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OVERCOMING THE FAILURE PHENOMENA: RECOUPING HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT THROUGH AN ONLINE LANGUAGE ARTS COURSE

A Project

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

in

Education:

Instructional Technology

by

Wesley Vern Andrews

June 2007

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ABSTRACT

This project envisioned a comprehensive program called *The Virtual Senior*, which, in its entirety would offer various online courses to enable high school seniors to recoup lost credits and graduate on time. This program would be based on the California Content Standards, and would offer courses from all core content areas.

The actual resource that was designed for this project was more limited in its scope. This resource was an on-line prototype Language Arts unit within the overall Virtual Senior program. This unit was based on the literary work Beowulf, the earliest known piece of English literature. It utilized the Moodle Course Management System to compose a total of 5 modules of instruction. These modules presented specific content standards (target skills), allowed students to practice those skills (instructional activities and assignments), and assessed student achievement to measure mastery necessary to receive high school credit. In the future, this prototype unit will serve as a template that will allow for the insertion of other content in order to produce further units quickly yet thoroughly.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

Introduction

This project addressed the problem of high school failure. It envisioned an online course that would assist failing students to develop mastery of content standards and skills in the English Language Arts. When put into use, this course would allow students to recoup high school credits and graduate high school. It was intended to use technology to overcome barriers that impeded student achievement, and thus increase the opportunities for success of at-risk students; however, at the conclusion of the project, some limitations in this particular study were noted.

Statement of the Problem

On average, one out of every four high school students in California fails to graduate (Knight, 2004). This rate of failure poses significant repercussions for individuals, communities, and even the nation. The ills of poverty and crime are closely related to the level of education, for educations greatly influences one's socio-

economic standing. As failure rates increase, crime and poverty increase.

It becomes imperative that schools do what they can to support students in obtaining their high school diplomas. Often times, the reason these students fail is because they lack one or two courses in core subjects necessary for graduation. It devolves upon the school to help these failing students legitimately recoup the credits they lack so that they can graduate. By targeting the core classes in which students are deficient and providing a valid opportunity to obtain lost credits, many students who are now in danger of failing may legitimately qualify themselves for graduation.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the project was to develop an online educational program that offered the courses in which students are deficient. This program was called *The Virtual Senior* (VS). Ultimately, multiple courses across each of the core disciplines will be created based on California State Standards. However, this was a massive endeavor unrealistic to the scope of this project.

Therefore, this project narrowed its focus to create a

single online unit of study for Twelfth Grade English
Language Arts. This unit was intended to serve as a
prototype or template into which other Language Arts
content could later be inserted to create multiple units
of instruction, each with a familiar format for students
to work through. Upon completion of each unit, students
would be awarded partial credit toward completion of
twelfth grade Language Arts graduation requirements.

Significance of the Project

Currently, many schools employ after school support programs in which failing seniors concurrently enroll so that, in addition to their normal coursework, they are also recouping lost credits in order to graduate.

Personal experience in these programs has demonstrated that they are not highly successful under the current model: many students fail to complete the programs.

While each case is unique and many factors contribute to the subsequent failure of students within these programs, this project sought to 1) use technology to overcome some of the barriers that impede student success in recouping credits, and 2) adapt sound educational strategies to an

online format that will increase student success and achieve a higher rate of high school graduation.

Limitations

During the development of the project, a number of limitations were noted:

- 1. The data gathered and used to evaluate the effectiveness of the project was taken from a very small sample of students (9 participants); generalizations therefore drawn from the analysis of the data cannot necessarily be expanded to apply to larger populations without further study.
- 2. Participants in the study were entirely volunteers; motivation for these volunteers was not equal to the motivation that would normally accompany the audience for which this project was created (namely, high school seniors in danger of failing to graduate). As a result, the work completed by participants may not have been as thorough nor detailed, and effort may not have been as sincere.

3. Participants in the study may not have accurately represented the desired type of student for whom this project was created. That is to say, the ideal student for this project would be a senior in danger of failing to graduate. Actual participants were not screened for academic performance nor for the likelihood that they might fail to graduate. Therefore, specific results assessing the mastery of standards as a result of this project may not necessarily represent the same level of mastery for at-risk students using the same resource.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined as they apply to the project:

- <u>Virtual Senior</u>: a comprehensive program of instruction, of which the Beowulf Unit forms only a small part targeting English Language Arts.
- <u>Beowulf Unit</u>: the online resource that serves as the product for this project.
- Moodle: an online, share-ware Course Management System (CMS).
- <u>Module</u>: one of five instructional sections within the Beowulf Unit.
- Beowulf Home Page: the online home page from which all instruction was based.
- Implementation Group: the group of high school senior participants who utilized the resource.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Education is considered a crucial and necessary element of our society. It brings with it a great deal of theory, practice, and controversy. While much has been studied, analyzed, and reported in the educational field, it was not the intent of this project to explore in any depth the many detailed intricacies of education. Rather, for the effective design of this educational resource, it was simply necessary to understand several key aspects of education and design:

- High School Failure and Factors that Influence Atrisk Students
- Student Motivation
- Effective Elements of Online Design and Successful Strategies for At-risk Learners

High School Failure and Factors that Influence At-risk Students

High School Failure Rates and Implications

One of the educational factors that impacts society to the greatest extent is the rate of failure experienced

in high schools. A recent study by The Education Trust—West (2004), a national policy organization in collaboration with schools, communities, citizens, and policymakers, reported that California graduated only 70% of its students last year. This rate of failure among students raises alarm for students, parents, and communities alike. It also holds significant implications for governments and economies.

Woods (1995) cited several reports to synthesize a list of consequences of dropping-out or failing high school. He noted that employment opportunities became much more limited. At-risk behaviors such as premature sexual activity, early pregnancy, delinquency, crime, and substance abuse were more prevalent among those who fail These individuals tended to rely more to graduate. heavily on welfare and other social programs that the government and taxpayers fund. As a direct result of high school failure, he also projected that unskilled labor would likely grow and develop a large American under-class that would widen the economic divide. All of these factors have not only placed the individuals who fail at risk of dire consequences, but have and will continue to negatively affect our local communities and our collective society.

Factors Influencing High School Failure and Dropout

Many causes for failure and drop-out have been identified through numerous studies. Social or family background, substance abuse, pregnancy, and poverty are a few of the more common factors among the myriad of influences that all contribute to the failure and drop-out of students. Asche (1993) stated that "based on a thorough analysis of the research literature, Wells, Bechard, & Hamby (1989) identified four major categories of factors that...may lead to a student's dropping out of school. The four categories list risk factors that are school-related, student-related, community-related, family-related" (p.10).

While it is impossible for schools to address and remedy all of the factors influencing high school failure—and it is inappropriate to assume that all of the factors should be addressed by schools—education can and should address the school-related factors which are clearly within the scope of education's duty. Wells, Bechard, and Hamby (1989) clearly identify some of the key school-related indicators of failure:

- ~ Poor attendance
- ~ Low grade point average

- ~ Low standardized test composite scores
- ~ Number of grade retention
- ~ Number of discipline referrals
- ~ Special program placement
- ~ Low reading and math scores
- ~ Number of suspensions
- ~ Interest in school
- ~ Participation in extracurricular activities
- ~ Number of counseling referrals

However, in addition to this list of factors, Wood (1994) claimed that poor academic performance was the single most influential factor of school-related dropping out. Taken together, these factors have overwhelmed too many of California's students.

Student Motivation

Lumsden (1994) found that motivation for many students has significantly declined by the time they enter high school. She further admitted that teachers have little control over many of the factors that contribute to this disinterest in education. Nevertheless, Brewster & Fager (2000) cited various studies to emphasize that in spite of an apparent lack of motivation on the part of

students, "certain practices do work to increase time spent on task; and that there are ways to make assigned work more engaging and more effective for students at all levels" (Introduction section, para. 2). In her article on motivation as it relates to Instructional Design, Small (1997) outlined research in presenting the ARCS model as one effective model of design for efficient and motivating instruction.

Attention, Relevance, Confidence, Satisfaction Model of Instructional Design

This model utilized four "strategy components" to create motivating instruction:

- Attention strategies
- Relevance strategies
- Confidence strategies
- Satisfaction strategies

Each of these categorized strategies, when compared with other relevant research, exemplified common elements evident in successful instructional practice. A brief overview of these strategies and pertinent comparative research gave one a solid framework within which to design effective learning activities.

Attention Strategies. Attention strategies arouse and sustain curiosity or interest. They "provide novelty, surprise, incongruity, or uncertainty" (Small, 1997, Attention section, para. 1). Such strategies may take the form of self-searching questions, the proposition of a unique or authentic problem, or the use of every-day concepts or ideas in through new or uncommon perspectives. Brewster & Fager (2000) suggested the presentation of fragmentary or contradictory information to stir interest; this approach allows students to develop their own conclusions through the course of study, and by doing so, they maintain a meaningful focus on their own ideas in relation to the content. Regardless of the specific activity, it is crucial to pique and sustain curiosity and interest in the content, especially at the onset of new material. Tapping into this interest naturally creates more engaging class activities and increases the amount of time students spend on task (Small, 1997).

Relevance Strategies. Relevance strategies link content to a student's needs, interests, and motives.

Small's (1997) definition of relevance can be summarized as the quality of presenting objectives and content clearly and understandably and placing them within a purposeful context that relates to a student's experiences

and values. She insisted on the presentation of objectives to students and the creation of learning activities that match students' experience. strategies are not new to educational practice. Bruner (1975) postulated the concept of scaffolding, which was further defined in eight essential elements-the first two being 1) pre-engagement between student and content, followed by 2) the establishment of a shared goal or objective (Hogan, & Pressley, 1997). "contextualizing" of learning helps students recognize way in which skills and knowledge can be utilized in the real world. Against this background of relevance, learning becomes real and practical to students, thus promoting student motivation in general (Lepper, 1988). summarizing previous research, Brewster & Fager (2000) concluded that in order to heighten engagement with students, educators must ensure that course materials relate to the lives of students; they encouraged teachers to emphasize modes of learning that can be applicable in real-life situations.

