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**The No-Draft Proposal Essay
A Lesson and Assignment Design for English 101**

Overview & Rationale

As many Comp 101 instructors do, I assign and execute lesson plans in a fairly standard and predictable way. For each 'big' essay assignment, I teach using short lectures, in-class writing assignments, and I assign a rough draft of the essay which I correct and comment on all before the final graded essay is handed in. The ultimate goal is to expose students to a variety of writing applications which will pop up again and again as their college careers progress.

But a curious phenomenon develops between correcting the rough draft of the essay and reading the final draft: the only changes made to the draft are directly related to the comments I make on the draft. Now I realize this may sound like a no-brainer, since students only look for the 'red ink' on a draft, but the problem I find with that is I don't see a student learning only by correcting the errors I point out. For example, if I mark a misspelled word, the change is made no problem. However, if I make a comment suggesting a logic-error or mechanical-error within a paragraph, many students either disregard the comment or delete the majority of the paragraph without seeing the effect it has on the rest of the essay.

So I decided I would design an assignment where there would be no rough-draft which I corrected, instead there would only be a final draft which carried a significant percentage of the final grade. However, my plan was not to simply leave my students in the dark or let them flounder alone. Instead, this assignment would be built around several in-class workshops designed to build confidence in the writer's own abilities as well as focus on an intensive peer-review workshop meant to elicit outside comments on the essay (much like comments I would make on a draft).

The Assignment

The assignment I decided to test my design with was an explanatory synthesis essay built around gathering and utilizing outside source materials. Using Bruce Ballenger's *The Curious Writer* as a class text, the easiest way I felt to incorporate sources was by turning the synthesis essay into a Proposal/Problem and Solution essay with a research component emphasis. The essay was built around utilizing outside material to discuss a 'problem' and possible 'solutions' offered by different appropriate and credible sources.

The essay held a point total of 150 points, or roughly 15% of the final grade, a figure which seemed to make my students a little wary from the start of the assignment.