

Valencia Community College

Program Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan

The following plan was developed by Office and Medical Administration faculty during Destination 2009 for implementation during the 2009-2010 academic year.

- Program Area: **Office and Medical Office Administration**
- Planning Team Members:
 - **Marie Howard**
 - **Carole Nevels**
 - **Betty Wanielista**
- Collegewide Implementation Team Member (Working in collaboration with the Learning Evidence Team) – **Marie Howard, Carole Nevels, Betty Wanielista**
- Program Learning Outcome Selected for Assessment: **Students will be able to perform communication activities using collaborative writing.**
 - Performance Indicators: **See attached Rubric**
- Targeted Course(s): **OST 1335 – Business Communication**
 - Common Course Outline
 - **The Common Course Outline for OST 1335 was completed on 9/14/2007 and is due for revision on 9/14/2009.**
 - Common Course outlines are reviewed on a 2-year cycle.
 - Changes to course level outcomes as a result of program outcomes assessment must be reflected in the faculty approved common course outline
 - Targeted Course Level Outcome:
 - **Students will explain the communication process, research international business procedures and review grammar.**
 - **Student will create good news, bad news, and persuasive messages in business situations.**

- **Student will demonstrate active listening and oral communication skills using telephone scenarios.**
- Description of Proposed Common Assignment: **Team Project to compose a persuasive, informational form letter.**

➤ Implementation Timeline / Plan:

- **Discipline coordination / preparation in Fall 2009**
- **Collection of student work - end of Spring term 2010**
- **Scoring of sampled student work and faculty discussion – May 6, 2010**

➤ Attachments:

- **Informed Consent statement to be included in all Syllabi**
- **Team Project—Form Letter from Local Chamber of Commerce**
- **Team Project—Form Letter from Local Chamber of Commerce – Student Handout**
- **Proposed Rubric**

Participant Informed Consent Form

(Informed consent forms to be included in all General Education syllabi starting Spring 2010 – consent forms for courses not in Gen Ed will be distributed once approved by the IRB)

Research is being conducted to assess General Education Program student learning outcomes. Student work will be collected at random from students enrolled in General Education courses each academic term. Your instructor may be asked to submit an article of work that you have completed during the course of the semester. Your identification will be removed from the work so as to preserve your anonymity and confidentiality. The work will then be scored holistically using a rubric. Those results will be used to improve instruction not to assess you as an individual student. You will not be asked to do anything outside of your normal class assignments and this assessment is completely separate from and will have no effect upon your class average or final course grade. There are no identifiable risks to you. The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records. All information is subject to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, which is designed to protect the privacy of educational records.

Your participation in this study is totally voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without negative consequences. To withdraw at any time during the study, simply ask your instructor not to submit any of your work.

Please feel free to contact Roberta Brown (407-582-3421) or Kurt Ewen (407-582-3413) if you have any questions about the study. Or, for other questions, contact the Chair of Valencia's Institutional Review Board at irb@valenciac.edu.

I am at least 18 years of age and not requesting exclusion from the study constitutes my informed consent.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Team Project—Form Letter from Local Chamber of Commerce

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Teaches pros and cons of collaborative writing
2. Demonstrates how a form letter can be an efficient communication tool in the workplace.
3. Teaches the amount of work that goes into an effective form letter.

INTRODUCTION

Form letters are important communication tools that may well be written by a committee. For example, members of a medical clinic of doctors, a veterinary practice, or a law firm creating a letter to welcome new clients may have numerous ideas that they want to incorporate into a form letter. A form letter to witnesses subpoenaed for trial may include ideas from support staff and attorneys involved in trial work. It is appropriate that this assignment be written collaboratively by a team. A significant part of the project will be exchanging ideas and reaching agreement on which of those ideas should be included in the limited space available.

While form letters are often regarded as the “junk mail” of business correspondence, this project brings home what a time-saving and effective tool a well-written form letter can be and just how much work goes into its creation.

CONTEXT OF PROBLEM

You should imagine yourselves as employees of our local Chamber of Commerce. As employees, you frequently receive phone calls and letters from people interested in visiting the area requesting information about accommodations, attractions, restaurants, etc. Answering the calls and letters individually is very time-consuming and measures need to be taken to free up employees’ time.

ASSIGNMENT

Students, as a team will compose a persuasive, informational form letter from the local Chamber of Commerce to people interested in visiting the area. Planners will brainstorm to come up with as many potential questions as possible to answer in the form letter. The goal is a concise but complete letter that requires no follow-up questions on the part of the would-be visitor.

TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

(For best results, cover Steps 1 through 3 at least one day before beginning the collaborative writing.)

STEP 1. INTRODUCTORY LECTURE. Introduce the concept of form letters, explaining the types and uses of form letters and unique characteristics of each. Occasionally, I ask students to bring in form letters that they have received. These provide useful and interesting examples, or you may want to show examples in the text. Some guidelines for this introductory lecture follow:

A. Reasons for form letter

- Form letters are effective tools of communication.
- After an initial investment of time, form letters are time savers.