Confidence Strategies. Confidence strategies help students believe that they can successfully complete goals and academic tasks. Students can be confident when they know and understand what they are expected to do and how

they will be evaluated. Performance objectives must be emphatically clear (Skinner & Belmont, 1991). One common practice is to post and even discuss standards and objectives as part of classroom activity. Rubrics detailing the criteria necessary for success are another tool that can be used to clearly communicate objectives for student performance: "a focus introduced through a listing of outcomes [rubrics]" will more likely bring learners to a successful mastery on content (Hoffman & Ritchie, 1996, p. 1). Strong, Silver, & Robinson (1995) expanded the concept by suggesting that students will perform more successfully on specific academic tasks if given the opportunity to view models of high-, mid-, and low-level work and open dialogue as to how each was evaluated. Finally, Brewster & Fager (2000) emphasized that evaluation needs to be based on student product rather than comparison with other peers. In summary, students familiar beforehand with the objectives, rubrics, and evaluative criteria will feel more confident in their ability to perform exactly what is expected of them; as a result, the process of learning is demystified and motivation is heightened at the beginning of an instructional activity.

After knowing what is expected, the next aspect of engendering confidence as a means to heighten motivation is to break academic tasks into smaller, manageable tasks (Lumsden, 1994). Research has shown that such tasks ordered sequentially in linear structure improve student performance (Hsu, Frederic, & Chung, 1994). An increase in performance in turn reinforces student confidence and the motivation to continue. A key factor in promulgating this cycle of confidence and motivation is quick, clear, and constructive teacher feedback on completed student work (Strong et al., 1995). When done correctly, this productive feedback with an instructor helps students feel supported, and instills in them the encouragement to succeed. A final strategy typical of ensuring confidence for purposes of motivation is to emphasize Mastery Learning (Brewster & Fager, 2000). Mastery Learning simply means providing multiple opportunities to tackle a task when the initial attempt does not meet the expected criteria; these other opportunities are intended to be guided by feedback from the instructor to reinforce or reteach the skills needed to achieve the desired result (Dev, 1997).

Satisfaction Strategies. Satisfaction strategies give students both extrinsic and intrinsic reinforcement for the efforts they have put into their work. Small (1997) exemplified this satisfaction by suggesting various strategies such as testimonials of former students (intrinsic) and positive reinforcement and motivational feedback (extrinsic), similar to the previously mentioned confidence strategies (Strong et al., 1995; Dev, 1997; and Brewster & Fager, 2000). However, Brooks, Freiburger, and Grotheer (1998) warned that extrinsic rewards are not ultimately productive and should be given only when they are clearly deserved and only as they relate to the task accomplished. Otherwise, the reward itself becomes meaningless.

Effective Elements of Online Design and Successful Strategies for At-risk Learners

Foundations for Effective Design

Among the various theories and strategies, several basic principles of design formed the basis of this project. Dick and Reiser (1989) proposed a solid foundation for instructional design by classifying seven key elements common to effective instructional sequences:

~ Motivating the learner

- ~ Identifying what is to be learned
- ~ Reminding learners of past knowledge
- ~ Providing instructional material
- ~ Providing quidance and feedback
- ~ Testing comprehension
- ~ Providing enrichment and remediation

These categories were later adapted specifically to the use of online instruction by Hoffman & Ritchie (1996). In discussing the use of the Internet and other computer-based teaching, they noted both beneficial observations as well as instructional cautions with regard to on-line learning. They also introduced the concept of "active involvement" on behalf of online students. Their adaptations are summarized within Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Observations and Instructional Cautions with regard to On-line Learning: Hoffman & Ritchie (1996)

Category of Design	Observation/Caution
Elements	
Motivating the learner	Graphics, color, and animation
	grab attention; but can be
T.1	"overdone"
Identifying what is to be learned	Clearly identify what learners
learned	will be responsible for (i.e. assignment/task/test) when they
	arrive to the end of instruction;
	this adds focus to the interaction
	with the web and avoids mindless
	"surfing"
Reminding learners of past	Linking current input to prior
knowledge	knowledge or experience links new
Milowicage	information into the long term
	memory; links within a web-page
	can associate "new" information
	with familiar experiences or
	concepts
Requiring active involvement	Mindless "surfing" is a danger
(student-to-content)	in on-line instruction;
	suggestion: require on-line
	students to produce an "artifact"
	of their learning-compare,
	classify, induce, deduce, analyze
	errors, construct support, make
	abstractions, or analyze
	perspectives they encounter in
	their Internet searches (cited
	from Dodge, 1995; Marzano, 1992)
Providing guidance and feedback	Guide students through clearly
	titled links that cannot be misconstrued or misleading; rather
	than mark answers "right" or
	"wrong" in the case of a multiple-
	choice quiz, use web pages and
	Common Gateway Interface (CGI)
	codes to give feedback and correct
	instruction when incorrect choices
	are made in question-answer
	scenarios
Testing	Testing can be objective or
	subjective, on-line or off-line;
	testing can include construction
	of on-line portfolios or student-
	created web pages
Providing enrichment and	Remedial instruction should be
remediation	adapted to individual student
	needs; it should expand
	understanding and clarify concepts

Elements of Design Compared to Attention, Relevance, Confidence, Satisfaction Model and Other Research

Several of the effective design elements summarized by Hoffman & Ritchie (1996) overlap various components of the ARCS model strategies that were indicated as crucial factors for heightening student motivation. A matrix illustrates this overlap (see APPENDIX A: ELEMENTS OF DESIGN COMPARED TO ARCS MODEL AND OTHER RESEARCH); it also introduces additional related research discussed in detail below. As can be seen, various strategies entailed characteristics that addressed both effective design and student motivation. These overlapping concepts then became the foundation of this project. Of worthy note are several final elements of design that, although they did not fit neatly into categorization within either the Elements of Design as specified by Hoffman and Ritchie (1996) nor the ARCS Model as detailed by Small (1997), they did share similar characteristics that made them valuable strategies useful to the design of this project: personalized interaction, linear navigation and structure, and advanced graphic organizers that engage students.

Personalized Interaction. Brewster & Fager (2000) emphasized the benefit of building quality relationships between student and teacher, pointing out that this is a

"critical factor" especially for students considered to be at-risk. Their claims were reinforced by previous research that suggested student motivation could be enhanced when students feel welcome and supported (Lumsden, 1994). It is vital for a teacher to get to know the students and interact with them regularly so as to foster motivation and engagement.

Linear Navigation and Structure. Handal & Herrington (2004) addressed the struggling learner's need for structure in the online atmosphere. They stated that struggling learners "are less likely to establish a meaningful organization of ideas" when the instructional atmosphere "lacks structure and where few clues are obtainable" (Handal & Harrington, 2004, p. 5). While the Web offers unlimited opportunity for learners to expand their knowledge by linking to literally thousands of sources of information, some risk of distraction clearly exists for students who may be overwhelmed by the massive quantity of information. Based on her research, Governor (1998) reduced the needs of struggling learners to a simple maxim: "by nature [they] would require more guidance" (p. 3).

Several studies explored the use of linear navigational structures in online learning environments.

Results confirmed that students preferred linear navigation while working through online content (Phelps & Reynolds, 1999). A separate study reported that performance improved for students when using a linear navigational structure (Hsu, Frederic, & Chung, 1994). Furthermore, Brown (1998) determined that linear navigational structure resulted in more recall and retention for learners. Ultimately, it was realized that this project should attempt a linear structure in order to accommodate the most efficient learning for struggling students. This required a design which incorporated a navigation system that led students step by step through the use of the site, and page layout that guided students clearly through the completion of assignments.

Advanced Graphic Organizers that Engage Students. A final element of design that facilitated struggling learners was the use of advanced graphic organizers that engaged students in higher critical thinking. Meng & Patty (1991) studied the effects of contextual or graphic organizers of information with regard to at-risk students. They concluded that struggling students appeared to have better success when utilizing advanced graphic organizers. The beneficial use of graphic organizers has been undisputed in communicating and reinforcing content for

all students. However, these graphic organizers needed to instigate active involvement with the content on the part of students. Based on research by Marzano (1992), Dodge (1995) designed groundwork for the instructional strategy of WebQuests. He compiled and defined a list of "thinking skills" necessary for acquiring, integrating, and refining knowledge:

•	Comparing	Identifying and articulating
		similarities and differences
		between things.

- Classifying Grouping things into definable categories on the basis of their attributes.
- Inducing Inferring unknown generalizations or principles from observations of analysis.
- Deducing Inferring unstated consequences
 and conditions from given
 principles and generalizations.
- Analyzing errors Identifying and articulating errors in one's own or others' thinking.

Constructing a system of support support or proof for an assertion.
 Abstraction Identifying and articulating the underlying theme or general patter of information.
 Analyzing Identifying and articulating perspectives personal perspectives about issues.

These same characteristics can be applied to the design of advanced graphic organizers. This would require students to structure, organize, and complete informational content in a final student "product" or "artifact" that would demonstrate student processing of information (Hoffman & Ritchie, 1996). Thus, students must engage the content on deeper levels of thought, and truly learn.

CHAPTER THREE

PROJECT DESIGN PROCESSES

Introduction

Having sampled extant research, a brief analysis of student clientele and needs was conducted. Based on the research, specific strategies were identified as beneficial for the student clientele. A focus group of high school seniors reaffirmed the validity of these strategies. With a clear understanding of student needs and preferences, specific standards for English Language Arts were then identified for this project and concrete learning objectives were formed as a basis on which to begin the design of an effective prototype unit, including instructional activities intended to convey content and assess mastery of skills.

Analysis

This project targeted at-risk high school seniors in danger of failing high school because they lacked the credits necessary to graduate. The research reviewed indicated that in general, at-risk students benefited from a variety of strategies that support their learning needs:

- relevant links that associate learning to real life
- clear expectations for performance:
 - o stated objectives of small, manageable learning tasks,
 - o rubrics and an explanation of grading requirements,
 - o and examples of satisfactory work
- structured input and linear movement through content
- advanced graphic organizers that require analytical, higher order thinking
- interaction with teacher focusing on constructive feedback, together with the opportunity for returning and redoing work to attain mastery of skills

This information was validated by a focus group of twelve high school seniors. This focus group consisted of five male and seven female seniors at Arroyo Valley High School in San Bernardino, California. At the semester break, each of these students had been placed in a remedial class that targeted English Language Arts skills for passing the California High School Exit exam.

Students were placed in this class because they were "atrisk" students who were in danger of failing to graduate because they had not passed the California High School Exit Exam and/or performance in their Senior English course was lagging.

