



MISSISSIPPI ASSOCIATION FOR
DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION

A Message from the President of MADE

Hello, Everyone,

Welcome to another year in MADE!

We saw many of you at the annual MADE Conference at Eagle Ridge Conference Center in November, and it was great to connect again. Although some of us live in close proximity, we get to meet rarely to celebrate the successes of our students and to explore possibilities for helping them advance to greater heights.

For those of you who are fortunate enough to attend the upcoming NADE Conference in Greenville, South Carolina, please be aware that MADE's Chapter Meeting will be on Thursday, February 26, from 1:00 to 1:45 p.m. in Room 100 of the TD Convention Center. (At this point, ARKADE is also meeting in that room, so we MADE members will cluster in our area of the room.) During this meeting, President-Elect Cassandra Hawkins-Wilder will share information about MADE's annual conference next fall. Please watch for information in upcoming newsletters or on MADE's web site as details for that conference unfold.

For additional information about the 2015 NADE Conference, go to www.nade.net.

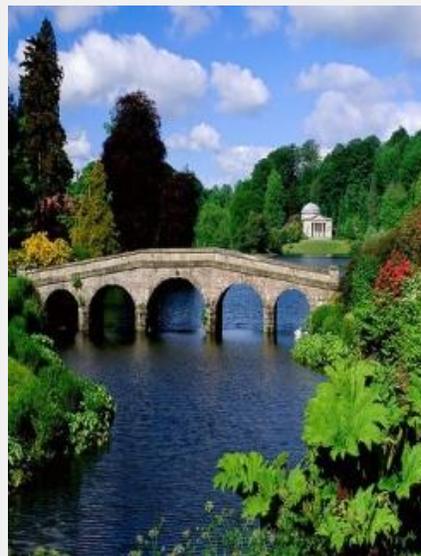
Best wishes for an excellent spring!

Sincerely,

Vickie Kelly
MADE President

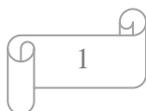


Attending NADE 2015? McGraw-Hill Education invites you to join our Digital Faculty Consultants as they lead peer-to-peer discussions around current models of Developmental English—from Integrated Reading and Writing courses to co-requisites to contextualized reading. Attend one of the sessions below to enhance your own professional development and network with the developmental education community as we work together to ensure student success.



*You don't always need a plan.
Sometimes you just need to
breathe, trust, let go and see what
happens*

-Mandy Hale



Flag at half-staff in memory of instructor David Rule

Wesley David Rule, 60, of West, died Sunday, Jan. 25, 2015, at the Baptist Medical Center in Jackson.

Visitation is from 5-8 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 31, 2015 at Jordan Funeral Home in Kosciusko.

Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Sunday in the Jordan Funeral Home Chapel with burial in the Brister Cemetery.

Rev. Gene Richardson will officiate.

He was a member of First Baptist Church of Kosciusko.

Survivors include his mother, Ernestine Rule of West; daughters, Lisa (Eddie) Singletary and Amie (Richard) Simpson; grandchildren, Holden, Abby, Gracie, and Memphis Singletary and Emma, McCool, and Faylyn Simpson; brother, Tommy Rule; nieces, Jennifer Rule and Crystal Rule; great nieces, Madison Walton, Mackenzie Walton, and Lilly Coleman.

He was preceded in death by his father, T. J. Rule.

Pallbearers are Robert Harris, Jim Marion, Jim Shirley, Kenny Dupont, Jerry Harris, and Jim Schroeder.

Honorary pallbearers are Billy Wilson, Joe David White, Gee Wei Lee, and Jay Cheatham.



The Goodman Campus flag stands at half-staff in memory of longtime mathematics instructor and department chair David Rule.

Technology-Based Curriculum: Implementing StoryKit Application in Developmental Courses

Cassandra L. Hawkins-Wilson and Dr. Sherry L. Rankin

Introduction

Advanced forms of technology are used in every aspect of higher education, and the developmental writing classroom is no exception. When students are able to use various forms of technology, which they are familiar with or use frequently, in their educational process, they tend to perform better on their assignments. This utilization of the constructivist theory allows students to connect their current knowledge to the concept being taught (Lambert et. al, 2002, p. 26). According Rakes, Fields, and Cox (2006) and Schroll (2007), the constructivist theory can be connected to the use of technology in the writing classroom to enhance the learning process for students (p. 411). Not only does technology within the developmental writing classroom enhances student learning, but also, technology can be used in the writing classroom to make writing a more expressive task for students. Implementing advance forms of technology in the developmental writing classroom becomes an essential means of teaching.

Active learning approaches are important to academics in higher education. Proving beneficial, active learning approaches significantly improve student-learning outcomes. Not only are student learning outcomes are addressed, student accountability improves. According to Morgan, “active learning focuses on doing something with the material or experiencing it in the moment” (2003, p. 352). Considering what active learning entails, instructors of developmental writing students must begin to examine how to incorporate active learning in the classroom to ensure that students are more accountable for their learning.

Understanding that students view essay-writing as a laborious, tedious chore, developmental writing instructors know that the process of teaching the skill of written communication has not changed much over the years; however, it is still a recursive process that attempts to exhibit students’ creativity. In addition, an instructor’s approach can make all the difference in how well the students fully grasp the information being taught. Consequently, the way these instructors view the assignment tends to be evident in the way they teach and assess the assignment (Ruttle, 2004, p. 72). Therefore, instructors should consider exactly how to address the needs of developmental students, while implementing active learning.

