

## Sabbatical Follow-Up Report for Professor Laura Foster (awarded for Fall 2018)

### Background

My sabbatical project fell under the Teaching/Methodologies category and represented my best professional effort to help my department, the Integrated Reading & Writing Department, adjust our curriculum as we set about trying to meet the requirements set forth in Texas House Bill 2223. That law requires colleges across the state to accelerate the path of remediation for Developmental Education students. In addition, it calls for significant numbers of students to be placed into co-requisite course models wherein a student takes a credit class (ENGL 1301, HIST 1301, et cetera) and is engaged in some sort of developmental instruction at the same time. Collin's approach has been to meet the Texas Coordinating Board's guidelines that hold us responsible for developing co-requisite courses and placing a minimum of 25% of our DE students into such courses for the 2018-2019 academic year. We are already achieving these targets and are scaling up to the 75% mark well ahead of the 2020-2021 deadline.

Because co-req courses were a new concept to our faculty, I and some other professors piloted some early sections in the Spring of 2018. From those experiences, we learned that it would be important to generate a comprehensive set of instructional material (PowerPoints, downloadable hand-outs, quizzes, and a variety of practice activities) that would be suitable not only for INRW/ENGL pairings but also for INRW/GOVT and INRW/HIST pairings. Such material could also be useful for free-standing courses, tutoring centers, and self-paced pathways.

This was the genesis of my sabbatical proposal, and I felt that having material that is consistent from professor to professor and can readily be adapt to the various core courses would help our INRW students succeed in these challenging double courses.

## My Work

I began my project with a survey of the credit-level faculty the associate deans identified as being involved in (or likely to become involved in) the co-reqs. The goal of the survey was to ascertain their perceived priorities, the challenges they foresaw for DE students, and other ideas they had for the content of the INRW part of these course pairings. From the survey (blank copy attached), I learned that the credit faculty agreed that covering basic reading and writing principles were seen as musts. But I also learned that these professors predicted that grammar would be the biggest potential obstacle for the students enrolled in the co-reqs. There also appeared to be some degree of trepidation that they might not be able to guide students in this area, an understandable concern for those with little to no experience teaching grammar or punctuation.

Therefore, I moved forward with creating a series of PowerPoints (and accompanying hand-outs and suggestions for class activities). I concentrated on grammar basics: common verb errors; pronoun errors; run-ons and fragments; the four basic sentence patterns; comma misuse; and capitalization rules. The reading and writing concepts I covered ranged from active reading strategies to information about writing essays and constructing arguments to documentation styles, including the MLA and the APA. Over the remaining three months of my sabbatical, I created over a dozen PowerPoints dealing with grammar and almost thirty presentations related to reading strategies, writing strategies, and other concepts covered by the SLOs of our INRW classes.

## Update

Upon my return from my leave, I've met with both the full-time and associate faculty in my area to share and explain the work I did. I am happy to say that my colleagues were both impressed by the breadth of coverage of my work and the in-depth treatment I gave each topic. I also have worked with Web Services to create a permanent CANVAS course (a recently completed development). The purpose of this "course" is to distribute the curriculum I created to various interested parties, mainly the faculty teaching the co-reqs. (They will become students in the course and remain enrolled so long as they are on Collin's teaching staff.)

These faculty-member “students” will be able to download my presentations (and other material) and use them as-is or adapt them to their own use—probably uploading them to their own CANVAS pages or showing them during class. I have recently started uploading the content and will begin inviting students soon.

I’ve begun using the presentations with my students in my own co-req classes this spring and have found that they are very helpful and as practical as I had hoped. Of course, I have already made some minor adjustments to many of the presentations and have identified several more topics that might be covered in future PowerPoints. I have begun work on four new ones myself this semester (though it is hard to find time given my teaching load and search committee work), but I will plug away at them as time allows. I also plan to invite my colleagues to create new ones as well. This strategy will allow for us to grow the curriculum to our ever-changing needs.

Below is a list of all the PowerPoints I have created—separated into two groups: INRW concepts and grammar concepts. I also included a third list of the ones I’m working on now as well as a few that I am revamping a bit due to student feedback. Following the lists are detailed descriptions of each title. And following that is the aforementioned faculty survey I conducted.

### Final Note

I am grateful for having been awarded a sabbatical. It allowed me some much need R & R and gave me a chance to be creative as I addressed the needs of our curriculum.

## INRW Concept PowerPoints

1. "'A' is for Annotate, Part 1 (The Hows and Whys)"
2. "'A' is for Annotation, Part 2 (Instructive Examples)"
3. "Annotation in the Age of the Smart Phone"
4. "Active Reading Strategies"
5. Extreme Sentence Make-Overs
6. "Documentation Styles: APA"
7. "Documentation Styles: MLA"
8. "Finding the Thesis Sentence and Main Ideas When Reading"
9. "How to Write a Summary"
10. "Introducing Introductions"
11. "Introduction to Conclusions"
12. "Learning How to Write Main Point and Support Sentences: Practice Makes Perfect"
13. "Looking Good: Formatting Essays"
14. "Narrowing Topics"
15. "Notes on Notes"
16. "Notes: Headings and Subheadings"
17. "Planning the Perfect Essay"
18. "Planning the Perfect Paragraph"
19. "Proposition Thesis"
20. "The Qualities of Good Writing"
21. "Reading History Books"
22. "Rhetorical Modes"
23. "Subject, Audience, Purpose"
24. "Support Sentences: Development in Action"
25. "Tackling the Tough Topics"
26. "Tone: A Test Case"
27. "Using Primary and Secondary Sources"
28. "Word! How and Why to Build Vocabulary"
29. "The Writing Process"

