so willing to teach.
5. I would go straight to the instructor and try and resolve my failing grade.	5. I would go straight to the instructor.
6. Yes, because the instructor seems like he/she cares and that's what I would do first.	6. Yes, because this is what I would do no matter what. However, it would be easier as seeing how the teacher seems so nice.

Comments: I think that this survey was interesting because I do get a first impression from a teacher's syllabus.

Syllabus A	Syllabus B
1 It is a great introductory course for writing & will teach students the correct way to write papers, etc.	1. My first impression is that it is a course to help students become better writers through different assignments in and outside of class.
2. My first impression of the instructor is that he is willing to help you if you report to him and ask for help, but other than that you are pretty much on your own.	2. This instructor, I feel, really wants to help the student any way he can. He wants the student to do better.
3 I feel the instructor will respect the students if they respect him.	3. This instructor seems to see students as people who really want to learn and he will be there to teach them.
4. I don't know if I would personally get along with the instructor because he seems very intense. I would definitely respect his class rules and wishes.	4. I think I would definitely get along well with this instructor.
5. If I were struggling in the course, I would definitely go to him for help. I just hope that he would do all he could to help me.	5. If I were struggling in this course I would most definitely go to the instructor for help. He definitely seems to have a lot to offer students. I would completely ask for help.
6 I can imagine asking the instructor for help. I may be a little intimidated at first, but I feel that the instructor is there to help you and if I needed it I would ask.	6. I can imagine asking this instructor for help without a doubt. If I needed help in a class I would always go to the instructor but this one in particular wants to help.
	10.

Comments: No, I do not have any questions or recommendations. I was glad that I can help.

Syllabus A	Syllabus B
<p>1 The course will be a great help in improving writing skills.</p> <p>2. This instructor seems to care about whether or not their students improve there writing skills.</p> <p>3. This instructor has a positive view of its students and is available to help them improve.</p> <p>4. I don't think that the instructor's office hours are enough for any of the students to really get the help they need but the instructor is trying.</p> <p>5. I would visit the instructor and try to get the help I need with him/her or the writing center.</p> <p>6. Yes, I can. Instructor seems to be willing to help.</p>	<p>1. This course seems to be the standard English 004 course working on the basics of writing and communication.</p> <p>2. The instructor seems to be more willing to give help making the note that "E-mail is the best way to..." gives students more than just the 1 hr. instructors office is open.</p> <p>3 Instructor seems to be more willing to give students the help they need. Is understanding of the needs and events in students' lives.</p> <p>4. this instructor is more open could have a closer relationship with this instructor.</p> <p>5. I would approach the instructor for help probably through e-mail depending on my schedule</p> <p>6. Yes, I could. By the tone of the writing I sense that the instructor is someone I would not hesitate to ask for help.</p>

Comments: Both syllabi were well written and put together. Second one offers more explanation and detail about class.

Participant 010

Syllabus A	Syllabus B
<p>1. My first impression is that the class will be difficult and although I consider myself a good writer I was questioning how successful I would be in this course.</p> <p>2. That he or she was strict and has had previous classes of students who did not follow the given instructions.</p> <p>3. I believe the instructor has a negative view of his or her students and anticipates that some of them will fail.</p> <p>4. I have found that I have had better relationships with instructors who are more easy-going and understanding. My relationship with this teacher would be decent because I intend to do to the best of my ability but the relationship will not be as good and comfortable.</p> <p>5. I would approach the teacher and ask for help. If the teacher sees you are making an effort I believe he or she will be more helpful and favorable in your grading.</p> <p>6. Yes, I can see myself asking for help because I believe no matter how strict or not friendly the teacher is, it's always good to ask for help because it will benefit you in the long run.</p>	<p>1. The course will be difficult but as long as I put in the effort I will be able to succeed.</p> <p>2. That the teacher has certain rules that must be followed but he/she understands that things do happen and is more open to helping those who have excused absences.</p> <p>3. The instructor has a positive outlook that he students will be successful and will do what's needed to receive a good grade.</p> <p>4. I will have a good relationship with this teacher because he or she seems to know how to handle a group of college aged students appropriately without making them feel that he or she is looking down on the students.</p> <p>5. Make arrangements to meet with the teacher for help.</p> <p>6. Yes, because I will ask for help anytime in school and this instructor seems open to helping his/her students and easy to approach.</p>

Comments: No.

Appendix N

Table of Survey Data by Questions

Note: Odd numbers saw Syllabi one first, even numbers saw Syllabi two first.

Question #1: What is your first impression of this course?

