

SCHOLARSHIP OF EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

**ANGIE LAWVER: ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF
ENGLISH/READING, GERMANTOWN CAMPUS**

PART 1

GOALS

My main goal

3

GOAL: To enhance my student's growth mindset essay grade

WHY: Many of my developmental students lack basic essay writing skills. In order for them to “graduate” to credit-level English classes (ENGL101 or ENGL101/011), they need to have a firm understanding of the writing process:

- ▶ Free writing, outlining, drafting
- ▶ Creating strong thesis statements
- ▶ Creating strong topic and concluding sentences.

WHY DID THIS GOAL OCCUR TO ME?

- ▶ **Growth mindset essay is first**
- ▶ **Developmental students are graduating high school without proper writing skills**
- ▶ **Making a personal connection to essay topic makes it more meaningful**
- ▶ **“Hand holding” on first essay builds confidence.**

PART 2

SCHOLARSHIP

IMPORTANT QUOTES FROM READINGS

“While we want students to be motivated and comfortable, we also want to challenge thinking and promote diversity.”

~*Collaborative Learning Techniques*, pg. 87

“...identifying and building upon people’s strengths...”
~Higher Expectations: Can Colleges Teach What Students What They Need to Know in the 21st Century, pg 127

“Critical thinking is the art of analyzing and evaluating thought processes with a view to improving them.”
~The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking, pg. 9

PART 3

MY STRATEGY!

**WHAT DID I HAVE
STUDENTS DO?**

WHAT DID I DO?

MY STRATEGY!

- ▶ **Color-coding parts of the growth mindset essay**
 - ▶ The introductory paragraph of the essay needed to include a definition of mindset, information on the TED Talk we watched, and a thesis statement and blueprint points
 - ▶ I color-coded the definition **red**, the in-text citation of the TED Talk **red**, and the beginning of the thesis statement and blueprint points **red**.
- ▶ **What does this look like?**

MY STRATEGY!

▶ Introduction (50-100 words)

1. Informative

Intro (Step 1 = Definition) **According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, mindset is "a mental attitude or inclination" ("mindset").**

▶ (Step 2 = Summary) **In Carol Dweck's TED Talk, "The Power Of Believing That You Can Improve," she says people with a growth mindset believe that their abilities can be developed and I agree.**

▶ 1. Thesis **I demonstrated a growth mindset when** I summited Mount Katahdin.

▶ 1. Blueprint **Not only did I** provide positive reinforcement to my family, **but I also** continued walking despite my fear.

Examples of specific directions

- ▶ We completed the introductory paragraph as a class
- ▶ I asked for student input on the definition of mindset
- ▶ We talked about the thesis of the TED Talk, “The Power Of Believing That You Can Improve” by Carol Dweck
- ▶ We spent time creating strong thesis statements
- ▶ We spent time creating specific actions for blueprint points.

Student examples

The Struggles of a Newly Single Mother

According to the Marriam-Webster Dictionary , mindset is a mental attitude or inclination. (“Mindset ”). In Carol Dweck’s “TED TALK”, “The Power of Believing That You Can Improve ” she states people with a growth mindset believe their abilities can be developed and I agree. I demonstrated a growth mindset when I had to become an instant single mother. **Not only did I** take on the task of remaining focused and continuing school, **but I also** developed and maintained a happier and healthier lifestyle for my daughter as well as myself .

Student examples

The Running Power of a Growth Mindset

According to the Merriam – Webster Dictionary, a mindset is defined as “a mental attitude or inclination” (“mindset”). In Carol Dweck’s TED Talk, “The Power of Believing That You Can Improve,” she states that people with a growth mindset believe their abilities can always be improved and I agree. I demonstrated a growth mindset when I didn’t win my first track meet. **Not only did I** begin to engage in more strength training, **but I also** changed my diet in its entirety .