## Grammar PowerPoints

1. "Grammar Unlocked: Avoiding Sentence Fragments"
2. "Grammar Unlocked: Avoiding Run-On Sentences"
3. "Grammar Unlocked: Capitalization Rules"
4. "Grammar Unlocked: Colons and Semicolons"
5. "Grammar Unlocked: Commas, Part I"
6. "Grammar Unlocked: Commas, Part II"
7. "Grammar Unlocked: Compound Sentences"
8. "Grammar Unlocked: Pronouns, Part I (Pronoun Reference)"
9. "Grammar Unlocked: Pronouns, Part II (Pronoun Agreement)"
10. "Grammar Unlocked: Pronouns, Part III (Pronoun Case)"
11. "Grammar Unlocked: Sentence Basics & Subjects and Verbs"
12. "Grammar Unlocked: Sentence Patterns"
13. "Grammar Unlocked: Simple Sentences"
14. "Grammar Unlocked: Subject-Verb Agreement"

## **PowerPoints under Development**

1. "Cornell Notes" (requested)
2. "Dialectical Journals" (forthcoming)
3. "Grammar Unlocked: Apostrophes" (forthcoming)
4. "Grammar Unlocked: Complex and Compound-Complex Sentences" (revamping)
5. "Grammar Unlocked: First person, Second Person, Third Person" (requested)
6. "Grammar Unlocked: Passive Voice" (forthcoming)
7. "Grammar Unlocked: Quotations" (requested)
8. "Grammar Unlocked: Restrictive and Non-Restrictive Clauses" (forthcoming)
9. "Pre-Writing" (revamping)

## “‘A’ is for Annotation, Part 1 (The Hows and Whys)”

“‘A’ is for Annotation, Part 1 (The Hows and Whys)” provides students with a rationale for taking the time to engage in annotation. It explains the technique and the benefits one might derive from it. As the slides progress, common annotating strategies.

This PowerPoint is a fairly long one—almost sixty slides. It is suggested that professors review this one together with students whereas the second part might be left for students to review themselves where they can see full examples of annotation wherein the annotation techniques are combined.

## “‘A’ is for Annotation, Part 2 (Instructive Examples)”

“‘A’ is for Annotation, Part 2 (Instructive Examples)” provides students with a rationale for taking the time to engage in annotation. It explains the technique and the benefits one might derive from it. As the slides progress, common annotating strategies.

Both PowerPoints are fairly long one—almost sixty slides each. It is suggested that professors review only one together with students and leave the other one for students to review on their own. This second part gives students numerous examples of annotation both within academia and without. The examples highlight the versatility and practicality of the techniques.



## “Annotation in the Age of the Smart Phone”

This PowerPoint shows students how to use their smart phone, tablets, and other devices to advantage during annotation. The presentation focuses on the annotation of poetry, a particularly difficult task for most students and empowers them to use the digital world to explore new ways to understand the images, symbols, and themes that tend to play a crucial role in verse.

Assignment/Activity Ideas: I encourage professors to ask the students to try annotating the poem that is the focus of the presentation (“The Good Humor Man”) using traditional, low-tech annotation (pencils, highlighters, dictionaries). Then, after a few minutes, where the students don’t accomplish much, have the students to use classroom computers or their personal cell phones to look at jpeg images, GIFS, Wikipedia pages, and YouTube videos to elucidate the poem. Then, the PowerPoint can be shown. Many of the slides will likely capture the students’ own efforts with some slides showing them even more ideas on how they can use the multi-media aspects of the internet to help them grow reading comprehension of even difficult material.

## “Active Reading Strategies”

“Active Reading Strategies” is a PowerPoint that can be shown in class (in whole or selected slides) or be made available for students to watch on their own. It provides a basic introduction to the concept of active reading, sets for a rationale for engaging in active reading strategies, discusses some general guidelines, and goes into detail about two specific strategies, the KWL and SQ3R. Hopefully, it underscores the practical purpose for both pre-reading and post-reading activities and disabuses them of the notion that one simply opens a book to a page and just reads until one comes to the end of a text.

Assignment/Activity Ideas: Give students the opportunity to practice the KWL or SQ3R with some very short articles that can be completed/discussed in a single class period. They could be encouraged to use these techniques in their credit co-requisite classes. For example, you might ask students to complete an SQ3R of a textbook chapter from the other course. If the alternative, they could use a self-help book that addresses an area of personal interest to the student.

## “Documentation Styles: APA”

“Documentation Styles: APA” provides students a basic introduction to the documentation style put forth by the American Psychological Association, or APA. The APA system is required in some of their classes, but their English class may or may not cover the APA as most English professors actually preferring the documentation style used by the Modern Language Association, or MLA.

The suggested learning outcomes for our INRW classes don’t really create the expectation that we will delve into research paper documentation styles during our courses; however, my own experience and those of others teaching the co-reqs suggest that the information would prove very helpful to our students. If you decide not to cover this PowerPoint (or a corresponding one about MLA), at least let them know it available to them.