Discussion was opened regarding strategies and ideas they felt would help students be most successful in future learning environments, including the possibility of an online atmosphere. The following questions were posed to the focus group:

- What are some of the specific strategies or "tricks" that helped you feel more successful in this class this semester?
- What are some ideas that you feel would help you be more successful if you were to take this class again?
- If you were to take a class online, what things might you need to be helped with—what would make you feel confident with an online class?

Student responses coincided with the research on several key points. Specifically, students identified that graphic organizers were more beneficial than traditional outlines and note-taking. Additionally, they

overwhelmingly indicated that seeing examples of satisfactory work brought them confidence in their own assignments. They also felt the opportunity to review and revisit assignments and class work was beneficial and allowed them to solidly grasp and recall key concepts.

Anxiety over the possibility of taking a class online was expressed in two distinct concerns. First, students felt an online course could possibly be confusing and lead to distraction. They expressed the desire for a very structured step-by-step pattern to help them through content and assignments. Secondly, students identified that teacher encouragement and interaction would be crucial. Several students expressed specific interest in the instructor's availability to answer questions, clarify ideas, and motivate students onward, indicating that without a strong relationship or connection with the instructor, they felt they would not be successful in the class.

Thus, the concepts of sample work, rubrics, clear expectations, linear step-by-step structure, advanced graphic organizers, and supportive teacher interaction became target concepts of design for *The Virtual Senior* program, and specifically for the design of the prototype unit.

The specific prototype unit designed for this project was based on the grade-level text of Beowulf, the earliest known piece of British literature and a common text within most twelfth-grade English Literature textbooks and curricula. All content within the prototype unit was structured around the Standards for the English Language Arts for Eleventh and Twelfth Grades as specified by the California Department of Education. Table 2 represents the target standards that were selected for this unit; concrete learning objectives were derived from these standards to specifically describe the learning tasks and skills expected of students.

Table 2. California Standards Correlation to Beowulf Learning Objectives

California English Language Arts Standards	Learning Objective for Beowulf Unit
Reading 2.0—Comprehension Students read and understand grade- level-appropriate material, and analyze the organizational patterns, arguments, and positions advanced.	As students read, they will recall and identify key characters and events within the epic tale, Beowulf, by responding to specific comprehension questions.
Reading 3.2-Literary Response Analysis Analyze the way in which the theme or meaning of a selection represents a view or comment on life, using	Students will formulate and explain themes extracted from Beowulf, integrating examples from the text to
Reading 3.7—Literary Response Analysis	support ideas.
Analyze recognized works of world literature from a variety of authors: a) Contrast the major literary forms, techniques, and characteristics of the major literary periods. b) Relate literary works and authors to the major themes and issues of their eras.	 a) Students will evaluate a work of literature, and summarize and describe the characteristics of literary form that qualify a text as an epic. b) Students will formulate and explain themes from Beowulf, integrating examples from the text to support ideas.
Writing 1.3—Writing Strategies Structure ideas and arguments in a sustained, persuasive, and sophisticated way and support them with precise and relevant examples.	Students will compose a graphically organized outline that arranges their analysis of themes into a logical order. The outline will include: • Introduction • Body paragraphs • Quotes from text • Correct APA citations • Conclusion
Writing 2.2-Writing Applications Write responses to literature: a) [Not addressed in this unit.] b) Analyze the use of imagery, language, universal themes, and unique aspects of the text. c) Support important ideas and viewpoints through accurate and detailed references to the text and to other works.	Students will write a concise essay in which they present and support their analysis of significant themes in the epic, Beowulf. Essays will include • Introduction & Conclusion • At least 3 accurate themes • Multiple quotes from text • Correct APA citations

The broad categories of Reading Comprehension,
Literary Response & Analysis, and Writing—together with
the subsequent standards-based learning objectives derived
from them—guided the design of content delivery and
assessment. Learning activities or assignments were
designed to practice and informally assess basic reading
comprehension, higher-order literary analysis, and writing
skills. Student mastery of each standard was to be
assessed through both ongoing, informal learning
activities or assignments and a final formal exam as
summarized below.

Reading Comprehension

Specific reading selections from the text of Beowulf would provide the literary text for the unit.

Comprehension questions for each selection of the epic would be conceptualized to assure that students acquired a basic understanding of the text. It was intended that students would achieve 70% correct on each section of comprehension questions; this minimum score would assure that students had mastered the standard for reading comprehension and would prepare them for the literary analysis that ensued. Provisions within the resource would be created so that, in the event a student failed to achieve the 70% requirement, he or she would be permitted

to reread the reading selection of the text in question and return to complete the comprehension questions for that section before moving on to complete their analysis of the text. In this way, students were to demonstrate adequate proficiency in the standard for Reading Comprehension.

Literary Response and Analysis

Having read the text, students would be introduced to analytical content based on or related to the text. Several advanced graphic organizers were envisioned which would require students to exercise higher-level thinking skills in the analysis of the text. These assignments would likewise require a correct completion of 70% to qualify as proficient. The submission of these activities or assignments to the instructor would provide constant monitoring of student achievement and demonstrate that a student had sufficient mastery of the target standards and Similarly, if a student failed to achieve the 70% skills. requirement, provisions within the resource were envisioned to allow the teacher to intervene with feedback, encouragement, and suggestions. Content and skills were to be taught anew if necessary. instructor could invite the student to revisit the content, rework the assignment, and resubmit their work as

might be needed. This process would be repeated until at least 70% mastery was attained, thus ensuring that an agreeable analytic proficiency was demonstrated, and the skills underlying target standards were properly acquired. Writing

After having completed a thorough analysis of the text by way of the informal assessment assignments or activities, it was intended that students would be prepared to advance from Bloom's distinction of application and analysis to the higher-order thinking skills of synthesis by combining the interpretations they had gleaned to produce an original essay. The assigned essay was conceptualized for two purposes: first, it would provide a review of the textual information and a reassessment of the learning objectives for reading comprehension and literary analysis, thus helping students prepare for the final formal assessment; second, it would provide a framework within which students could engage the writing standards selected for this unit.

Several learning activities were conceived which would walk students through the writing process. First, students would learn the elements of structure in written composition and the organization of ideas. Techniques for the use of textual support and the appropriate way in

which to cite references would also be introduced. writing process would then be collaboratively initiated between student and instructor. Students would complete an outline of their analysis, and have it reviewed by the instructor. They would then familiarize themselves with a rubric by way of a written dialogue with the instructor. Finally, students would complete the writing process by drafting, editing, and finalizing their essay. During each step of this process, students were to check in with the instructor, receive feedback and further instruction if needed, and return to the essay, revise, and resubmit their work. Through constant dialogue with the instructor, a mastery of the writing standards would be assured. As with previous work, the quality of writing would be required to meet the minimum 70% requirement for proficiency. This was defined by the rubric, and paralleled the criteria used for the California High School Exit Exam. Ultimately, if a student successfully met the criteria, the final product would demonstrate that a student had gained adequate proficiency in the writing standards selected for this unit.

In summary, this project intended to assure student mastery of targeted content standards by establishing multiple stages of assessment which measured their mastery

of the content standards. Interaction with the instructor through all stages of the learning activities or assignments would provide the opportunity for immediate remediation. Students would be able to revisit unsatisfactory work and improve upon it until proficiency was achieved. These interactions would serve as ongoing, formative assessments of student learning, and would assure that students were achieving. The final formal assessment reaffirmed student mastery of literary analysis and ensured proficiency in the writing standards though ongoing teacher collaboration.

Design

With the initial analysis complete, the stage was then set for the conceptualization and development of specific instructional activities to accomplish the following objectives:

- convey to students content information as per the targeted content standards;
- provide students opportunities to practice and develop knowledge and skills; and
- assess acquired skills of students to determine
 mastery of the content standards.

Early in the design of the project, it was decided to utilize Moodle, an open-source course management system built around the pedagogical principles of constructivism. The most appealing aspect of this system was that it quickly and efficiently provided the means to incorporate two of the key elements of instruction that research found to be crucial in addressing the needs of the target population of this project: student-teacher interaction and structured, linear input.

Moodle provided student-teacher interaction in multiple ways that will be described in more detail later. Briefly stated, however, content information could be inserted into interactive lessons templates within Moodle. Then, teacher-created graphic organizers (assignments) were designed and posted for students to download directly to their own computers. Students completed the task(s) explained on the graphic organizer— processing, interpreting, categorizing, or analyzing the content of the lessons; they then uploaded the assignment for the teacher to grade and provide feedback as needed. A second form of student-teacher interaction was the confidential posting of student grades. Finally, an email feature in Moodle provided a constant and open path of communication.

for questions, concerns, and updates between both the instructor and the students.

Moodle also provided a structured and linear format for the delivery and practice of content and skills.

First, a home page was established and named BW101. An introductory module to orient students to the format of an online course was found at the top of this home page.

Following this orientation, target standards content was subsequently organized categorically into linear modules or topics within the BW101 page. The list of topic modules as presented to students was as follows:

- Introduction to Course & Content Standards
- Defining the Characteristics Epic
- Reading Comprehension
- Literary Analysis of the Epic
- Write a Response to Literature: Analytical Essay

Each topic module was designed with a uniform format as explained here. A brief title identified the general content of the topic module, and a short description of what would be expected of students was given below the title. A clear and concise list of objectives was then provided so that the students would understand exactly what was expected of them in each topic module. Finally a

list of links followed that engaged students in various lessons, activities, or assignments.

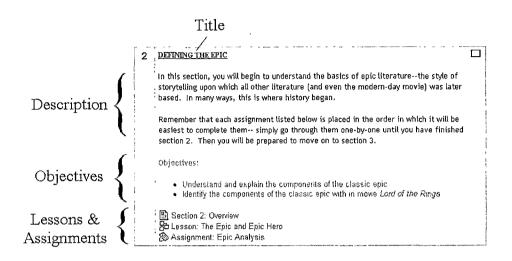


FIGURE 1. Screenshot: Format of Each Module

The first link of each content topic module was always an "Overview" link. This link opened into a text page that expanded the initial description of the topic module. It explained more in detail what the purpose and objectives of each topic were, and described in specific detail the tasks that were to be assigned. This overview page additionally gave students navigational tips through the topic module and the BW101 Unit, and reminded students

of the technical procedures of downloading and uploading assignments.