B. Types of form letters and purposes for each

- Welcome (as a new client)
- Appreciation (of business, etc.)
- Sympathy (from doctor, vet)
- Information (many reasons)

C. Unique characteristics of form letters

- Initial effort in creating form letters ultimately saves time.
- Form letters evolve as suggested by audience feedback.
- Form letters, while concise, are as complete as possible to avoid need to follow up.

STEP 2. THE CLASSROOM DISCUSSION. Review the context of the assignment and the assignment itself. Then ask students what they might want to know if they were planning a visit to a strange town. Write each item on the board. Consider:

Transportation:	taxis, airports, bussing, rental cars
Entertainment:	theatres, movies, sports, historical or other places of interest
Restaurants:	fine dining, casual dining, fast food
Accommodations:	hotels, motels, bed & breakfast inns
Special Events:	festivals, coming attractions, etc.

Discuss events unique to your city and the surrounding area. Form letters obviously cannot contain complete information about all the subjects mentioned above, but they can touch upon each important area and include referrals to web sites, enclosures and brochures for supplemental information. Discuss what enclosures students might choose, such as maps and brochures. Also, suggest local web sites that might be helpful and easily accessible to potential visitors. Students may have additional suggestions.

Emphasize the importance of creating a letter that accomplishes your purpose. The goals of your letter are to inform and to welcome. Students will need to be sure all questions are answered fully, as visitors may not be able to call back easily with additional questions. The letter should be welcoming and friendly so readers will want to visit your area. Ask students for suggestions on how to create a welcoming tone. (“Thank you for your interest.” “Enjoy your stay!”)

STEP 3 – THE TEAMS. Establish teams for the project. Allowing students to choose their own teammates usually works well. (Use teacher discretion.) Limit groups to four or five students, if possible. Two students are not enough; six are too many. NOTE: I have, at times, chosen to “stack the deck,” so there is at least one student with a strong writing skill on each team.

STEP 4- RESOURCE MATERIAL. At least one day prior to the team exercise, offer resources where students can gather ideas for the assignment. The following web sites are notable because they have diverse ideas that students might include in their form letter and the language used is vivid, appealing and inspiring. You may find other suitable web sites in your locality.

<http://www.explorefairbanks.com>

<http://www.choosechicago.com>

<http://www.berkshires.org>

<http://www.visitcantonohio.com>

<http://profootballhoffestival.com>

STEP 5- TEAMWORK! Announce the date of the team assignment in advance. Students who do not attend class on the day of the team project should be informed that they will be assigned the form letter as an independent exercise.

Allow a minimum of two hours of classroom time for the collaborative writing itself, and give students permission to take their notes home to type up the letter. Each team will type only one letter. Monitor the teams only occasionally as they work and have students show you a rough draft of their form letter before the class session ends. This motivates the students to stay focused and finish the work within the allotted classroom time.

AFTER assignments have been handed in, graded and returned, I hand out copies of the following form letter which has been compiled, in part, from students’ ideas. Students can then compare the model to their own work and recognize their strengths and weaknesses.

*Visitors Bureau of Anytown, USA
333 Kirkman Road
Anytown, FL 32825
Phone: (550) 582-xxxx
<http://visitcentralflorida.com>*

DATE

Dear

Whether you're visiting Ocoee or business or for a vacation getaway, you'll find what you are looking for. Plan to stay for a while to enjoy the best of travel—the comforts of home and exciting experiences unique to Central Florida.

Transportation: Two airports serve the Ocoee area—McCoy Airport in Orlando, Florida, and Sanford International Airport in Orlando, Florida, served by Delta, Southwest and Continental Airlines; and Colonial Town Airport served by independent airlines. Limousine and bus service, taxis, and rental car agencies are available at both airports. Amtrak also serves Central Florida. A brochure of local rental car agencies is enclosed.

Accommodations: For the business traveler, area hotels are convenient to the Orlando Sanford airports and include modern meeting and banquet facilities. Those looking for a peaceful retreat will find quaint and comfortable bed-and-breakfast inns. A complete list of hotels and accommodations is posted at our web site.

Attractions: Activities in the area offer something for everyone—ghost walks at Haunted Mansion Hotel (fall/winter), a trip down the memorable canal on the Winter Park Chain of Lakes (summer to fall), visits to the biggest flea market in the state as tours of Disney World and Universal Studios to name a few attractions. Ocoee is rich in history, arts and crafts, culture and more. A map with locations of local attractions is provided. For more information, including addresses and phone numbers of local sites of interest, visit our web site.

Sports: Sport enthusiasts will enjoy the Basketball Hall of Fame Festival in September, noted for the parade, the downtown Strawberry Field, the Magic basketball game, and to top it off, a visit to the Citrus Bowl. For a full calendar of festivals and events, visit <http://www.centralfloridasports.com>. Ocoee also offers a wealth of recreational clubs and golf courses. Many area hotels offer golf packages. A list of area golf courses, including prices and descriptions, is enclosed. See our web site for a full calendar of other sport activities.