## “Documentation Styles: MLA”

“Documentation Styles: MLA” provides students a basic introduction to the documentation style put forth by the Modern Language Association, or MLA. The MLA system is required in most English classes. For this reason, this presentation could be very helpful, especially when we consider that majority of the co-requisite course-pairings join INRW 0315 with ENGL 1301, so even though the INRW learning outcomes don’t contemplate research documentation, we want our students to get as strong an understanding of the MLA system as possible since they are likely to be called upon to use it in the other class. If the course pairing is with a government or history class where the credit instructor is more likely to require the APA system, there is a separate PowerPoint on that style.

## “Extreme Sentence Make-Overs”

“Extreme Sentence Make-Overs” deals with sentence editing. The slides work through an analysis of several example “weak” sentences that are contrasted against “stronger” ones. Then students are walked through a much longer example that shows them the thought process a writer might go through to edit a sentence. The basic strategy is to consider sentences from the perspective of the reader. Generally, that means adding specifics and details. The PowerPoint points out that the effect of undertaking these main strategies enables students to write much longer, much more sophisticated sentences that will propel their sentences toward collegiate-level writing.

## “Finding the Thesis Sentence and Main Ideas When Reading”

“Finding the Thesis Sentence and Main Ideas When Reading” is a helpful PowerPoint because it addresses a skill readers need, especially those in college-level classes who are frequently called upon to assess and otherwise analyze a variety of documents—from expository essays to news articles to assorted works of literature. It gives them hints and strategies for identifying thesis statements, themes, and the topic sentences of paragraphs. I would suggest reviewing the presentation together with your students early in the semester as all of them will benefit from having this information sooner rather than later.

## “How to Write a Summary”

The “How to Write a Summary” presentation walks students through eight keys to a successful summary:

- Identifying the material being summarized
- Capturing the thesis “early” (usually first sentence)
- Highlighting main points only
- Putting material in your own words
- Remembering your reader is not familiar with the material
- Using transition words/verbs to guide the summary reader
- Not inserting your own opinion
- Being brief.

Each point is given extended treatment during the PowerPoint with discussion and multiple examples. The difficult-to-phrase first sentence enjoys some extra attention as well. Examples are drawn from film, news articles, novels, interview shows, scholarly journals, and non-fiction works, so students are exposed to a variety of summaries.

Assignment/Activity Ideas: Give students practice at writing the first sentence of a summary—sentences which tend to be long and grammatically tricky. Supply students with a randomly ordered list of information and give them practice at generating those sentences.

Example:

- Young adult fiction
  - Novel
  - Angie Thomas
  - 2017
  - Girl (Starr Carter) becomes activist after cops unlawfully shot her friend
  - Black Lives Matter theme
- Set in a fictional and predominantly poor black urban community, The Hate U Give is a 2017 young adult fiction novel by Angie Thomas that chronicles the life of Starr Carter, a typical sixteen-year-old girl who becomes a Black Lives Matter activist after seeing the police unlawfully shoot her friend.

Another idea is to show a short two-or-three-minute-long YouTube video of general interest during class, ask students to write a quick summary of it in

approximately 100 words or so. These summaries could be discussed, compared, and juxtaposed against a teacher-prepared model.



## “Introduction to Conclusions”

“Introduction to Conclusions” is a PowerPoint that explains approaches to conclusion paragraphs that move beyond bland, formulaic summaries they learned to write in high school. In addition to showing several “weaker” examples and a few “what-not-to-do”s, the presentation offers numerous well-written ones that demonstrate more appropriate endings to the types of essays students will write in college. By design, the examples in the beginning of PowerPoint deal with a fairly simple thesis; toward its end, they deal with more sophisticated topics.

This PowerPoint can be viewed together with a class or can be assigned as homework to individuals or larger groups of students.

Assignment/Activity Ideas: An in-class assignment is to give students a thesis and a visual plan and have them write conclusions. While this exercise may seem initially hard, in my experience, students catch on quickly.

## “Introducing Introductions”

“Introducing Introductions” is a helpful PowerPoint in that it explains the basic structure and function of introductory paragraphs. It provides numerous examples, including several of interest grabber techniques that might help students get their first paragraphs off to a good start. There is also some discussion of mistakes to avoid and some hints about how to decide whether an introduction is “good enough”

Assignment/Activity Ideas: I encourage you to have your students practice writing introductions as a class exercise. (It is not necessary for them to write out the entire essay, just the first all-important paragraph that either secures—or deters—readership.)

## “Learning How to Write Main Point and Support Sentences: Practice Makes Perfect”

The subject matter of “Learning How to Write Main Point and Support Sentences: Practice Makes Perfect” involves the concept of development. INRW students often come to us accustomed to writing short, underdeveloped paragraphs that engage in superficial discussion. This PowerPoint teaches them to write more content that expands upon their thoughts and lets them go into depth in longer paragraphs. They can do so by learning what main point and support sentences are and practicing with them. The concept is not dissimilar from the main idea-supporting detail language some teachers use, so don’t allow yourself or your students to focus too much on the labelling involved in the technique (even if it is new to you), but concentrate your attention (and theirs) to the eight different tactics one can use with support sentences. There is another PowerPoint that also deals with paragraph development via support sentences.