As mentioned each of these topic modules broke content and skills into smaller manageable modes of input (lessons or content pages) and activities or assignments. These activities, lessons, or assignments were designed based on the key elements of instruction dictated by the research. Wholistically, instruction in the Beowulf unit progressed with each successive module, beginning with basic identification and recall in the beginning modules, extending this information into analysis, and finally, culminating in the synthesis of what students had learned. The flow of each topic module is presented in greater detail below.

Module 1: Introduction to Course and Content Standards

The first topic module was designed as an orientation to online study for this course. The title of this module began with red text stating "Start Here" in order to attract the students' attention to a clear point at which they should have begun. The brief description assured students that this topic module would take them step-by-step through the process of completing assignments. They were also informed that they should

proceed through all the links in the given order for them to most efficiently complete the course. Students were explicitly instructed that they should complete topic module (or section) 1 before moving on. The objectives for this topic module were then listed:

- Understand how to complete this unit
- Understand the Target Standards for this unit
- Learn to download and complete an online assignment
- Upload (or turn in) your first assignment online

Following the objectives was a list of two content pages and one assignment. The first content page was entitled "Welcome to the Beowulf Unit—What do I do?" This page explained a key feature of navigation: the navigational header BW101. This header was standard on all pages and allowed students to return to the home page at any time in their studies. It proceeded to reemphasize the completion of assignments in the order presented within the unit, and explained in brief the concept of "uploading" work to the instructor. Finally, students were informed of the way in which they could access their grades from the home page by clicking on the

"Grades" link. When they finished absorbing the information on this page, they were instructed to practice navigating back to the home page by way of the navigational header.

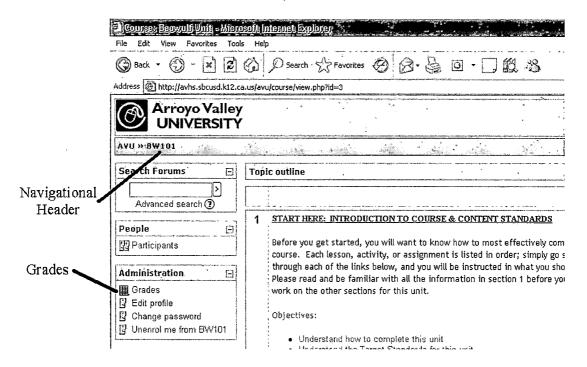


FIGURE 2. Screenshot: Navigation from the Beowulf Homepage

The second link in the introduction module opened a basic web page that simply listed the content standards that the Beowulf unit addresses. A short explanation was provided that these standards were selected from the

California State Standards for the English Language Arts, Eleventh and Twelfth Grades. The standards were represented on this page in the exact language used by the State Board of Education. At the conclusion of this page, students were again trained to return to the home page through the use of the standard navigational header, BW101.

The final aspect of the introduction module was a link entitled "Assignment: Introduce Yourself." All assignments throughout the unit were given the appellation "Assignment" and then followed by the specific name of each assignment. This was done to clearly identify to students that a particular link was absolutely required and would impact their grade. This first assignment was not a content-based assignment; rather, it provided students an opportunity to introduce themselves. It also served as a practical exercise in downloading, completing, and then uploading (or submitting) their first assignment—all of which were crucial technical skills that would be necessary for a student to be successful in the course.

When the link "Assignment: Introduce Yourself" was accessed, a new Moodle page opened up. This page was an assignment template within Moodle. This assignment template contained a brief overview of the assignment

which explained the purposes it was intended to achieve. After this overview, students were given concise step-by-step instructions for successfully completing this first assignment. Specifically, they were directed to open a posted Word document, save it to their computer, open and complete the assignment according to the instructions on the document, and finally to save and upload the document to Moodle for credit. After receiving all these instructions, a link was provided for students to access and complete the actual assignment that accompanied this module.

The "Introduce Yourself" assignment served a threefold purpose. First, it provided for some student-teacher
interaction by allowing students to introduce themselves
on a personal level. Research indicated that effective
design provided for students to build relationships and
motivation was increased as students felt welcomed
(Brewster & Fager, 2000; Lumsden, 1994). Secondly, this
assignment was an opportunity for students to selfevaluate their computer skills and voice their concerns
about an online course—an experience that for many of them
may be a first-time experience. Finally, this assignment
was a practical exercise in learning and using the
technical procedures for downloading an assignment,

completing it digitally, and finally uploading it for credit. The success or failure of doing so allowed the instructor to immediately intervene in an effort to help students master those basic technical skills of accessing and utilizing the technology; this would allow students to focus more on the academic content and not become frustrated with computer basics. Theoretically, this mediation would lead to their eventual success in the course.

Module 2: Defining the Epic

The second topic module was created to be an orientation to the basic content that needed to be understood in order to master the target standards. Module 2 functioned instructionally with simple identification of key content elements that were the basis for further instruction.

The module description introduced the concept of an epic and emphasized that each of the assignments would most easily be completed in the order in which they were listed. Students were again reminded that they should complete module two before progressing on to other modules. The objectives for this module were then listed:

 Understand and explain the components of the classic epic • Identify the components of the classic epic within the movie Lord of the Rings

Three links then followed this list of objectives. The first link was a content page entitled "Overview." As was mentioned previously, the "Overview" link opened into a text page that explained in greater detail the initial description of this module, including background on the information to be learned and general instructions regarding the activities and assignments that would be assigned. Specifically, the module 2 overview introduced the literary work Beowulf and gave a brief history of the It then introduced the concept of an epic and text. listed its crucial components. Students were informed that they would be required to complete an online lesson (the second link in module two) and complete a brief quiz as part of that lesson. Finally, the overview briefly explained that students would be required to complete an analysis of the movie Lord of the Rings after they had learned to identify the component parts of an epic; specifically, students were instructed that they would identify and describe the elements of the movie that qualified it as an epic. This "Overview" page concluded with a reminder to use the BW101 navigational header to

return to the home page of instructional modules. It also reminded students to be sure to upload their assignments after completion in order to receive the appropriate credit for their work.

The second link in Module 2 was titled "Lesson: The Epic and the Epic Hero." The appellation "Lesson" precedes the title of this specific lesson to clearly emphasize the nature of this link. This lesson was designed to teach students the key elements of an epic. This link opened to a basic text page which provided an opening description of the epic and its influence in history. General instructions directed students to explore each of the key elements in this lesson and take the quiz. Below this introduction, a selection of buttons represented the key elements of the epic that students needed to explore:

- The Epic
- A Story About a Hero
- A Dangerous Journey
- Universal Problems
- Supernatural Elements
- The Epic Quiz

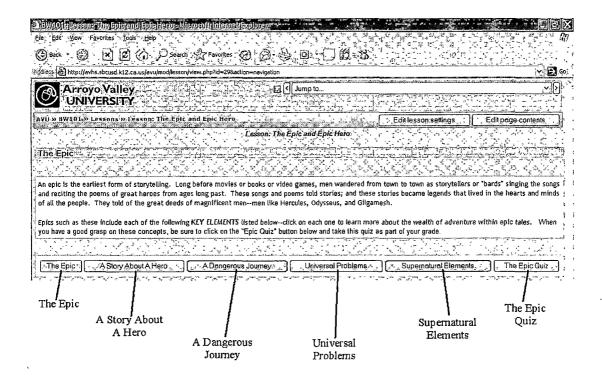


FIGURE 3. Screenshot: The Epic and Epic Hero Lesson

Each of the buttons opened into a new content page that gave a detailed description or explanation of the specified key element. Within each of these branching pages, the same buttons were located beneath each description, providing the opportunity for students to move from key element to key element in any order comfortable or logical to the student.

As noted, students were to take the quiz after they had reviewed all the key elements of the epic as presented

in this lesson. The quiz was a short answer essay prompt intended to check for understanding and to assure that the content of the lesson had been retained; thus ensuring that mastery of the targeted standard had been achieved.. After a brief reminder to be sure that one understood all of the key elements, students were given the following prompt:

In your own words, describe the characteristics of an epic tale. Be sure to use ideas and concepts you have learned in this short lesson, and be detailed in your response. Give examples that help you to remember and understand what an epic is. Do not leave important information out or you may be asked to answer this question again. You may return and review any of the information you wish in order to complete this quiz.

A blank text field was then provided for the submission of the short answer essay. A button indicated the appropriate click when the submission was complete and ready to be sent.

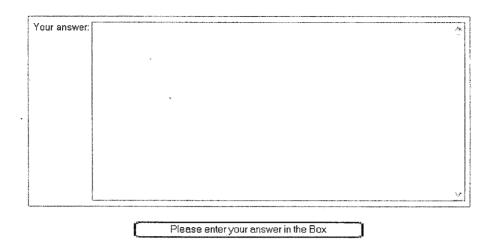


FIGURE 4. Screenshot: Text Box for Submission of Short Answer Responses

Failure to identify and adequately explain the key components of an epic would necessitate remediation by the instructor. The Quiz feature within Moodle allowed for the instructor to comment back to the student through the Course Management System and post comments directly to the students quiz; when checking their grades, students would be able to see an instructor's comments and redo the quiz as needed. This feature provided the means whereby a clear understanding of the elements of an epic could be attained prior to attempting the ensuing assignment.

The third link within Module 2 was titled
"Assignment: Epic Analysis." This link opened into the
assignment template. As with the first assignment from

Module 1, a brief overview of the assignment was given, followed by concise step-by-step instructions for successfully completing this assignment. Directions were similar to the first assignment: open a posted Word document, save it to a computer, open and complete the assignment according to the instructions on the document, and finally, save and upload the document to Moodle for credit. After receiving all these instructions, a link was provided for students to access and complete the assignment which accompanied Module 2.

The completion of the module, and specifically the Epic Analysis, ensured that students had a working knowledge of the various aspects of the epic genre. They were able to identify these key elements of the epic from a modern-day, familiar movie; essentially, this was their first analysis of an epic. By evaluating their success with a familiar media representation of literature, students demonstrated that they were prepared to transfer this analytical skill to a curriculum oriented literary text in the next module.

Module 3: Reading Comprehension

The third topic module was a traditional reading comprehension exercise: students were required to read the text and answer basic comprehension questions to

demonstrate that they understood the text.

