

Making Connections in a Large Class: The Guided Writing Project

The challenge: Offer an extra credit project in a class of 70 students.

The assignment:

PAS 319 Stuttering I
Fall 2005

Extra Credit Project

What: Write a 3-5 page double spaced paper on one aspect of stuttering. This topic can be your choice. I recommend looking at the ASHA journals, such as *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, or *Contemporary Issues in Communication Science and Disorders*. Other great sources are the *Journal of Fluency Disorders* or the *Journal of Communication Disorders*. Find something that interests you. Write a paper that explains your topic. You might want to include some background about your topic (such as the issues involved), and what some studies have revealed about your topic.

Sources: Use a minimum of 2 sources. These sources must be refereed journal articles, such as those journals listed above. If in doubt, check with me about a source.

Style: The paper should be in APA style, or a style used in one of the journal articles you cite. It should be in your words, not the words of the journal article writers.

Points: The paper is worth up to 10 points. The score you earn on your paper will be added to the total points you have earned in the course. To earn 10 points, the paper must be well written, which means I have to see it before you submit it, so you'll have to plan on meeting with me before the due date, and give yourself enough time to re-write the paper.

Due Date: The last day of class, December 9, at class time.

The response: Seventeen students participated, and got the instructor's approval before they did their writing. Some came in for individual conferences, and others relied on a written response. Those who earned 10 points tended to start early, approximately 4 weeks before the deadline. Most (9) rewrote their papers once. Four students who earned 10 points rewrote their papers 4 and 5 times. In total, 43 drafts were read.

The benefits: Six of the 17 students improved their course grade, earning an average of 8.6 points on their papers. Those who did not improve their grades averaged 7 points on their papers. Scores on the papers ranged from 4 to 10 points.

Students learned how to prepare a paper using library sources and academic writing. They received more individual attention and were able to expand their knowledge of the course content. The teacher got to know the students better and help them improve their skills. This project could easily be expanded by having the students prepare posters for an in-class poster presentation session.