Assignment/Activity Ideas: I view class-time practice with support sentences as crucial, so I recommend that students be given frequent practice. Simply supply them with a main point sentence about a random topic and ask that they generate two to four support sentences that develop the idea. For example, you might ask them to respond to a main point sentence that reads, “The photographer also suggested some creative poses for my children’s photo shoot.” Then give them about ten minutes to write a few support sentences that could later be shared in pairs or turned in for a daily grade.

## “Looking Good: Formatting Essays”

“Looking Good: Formatting Essays” is a PowerPoint that addresses the issue of what collegiate essays should look like in terms of spacing, margins, cover sheets, and other formatting concerns. (It does not go into the documentation styles such as MLA or APA. Other PowerPoints do that.) The presentation offers some advice on proofreading and has several slides devoted to the titles students might give their essays.

You may or may not want to take up class time to cover the PowerPoint, but don’t take for granted that your INRW students know this information. Many have little experience writing formal essays and do not actually know or follow some of the generally accepted formatting conventions.

## “Narrowing Topics”

The PowerPoint “Narrowing Topics” offers students more insight into generating ideas for writing. The specific goal is to demonstrate how one might create an interesting, personalized take on an assigned topic. Such topics tend to be purposefully broad, a sort of intrinsic test subsumed with almost every writing assignment. The idea of the presentation is to get students to tap into their creative side and meet this challenge. The numerous examples serve to demonstrate how and why student writers should narrow their topics to make writing on those topics easier for them and potentially more interesting for their readers.

Assignment/Activity Ideas: A class discussion could center around students offering up ideas for narrowed topics based upon some broad a professor might suggest. The same activity could be done as a paired or small group activity.

## “Notes: Headings and Subheadings”

“Notes: Headings and Subheadings” offers student additional advice on note-taking, especially respecting the kinds of headings and subheadings that can make a set of notes more useful to the note-taker who took them. Notes should be well labelled so that the note-taker can quickly access the information the notes contain quickly and efficiently. Another PowerPoint (“Notes on Notes”) also addresses note formatting and mentions headings and subheadings, but this presentation goes into more detail and offers more examples.

## “Notes on Notes”

“Notes on Notes” is a PowerPoint that can be shown in class (in whole or selected slides) or be made available for students to watch on their own. It provides practical advice about note-taking and encourages students to abandon bad habits. It underscores the practical purpose for taking notes and reminds students that, if it’s done thoughtfully, note-taking can help them understand what they read, engage in critical-thinking, and prepare for assignments and tests. There are two other PowerPoints about note-taking: “Notes: Headings and Subheadings” and “Stdy ≠ Hard.”

Assignment/Activity Ideas: Ask students to submit a set of notes they’ve taken for a credit-level class (the co-requisite perhaps), using the new techniques. An alternative could be to give them a textbook chapter you’ve chosen or allow them to take notes over a current news article. Students might then be asked to pair up to compare techniques and assure that their notes make sense and are complete.

It might be helpful to show students an example you’ve prepared ahead of time over an article you’ve asked them to read. Ideally, they will notice that the model’s use of the recommended techniques makes it clear and understandable.

An alternative assignment might be to ask students to take a set of notes over a reading selection using whatever habits they developed over the years. Then ask them to re-do those notes, using the new taught techniques. That revision could be accompanied by a short reflection paragraph wherein the students evaluate their own note-taking growth.

## “Planning the Perfect Essay”

The “Planning the Perfect Essay” PowerPoint provides students a workable way to plan their essays. The presentation tries to disabuse students of the notion that they can write without a plan or attempt to plan even as they write. The template introduced in the PowerPoint is one I use in my own classes to great success. I call it a “visual plan,” and make blank copies available to students to provide them a planning tool. With it, a student is essentially forced to consider what point he or she might make in each body paragraph. The design of the visual plan stresses an important “rule” that requires each body paragraph to make only one point in support of essay’s thesis.

The presentation offers comparisons between the high school and collegiate essays and contains several examples to illustrate how visual plans work in action. A blank form can be made available for students to download and use for some of their future writing assignments



## “Planning the Perfect Paragraph”

“Planning the Perfect Paragraph” provides students a system for planning paragraphs, be they body paragraphs that are part of essays or paragraph discussions that run about half to three-quarters of a page in length (paragraphs that might be called “stand-alone paragraphs”). The template introduced in the PowerPoint is one I use in my own classes to great success. I call it a “step-by-step plan,” and make blank copies available to students to provide them a planning tool to write the types of paragraphs other instructors and I often assign them.

The presentation explains the rationale for the system, breaks down the form, and goes through an example before giving students some practice exercises. A blank form can be made available for students to download and use for some of their future writing assignments.

## "Practice Makes Perfect: Learning How to Write Main Point and Support Sentences"

"Practice Makes Perfect: Learning How to Write Main Point and Support Sentences" is a PowerPoint that stresses the need to practice writing main point sentences and support sentences. It actually encourages students to start with easy topics of a generic sort (how a meal was delicious, the messy appearance of a bedroom, et cetera) and gradually progress to more sophisticated topics (thoughts about a politician's speech, features of a new app, et cetera). The presentation emphasizes that having information and knowledge is crucial to the successful development of writing, but so is practice.