PART 4

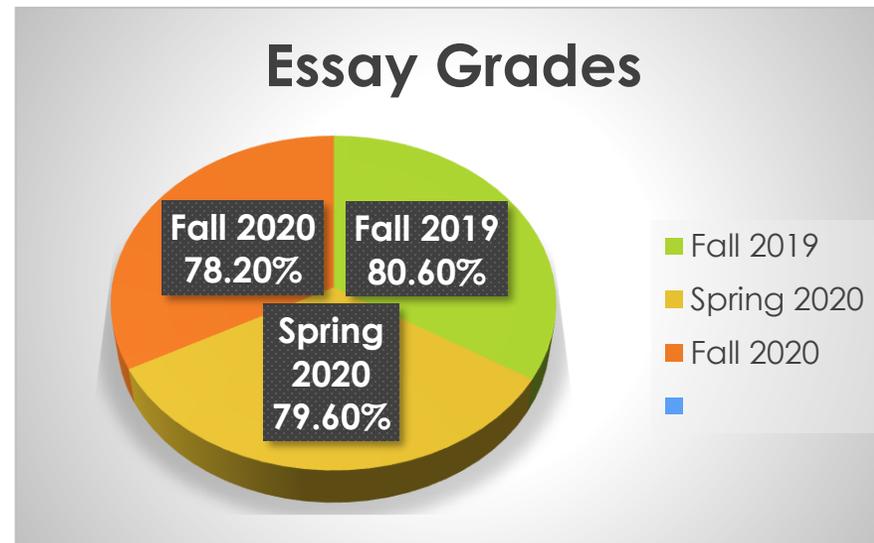
ASSESSMENT OF MY STRATEGY

What Assessment Techniques did I use?

- ▶ I compared the grades of the growth mindset essay final drafts to two previous semesters
- ▶ I also compared final grades between the semesters
- ▶ ****Important to keep in mind that grading essays is highly subjective****

The results are in! Growth Mindset essay average grades

Fall 2019	Spring 2020	Fall 2020
IERW001 CRN23249: 80.6%	IERW001 CRN33015: 79.6%	IERW001 CRN22957: 78.2%