Instructionally, Module 3 served as a simple recall of key events in the text, a necessary instructional step to provide a basis for textual analysis later in the path of instruction.

The module description explained that students would be most successful if they completed the assigned reading and the subsequent quiz in the order listed. Students were further reminded that they should complete all assignments prior to moving on to the next module. A final note encouraged students to utilize printed copies of the excerpts in order to understand the readings, take notes, and remember the information necessary for the comprehension quizzes. The objectives for this module were then listed:

- Read selected excerpts from Beowulf
- Answer comprehension questions regarding key events and characters within Beowulf

Eleven links then followed the objectives. The first link was an "Overview" link for Module 3. This link opened a basic text page that explained this module in greater detail. It first reminded students of the need to be sure they had a solid understanding of the previous

module and the function of the key elements of an epic.

Secondly, it explained that *Beowulf* was a long epic poem of which students would only be reading five key excerpts for purposes of this unit:

- Grendel's Attack
- The Arrival of Beowulf & A Test of His Character
- The Battle with Grendel
- The Lair & Battle with Grendel's Mother
- The Final Battle & Farewell

Finally, students were informed that they would be required to complete a short comprehension quiz after reading each excerpt. The overview page concluded with a reminder to use the navigational header, BW101, to return to the home page of modules and begin their reading assignments.

The ten remaining links in module 3 were of two basic natures: reading excerpts and quizzes. These links were listed in alternating order: first a reading excerpt, followed by the corresponding comprehension quiz.

Read: Arrival of Beowulf & A Test of His Character
Quiz: Arrival of Beowulf & A Test of His Character

Read: The Lair & Battle with Grendel's Mother
Quiz: The Lair & Battle with Grendel's Mother

Read: The Final Battle & Farewell
Quiz: The Final Battle & Farewell

FIGURE 5. Reading Selections and Comprehension Quizzes

The reading excerpts each followed the same format.

The title for each link began with the appellation "Read" in order to emphasize the nature of the link. When opened, the reading links presented a basic text page, with specific textual information as described hereafter. The title of the excerpt and the name of the translator/author was written at the top of the page.

Following the title, a short summary of the excerpt gave a preview of what students were to read. Specific details were avoided in this summary, but a general description of events helped to orient students to the content they were to read; this was determined to be useful since the ancient style of language and the genre of epic poetry can pose difficulties in comprehension. The excerpted text of Beowulf followed, including line references to the left of

the text every five lines. When students finished the reading selection, they were expected to complete the subsequent quiz.

Each quiz was a simple multiple choice quiz designed to assess ample comprehension of key events within the reading selection. These key events were precursors to deeper understandings that were crucial to the analysis of the text that would be drawn from the readings in a later module. Instructions informed students that they would be required to answer 70% of the answers on each quiz correctly in order to receive credit for the class. Provision was made within the Moodle course management system for students who failed to achieve the 70% percent correct requirement. Students were allowed to take the quiz as many times as needed in order for them to demonstrate that they correctly understood the main events of each excerpt. Each time the quiz was attempted, Moodle was programmed to shuffle the order of the questions in order that students rethought each specific question. Additionally, the answers were never revealed so that students would likewise be forced to rethink each quiz and reread the excerpt in order to reinforce the key events and allow the students to successfully complete the quiz and be prepared for further literary analysis in Module 4.

Module 4: Literary Analysis

This module was created to walk students through a basic process of analyzing a literary text. Module 4 was designed to extend the more basic thinking skills of the preliminary modules—identification and recall—to the higher-level abstraction of analysis and interpretation.

The module description from the BW101 homepage informed students that they were to begin analyzing the text they had finished reading. A brief highlighted reminder encouraged students to review information from previous modules if they felt lacking in any of the information from prior lessons, specifically, the elements of the epic as taught in Module 2. Furthermore, students were reminded that they should complete the assignments and lessons in the order listed, and be sure to upload their assignments to Moodle for review by the instructor. The objectives for Module 4 were then listed:

- Identify the components of the classic epic within Beowulf
- Identify multiple themes from various movies or popular folktales

- Identify and explain key themes within the epic

 Beowulf
- Provide quotes or examples from the text to support chosen themes

Following the list of objectives were the links pertaining to Module 4. The first link was the "Overview" content page for this module. This page reminded students that they should have read all the comprehension excerpts from Module 3 and achieved a score of seven or better on each of the accompanying quizzes in order to receive credit for this class. Students were then explained that they would begin to engage the text of Beowulf analytically; they were to break down the tale into the component parts of an epic as explained within Module 2. A link was provided for them to return and review those key components if necessary prior to engaging the assignments pertaining to this module. The overview further explained that students would also be required to analyze the use of themes within the epic. A brief explanation of the literary term "theme" was given, and students were assured that they would be quided through the process in this module. The Module 4 overview

concluded with the usual reminder to return to the BW101 homepage to begin the instruction within Module 4, and to be sure to upload all assignments in order to receive credit.

The second link of Module 4 was an assignment entitled "Epic Analysis of Beowulf." This link opened into a basic text page that provided a detailed description of this assignment. General instructions informed students that they were to identify and describe key elements of the text that qualified this tale as an They were assured that they had already done an assignment similar to this when they analyzed the movie "Lord of the Rings" in Module 2, and they were again offered the opportunity to return to Module 2 to review the lessons pertaining to the key elements of the epic. Following this introductory description, concise instructions similar to other assignments guided students through the process of downloading, opening, and completing the assignment, as well as saving and uploading their completed work to Moodle for credit. Finally, a link was posted to download the actual assignment, The Epic Analysis of Beowulf. In completing this assignment, students reviewed and reaffirmed their understanding of

the elements of an epic, and demonstrated again their mastery of the content standard addressed in Module 2.

The third link for Module 4 was titled "Lesson:

Identifying Themes." This lesson was designed to teach students the literary concept of theme and guide them in identifying themes from popular movies or folktales. This link opened to a basic text page that defined theme as a literary concept and gave general instructions for completing the lesson. Four buttons were placed below this introduction:

- "The Tortoise and the Hare"
- Finding Nemo
- The Lord of the Rings.
- I Finished Themes Lesson

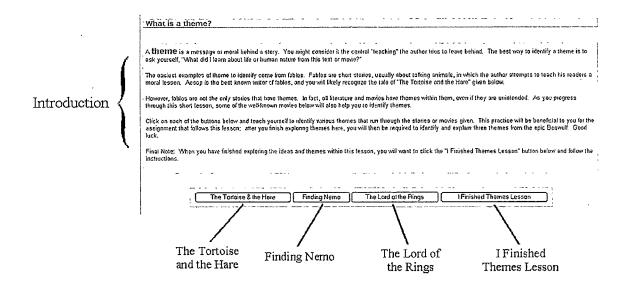


FIGURE 6. Screenshot: Themes Lesson

The first three buttons guided students to various media selections to explore different themes. When clicked, each of these buttons opened into a new content page that summarized the given folktale or movie.

Following this summary, a question was posed that invited students to consider what theme could be extracted from the general storyline. A selection of possible themes was then given in a multiple choice box, followed by a button titled "Please check one answer." When students had engaged the text of the given folktale or movie, they selected an appropriate theme, and clicked the button.

FIGURE 7. Screenshot: The Tortoise and the Hare Theme

Upon selecting an appropriate theme, a text page validated the student's response and explained more in depth the way in which the chosen theme applied to the particular folktale or movie.



AVU » BW101 » Lessons » Lesson: Identifying Themes

Theme: NEVER GIVE UPI

Explanation

Absolutely!
This is probably the clearest and most recognized "lesson" or theme that we learn from this classic story. The tortoise won because he didn't give up; and we should identify with this small, slow little guy. We, like him, are just plodding along through our lives, doing the best we can. We will have challenges that "leave us in the dust" or people who mock and criticize us. Nevertheless, like the tortoise, we just need to keep on going, and we will come out the winners in the end.

Now that you have the idea, try returning to the story of the tortoise and the hare and see if you can think of another theme-- there are usually more than just one solid theme that you can pick out of story.



FIGURE 8. Screenshot: Explanation of Theme

Following this explanation, instructions guided students to return to the previous lesson page for the given folktale or movie, and explore the other choices presented in order to more deeply understand the concept of theme. A button labeled "Continue" concluded the page; when clicked, this button automatically returned the student to the previous page for the specific folktale or movie with which they were working and allowed the student to continue their exploration of the literary concept of theme within that folktale or movie.

Some of the multiple choice responses for each folktale or movie were incorrect. When a student selected an incorrect theme, a text page appeared that encouraged

students to rethink their choice; it further clarified why this particular choice was not a fitting theme for the given folktale or movie. Again instructions and the "Continue" button guided students back to the previous lesson page for the given folktale or movie to explore the other choices in order to adequately learn the concept of theme.

One of the multiple choice selections for each folktale or movie was an option titled "Done." This option was intended to be selected once students had completed their exploration of all the themes for the given folktale or movie. When selected, this choice brought students to a concluding text page for the particular folktale or movie with which the students had been engaged. This text page invited students to be sure that they understood each of the multiple choice selections for the given folktale or movie. Instructions then suggested the following two options:

• First, if all multiple-choice selections had been explored, students were directed to click the "Continue" button. This button would return them to the initial lesson page entitled "Lesson:

Identifying Themes" from which they could then explore the other folktales or movies.

• Second, if all multiple-choice selections had not been explored, students were directed to use the "Back" button on their browser and return to the folktale or movie that had not yet been thoroughly studied; they were encouraged to complete their exploration of the choices for this folktale and then to select the "Done" option from the list of multiple-choices.

When students had completed their study of themes from the three original selections—"The Tortoise and the Hare," Finding Nemo, and Lord of the Rings—they returned to the initial lesson page entitled "Lesson: Identifying Themes." A button named "I Finished Themes Lesson" was the final selection for the lesson.

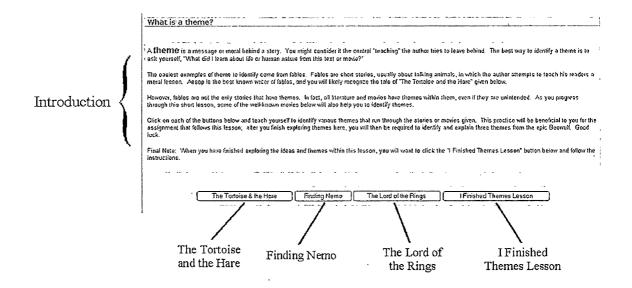


FIGURE 9. Screenshot: "I Finished Themes Lesson" Button

When clicked, students were brought to a "Congratulations" page. This page informed students that they had completed the "Themes Lesson," and offered students three self-explanatory navigational options: first, review the lesson; second, return to the course menu; and third, view current grades.