I encourage reviewing this PowerPoint with an entire class and engaging students with practice opportunities that themselves move from unassuming topics to more urbane ones.

## “Proposition Thesis”

The PowerPoint entitled “Proposition Thesis” explains what a thesis is and isn’t. Giving dozens of examples, the PowerPoint demonstrates to students the wide variety of thesis statements that can derive from a single subject—in this case, “baseball.”

Assignment/Activity Ideas: Students can practice creating thesis statements for other topics in pairs or a class exercise.

## “The Qualities of Good Writing”

“The Qualities of Good Writing” presents an explanation of the factors that impact the success of writing. Effective writing—and indeed ineffective writing—can generally be explained by how well a writer handles the basic factors covered by this PowerPoint. Many INRW students don’t really understand why their writing has been criticized, nor do they have a sense for how it can be made better. The goal of this presentation is to eliminate that confusion by reviewing the qualities of good writing slowly and systematically.

This PowerPoint is worth going over in class. There is an accompanying handout that students can be encouraged to utilize as a sort of check list for self-analysis or revision.

Assignment/Activity Ideas: An exercise I suggest is showing students both well written and poorly written paragraphs and asking pairs or small groups identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the models relative to the six qualities discussed in the PowerPoint.

## “Reading History Books”

“Reading History Books” takes students through active reading strategies as applied to texts of the sort used within a typical history class. The examples are also history-class related and may generate a sense of immediacy where students can take INRW concepts we teach them and put into ready use in their credit classes (even the other side of some of the co-req pairings). This PowerPoint stands alone but provides a segue way to another PowerPoint about primary and secondary sources. I strongly recommend going over the PowerPoint in class early in the semester, pausing to add comments and examples of your own and inviting students to do the same. It might be wise to revisit the presentation somewhat later to see if the students are successfully putting its lessons to use.

## "Rhetorical Modes"

The PowerPoint entitled "Rhetorical Modes" provides definitions and examples of the nine patterns of development traditionally taught in freshman composition classes. My experience with students is that, other than not always knowing their official names, they are familiar with these modes. But the presentation discusses them in a way they may not be accustomed to, for it presents the nine modes as being very flexible, versatile concepts that frequently work in cooperation with each other to develop ideas. I discuss them as intentional strategies for writers to build essays, paragraph by paragraph with individual paragraphs tending to rely on one or two of the modes while other paragraphs might depend more strictly on some of the other modes. Some of the presentation's slides invite students to try the same strategy by asking them what they would do were they asked to write on given topics.

## "Subject, Audience, Purpose"

The "Subject, Audience, Purpose" PowerPoint introduces students to the rhetorical triangle and encourages them to see the dynamic connection among the three concepts. The goal is for them to understand how one's audience influences what one does with one's topic and how those decisions are colored by the purpose one sets out to achieve in his or her text. Students are encouraged to see these concepts from the point of view of not only themselves as writers but also from the point of view of the authors whose works they might be reading.

Assignment/Activity Ideas: The presentation incorporates numerous exercises students can undertake on their own. These exercises could also be the foundation for class discussion. Included, too, are a series of questions designed to help students realize that they will not always be writing for teacher in a class for a grade, but sometimes will be preparing the documents for real-world readers such as bosses, clients, co-workers and other individuals.

## “Support Sentences: Development in Action”

“Support Sentences: Development in Action” demonstrates the power of support sentences to transform skinny, ho-hum paragraphs to full, rich ones that develop a writer’s thoughts in a way that makes them not only make sense to readers but makes them come alive. It shows students that adding descriptions and explanations and commentary and details of all sort are the driving force behind the concept of development. The presentation acknowledges but doesn’t celebrate the added length support sentences bring to paragraphs and essays. Instead, it stresses the stronger grades they’re likely to earn and the positive impact they have on the readers’ reading experience.

Assignment/Activity Ideas: The PowerPoint imagines an essay with seven body paragraph and fully explores one of them, but a good class exercise or homework assignment would be to ask students to develop one of the other six.



## “Tackling the Tough Topics”

“Tackling the Tough Topics” is a PowerPoint that addresses a common student lament: how to write on the tough topics, the ones they find boring, or the ones that they don’t know much about. Students often hope there is a quick and easy solution to this perceived problem. But what they need is a change in perspective. This presentation, with its ample example prompts and responses, supplies some guidance that may well convince students that they have it within themselves to write on practically any topic.

Assignment/Activity Ideas: Instructors might devote some class discussion time for students to work through some tough topics of his or her choosing. Those topics could then serve as the basis for other assignments.

## “Tone: A Test Case”

“Tone: A Test Case” presents a students an opportunity for students to consider a real-life example of tone. The presentation introduces an athlete who makes some fiery remarks in a post-game television interview. The remarks themselves are discussed, but students are also shown written reactions to the athlete’s remarks and analyze the tone of these passages to determine the writers’ opinions. The ability to ascertain how authors use word choice, details, and emphasis to establish their tone is a crucial skill that students need to pick up. It helps them better understand what they read.

