Wiki update for final collaborations of Freshman Seminar teachers.

Mark Larson, Paul Swanson, and Joe Bucolo have been meeting and discussing the goals for grammar instruction and assessment. As stated in previous Wiki postings, the three of us are giving, and have given, three common grammar assessments. We have discussed with the English Department how these common assessments align vertically with the other three years of the English curriculum. Our conversations reinforce the validity of our Seminar grammar assessments.

The Seminar remediation instruments for these three grammar assessments have not been decided. Before these decisions can be made, further whole-departmental conversations are needed regarding the philosophy regarding remediation. In other words, what do we do with students who receive less than a C- grade on a common assessment? Some issues regarding remediation are: Is anything done at all? Does the final exam offer an additional assessment; however, will this depend upon independent student work? Does remediation occur primarily via teacher/student conferences? Is this a dependable protocol? Do we give additional written materials to these students? Does that mean these students are working on remediation while simultaneously maintaining class homework? Is the Learning Center a place of remediation? We have reviewed online sources of grammar instruction; however, Joe, Mark, and I have not been impressed thus far in our review of two such sites. Before we embrace online remediation, we believe the department must agree with this protocol. Therefore, we are at a pause in our conversations and are awaiting departmental discussions.

Our fourth common assessment measures analytic writing. Students write a four-part detail that aligns with the expectations of the Sophomore English teachers and curriculum. Because this skill has many other assignments in the freshman year, remediation has precedents: analytic papers with four-part details are developmental and included in a Seminar writing portfolio, outlines for analytic essays usually have teacher approval/input, and the Learning Center is a place of remediation for analytic writing. In other words, our embrace of grammar as a large component of the Seminar common assessments is a new and laudable step for Seminar teachers. Reading and writing skills have many more tools already in place that make aligning assessments into common instruments much easier. Grammar is a place of infrequent conversations and easy to have dodged.