

Ways to Link

English 90 (Basic English Skills)

and English 90R (Reading Skills Development)

English 90 Instructor: Joan Ahrens

English 90R Instructor: Jenny Nolen

Reading and Writing Activities

- The instructors select the same books for both classes: *Inside Out* by Terry Trueman, *Hole in My Life* by Jack Gantos, and *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* by Mitch Albom.
- The instructors introduce and discuss the books in both classes.
- The reading instructor quizzes and tests the students on the books.
- The writing instructor asks the students to write about the books after they have been tested on them in the reading class.
- The reading instructor explains how to identify main ideas and supporting details in a paragraph. Then she gives the students a variety of prewritten paragraphs and asks them to underline the main idea, circle the transitions, and highlight the supporting details.
- The writing instructor asks the students to underline the topic sentence, circle the transitions, and highlight the supporting details in the paragraphs they write.

Vocabulary and Grammar Activities

- In the reading class, students study twenty new words each week in the workbook *Building Vocabulary Skills* and write an original sentence using each word.
- The writing instructor selects some of the vocabulary words and asks the students to use them in the paragraphs they write for her.
- When the writing instructor writes sample sentences on the board to demonstrate various grammar concepts, she uses the weekly vocabulary words in those sentences.
- Once the writing instructor has tested the students on compound sentences, for example, the reading instructor will require the students to use compound sentences when they compose their weekly vocabulary sentences.
- If the writing instructor has already covered fragments, for example, the reading instructor will take off points if students create fragments in their weekly vocabulary sentences.

Mentoring Activities

- During the lab hour, both instructors provide each student with a monthly grade report during a one-minute conference. The instructors talk to each student individually and discuss their grade in the course and how they can improve if they are failing.
- The instructors encourage students to form study groups.
- If students start to slack in terms of attendance or homework, the instructors talk to the class together to get them back on track.
- The instructors confront “problem students” together.
- The instructors have a class party at the end of the semester and pass out awards to the top students.