

2019 'Exemplary' Overall Instructional Narrative Faculty, English Department, YR2 of PAR

What a year it has been. My second year at Mesa Community College has been filled with hard work, rewarding experiences, and deeper collaboration. While I feel more connected and informed as a faculty member, this year has also deepened my understanding of what a complex and dynamic organization the Maricopa Community College District is. I feel so fortunate to serve our college, contribute to the English Department, participate on several committees, and assist my students. As can be seen in my service posts, I have been able to focus on my attention this year on several overlapping committees/projects that have revolved around integrated developmental education. At the end of the Spring semester last year, I volunteered to help plan and teach a pilot Foundation for Student Success (FSS) Reading/Writing Bootcamp. Out of this rewarding experience came the opportunity to serve on the FSS Committee. As a teacher who has dedicated my career to teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) students, this is a topic that is very close to my heart. Through joining the FSS Committee and attending the MCLI Developmental Education: Re-Imagination of Student Success workshop, I realized that our ESL Program was not addressing the move to integrate developmental education and that I was in an opportune position to create and teach the first Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) ESL class which concurrently addresses ESL 097 and ENG 107. It was at this point that I also joined the ALP Committee and began collaborating with my ALP colleagues in the English Department who teach students' whose native language is English. I have been really fortunate to work with excellent colleagues who have provided me with great insight as I created and began teaching the first ESL ALP. Through my involvement in each of these committees/classes, I have learned about the incredible resources that MCC offers its students and I have been able to contribute ideas and insights from my experience to improve these. Now, looking back, I can see how each decision connected me more deeply to the campus, my colleagues, and my students. This connection is one of the things that I am proudest of this year and has made my experience this year more productive and cohesive.

After reflecting upon my observations, evaluations, PARC Letter from last year, and my own evaluation of my teaching, I have found four areas of strengths and four areas for development.

Areas of strengths

I. Embedding Services into My Classes

a. As I have become more familiar with the variety of student services that are available and through extensive discussions with my colleagues about student success, I have made an concerted effort to integrate these resources into my classes. As a result, my classes this year have helped students to connect to the larger campus community and to provide them with the skills and means for them to help themselves once they leave my classroom. While I haven't been able to embed them into every class that I teach, I have been able to contextualize the following resources into my at least one or more of my classes this year with the hope of bringing these into all of my classes next year:

i. Service Learning: I incorporated service learning into my Level 4 ESL Listening and Speaking Class: First, I brought students to the Center for Community and Civic Engagement for an information session about the

various volunteer opportunities that are available to them. Then, out of three possible service learning projects that directly related our class themes, students chose one project to volunteer with. Students could (a) read to elementary school students as part of an event for Dr. Seuss' Birthday, (b) package food for hungry children with the organization, Feed My Starving Children, or (c) help run the E.A.R.T.H. Forward Sustainability Conference. Through this, students gained authentic communication experience, learned first-hand about the important world problems, and connected with and contributed to their community.

ii. Student Success Workshop on Time Management: As a part of my ESL ALP class, a representative from FSS came and conducted a 45-minute workshop on time management skills. I continue to refer back to the valuable information from this workshop and students consistently use some of the strategies that were taught (e.g., working backwards from their due dates and planning their schedules accordingly, prioritizing their responsibilities).

iii. Library Research Presentations: For each of my ENG 107/ALP classes, my students have two library sessions where they get to know the Library's resources, learn how to navigate the databases, and have hands-on practice searching for sources.

iv. Academic Skills Center: For all of my ESL classes, we have an orientation to the Academic Skills Center where students learn where to go, the ASC's resources, as well as how to get help from a tutor.

v. Writing Center: While we do not physically go to the Writing Center, it is a resource that I encourage students to use in all of my ENG 107/ALP classes for each essay.

vi. Advising: In two of my ESL classes, students seemed to have a lot of questions about the placement tests they needed to take, the classes that they could sign up for as well as questions about their student visas. In response to this, I asked an international student advisor to come and speak with my classes. It was very successful and students seemed to appreciate having the time to speak with the advisor as a group.

vii. Career Services: Students navigated the campus website, took personality tests and researched future professions as a part of their classification essay in my ENG 107/ALP classes.

viii. Personal Development Points: In addition to the resources that I integrated into my classes, and based on the "Bucket Points" activity that was created by Jennifer Caldwell in the Math Department, I have given my students over twenty other resources that they can utilize for extra credit points (e.g., Brainfuse Tutoring, Connect 4 Success).

