

Grande Prairie Regional College
Department of Early Childhood Education
CD 1130
Communications

HOURS: 45
SEMESTER: Fall 1999
INSTRUCTOR: Rebecca Reynolds

TELEPHONE: 539- 2053 (office) or 539-1476 (home)
OFFICE: H129
OFFICE HOURS : 11:00 - 12:00 Wednesday
11:30 - 12:30 Thursday

REQUIRED TEXTS

Norton, S. and Green, B. : The Bare Essentials, Form B
(4th edition). Harcourt Brace, Toronto. 1999.
ISBN: 0-7747-3636-4

Fitzpatrick, D. and Center Vance, K. : Writing for Success.
Prentice Hall Canada, Scarborough, Ontario. 1998.
ISBN: 0-13-095493-4

A good English dictionary, preferably the Oxford English Dictionary or Collins Co-
Build.

RECOMMENDED TEXT

Leech, G. : An A-Z of English Grammar and Usage.
Nelson, UK, 1989.
ISBN: 0-17-556021-8

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OVERVIEW

This course is designed to help students improve their written and oral communications skills. Through the study of grammar and through the process of writing and then orally presenting their work, the students will improve their use of English. Students will learn to apply these skills to practical business communications, thereby enhancing their abilities in the workplace.

SECTIONS IN BRIEF

Section 1: Grammar, syntax and mechanics: a review of our language's basic rules and structures.

Section 2: Writing and research: paragraph and essay structure; research and documentation skills.

Section 3: Putting it all together - the business portfolio: memos, e-mails, business letters, reports and pamphlets.

Section 4: Oral presentations with visuals.

SECTIONS IN DETAIL

SECTION ONE: Grammar, Mechanics and Syntax

In this section, students will re-acquaint themselves with the basic structures of English grammar, its mechanics and its syntax. The majority of classwork for this section will come from The Bare Essentials

Section 1(a)

By the end of section 1(a), students will demonstrate a sound knowledge of the basics of English grammar. This section will be prefaced by a discussion of grammar, its purpose and its inherent usefulness. We will examine how the grammar we use directly and dramatically colours the way in which we communicate with others and how these communications are received. Section 1(a) will become the foundation upon which much of the course will rest.

This section will include, but not be confined to, the study of: subjects, verbs and objects, subject/verb disagreement, person, pronouns, and the correct formation of all tenses.

Section 1(b)

In section 1(b), students will re-familiarize themselves with a fundamentally important aspect of effective communications: mechanics. Specific attention will be given to some of the many troublesome aspects of spelling and punctuation.

Section 1(c)

In this sub- section, students will investigate syntax; the rules that govern the formation of sentences. Here, students will combine the skills they have acquired from the previous two sections and, together with the rules of syntax, will demonstrate skill in writing clear, correct sentences. Specific attention will be given to such issues as dangling and misplaced modifiers and run- on sentences.

SECTION TWO: Writing and Research

In this section, the students will apply the lessons of section one to paragraphs and short essays. By learning the essay style, students will necessarily acquire and apply logical and critical thinking skills. Students will also practice paraphrasing techniques and will learn to distinguish between paraphrasing and plagiarism. The majority of classwork for this section will come from Writing for Success.

In section two, students will also develop library and internet research skills and will learn the various formats for documentation. A sound knowledge of documentation skills will assist students in avoiding plagiarism.

Library day: A tour of the library will be conducted in early October. Library staff will help students become familiar with the retrieval system and will provide information on documentation. Students may also use this time to acquire internet skills.

SECTION THREE: The Business Portfolio

In the third section of this course, students will encounter the many practical business applications of sections one and two. For their "**business portfolios**", a major assignment which is worth 40 per cent of their total mark, students will be required to produce a variety of business communications such as e- mails, letters and memos. The weightiest part of this assignment is the **formal report**; a project which will bring together all of the writing and research skills that the students have accumulated throughout the course. Reflection and research for the formal report can begin in mid- September, when the students will be asked to choose between two possible "**scenarios**". Students will base their business portfolios on the scenario that they select. A thorough description of this project will be conducted in the second week of classes.

SECTION FOUR: Oral Presentations

Pairs of students will present the pro and con sides of issues arising from the scenarios. Supporting materials such as visual aids must be used and both sides of the issues must be presented as fairly and rationally as possible. This is not intended to be a debate, but the full and fair presentation of a whole issue. The minimum time limit for the presentations is **ten minutes** and students are asked **not to exceed fifteen minutes**. Students will also be expected to answer questions posed by their classmates.

Pairs will be established as soon as students have selected the scenarios for their business portfolios. Students are encouraged to develop supportive academic relationships with their partners. Marks for this assignment will be assigned to the **pair**, not to the individual student.

COURSE EVALUATION

Participation..... 10 %

- Class attendance
- In- class assignments and homework based on exercises in Bare Essentials and Writing for Success

Quizzes.....10 %

- Three short quizzes based on grammar, mechanics and syntax

Dates for quizzes to be announced

Writing Components..... 20 %

- One paraphrasing exercise
- One short essay, five paragraphs in length in which students will demonstrate a) the ability to write a thesis statement and develop it logically through to its conclusion and b) the ability to write clear and concise paragraphs which flow intelligently from strong topic sentences. This essay will be written *during class time* and will be a demonstration of how effectively students can apply the skills of grammar and writing that they have acquired during the course.

Date for the in- class essay: Friday, November 19th

Library Assignment..... 10 %

(To be completed during and after the library tour)

- Students will demonstrate the ability to retrieve materials from the library's existing collection and from the internet. It is expected that students will retrieve materials relevant to early childhood development and materials that will assist them in the completion of their business portfolios.
- Students will complete an in- class exercise on documentation (footnotes, bibliographies etc.)

Due date for library assignment to be announced

Business Portfolio..... 40 %

Students will base their business portfolios on one of two possible scenarios. Each component of the portfolio will be directly related to the chosen scenario. The scenarios will be presented on September 17th so that the students may have adequate time to consider and research their projects.

- One e- mail
- One memo
- One business letter (covering letter, letter of inquiry, thank- you letter, follow- up letter etc.,)
- One formal report. The formal report will require the students to demonstrate skill in persuasion, observation and research. Students will be required to submit full and accurate documentation with their reports.
- One pamphlet which details either the results of the formal report or any changes that will be made as a result of the formal report.

Please note: The contents of the Business Portfolio must be typewritten, double spaced and handed in on the assigned date. 5 % will be deducted per day from students who have not specifically requested an extension.

Oral Presentation (pairs work)..... 10 %

- The mark for this section of the course will be based upon how well pairs of students orally present and examine the issues arising from the scenarios. Visual aids must accompany this presentation. Marks will be assigned to the pair, not to the individual student.

Dates for oral presentations: December 3rd and December 10th
Presentations will be conducted in the Rotary Video- Conferencing Room

THERE IS NO FINAL EXAMINATION FOR THIS COURSE.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Writing Centre

The services of the Writing Centre are available to those students who need extra help with their written work. The staff at the Writing Centre will help students identify their weak areas and will provide possible solutions. The staff members DO NOT proof- read assignments and they DO NOT correct work.

Please see **Katherine** at the Writing Centre in its new location, **C311A** , to make an appointment if you feel that you need supplementary help.