## “Using Primary and Secondary Sources”

“Using Primary and Secondary Sources” is a PowerPoint that introduces INRW students to the concepts of primary, secondary (and even tertiary) sources. It helps students identify which sources might fall into each category and how typically they’d make use of them. Students taking ENGL 1301 may well get some basic instruction from their professors and/or texts on these matters, but they are concepts that INRW students may need more time with them, and students in other corequisite pairings may be called upon to use such sources (in a variety of assignments) without much class time being devoted to a full-bodied discussion about how to use sources.

This PowerPoint that can be shown in class (in whole or selected slides) or be made available for students to watch on their own. It provides definitions and examples (including some where Point viewers can guess) and walks students on how they will use all three types of sources throughout their academic careers.

Assignment/Activity Ideas: Students might be given a quiz to identify various sources be asked to provide examples of primary, secondary, and tertiary sources for certain topics. (What would some good secondary sources for an essay about the Paris Climate Agreement? Or What would be some good primary sources if your topic were the controversial transgender bathroom laws?)

## “Word! How and Why to Build Vocabulary”

“Word! How and Why to Build Vocabulary” addresses the manner in which a strong vocabulary contributes to grade level, from the standpoint of both reading comprehension and writing ability. The PowerPoint offers general advice and background into how vocabulary is built and how, according to research, it impacts success. But then it delves into the design and instructions of a particular vocabulary project that I assign in my classes. The goal of the project is for students to increase their awareness of new words and develop systematic habits for learning those words and growing comfortable with their correct use. A number of the slides try to steer students clear of some common mistakes to avoid as they set about mastering the words they use for the project.

Assignment/Activity Ideas: I strongly encourage teachers to engage students in some sort of formal vocabulary assignment. The truth is that many of our INRW students come to us with a limited lexicon growth and, without focused work, may experience inadequate growth, but with practice, they can grow stronger in their skills. Instructors are encouraged to adopt my assignment, but any thoughtful assignment could go far toward helping our students write more collegiate-level sentences.

## “The Writing Process”

Although “The Writing Process” addresses the title topic, it also explains what the model approach is and why students would be well advised to blend the concepts in their own view of writing. The presentation explains the recursive nature of the process and provides an overview of pre-writing techniques.

## “Grammar Unlocked: A Trick for Avoiding Sentence Fragments and Run-Ons”

“Grammar Unlocked: A Trick for Avoiding Sentence Fragments and Run-Ons” provides students an innovative strategy for avoiding sentence errors (i.e., sentence fragments and run-ons) until such time as they master the grammatical concepts involved in simple and compound sentences.

This PowerPoint may work best for students in a self-directed fashion, but I encourage you to review it yourself so that you can respond to any student questions about it, or at least develop a sense for which students might be ideal candidates for its viewing. The PowerPoint itself does make reference to other presentations within the “Grammar Unlocked” series that address some of the grammar concepts involved in a more traditional fashion.

Bear in mind that sentence errors are the most serious grammar errors students make and were earmarked as a point of concern by the credit teachers who responded to my co-req survey.

## "Grammar Unlocked: Avoiding Run-On Sentences"

"Grammar Unlocked: Avoiding Run-On Sentences" provides students information necessary to fulfill the title promise. Example sentences--both correct versions and errors--are broken down slowly so that students can understand which mistakes create run-ons and which strategies fix them. They are further reminded the comma splices, fused sentences, and run-ons are typically considered serious and can have significant negative impact on their grades and/or a reader's perception of their intelligence. Some slides offer students practice at implementing the rules they have just learned.

## “Grammar Unlocked: Capitalization Rules”

“Grammar Unlocked: Capitalization Rules” is a PowerPoint that reviews some basic grammar concepts that help students to avoid annoying capitalization errors. The PowerPoint acknowledges that such mistakes are common enough for reasons that make sense but stresses the need for the basic rules to be followed. The PowerPoint provides a fairly comprehensive list of the rules along with examples of their correct implementation. Not every student needs to see this PowerPoint, but it is obviously best suited for students who make capitalization errors.



## “Grammar Unlocked: Colons and Semicolons”

“Grammar Unlocked: Colons and Semicolons” covers the two named marks of punctuation, both of which are sources of considerable confusion for many students. Some students avoid using either punctuation mark, but in their absence, they struggle to write longer, more sophisticated sentences. Then, too, as they try to use them, they often stumble and unwittingly create serious sentence errors. Hopefully, this PowerPoint will set them on the road to a full understand of colons and semicolons.

## “Grammar Unlocked: Commas, Part I”

“Grammar Unlocked: Commas” series covers several commonly violated comma rules. The presentation is divided into two parts.

## “Grammar Unlocked: Commas, Part II”

“Grammar Unlocked: Commas” series covers several commonly violated comma rules. The presentation is divided into two parts.

## “Grammar Unlocked: Compound Sentences”

“Grammar Unlocked: Compound Sentences” introduces students to the versatility of compound sentences. The presentation supplies definitions, breakdowns, examples, and practice opportunities to understand the named sentence pattern. There are several other, related PowerPoints about sentence basics, sentence patterns, and three other sentence patterns. If students are to achieve college-level writing, it is essential that they master the sentence types. Therefore, I recommend all students be encouraged to review these PowerPoints. This might be handled individually or shown during class.