Restaurants: Restaurants are as varied as the appetites of our visitors, including southern style home cooking, fast food, 50-Diner favorites, gourmet table side cooking, and ethnic cuisine. An updated brochure of local restaurants, including their specialties, prices, and sample menus, is enclosed.

Shopping: No trip is complete without buying a few souvenirs to take back. In Ocoee and vicinity, you'll find shopping opportunities ranging from old-world specialty and antique shops to contemporary malls. A complete list of area shops and malls can be found at our web site.

Thank you for your interest in our hometown where we hope you will quickly feel at home. Do not hesitate to check out our web site frequently. Enjoy your stay!

Sincerely,

Sally Strawberry, Welcome Coordinator
Ocoee Visitors Bureau

Enclosures

HANDOUT FOR STUDENTS

Team Project—Form Letter from Local Chamber of Commerce

INTRODUCTION

Form letters are important communication tools that may well be written by a committee. For example, members of a medical clinic of doctors, a veterinary practice, or a law firm creating a letter to welcome new clients may have numerous ideas that they want to incorporate into a form letter. A form letter to witnesses subpoenaed for trial may include ideas from support staff and attorneys involved in trial work.

While form letters are often regarded as the “junk mail” of business correspondence, this project brings home what a time-saving and effective tool a well-written form letter can be and just how much work goes into its creation.

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You should imagine yourselves as employees of our local Chamber of Commerce. As employees, you frequently receive phone calls and letters from people interested in visiting the area requesting information about accommodations, attractions, restaurants, etc. Answering the calls and letters individually is very time-consuming and measures need to be taken to free up employees' time.

ASSIGNMENT

You, as a team, will compose an informational form letter from the local Chamber of Commerce to people interested in visiting the area. Planners will brainstorm to come up with as many potential questions as possible to answer in the form letter. The goal is a concise but complete letter that requires no follow-up questions on the part of the would-be visitor.

BACKGROUND

- 1) Reasons for form letters
 - i) Effective tools of communication
 - ii) Time savers
- 2) Types of form letters and purposes of each
 - i) Welcome (as a new client)
 - ii) Appreciation (of business, etc.)
 - iii) Sympathy (from doctor, vet)
 - iv) Information (many reasons)
- 3) Unique characteristics of form letters
 - i) Initial effort in creating form letters ultimately saves time.
 - ii) Form letters evolve as suggested by audience feedback.
 - iii) Form letters, while concise, are as complete as possible to avoid need to follow-up.

THOUGHTS

What might a visitor want to know when planning to visit a strange town?

Transportation—taxis, airports, bussing, rental cars

Entertainment—theatres, movies, sports, historical or other places of interest

Restaurants—fine dining, casual dining, fast food

Accommodations—hotels, motels, bed I& breakfast inns

Special events—festivals, coming attractions, etc.

Unique events in our city and surrounding areas.

Important Web sites, maps, brochures

GOALS

Inform and welcome

Letter should be a friendly tone—Thank you for your interest. Enjoy your stay!

RESOURCE MATERIAL

<http://www.explorefairbanks.com>

<http://www.choosechicago.com>

<http://www.berkshires.org>

<http://www.visitcantonohio.com>

<http://profootballhoffestival.com>



Name: _____

Teacher: _____

Date : _____

Title of Work: _____

	Criteria				Points
	Accomplished	Competent	Developing	Beginning	
	4	3	2	1	
Appropriate formatting of form letter	Current date, inside address, salutation, body single-spaced, appropriate complimentary closing,	Current date, inside address, salutation, body single-spaced	Current date, inside address, body single-spaced	Current date, body single-spaced	
Language	Choice of words precise and purposeful and demonstrating command of language	Competent use of language	Sometimes uses weak vocabulary or inappropriate word choice	Displays frequent and fundamental errors in vocabulary	
Content of form letter	Main idea, necessary details and explanations, appropriate resources and goodwill closing paragraph	Main idea, necessary details and explanations, appropriate resources	Main idea and necessary details and explanations	Begin with main idea	
Tone of form letter	Tone is welcoming, friendly, appropriate for global audience	Tone is appropriate for global audience	Tone is welcoming and friendly	Tone is welcoming	
Development of Message	Used four phases of AIDA Model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action)	Used three phases of AIDA Model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action)	Used two phases of AIDA Model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action)	Used one phase of AIDA Model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action)	
Selecting the correct approach	Balanced emotional and logical appeals (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs)	Anticipated audience reaction and made effort to address their concerns	Weighed heavily on logic, with little regard for emotions or Weighed heavily on emotions without providing adequate evidence	Did not consider the audience's position	
				Total---->	

Grading Scale – Total Points = 24

A=20+

B=18-19

C=16-17

D=14-15