

Coherent Assignment Sequence

(Assignment adapted from Pam Coke, Louann Reid, and Mary Schaffer)

Rationale for Writing a Coherent Assignment Sequence (CAS)

If you are *teaching* writing and not just making assignments, you are also responsible for helping students learn what they need along the way to the culminating product. That means you need to plan backwards from the final product in order to determine its components, the lessons you will need to teach to help students create them, and the sequence of those lessons. Creating a CAS will help you support students at each step of the composing process.

We have intentionally built in a high degree of collaboration for the CAS because we know from our own experience that when designing projects as big as this one, the most effective teachers work with colleagues in some capacity (e.g. borrowing materials and ideas, talking informally, and designing instructional materials). This is especially true early in your career when you are often designing projects from scratch. To facilitate this collaboration, we will give you some workshop time in class where you can receive our help. *It will not be enough time to complete the entire project*, so your group should also plan to meet for a significant amount of work time outside of class; again, this is reflective of teachers' real-life circumstances. In addition to providing class time, we will also set up a group on the Ning so that you can interact online when face-to-face meetings are impractical.

Assignment

Design a coherent collection of instructional materials that will support students, especially ELLs, in completing a major assignment associated with your group's focus in the SOS Project. Your CAS must include opportunities for 1) daily writing, 2) peer response, 3) collaboration, and 4) digital composing.

Use a notebook to bind your materials together in an organized fashion. *We don't expect you to spend a lot of money doing this*, but your final product should be professional in appearance—polished enough that you would be proud to take it to a job interview as an exemplar of your work. The notebook should include the following components:

- A standards- and research-based **rationale** that includes:
 - A list of the “Colorado Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, and Communicating” addressed in your CAS. In terms of format, include each standard, the concepts & skills students will master, and evidence outcomes. Include only the standards that your CAS will directly address.
 - A reasoned and persuasive argument that provides an overview of the assignment sequence and makes a case for your approach, referencing the theory and research that support it. *Your case should include an explanation of how your CAS is especially supportive of the writing development of ELLs.* (NOTE: Be selective when choosing evidence to support your approach—quality is more important than quantity—and don't ignore the core textbooks, articles, and book club texts assigned in this class.)

Format: Organize your rationale in a way that fits your message, and try to confine it to one single-spaced page. If it suits your style and purpose, provide bullets, subheads, and/or other markers for the reader.

- A CAS **calendar** that gives an overview of each day in the unit. List key activities for each day and include necessary due dates. To get a sense of the level of detail we're expecting for your calendar, see the “This I Believe” podcasting project on pp. 66-71 of the Troy Hicks chapter from *The Digital Writing Workshop*, which we will read in its entirety later in the semester. We've posted the Hicks chapter to the Ning in the “Articles, Chapters, etc.” group. **Format:** Please format your CAS calendar according to this example.
- **Instructional materials** you would use to teach the CAS. These include:
 - A collection of **three sequenced mini-lessons** you would use to teach your team's portion of the SOS Project. **Format:** Use the same template you used for the in-class activity in your Book Club Teaching Demonstration and include any handouts mentioned in your mini-lesson. This template is posted on the Ning in the “Assignment Sheets” group. (See the post on the Book Club Teaching Demonstration.)

- The **assignment sheet** for the culminating project that you would hand to students for your team's portion of the SOS Project. **Format:** For a refresher course on the required components in an assignment sheet, see the "Anatomy Lesson: Writing Assignment" in the "PDFs of Keynotes" group on the Ning. We've also posted the assignment sheet for the Personal Reflection so that you will have a model to use. (NOTE: The assignment sheet you are now reading also follows this format.)
 - A **scoring guide** for evaluating the culminating assignment. **Format:** With the assignments we've made thus far in this class, we've intentionally provided a range of models you might use as models for your scoring guides, including the Personal Reflection paper (which you helped design), the Writer's Notebook, and the Book Club Teaching Demonstration. While the format for these scoring guides differs according to the nature of the assignment, they all share these features, *which you should also include in your scoring guide*: 1) a list of the required components for the assignment that align directly to the components listed on the assignment sheet, 2) grading criteria that indicate the quality expected on the assignment, and 3) a place for written feedback.
- **Group and individual participation statements** describing each group member's role in completing the assignment. You should divide the labor for the assignment evenly among the group. See the "Points Possible" section below for details in this regard.

Audiences for This Assignment

Beth, Cindy, your classmates, and anyone viewing our class Ning are the audiences for this assignment. *You must post your final project in the group Cindy will create for you on the Ning.*

Due Date

Your notebook containing all the required components is due **Wed., 11/10**. On that day, your group will also make a ten-minute "Coffee Talk Presentation" to the class in which you will 1) present an "ignitshow" that provides an overview of your CAS and describes its relevance for ELLs, and 3) answer 1-2 questions from the class. Stay tuned for a handout and scoring guide for this aspect of the project.

Points Possible: Everyone should have input on every component of the assignment, but each group member should specialize in at least one component. You will receive two grades:

1. a group grade that assesses the overall coherence of the project and your group's demonstrated ability to collaborate effectively throughout the project, and
2. an individual grade that assesses your component in particular.

Taken together, these assignments will comprise 23% of your final grade for this class, as follows:

CAS Group Grade = 13%
 CAS Individual Grade = 7%
 Coffee Talk = 3%