## “Grammar Unlocked: Pronouns, Part I (Pronoun Reference)”

“Grammar Unlocked: Pronouns, Part I (Pronoun Reference)” is the first in a series of PowerPoints about common pronoun errors. This one deals with the problems of “agreement,” where pronouns do not either have no antecedent or are seemingly matched to the wrong antecedent. The concept is explained as it is supposed to work and then errors are both demonstrated and corrected. At the beginning, examples focus on personal pronouns but, as it progresses, trickier situations crop up with collective nouns and indefinite pronouns. Common errors involving demonstrative pronouns and the controversial singular use of “they” are also addressed. These concepts are sometimes difficult and time-consuming to explain in class, so instructors might prefer to direct students making mistakes in this area to this PowerPoint, instead.

## “Grammar Unlocked: Pronouns, Part II (Pronoun Agreement)”

“Grammar Unlocked: Pronouns, Part II (Pronoun Agreement)” deals with the complicated concept of pronoun agreement. INRW students, particularly those with a non-English-speaking background, sometimes struggle to properly match pronouns to their antecedents. The presentation contains explanations, examples, and opportunities for practice. Almost all students can benefit from viewing this PowerPoint, but it would be especially helpful to those who make frequent pronoun errors.

### “Grammar Unlocked: Pronouns, Part III (Pronoun Case)”

“Grammar Unlocked: Pronouns, Part III (Pronoun Case)” deals with the complicated concept of pronoun case, addressing a variety of errors, including but not limited to using “me” as a subject, the confusion of “your” versus “you’re,” and the misuse of “who” and “whom.”

Covered are subject case pronouns, object case pronouns, and possessive case pronouns as well as reflexive and emphatic case pronouns. Comparative constructions and predicate nominative pronouns are also included. Many instructors use pronoun case correctly but do so on a largely intuitive basis, and, so find the concepts difficult to explain. This PowerPoint may help in that regard. It is somewhat long, but its explanations are thorough and its examples plentiful. Students are also given numerous opportunities to try to answer questions.

The PowerPoint may be reviewed in class, but a slower, more private review could be most helpful to students who commit pronoun case errors.

## “Grammar Unlocked: Sentence Basics & Subjects and Verbs”

“Grammar Unlocked: Sentence Basics & Subjects and Verbs” is a PowerPoint I highly recommend for students or class sections whose members are making a lot of sentence errors. This PowerPoint breaks down sentence basics—from defining what sentences are and how to understand their main parts (subjects and predicates). It also provides a brief introduction to the four sentence patterns that every student should be learn to master.

Many of the other presentations I’ve created assume that students have either seen this PowerPoint or understand the information contained within it.

Some students may balk at being required to review this presentation, thinking they already know the basics of sentences, but couch it as a “refresher course.” Most students actually have some gaps in their knowledge, so they will likely learn new information from it. And for those without much background, this presentation lays a good foundation to build upon as they learn to correctly punctuate longer and more sophisticated sentences.



## “Grammar Unlocked: Sentence Patterns”

“Grammar Unlocked: Sentence Patterns” is a PowerPoint that reviews the four basic sentence patterns: simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, and compound-complex sentences. There are other presentations about each specific pattern. College students should be writing all four types of sentences—and doing so without creating grammar errors. Unfortunately, many of our INRW students are very unclear about the grammar principles behind the sentence types. So this PowerPoint works to provide that background. There are also related PowerPoints that teach students to avoid sentence fragments and run-on sentences as they learn to master the sentence patterns.

There are, of course, some students who know the information contained in these PowerPoints, so you may want to reserve them for students who appear to need them or class sections whose students frequently make errors with their sentences or those whose members struggle with sentences that are both modest in terms of length and intellectual complexity.

## “Grammar Unlocked: Simple Sentences”

“Grammar Unlocked: Simple Sentences” introduces the first and needless to say simplest of the sentence patterns. It provides students an understanding of how simple sentences are formed, whether through declarative or interrogatory sentences. It further demonstrates how easily simple sentences stop being simple sentences and become complex or compound sentences and warn students to be careful about the picky punctuation required by those other sentence patterns. It also demonstrates how fragment sentences can be fixed by transforming them into simple sentences. This PowerPoint works in combination with the other, related PowerPoints about sentence basics, sentence patterns, and three other sentence patterns.

## “Grammar Unlocked: Subject-Verb Agreement”

“Grammar Unlocked: Subject-Verb Agreement” is a long PowerPoint that covers the basic concepts of subject-verb agreement involved with typical noun subjects and action verbs. But it also goes on to cover tricky constructions that use compound subjects (both those joined with “and,” “or,” “along with,” et cetera), collective nouns, and a variety of singular and plural indefinite pronouns. It explains verb conjugation, touches on linking verbs and helping verbs, and offers students hints for avoiding faulty subject-verb agreement errors. The PowerPoint is likely to be very help to our INRW students who have an ESL background and others who have a tendency to misuse verbs.

Colleagues—

As you are no doubt aware, House Bill 2223 requires community colleges to create corequisite courses for developmental students. In an effort to meet the new state mandates, more and more INRW classes will be paired with certain credit-level courses. Collin's current strategy is to create corequisites between INRW/ENGL, INRW/GOVT, and INRW/HIST. These concurrent courses will certainly be challenging for students, but they also pose certain challenges for us professors, too, on both sides of the pairings.