Section 001 (no formatting, neg)	Section 002 (graphic organizers, use of pronouns)
<p>1. My first impression is that although this course is a developmental Eng course to prepare students for Eng 115, the instructor takes it very seriously.</p> <p>3. I think that this course is going to involve a large amount of writing. With homework everyday, it seems that there will be a lot of work for class, both in class and out.</p> <p>5. that it will be an extremely difficult course with a strict instructor but the work will have many benefits.</p> <p>7 The course seems demanding but I feel that I would benefit from taking it.</p> <p>9. The course will be a great help in improving writing skills.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>2. That this course will be a very heavy workload on students and they will be expected to keep up.</p> <p>4. This course seems very difficult. Student may have a tough time succeeding in this course.</p> <p>6. Similar to the first course I read, it seems to be a tough class with a lot of outside assignments.</p> <p>8. It is a great introductory course for writing & will teach students the correct way to write papers, etc.</p> <p>10. My first impression is that the class will be difficult and although I consider myself a good writer I was questioning how successful I would be in this course.</p>	<p>2. My first impression of the course was that the semester would include many, many writing assignments.</p> <p>4. This course seems like an introductory course. It would probably be offered to incoming freshman who struggle with writing.</p> <p>6. The course seems to be difficult. A lot of assignments and outside work is required.</p> <p>8. My first impression, is that it is a course to help students become better writers through different assignments in and outside of class.</p> <p>10. 1. The course will be difficult but ----- 1. Again it's a course designed to prepare struggling students for Eng 115 and the rest of college life.</p> <p>3. This course seems to be one that is for my benefit. I can see that I definitely need to be on time for class to use the warm-up time to help improve my writing.</p> <p>5. that the work has to be done but the teacher is understanding.</p> <p>7. That I will really benefit from this course and that I will be missing out on not only a good course but a teacher that want s to help me.</p> <p>9. this course seems to be the standard English 004 course working on the basics of writing and communication.</p>

Question #2: What is your first impression of this instructor?

<p>1. That he/she takes this course very seriously and promptly.</p> <p>3. I think that the instructor seems to be an average professor. The instructor seems to be concerned with following the university rules and also with making sure the students learn the required material. Since she allows the student to have ½ appointments with her for each different topic, she seems to be genuinely concerned with the students learning and improvement in writing.</p> <p>5. The instructor is strict but accommodating</p> <p>7. The instructor seems well organized and professional.</p> <p>9. this instructor seems to care about whether or not their students improve their writing skills.</p> <p>----- -</p> <p>2. That the instructor is very serious about this writing course and the class will be very fast paced with students expected to keep up.</p> <p>4. The instructor does not seem very friendly at all. He also seems like he is unwilling to help with any problems the students may have with this course.</p> <p>6. the instructor seems bossy. As well as very demanding from the students</p> <p>8. My first impression of the instructor is that he is willing to help you if you report to him and ask for help, but other than that you are pretty much on your own.</p> <p>10. That he or she was strict and has had previous classes of students who did not follow the given instructions.</p>	<p>2. My first impression of the instructor was that he/she takes this course very seriously and would not hesitate to drop your grade if you are not following the terms of the syllabus.</p> <p>4. The instructor appears to be very helpful. It also seems like they want their students to be successful in this course.</p> <p>8. This instructor, I feel, really wants to help the student any way he can. He wants the student to do better.</p> <p>10. That the teacher has certain rules that must be followed but he/she understands that things do happen and is more open to helping those who have excused absences.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>1. I feel that this instructor is better than the 1st one. The syllabi seems to have more of a softer message.</p> <p>3. This instructor wants to get the students prepared for the rest of college and life. She wants the students to learn to be on time and that will help them in class and in life.</p> <p>5. the instructor seems strict. He/she seems to expect a lot from the students.</p> <p>7. This instructor seems to really care about the student and wants his/her students to learn and benefit from his/her class.</p> <p>9. The instructor seems to be more willing to give help making the note that "E-mail is the best way to..." gives students more than just the 1 hr. instructor's office is open.</p>
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Question #3: How do you think this instructor views students in this course?