FIGURE 10. Screenshot: Congratulations Page

After having completed this lesson, students were practiced in identifying themes from various works, and were prepared to analyze the text of *Beowulf* in terms of appropriate themes.

The final link in Module 4 was titled "Assignment: Theme Analysis." This link opened into a basic text page that provided a detailed description of the assignment. General instructions informed the students that they would now be applying what they had just learned about themes to the text of Beowulf. They were encouraged that, though this may be challenging, they would be able to complete the task by following the steps listed; basic instructions followed.

These instructions again reviewed the process to open the posted word document, save it to a computer, open and complete the assignment according to the instructions on the document, and finally, to save and upload the assignment to Moodle for grading. The link to the actual word document for this assignment followed the instructions (see APPENDIX D: THEME ANALYSIS: LITERARY ANALYSIS OF BEOWULF).

Upon completing this module and the two graphic organizers assigned, students demonstrated their ability to analyze the epic Beowulf on two distinct levels. First, students identified and explained the characteristics of the text that qualified it as a classic epic. Second, students formulated legitimate themes from the epic, and supported their ideas with specific examples from the text. Each of these skills prepared students for the culminating evaluation they were to complete in the following module. As with all previous assignments, if a mastery of the standards did not meet or exceed the 70% required minimum, the instructor was able to immediately remediate, provide feedback and direction, and students were able to revisit the assignments and improve upon what they did understand prior to advancing along the path of instruction.

Module 5: Write a Response to Literature: Analytical Essay

The final module was intended as a higher-level thinking assessment. It sought to synthesize the information and analysis from the previous three modules into a cohesive blend of ideas and opinions that the student could clearly express through his or her own writing.

The module description explained that students would use all they had learned to this point in order to compose an analytical essay on the epic tale of *Beowulf*.

Students were reminded to be sure to have completed all of the previous modules before attempting the culminating activity. The objectives for this module were then listed:

- Understand the basic organization of a formal essay (intro, body paragraphs, conclusion)
- Understand the elements of a writing rubric
- Grade/evaluate an example essay
- Plan or pre-write a graphically organized outline of your essay
- Write a formal essay to analyze key themes in Beowulf

Seven links then followed the list of objectives. The first link was the usual "Overview" page. It opened to a text page that again emphasized the need to have completed all other assignments before attempting the assignments for Module 5. The overview then broke the module into three basic steps. The first step was to prepare to write the essay, and simply reminded students that they would use the information they gathered in Module 4 to construct a formal and structured argument to analyze the text. The second step was intended as a model after which students were to pattern their own essays; it informed students that they would use a grading rubric to evaluate an example essay and familiarize themselves with various expectations for this assignment, including the format, organization, and use of language appropriate for their composition. The final step within this module was defined as the actual writing of the essay, including use of an introduction, body paragraphs, quotes, citations and a conclusion. Students were also informed that they would be instructed in the APA format, which was to be used in their essays. The "Overview" page for this module concluded with the usual reminder to use the BW101 navigational header to return to the homepage of instructional modules to continue with the other links

within Module 5. A final reminder instructed students to upload each of their assignments in order to receive credit for their work.

The second link for Module 5 was entitled "The Essay Question," and simply opened to a basic text page. On this page a brief explanation pointed out that students had read and analyzed key excerpts of the epic Beowulf, and that they would now write an essay. The official essay prompt then followed:

Writing Prompt: Themes are those messages and lessons that we find woven into our culture and our subconscious through generations of experience.

Whether we realize it or not, they are part of ussomething deep within is touched when movies or literature hit on the themes that we recognize. This is what makes many of the movies or books we love so memorable. Write an essay in which you discuss several important themes within the epic adventure of Beowulf. Be sure to clearly state the themes you have chosen and provide examples and quotes from the text to support your ideas. Also remember to include appropriate citations to appropriately identify your quotes.

Following the prompt, a final paragraph cautioned students to not simply jump into the process of writing, but to review and study the remaining links in Module 5. They were reminded that each of the remaining links was intended to help them learn key organizational skills and writing strategies that would be crucial to the success of their essay.

The third link in Module 5 was a lesson entitled "How to Organize an Essay." This link opened to a text page bearing the same title. This page emphasized yet again that Module 5 would take students step-by-step through the writing process as they followed the links consecutively. Students were also warned that if they did not compose an appropriate essay, they would be required to redo the assignment until adequate writing skills were demonstrated. Students were then instructed that before they began writing, it was crucial for them to understand how their essay should be structured. A link then took students to a graphically organized representation of the essay's structure, including the use of an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion:

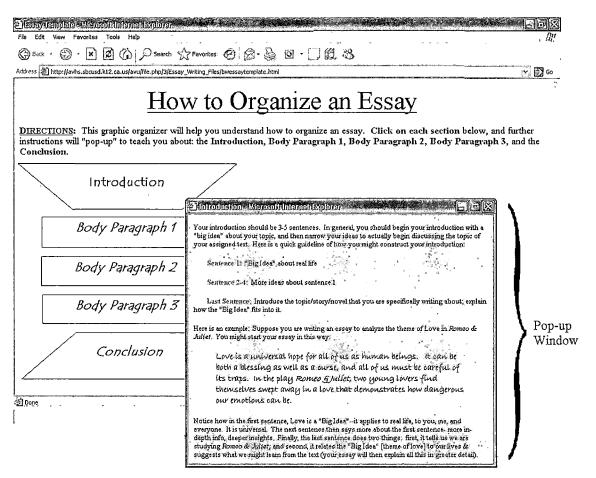


FIGURE 11. Screenshot: Pop-up Window for "How to Organize and Essay"

Instructions explained that this graphic representation was interactive, and required the students to click on the different components of the essay in order to learn more. When clicked, each component was linked to a simple pop-up window that explained the corresponding component more in detail, including a concrete example of each component with critical editing commentary. Students

were expected to browse through each of the components on the graphic representation in order to have the basic knowledge of the way in which to structure their own writing. An assessment of this lesson was incorporated later in the Module 5, under the link titled "Assignment: Grade an Example Essay" that is explained later.

The fourth link in Module 5 was titled "Understand the Writing Rubric." Again, a basic text page bearing the same title as the link introduced this lesson when the link was selected. Preparatory instructions defined the function of rubrics and oriented students to the use of a rubric as on method of evaluating writing. They were instructed to review the rubric provided in this lesson and were admonished that failure to write an essay in accordance with the characteristics as explained on the given rubric would result in their needing to redo the essay. Students were then instructed to follow a link that opened to an interactive writing rubric designed to be printed on a single page for students to reference during the actual writing of their essay (see APPENDIX E: WRITING RUBRIC).

This rubric was a matrix of five columns and five rows. An additional row across the top served as a key to indicate possible scores ranging from 4 down to 1;

traditional "letter grades" paralleled these scores on the rubric in order to give students a familiar reference point to understand the scoring. The directions at the top of the page explained that a score of "4" or "3" was sufficient to demonstrate a satisfactory mastery of skills, whereas anything less would necessitate a revision and resubmission of the essay. The instructions further guided students to click on blue text within the rubric, after which more detailed instruction would appear to assist students in analyzing and studying the key characteristics of a satisfactory essay. These characteristics were classified in the left column:

- Analysis of Theme
- Specific Details and Examples
- Structure
- Format
- Word Choice & Conventions

Each of these characteristics was further defined on the rubric by detailed descriptors in each category of proficiency ranging from "4" to "1". Furthermore, each descriptor contained specialized blue text, indicating a web link; rather than an actual link, however, this text

was a simple mouse-over function that brought a text box to the front of the page with further detailed description about specialized terms or content within the rubric.

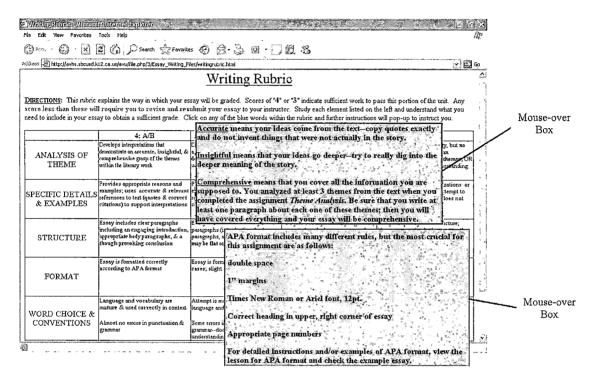


FIGURE 12. Screenshot: Writing Rubric Showing Mouse-over Instruction

Having completed an exploration of the writing rubric, students were then directed to the next link in the module.

The fifth link in Module 5 was an assignment entitled: "Assignment: Grade an Example Essay." This assignment was designed as an informal assessment of the previous two links (or lessons) regarding the structure of

an essay and the use of the writing rubric. The link opened to a text page with general instructions to orient students to this assignment. They were informed that they would at this time "grade" or evaluate an example essay using the five elements of writing on the rubric they had just reviewed and the information they had previously learned regarding the acceptable organization of an essay.

A numbered list of steps directed students to link to and read an essay, and then download a Word document upon which they would grade the essay and explain their rationales.

The completion of this assignment assured that students had reviewed both the structured organization of the introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion, as well as the key characteristics of the writing task detailed on the rubric. Having evaluated these characteristics, students were adequately prepared to begin planning their own essays. If a student failed to adequately explain his or her rationale for having graded the essay, the instructor pointed out a suggestion or two as to how a student might more fully qualify their rationale for having assigned a specific element from the rubric. Students were then encouraged to return to the essay and reevaluate it more thoroughly. After having demonstrated a

thorough evaluation of the example essay, students were directed to return to the module homepage, and continue with the next link in Module 5.