II. Model UN Project

a. As a part of my Listening and Speaking Level 4 ESL Class, I developed a small Model United Nations Project in Spring of 2018. This semester (Spring of 2019), I expanded on the project and have organized my course around it. I am incredibly excited about this as it utilizes many of the more beneficial second language teaching approaches (Content-based Instruction and Project-based Learning) while also clearly connecting to the real-world and provides for an ideal platform to achieve the curricular objectives for a Listening and Speaking Course. Students first are introduced to the United Nations and its function in the world and choose a country to represent for the rest of the semester. Then, they debate and vote on their three most important world problems (e.g., hunger, education inequality, environmental sustainability). These three problems become the themes for the rest of the semester. For each theme students are exposed to information about one world problem in videos, podcasts, and readings. Students work together to define the problem and identify some of the causes of the problem. The last part of the semester is a "Resolution Writing" unit where students work to create comprehensive and thoughtful solutions to one of the three problems. As a group, they present their resolution to the Model United Nations (the class) and the members vote to adopt the resolution or not. Expounding on this project has been rewarding and my students are engaging with the content in very real and passionate ways that fosters authentic communication and is something that I am proud of this year.

III. Connection with students

a. My positive rapport with students was also a strength that I wrote about in my IDP from last year and is something that I continue to try to improve and foster. As noted in my Mentor Observation and my Chair and Dean Evaluations, I am generally a positive person who tries to encourage my students. Learning a language is extremely difficult and is a time that can be full of embarrassment, isolation, and discouragement. I am fully aware of the fact that many of my students are dealing with all of the struggles that comes with seeking a higher education, but they are doing it in a language and a culture that is not their own. Because of this, I strive to be honest and helpful with my students, but also very encouraging to them.

IV. Improvement of timing

a. One of the challenges that I faced last year was trying to time my lessons and activities so that students had an appropriate amount of time to practice and finish each activity within the class time. Through careful thought and consideration, I worked to better organize my activities and to be prudent with the amount of information that can be covered in any given class. This is something that I have worked hard to adjust and, as can be seen in my Dean and Chair Evaluations, it is something that has improved over the last year. Now, I am consistently planning lessons that provide students with enough context and content, but do not feel rushed.

Areas for development

- I. Still understanding how my classes fit into the larger program/curriculum

a. While I feel much more confident in my understanding of the courses/levels offered at MCC now than I did my first year, this is still an area that I want to develop. As one of only four ESL residential faculty members, I think that it is paramount that I have a comprehensive understanding of the ESL courses that are offered here and how they address different linguistic and academic competencies. I have now had the opportunity to teach seven of the fifteen ESL courses offered and have spoken with instructors who teach many of the other courses to better understand the other eight. Last year one of my goals for professional development was to observe other teachers' classes. I have been able to observe two other teachers classes (Stacy Wilson and Andrea Osteen) which has been very informative and rewarding. Both of these courses are native-speaker ALP courses. During these observations, in addition to becoming better informed about the assignments, structure, and scaffolding of the courses, I was also interested in learning about the differences between the native-English ALP students and my ESL ALP students. It was a pleasure to observe these classes and they provided me with a better understanding of the similarities and differences between these populations. Additionally, I always find it extremely beneficial to see how other teachers present their information and I learned a lot from the two ALP instructors whom I observed. However, I still have a lot to learn in this area and plan to continue my observations this Spring and next year. Unfortunately, while Patricia Pullenza (who teaches ENG 108) and I tried to find a time that was conducive to both of our schedules, we have been unable to do so. However, we have planned for me to observe one of her ENG 108 classes toward the end of the this Spring semester. I look forward to better understanding the rigor and requirements of the course that students take following my ENG 107 class. In addition to this observation, I would also like to observe a native-speaker ENG 101 class during the next academic year.