<p>1. I think maybe as struggling students that need help.</p> <p>3. I think that the instructor views students as people she can teach something to. She doesn't see her job as just coming and teaching. It is more of something that she really enjoys. I think this makes her have a good view of the students.</p> <p>5. as true beginners.</p> <p>7. I believe the instructor views his/her students with respect but expects work out of them.</p> <p>9. this instructor has a positive view of its students and is available to help them improve.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>2. As regular students who are there to take the writing course and improve their writing skills that will be needed in other college classes.</p> <p>4. The instructor views students as inferior. He wants to give them challenging work in this class in order to see who can handle the work.</p> <p>6. I think the instructor just views the students as themselves.</p> <p>8. I feel the instructor will respect the students if they respect him.</p> <p>10. I believe the instructor has a negative view of his or her students and anticipates that some of them will fail.</p>	<p>2. The instructor seems to view students in this course with respect but at the same time understands that he students do need help developing skills as a writer.</p> <p>4. The instructor views students s equals, without the students success, the instructor won't succeed.</p> <p>6. I believe the instructor views the students more as employees. The work is laid out and is expected to be done. Also the students are expected to show up and be on time.</p> <p>8. This instructor seems to see students as people who really want to learn and he will be there to teach them.</p> <p>10. The instructor has a positive outlook that he students will be successful and will do what's needed to receive a good grade.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>1. He views them as Reg college students that need a little bit more help in writing.</p> <p>3. This instructor seems very willing to help the student. The instructor wants to help the student help themselves. I also see the instructor as a woman..</p> <p>5. as adults</p> <p>7. I think this instructors sees his/her students as people who should want to benefit themselves.</p> <p>9. Instructor seems to be more willing to give students the help they need. Is understanding of the needs and events in students lives.</p>
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Question #4: What predictions might you make about your relationship with this instructor?

<p>1. Me personally, I don't fear m any instructors I feel I have a good personally in the class room.</p> <p>3. This seems to be an instructor with whom I would get along great. She is a professor who is genuinely concerned with students learning and improving, and that makes her very agreeable to me.</p> <p>5. Love hate relationship. Great person out of the class but strict in class.</p> <p>7. I think I would get along fine with this instructor.</p> <p>9. I don't think that the instructor's office hours are enough for any of the students to really get the help they need but the instructor is trying.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>2. I think the relationship would be very formal. Just going to the class, doing the work and the leaving.</p> <p>4. I would not have any sort of relationship with this instructor. I would rather ask another student if I had a question.</p> <p>6. I think it may be harder to build a relationship with the instructor.</p> <p>8. I don't know if I would personally get along with the instructor because he seems very intense. I would definitely respect his class rules and wishes.</p> <p>10. I have found that I have had better relationships with instructors who are more easy-going and understanding. My relationship with this teacher would be decent because I intend to do to the best of my ability but the relationship will not b e as good and comfortable.</p>	<p>2. It seems to me that the instructor is open to having a productive relationship with the students. He/she mentions a few times that communication is going to be used in this class and offers to help them.</p> <p>4. I would be close with this instructor. They seem very approachable.</p> <p>6. I think the relationship can be a friendly one. The instructor offers meetings, so I think I can take that time to get help, and build a relationship.</p> <p>8. I think I would definitely get along well with this instructor.</p> <p>10. I will have a good relationship with this teacher because he or she seems to know how to handle a group of college aged students appropriately without making them feel that he or she is looking down on the students.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>1. I think I would get along fine.</p> <p>3. This instructor is one with whom I would be able to agree with. I think that she would be great and very easy to get along with.</p> <p>5. positive relationship with mutual respect.</p> <p>7. I think I would become good friends with this teacher seeing how they seem so willing to teach.</p> <p>9. this instructor is more open could have a closer relationship with this instructor.</p>
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Question #5: What would you do if you found that you were struggling in this course?

<p>1. I would contact my advisor, then my teacher.</p> <p>3. I would probably try visiting her in her office (303 North Building) and see if she could help me with the ½ hour appointment time. I would also try the student help center that was mentioned</p> <p>5. go to the teacher and get a tutor before there is a chance of failing.</p> <p>7. I would go straight to the instructor and try and resolve my failing grade.</p> <p>9. I would visit the instructor and try to get the help I need with him/her or the writing center.</p> <p>----- -</p> <p>2. I'd probably try to figure out the situation myself also ask a friend who might be able to help me in the course.</p> <p>4. If I was struggling in this course, I would probably drop it. I could then retake it in the summer or the following semester.</p> <p>6. I would go to the instructor for help.</p> <p>8. If I were struggling in the course, I would definitely go to him for help. I just hope that he would do all he could to help me.</p> <p>10. I would approach the teacher and ask for help. If the teacher sees you are making an effort I believe he or she will be more helpful and favorable in your grading.</p>	<p>2. I would write an e-mail or talk to the professor to see what I'm doing wrong and what I could do to improve.</p> <p>4. If I was struggling in this course, I would ask the instructor for some advice on how to improve.</p> <p>6. I would go to the instructor for help.</p> <p>8. If I were struggling in this course I would most definitely go to the instructor for help. He definitely seems to have a lot to offer students. I would completely ask for help.</p> <p>10. Make arrangements to meet with the teacher for help.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>1. I would go right to the teacher!</p> <p>3. I would first ask her for help and then try the help center. I believe she would be the type of professor who would be willing to help the students who are struggling in her classes.</p> <p>5. go to the teacher right away.</p> <p>7. I would go straight to the instructor.</p> <p>9. I would approach the instructor for help probably through e-mail depending on my schedule</p>
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Question #6: Can you imagine asking this instructor for help? Why or why not?