The sixth link in Module 5 was titled "Assignment: Plan Your Essay." This page opened to a text page that provided a brief synopsis of the assignment, informing students that they would combine all they had learned in this module to create an outline for their essay using the analyses completed from Module 4. Students were specifically told they would write brief "summaries" of an introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Numbered steps then guided the students to click on the link "Assignment: Plan Your Essay" and save this document to their computer. They were further instructed to open the document and read all the directions given before completing the assignment. A bold reminder directed students to save their finished document on a computer, and final instructions reminded students to upload the file to Moodle for grading. At the conclusion of these steps, a link opened the actual Word document in a new window.

By completing this assignment, students were able to logically organize their ideas, thereby demonstrating a mastery of one of the key writing standards. When

students had completed their graphically organized outline, they were expected to submit it for approval by the instructor before beginning to write the essay. This allowed the instructor to quickly identify problems in the analysis of themes or the basic structure of the students writing; remediation would be engaged, if needed, and the process of continual collaboration would continue until students had a clearly organized outline for writing. Having completed this assignment adequately, and after receiving feedback and approval from the instructor, students were prepared to begin the final culminating assessment: an analytical essay exploring the themes of Beowulf.

The final link in Module 5 was titled "Assessment: Write Your Essay." This link opened into a text page that introduced the culminating assessment. This orientation page reminded students of all the previous tasks that should have been completed prior to the actual writing of the essay:

- Read & understand the essay question/prompt
- Know the order or how to organize your essay
- Review and be thoroughly familiar with the Writing
 Rubric

- Read and evaluate/grade an example essay (this should have been turned into your instructor)
- Plan your own essay, piece-by-piece (intro, body paragraph 1, 2, & 3, and conclusion) (this also should have been turned into and approved by your instructor)

The underlined sections indicated links that returned students to previous lessons or resources in order to facilitate their review. Students were then encouraged that as soon as they had a secure understanding of these basic writing skills, they should begin composing their essay. A list of instructions gave students general guidelines to open a word processing document, type their introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion. As all other assignments, directions concluded with instructions to save their document to their computer, proofread and revise as needed, and finally to upload their essay to Moodle for a grade.

The completion of this module served as a final culminating experience that synthesized the reading comprehension and analytical skills that students developed and practiced in previous modules with the

organizational writing skills of the final module. By adequately completing this essay, students demonstrated competency in each of the target standards as defined for the unit.

Development

Having designed a general path of instruction to deliver the content pertinent to the targeted content standards, adequate assignments were conceptualized, developed, and tested for this project. The majority of these assignments were intended to be formative in nature, providing clear insight to the instructor regarding "gaps" in learning that needed remediation throughout the learning process. The culminating assignment was developed to demonstrate a synthesis of student learning as a result of the Beowulf Unit. Each of these assignments is described in detail below and in the order in which they appear in the Beowulf Unit.

Module 1 Assignment: Introduce Yourself

As mentioned previously, this assignment was not a content based assignment. Rather, the purpose for this assignment was to establish a relationship between student and instructor as well as to address possible technological problems that could hinder student

performance due to the perhaps unfamiliar online nature of the instruction. After Module 1 explained the overview of the course and listed the content standards and learning objectives, students were directed to a link that opened this assignment (see APPENDIX A: INTRODUCE YOURSELF: STARTING THE BEOWULF UNIT).

This assignment was entitled "Introduce Yourself: Starting the Beowulf Unit." This was a "protected" Word document, meaning that only specified fields of the document were available to students to input their answers. The remainder of the document was "locked" and could not be manipulated with out the corresponding password. As students only needed to complete information and answers in the specified fields, this password was not provided to them. The assignment was a simple document that utilized text boxes for student input. Multiple text boxes were placed into the document in which students were to type their name, identification number, and the date on which they completed their assignment. Instructions were then given as to how to utilize the document; specifically, they were instructed to click into the highlighted boxes, delete the initial directions within each box (i.e. "Delete this message and type your answer here"), and type their answers appropriately. Explicit

instructions were emphasized to remind students to save their work to their computers and to then return to the online BW101 unit for specific instructions to then upload their assignment for submission to their instructor.

Following these instructions, three separate text The first was entitled "About Me" and boxes ensued. subsequent directions were provided to instruct students to type in their preferred name and other information they desired to share: hobbies, sports preferences, clubs, or other general interests. Students were to click into this box and type their answers. The second text box was titled "Goals & Plans." Likewise, specific instructions quided students to share what their plans and goals in life might be, and they were then expected to type their thoughts into this box. Finally, a third text box provided for a practical reflective opportunity for students to consider their computer skills and share their concerns with regard to their own abilities to use a computer. Students were asked to answer a few basic computer questions about general computer use, Internet use, familiarity with downloading and uploading documents. They were also asked to express their concerns as to how confident they were in being able to successfully complete this course. This final reflection concluded the first

assignment. According to the initial directions on the assignment document, students were expected to return to the assignment page online for this assignment and upload their work according to the step-by-step instructions given.

Module 2 Assignment: Epic Analysis

The design for Module 2 called for an assessment to assure students had mastered the elements of the epic genre. Instructions from Module 2 informed students that this assignment required them to view the movie "Fellowship of the Ring" and identify the key elements of an epic as they had been taught during the lesson accompanying Module 2. A link from the assignment page within Moodle then opened the word document for this assignment (see APPENDIX B: EPIC ANALYSIS: LITERARY ANALYSIS OF BEOWULF UNIT).

This assignment was entitled "Epic Analysis Literary Analysis: Beowulf Unit." As with all assignments, this was a "protected" document that allowed students to alter only parts of the document they needed to respond to.

Also similar to the previous assignment, this document provided a line of text boxes into which students were to type their name, identification number, and the date on which they completed the assignment. Instructions were

then given as to how to utilize this document by clicking into the accessible areas of the text, erasing the place-holding information, and inserting their own responses. Explicit instructions were again given to remind students to save and upload their completed work to Moodle for credit.

Below the instructions, a series of accessible text boxes were labeled according to the following tasks:

- Summarize the "Long Adventure" in this Epic
- Name and describe the "Hero" of the Epic
- Explain one (1) "Universal Problem" or "Societal Value" within this Epic
- List at least three (3) "Supernatural Elements" within this Epic
- List and explain two (2) "Traits of Culture" that this hero symbolizes
- Briefly summarize two (2) "Deeds of Courage" that
 this hero accomplishes
- Explain two (2) "Supernatural Forces" the hero must confront in this epic
- Explain two (2) "Supernatural Forces" that help the hero through this Epic

Students were expected to follow the instructions given at the beginning of the document: compose short-answer responses to each of the mini-prompts, type them into the accessible text boxes of the document, save their work, and upload it to Moodle for credit.

Module 3: Quizzes

As stated, Module 3 assessed the standard for Reading Comprehension. A series of 5 quizzes composed the assessment for Module 3, one quiz for each of the key reading selections. Multiple choice comprehension questions targeted an understanding of key events within each reading selection that would become crucial during literary analysis as presented later along the path of instruction

The quizzes were designed using a Moodle quiz template, and were accessed through the links in Module 3. All quizzes followed the same format described below. As with the reading assignments they assess, the title of each quiz was preceded by the appellation, "Quiz," in order to emphasize the purpose of this link. When clicked, each quiz opened to an introductory quiz page. This page gave general instructions pertaining to the completion of the quiz, including reminder to be sure that all questions were answered. The introduction also

invited the use of study notes during the quizzes in order to ensure comprehension was achieved. It also clearly defined the standard of mastery by emphasizing that students were expected to answer seventy percent of the questions correctly on each quiz in order to receive credit for the course. Further instructions explained that, if a student failed to answer seventy percent of the questions correctly, they would be expected to take the quiz again until obtaining the required seventy percent correct. At the bottom of the introductory page, a button entitled "Attempt quiz now" invited students to begin the quiz when they were prepared.

When clicked, this button opened the quiz function of Moodle. All quizzes functioned as explained herein. When initiated, the quiz opened into a non-traditional web page. All usual web controls disappeared, and only the quiz page appeared:

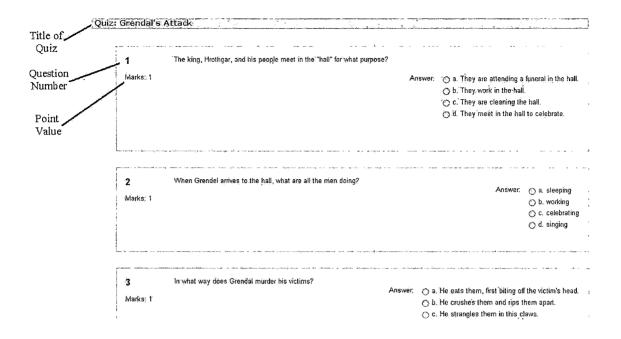


FIGURE 13. Screenshot: Quiz Format

The title of the quiz appeared in the top left of the screen. Obvious numbers were assigned to each question, followed by the actual comprehension questions. A short designation entitled "Marks" indicated the point value of each question. Multiple choice answers were provided from which students were to select their answers. Each quiz was composed of nine questions, after which there were two buttons. One button was entitled "Save without submitting." This feature permitted students to complete the quiz at their leisure, and allowed for the possibility that students could return later and finish if they were

unable to do so in one sitting. The other button was named "Save all and finish," and permitted students to submit their quiz to the instructor for grading.

Module 4 Assignment: Beowulf Analysis

Module 4 bridged the gap from lower level thought processes to higher level abstraction. The first assignment was a review of the identification of key elements of the epic. The assignment page from Moodle gave brief instructions for students to follow, after which a link opened the actual Word document they were to use (see APPENDIX C: BEOWULF ANALYSIS: LITERARY ANALYSIS OF BEOWULF UNIT).

This assignment was entitled "Beowulf Analysis." As with previous assignments, this document was create as a "protected" document in Word, allowing students to manipulate only those areas of the graphic organizer in which they needed to enter information. Similar to the "Epic Analysis" assignment of Module 2, this document provided text boxes into which students typed their name, identification number, and the date they completed the assignment. The instructions then guided students to save the file to their computer, alter the document as had been done in previous assignments, save their work, and finally upload the finished assignment to Moodle. The format for

this assignment then paralleled the format of the "Epic Analysis" from Module 2.