The overriding goal of the INRW courses has always been to teach students the sorts of active reading strategies designed to boost reading comprehension, introduce them to the planning strategies that help with writing, and engage them in assignments wherein they get practice at understanding and developing reasoned arguments. Efforts are also made to help students make strides with vocabulary development and grammar and punctuation.

These goals will continue, but INRW faculty foresee a need to adjust our curriculum as our students are no longer completing their developmental courses before moving forward to credit-level classes but will now be doing so while taking credit-level classes. For many, succeeding in their courses may be difficult, especially if those courses pose a heavy reading burden and require essays and other sorts of writing assignments. After all, these are the very skills with which they struggled on the TSI test. Still, the thought process behind the new state laws is to enable developmental students to proceed more quickly through their coursework and graduate at higher rates than they currently do.

This leads me to me and my sabbatical. My aim is to build new curriculum for the INRW program. We need to find faster ways to cover the expected learning outcomes with which we are charged as well as to help our lessons align better with the content students typically face in government, history, and freshman English courses. I am proceeding with my work related to the of these first objectives, but I am asking for your input to pursue the second. To wit, if we are to help students succeed in government, history, and freshman English courses, we need to understand the perspective of the government, history, and freshman English instructors.

Therefore, I'm asking you to please print out, complete the attached questionnaire, and return it to me by campus mail whether you are currently involved in the INRW corequisites or not. I expect that filling it out will take no more than fifteen minutes. I have established a deadline of September 14. Thank you in advance for your participation, especially considering how busy you are at this time in the semester. Your answers will most assuredly benefit Collin's students. For questions, contact me at [lfoster@collin.edu](mailto:lfoster@collin.edu).

--Laura Foster

## INRW Corequisites Questionnaire

Please return to Professor Laura Foster (INRW/SCC) by Friday, September 14, 2018

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Discipline:      ☐ ENGL    ☐ GOVT    ☐ HIST

What sort of assignments do you give? [please check all that apply]

- ☐ Essays (typical length \_\_\_\_\_)
- ☐ Other written reports
- ☐ Multiple-choice tests
- ☐ Short answer    ☐ paragraph-length answer tests
- ☐ Group projects
- ☐ Reading assignments (typical length \_\_\_\_\_)
- ☐ Textbook work
- ☐ Class presentations/speeches
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please list the types of texts you utilize in your courses? [please check all that apply]

- ☐ Standard test books
- ☐ Historical documents
- ☐ News stories (magazines and newspapers)
- ☐ Professor notes/PowerPoints
- ☐ Literature (poems, short stories, novels)
- ☐ Anthologies/readers
- ☐ Films/documentaries
- ☐ Biographies/autobiographies/monographs
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Which skills would be the most useful preparation for students in your class?

[please check all that apply]

Note-taking

☐ 1 not too important ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 very important

Annotation

☐ 1 not too important ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 very important

Summary-writing

☐ 1 not too important ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 very important

Journal writing

☐ 1 not too important ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 very important

Paragraph-length discussions

☐ 1 not too important ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 very important

On a scale of 1 to 10, how much does correct grammar and punctuation into your grading?

☐ 1 not too important ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 very important

What grammatical or technical errors do you find troubling? [please check all that apply, double check the one you find most troubling]

- ☐ ☐ Sentence errors (run-ons or fragments)
- ☐ ☐ Verb errors
- ☐ ☐ Pronoun errors
- ☐ ☐ Punctuation errors
- ☐ ☐ Spelling errors
- ☐ ☐ Misuse of words
- ☐ ☐ Proofreading mistakes
- ☐ ☐ ESL concerns
- ☐ ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

How important would you say a college-level vocabulary is to understanding you and/or the texts in your class?

- ☐ 1 not too important   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5   ☐ 6   ☐ 7   ☐ 8   ☐ 9   ☐ 10 very important

How important is it that your students use a college-level vocabulary in the work they do for your course?

- ☐ 1 not too important   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5   ☐ 6   ☐ 7   ☐ 8   ☐ 9   ☐ 10 very important

How structured are your classes when it comes to attendance, tardiness, late work policies, deadlines, re-tests, et cetera?

- ☐ strict   ☐ moderate   ☐ lenient

What is your usual response to students whose writing is weak? [please check all that apply]

- ☐ Grade the work accordingly
- ☐ Heavy editing of any papers
- ☐ Work with student during office hours
- ☐ Referral to the Writing Center
- ☐ Encourage student to study grammar books/web sites
- ☐ Encourage student to drop if severe enough
- ☐ Encourage student to take a writing course (ESW, INRW, or other)
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

What are the biggest challenges you think your students face in your class?

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Do you anticipate INRW students to face any additional or different challenges?

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Should you be called upon to teach within an INRW corequisite, do you anticipate handling the course paired with INRW any differently than the same course, unpaired?

☐ 1 not much ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 a lot

In what ways might you approach it differently?

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What level of coordination would you want to have with your INRW teaching counterpart?

☐ 1 not much ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 a lot

Do you require a format of your writing assignments? [please check all that apply]

- ☐ No
- ☐ MLA
- ☐ APA
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Do you use rubrics in your grading?

☐ yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes

Please provide three test questions, writing prompts, or project instructions that you typically use. If you prefer, you may simply describe the assignments. (These will not be shown to students).

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. \_\_\_\_\_  
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