II. Connecting class to their future and to the outside world

a. Although I have made strides to better connect the assignments and content in my classes to the outside world, this is still an area in need of development for me. Some of the ways that I have tried to contextualize my classes are to embed student services into my classes (as I mentioned previously in my areas of strength), create assignments that connect to students' lives (e.g., in ENG 107 students write a classification essay about their future profession), utilize realia in my classes (e.g., in ENG 107 I ask students to analyze the credibility of different authentic articles. As part of this, I bring in newspapers, magazines, and other periodicals for them to search through), and projects (e.g., the Model United Nations Project). However, on a day-to-day basis, connecting each lesson to the real-world is still something that I struggle with. Mostly, I feel that I am too focused on making sure that my directions/assignments are clear, and trying to balance my presentation with students' active engagement with the content and I forget or run out of time to clearly link the information/materials/assignment to the real-world. This is evident in my student evaluations and is also something that I have observed about myself in my reflections. Because of this, I asked my mentor for feedback on this area during his classroom observation. Unfortunately, that is one of the times where I ran out of time. While I had an activity that directly links the content discussed that day with students' futures, I was unable to use it because the other activities took longer than expected. As a result, his observation accurately shows that I did not do this well. During my

post-observation meeting with him, we discussed some of the ways that he links teaching citation styles with the real world (e.g., playing authentic new stories for students and asking them to find the sources, the quotes, and the introduction to the speaker). This is something that I will definitely incorporate into my classes in the future. Additionally, I will continue to work on my timing and try to directly link more of my materials and assignments to real life.

III. Giving feedback in a timely manner

a. The third area of development that I wish to improve is my timely feedback to students. This is something that I am very self-aware of and something that I have struggled with my entire career. As a writing teacher, I know that prompt and specific feedback on students' writing is paramount to them being able to improve their writing skills. I also try very hard to provide students with personal and specific feedback (both positive and constructive). While I try to do this quickly and efficiently, I find that it takes a lot of time for each student's paper and, therefore, increases the time it takes me to return students' work to them. I struggle to find the balance in providing the amount and type of feedback that I would like to give to students and the grading efficiently. I think that this is a fairly common challenge among writing teachers and there is evidence on both sides of the debate as to whether written feedback is actually beneficial for students. I have spoken with my mentor about this and he has shown me some examples of the feedback that he provides for his students and one of his suggestions was to gather a list of resources (websites, YouTube videos, handouts, etc...) that address common areas of concern so that I can quickly and efficiently steer students towards the resources that will benefit them the most. I will definitely do this and look forward to improving this in the future.

IV. Judiciously and purposefully calling on different students in my class to help me conduct an accurate evaluation of my students' understanding

a. One of my goals for each of my lessons is to engage students in different ways. I attempt to do this by using different types of activities, grouping, providing interesting and comprehensive input, etc.... I also try to make sure that students are held accountable for the information that is covered in the class. I do this through homework, games, activities, and comprehension checks. However, this is an area that my mentor suggested that I work on. He noticed that during many of my comprehension checks, I ask a question of the entire class and call on anyone with their hand up. Instead, he suggested that I might number the tables in my room and call on tables at random in order to have a better evaluation of my students' understanding. I think that this is a great idea and have begun to utilize this method in my classes. While I am conscious of the fact that some students do not feel as comfortable speaking in front of the class, this method allows the entire table to help each other, so that they connect with each other, help each other learn, while also giving me a better check of my students' comprehension.

Plan for Development:

I would like to take this opportunity to say how fortunate I feel to work with such a diverse group of students who are motivated and excited to learn, colleagues who are dedicated to providing excellent classes for their students, and for a college who is so supportive of professional growth of their faculty. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of this institution.

In the next academic year, I hope to continue to improve myself as a teacher and a colleague, by continuing to learn about our college and district, becoming involved in different committees and groups, and developing my teaching. As mentioned in my "Areas for development" section, in the next year I will continue to observe my colleagues, work to develop assignments/lessons that strongly link to the real-world, find a balance between helpful feedback, but feedback that can be provided in an appropriate amount of time, create a list of resources that can I can provide for students to help them with common challenges, and engage all students in my classroom by utilizing a suggestion from my mentor to number tables and call on all tables equally. By implementing these changes, I hope that I can continue to grow and improve.