Statement of the Problem

Intermediate English, a developmental writing course, focuses on helping students master writing paragraphs, in order to effectively construct well-composed essays. In this course, students are introduced or reintroduced to fundamentals, such as implementing the writing process, varying sentence structures, and understanding the numerous writing patterns. Intermediate English students often perform poorly on writing assignments because they do not take the time to go through the stages of prewriting and drafting before submitting the final draft. Since developmental writing students often experience difficulty with composing well-written paragraphs and essays, instructors focus on solving the problem of low student performance on writing assignments. This problem impacts developmental writing students. On a local level, developmental writing instructors at Jackson State University found the necessity of addressing low student performance on writing assignments. Acknowledging that many developmental students may have a background of poor writing skills, which is established based on data from their previous high school English grades and/or their English ACT subtest scores, developmental writing instructors encounter students, whose creativity does not follow freely. Developmental writing students are often more focused on completing the task than elaborating on the subject, using creativity. Instructors need to find a way to connect to students’ current use of technology to perform more confidently and expressively on writing assignments (Cunningham, 2004, p. 26).

Discussion

Through dedicated collaboration, Dr. Sherry Rankin and Cassandra Hawkins-Wilson started to examine the problem of low student performance on writing assignments in their developmental classrooms at Jackson State University. After noticing that students were often dreading writing assignments and approached them with disdain, these instructors discovered the necessity of finding a different approach to address teaching numerous writing patterns. Since the first writing major assignment in their developmental writing classrooms focused on the narrative writing assignment, these instructors began to transform their pedagogy and curriculum in order to incorporate active learning to help students develop well-composed examples of narrative writing. Both instructors desired to have developmental students more involved in the learning process and to take ownership of their finished products, which would demonstrate their mastery of narrative writing.

Since Dr. Rankin and Hawkins-Wilson were both designated Teaching with Technology Instructors, they began to examine how they could perform academics, using the technology provided by the iPad initiative at Jackson State University, as a means to improve student performance. Therefore, each instructor researched various applications available for the Student-Issued University iPad, which could assist students in presenting their personal narratives. As they filtered through their research in search of the most beneficial application, both instructors began to realize the necessity to step outside their comfort zone or routine teaching style to support students’ ability to conceptualize the narrative writing, perform well on the narrative assignment, and improve student learning outcomes.

Implementation

After much contemplation and examination of the various applications available for the iOS operating system, Dr. Rankin and Hawkins-Wilson, decided to utilize the application, StoryKit. StoryKit, created by ICDL Foundation, requires iOS3 or later and is compatible with the iPhone, iPad, and iPod. This application allows students to create an electronic storybook. Both instructors create narrative writing assignments, which incorporated the application. The narrative writing assignment was designed for students to create a narrative essay and transform it into an electronic storybook using StoryKit. The students used the application to write and illustrate their narrative essays. In essence creating their own personal story books forced students to only include the key points of their narrative essay in their story books, which reinforced how to compose narrative writing.

Additionally, the use of StoryKit allowed the developmental writing students to display their creativity. Students were able to include not only a narration with dialogue, but they were presented with the option of illustrations, photos, music, graphic designs, and etc. to emphasize their key point. The final product included a permanent example, which is an electronic storybook that can be used and shared beyond the classroom. Students viewed their electronic storybook on any iOS device, as well as online. Once students viewed their storybook on a website, they shared the link with their instructor. Assessment of the final product occurred from the shared online link. The implementation of StoryKit not only is an active learning approach to teaching developmental students, but also, it is a means to improve student accountability. When students are able to make an assignment their own, they tend to put more effort into the process (The National Commission on Writing in American's Schools and Colleges, 2003, p. 13). Students ultimately create their own electronic storybook with guidance from the instructors. The electronic storybook became an example of something that they were about to continually refer to as an illustration of narrative writing.

Results

During the assessment phase of the StoryKit electronic storybook, Dr. Rankin and Hawkins-Wilson discovered numerous findings. First, the student assignment completion rate increased. The majority of students submitted the narrative assignment. In addition to increase student completion rate, students adhered to the deadline for the narrative assignment. Instances of late assignment submissions were extremely low compared to previous narrative assignments. StoryKit also enhanced student engagement. Most significantly, student performance improved. Student submissions resulted in a score within the A/B grade range on creativity and content. Additionally, the electronic storybook contained fewer grammatical errors in comparison to previous traditionally written paragraph assignments in the developmental writing class. This improvement in the first writing assignment encouraged students at the beginning of the academic semester. Therefore, student confidence in their written communication ability helped to ensure students were academically on the following writing assignments. Consequently, students used the active learning approach to assist in an improvement in overall final grade performance.

It is possible that the traditional writing process and structured essay format tend to stifle the students' creativity because they focus more on presenting the composition correctly than they do on the content. Therefore, it is necessary for instructors to vary their approach to writing assignments so that students do not become apathetic to the routine process and instead can utilize their various learning styles and current knowledge to complete their writing assignments.

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Tell Someone about “your” organization

The MADE Board is elated that you are a member of MADE. We encourage you to “spread the word” about MADE. Also, we hope that you find this Winter Edition of the MADE Newsletter informative and enlightening. Please feel free to share this newsletter with family, friends, and colleagues.

THANKS FOR ALL YOU DO!

About Our Organization

The Mississippi Association for Developmental Education (MADE) is a state chapter of the National Association for Developmental Education (NADE). MADE was founded in 1981 and over the years, MADE has become a driving force in colleges and institutions across the state of Mississippi. MADE seeks to improve the theory and practice of developmental education. MADE enhances the professional capabilities of development educators and supports student learning and provides public leadership.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! THE MADE SPRING EDITION NEWSLETTER WILL BE OUT BEFORE YOU KNOW IT... IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED ANY AWARDS, HONORS, OR RECOGNITIONS PLEASE E-MAIL YOUR ARTICLES TO ME.

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THANKS!

NADE
BRIDGING THE PAST AND PRESENT TO
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