<p>1. Yes, I could ask for help. I wouldn't let myself just fail the course.</p> <p>3. Yes, she seems to be the kind of professor that would be very willing to help her students. I would feel very comfortable asking for help.</p> <p>5. Yes, because even though it's a hard teacher it seems like he wants the students to do well but I would be nervous</p> <p>7. Yes, because the instructor seems like he/she cares and that's what I would do first.</p> <p>9. Yes, I can. Instructor seems to be willing to help.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>2. I couldn't picture asking the instructor for help. The syllabus was just written in away that it seemed to me it was the instructors way or the high way. He/she did not offer to help people learn to properly cite a source as the syllabus required to avoid plagiarism charges. Also the instructor did not say why tardiness would not be accepted (such as a warm up activities.)</p> <p>4. I would not ask the instructor for help. He seems very intimidating and standoff-ish. I would actually go to the writing center instead.</p> <p>6. Yes I can imagine asking for help, because I would want to better my grade.</p> <p>8. I can imagine asking the instructor for help. I may be a little intimidated at first, but I feel that the instructor is there to help you and if I needed it I would ask.</p> <p>10. Yes, I can see myself asking for help because I believe no matter how strict or not friendly the teacher is, it's always good to ask for help because it will benefit you in the long run.</p>	<p>2. I could imagine asking the instructor for help because he/she mentions that they are always accessible through some means of communication and those who need help should seek it.</p> <p>4. I would ask this instructor for help because success seems to be important to them. If I am having trouble, the instructor would be the best person to ask for help.</p> <p>6. Yes I can imagine asking for help. I would do anything in my power to better my grade.</p> <p>8. I can imagine asking this instructor for help without a doubt. If I needed help in a class I would always go to the instructor but this one in particular wants to help.</p> <p>10. Yes, because I will ask for help anytime in school and this instructor seems open to helping his/her students and easy to approach.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>1. Yes, I could again I wouldn't just let myself fail.</p> <p>3. Yes, she would be the first person I would ask for help.</p> <p>5. Yes, they seem like helping students is the main priority.</p> <p>7. Yes, because this is what I would do no matter what. However, it would be easier as seeing how the teacher seems so nice.</p> <p>9. Yes, I could. By the tone of the writing I sense that the instructor is someone I would not hesitate to ask for help.</p>
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Comments:

1. I felt better reading the second one (S2). I like the use of the bullets, and the slight word changes made the stress of the class seem softer. That way the students go[es] into the class with a nice clear mind.
2. I think syllabi scare students and the more personal, the better, I like it when I get the impression that my professors want a relationship with their students.
3. No.
4. No
5. Were the syllabi the same? They seemed very similar.
6. No
7. I think that this survey was interesting because I do get a first impression from a teacher's syllabus.
8. No, I do not have any questions or recommendations. I was glad that I can help.
9. Both syllabi were well written and put together. Second one offers more explanation and detail about class.
10. No

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EDUCATION

Doctoral of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction, December, 2007
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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Aug 2007 UPRM, English Department, Assistant Professor
Jul 2007 PSU, College of Education, SCOPE, Office of Multicultural Services, TA
2003-2005 PSU, College of Education, Department of Curriculum & Instruction, TA
2000-2002 UPRM, English Department, Instructor
1994-1999 UPRM, English Department, Part-time Instructor
1996-2000 UPRM, Biology Department, Assistant to the Director

Courses Taught

C&I 295: Introductory Field Experience for Teacher Education at PSU.

Undergraduate English courses (Pre-Basic I & II, Basic I & II, Intermediate I & II, Conversational, Public Speaking, and Composition and Reading I & II) at UPRM.

Administrative Assignments

2000-2002 Administrative Assistant IV, UPRM, Biology Department
1996-1999 Assistant to the Director, UPRM, Biology Department

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Feb 2007 Presented dissertation research in progress at the Student Research Conference (SRC) at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE).

Aug 2006 Graduate Student Panel for the NSF SBE AGEP Orientation Project

Apr 2006 *Listening to the Silence: Exploring the Graduate Student Experience*. Research paper presented at the 2006 AERA Annual Conference in San Francisco.

Jul 2003 Participated in the Graduate Panel for the Summer Research Opportunity Program (SROP). (Representing the Hispanic Graduate Community).

Apr 2001 *Reaction Journals Prompted by Short Readings From the Internet* (Chicken Soup for the Soul in the Classroom) Presented to Western PR TESOL at the Inter-American University at San German, Puerto Rico

Apr 1995 *Short Stories Through Drawings*, Presentation on how to engage students to read critically and creatively present their findings. Puerto Rican Western TESOL 18th Annual Conference, Inter-American University of Puerto Rico at Aguadilla.