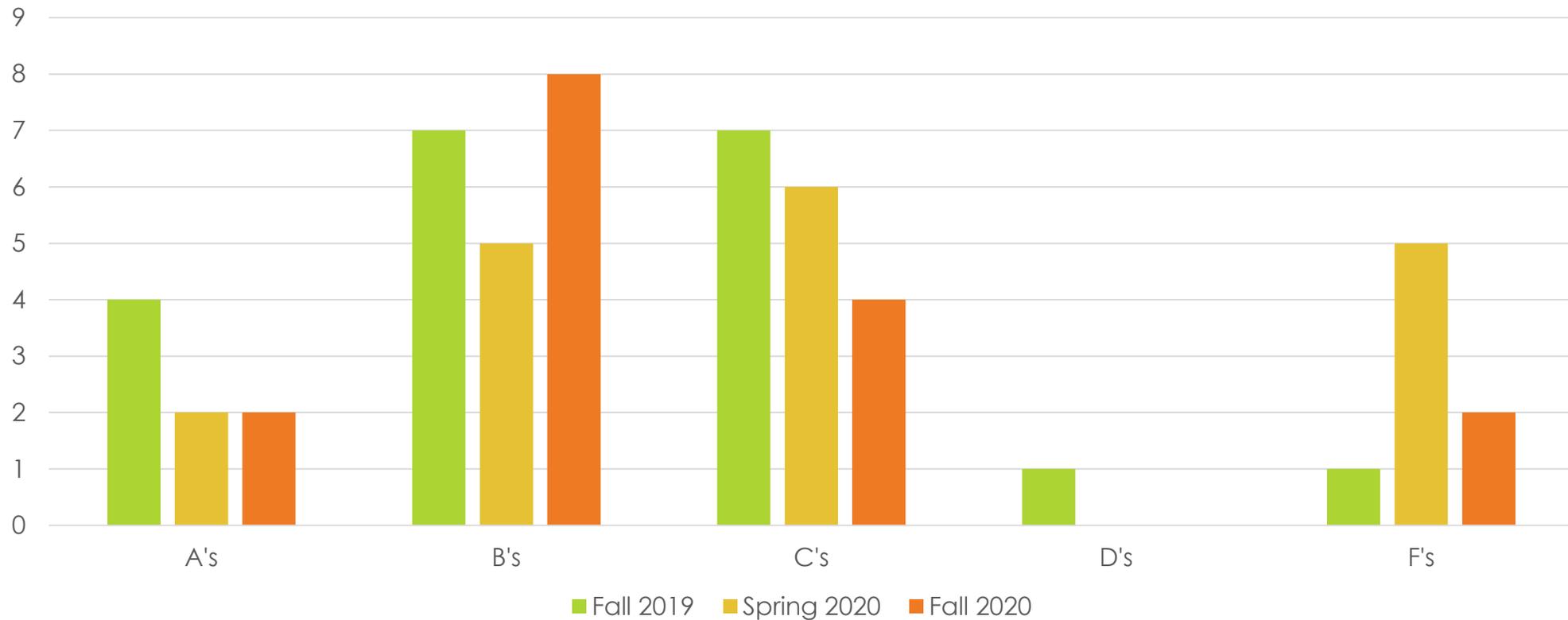


The results are in! Final grades!

Fall 2019	Spring 2020	Fall 2020
A = 4	A = 2	A = 2
B = 7	B = 5	B = 8
C = 7	C = 6	C = 4
D = 1	D = 0	D = 0
F = 1	F = 5	F = 2

The results are in! Final grades!

Final Grades



Summarization of information

- ▶ **Growth Mindset essay grades averaged 79.4%**
- ▶ **Positive feedback on strategy (14 students answered a polling question. 12 said YES, the strategy was helpful; 1 said NOT SURE)**
- ▶ **Final grades improved slightly (worst grades were during start of pandemic semester but then rebounded during Fall 2020).**

What did my students think of my strategy?

“It helped me keep my essay organized instead of writing all over the place.”

“I found it helpful to not use so much useless info. as I did in the past.”

“It guided me and helped me on how to begin an essay with the right beginning sentence.”

“It helped me realize the more important things that I needed to keep in the essay.”

“It was like a puzzle piece, so it made it pretty easy for me to know what to put in the sections and how to put it together.”

Is there any correlation between strategy and students' understanding of material and retention?

Understanding of Material	Retention
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Based on verbal feedback• Students who completed essay outlines did better• Students who participated regularly also did better and understood the material better	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• F grades in Spring 2020 were all students who stopped attending and turning in assignments• Students who completed essay outlines and participated regularly earned better grades

PART 5

**WHAT WOULD I DO
DIFFERENTLY?**

**WHAT WOULD I KEEP
THE SAME?**

What would I do differently next time?

1. I'd have my class be face-to-face (one can dream!)
2. I would have more student involvement/interaction (breakout rooms)
3. I would create an easier-to-follow template



What would I keep the same?

1. The act of color-coding parts of the essay worked quite well
2. Continue to color-code all three essays



Part 6 REFLECTION

**WHAT DID I LEARN
ABOUT MY
TEACHING?**

**WHAT DID I LEARN
ABOUT MY
STUDENTS?**

What did you learn about your teaching and students understanding from implementing this strategy?

25

- ▶ I have learned the following about my teaching and students' understanding from the implementation of this strategy:

My teaching	Student understanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I try multiple ways to get a concept across• I repeat myself to make myself clear<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Very encouraging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students learn in many ways• Students who asked questions performed better

My final thoughts on my SET experience

Overall, even though the data didn't necessarily show it, I believe my strategy was successful. I believe my strategy enhanced student learning, based on positive feedback. I also believe that it enhanced my teaching because I'm always looking for ways to tweak and better my teaching.

The SET experience was positive and reinforced to me the importance of self-reflection on my teaching, my course items, and my interaction with students.