Accessible text boxes were labeled with the following tasks:

- Summarize the "Long Adventure" in this Epic
- Name and describe the "Hero" of this Epic
- Explain one (1) "Universal Problem" or "Societal Value" within this Epic
- List at least three (3) "Supernatural Elements" within this Epic
- List and explain two (2) "Traits of Culture" that this hero symbolizes
- Briefly summarize two (2) "Deeds of Courage" that this hero accomplishes
- Explain two (2) "Supernatural Forces" the hero must confront in this Epic

Students were expected to follow the instructions to compose short-answer responses to the prompts, type them into the appropriate accessible text boxes, save their work, and upload it to Moodle for credit.

Module 4 Assignment: Theme Analysis

This assignment delved into the deeper thought process of analysis, moving the student farther into the abstract realm of learning. The assignment required students to process the reading selections, seeking to draw out generalizations of theme as they had practiced during the Themes Lesson of Module 4. Instructions from the assignment page in Moodle directed students to a link which opened the assignment document (see APPENIX D: THEME ANALYSIS: LITERARY ANALYSIS BEOWULF UNIT).

This word document was titled "Assignment: Theme Analysis." It followed the same format as all previous assignments. It was a "protected" document, allowing students to alter only the specific areas of the document they needed to compose. The usual text boxes were present for students to type their name, identification number, and the date of the assignment. Instructions then followed to remind students how to use the document by clicking into the accessible areas of the text, erasing the place-holding information, and typing their responses. A very short recap of the concept of theme was provided along with two guiding questions intended to spark student thought and guide them into an analysis of the themes within Beowulf. Following this recap and the guided

questions, a graphic organizer was created with distinct boxes for the following specified information:

- A Theme from the epic Beowulf
- A quote from the text to support the theme
- A second quote from the text to support the theme
- A final quote from the text to support the theme

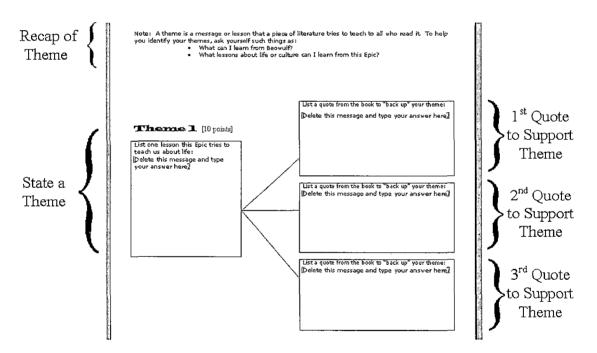


FIGURE 14. Screenshot: Graphic Organizer of Theme Analysis

Each of the boxes within the graphic organizer provided concise prompts that instructed students to first

formulate a legitimate theme suggested by the text and provide textual proof to support their claims; then, student were directed to type the appropriate information into each section. This format was repeated on page two of the assignment for two additional themes. Students were expected to follow the instructions within the various sections of the assignment, compose their responses, type them into the corresponding boxes of the graphic organizer, and then save and upload their assignment to Moodle for credit.

Module 5 Assignment: Grade an Essay

Module 5 was a comprehensive module designed to walk students thought the writing process. It was intended to be an intensive collaborative effort between student and instructor in which the instructor was involved with the student step-by-step during each part of the process. The first assignment initiated the writing process.

Students were instructed to view an interactive example essay via a link provided in Moodle; this example essay utilized mouse-over features similar to the rubric to identify and explain key characteristics of an essay. The key characteristics included instruction on the use of appropriately formatted headings, the creation of a title, a reminder about the structure of the introduction, as

well as the structure of body paragraphs, and the conclusion. Specific attention was given to instruct students in the use of APA citations in conjunction with quotes utilized within the essay; citations in the example essay were colored blue to suggest a hyperlink. When clicked, a specific pop-up window appeared that detailed the format and use of citations to identify quotes.

After a review of the example essay, the final steps on the initial assignment page suggested that students print the example essay in order to adequately evaluate it. They were then encouraged to print the writing rubric they had analyzed in the previous lesson; a link opened the writing rubric in a new window for them to review and print. The instructions then guided students to click on the link "Assignment: Grade an Example Essay," save this document to their computer, open the document and read all the directions given. A bold reminder directed students to save their finished document on a computer; they were then given final instructions to upload the file to Moodle for grading. At the end of these steps, a link opened the actual Word document in a new window (see APPENDIX F: GRADE AN EXAMPLE ESSAY).

The document was entitled "Grade an Example Essay."

As with all other Word document assignments, it was a

"protected" document, allowing students to alter only the specific areas of the document they needed to compose. The usual text boxes were present for students to type their name, identification number, and the date of the assignment. Instructions reminded students how to use the document by saving the document to their computer, clicking into the accessible areas of the text, erasing the place-holding information, and typing their evaluations of the example essay.

Following the instructions, a chart displays the appropriate place for students to evaluate the example essay. This chart lists the categories evaluated down the left column. The second column is has place-holding instructions directing students to use the rubric to determine the score the example essay achieved on the scale from 1 to 4; students are told to delete the place-holding information and to type in the score they assign. The third column likewise had place-holding information directing students to delete this text, and enter comments justifying or explaining why they have assigned the score they chose. The final column explains that this column will be used by the instructor to award points for the students' explanation of the grading rationale. As

they saved and uploaded this assignment to Moodle after they finished.

	Item to Grade	Grade	Explain why you give the essay this grade	
#		On Rubrio	Delete this message and briefly, explain your reasons for awarding the grade for this category.]	
L	Analysis of Theme	this message; give the essay a grade of 1,2,1,4 according to subject	To the cologony of	Yaur iestructor will award yau points for your evaluation fiera, (5 points)
	Specific Details & Examples	Delete this message; give the essay a grade of 1,2,1,4 according to rubric 1	Delete this message and briefly explain your reasons for awarding the grade for this calegory.]	Yaur instructor will award you paints for your evaluation fers. (5 points)
	Structure	Delete this message; give the essay a grade of 1,2,1,4 according to tubic]	Debie this message and briefly explain your reasons for awarding the grade for this category.	Your instructor will award you points for your evaluation fiere. (5 points)
	Format	Delete this message; give the essay a grade of 1,2,1,4 according to rubic	Dekte Nis message and briefly explain your reasons for awarding the grade for this category.]	Your instructor will award you points for your evaluation fiere. (5 points)
	Word Choice & Conventions	Delete the message; give the essay a grade of 1,2,3,4 according to rubic [[Delete this message and briefly explain your reasons for awarding the grade for this category.]	Your instructor will award you paints for your availation feet, (5 points)
ategory to		/	Explanation of Grade	1
C	Frade	l Grada		1
	'		Assigned tudent	Points Awar

FIGURE 15. Screenshot: Grade an Essay Assignment

Module 5 Assignment: Plan Your Essay

The second step of the writing process required students to organize their ideas prior to beginning to write. This assignment led students through this stage of writing by guiding them to consider the specific themes they wanted to discuss and the textual support to confirm their arguments. After preliminary instructions from the assignment page in Moodle, a link opened the assignment document (see APPENDIX G: PLAN YOUR ESSAY).

The Word document was entitled "Plan Your Essay." As with all other Word document assignments, it was a "protected" document, allowing students to alter only the specific areas of the document they needed to compose. The usual text boxes were present for students to type their name, identification number, and the date of the assignment. Instructions directed students to write brief summaries of each paragraph in the text shapes that followed the instructions; the instructions emphasized that this assignment was not a "full report" but a "guideline summary" of the essay they were about to write. Two columns followed the instructions. In the left column, text boxes were arranged to represent an introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion. The format of these text boxes paralleled the graphic

organizer from the previous lesson "How to Organize and Essay":

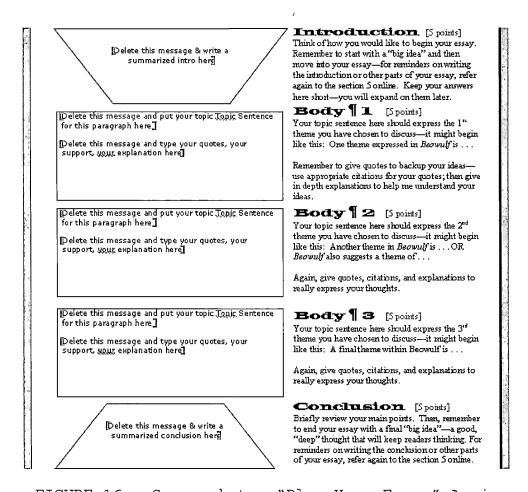


FIGURE 16. Screenshot: "Plan Your Essay" Assignment

Place-holding information directed students to delete the text within each text box, and enter specific summarized information. Text boxes for the introduction

and conclusion directed to write a preliminary introduction and conclusion. For each of the body paragraphs, the place-holding information was composed of two separate tasks. First, students were instructed to delete the place-holding information and write a topic sentence for each paragraph; following the topic sentence, a second line of place-holding instruction invited students to delete this text as well, and then write a brief quote or explanation to support the topic sentence they created.

In the right column, additional instructions are given to help students begin organizing concrete ideas for their own essay. These instructions helped students draw information from previous links or assignments and organize those ideas into the order in which students would eventually write about them. First, students were encouraged to implement techniques for writing the introduction that they gleaned from the lesson "How to Organize and Essay" as well as in their evaluation of the example essay. A reminder encouraged students to revisit the lesson in order to review any information they had forgotten. Secondly, additional instructions were given for the first body paragraph. Students were told to focus on the first theme they formulated from the assignment in

Module 4 entitled "Assignment: Theme Analysis." An example was provided to suggest one way in which students might create a topic sentence to begin their paragraph. Students were reminded of skills regarding the use of quotations, citations, and the explanation of quotes that they learned from their review of the example essay and the use of the writing rubric. Instructions for the second and third body paragraphs followed, paralleling the information for body paragraph one; additional examples of adequate topic sentences for these body paragraphs were provided. The instructions in the right column concluded with guidance in writing the conclusion. This information was a reminder of skills reviewed again in the lesson "How to Organize an Essay" as well as in the example essay.

Once the basic design of the course was determined and instructional activities were conceptualized and produced, Alpha testing was initiated to assess the viability of the instructional activities that were developed. Beta testing followed to evaluate the usability of the actual online unit and identify any possible technical glitches or needed clarification in the online instructions. Many suggestions were proffered by participants and considered for revision; appropriate

revisions were implemented. Each of these stages is defined further:

Alpha Testing

Three Subject Matter Experts (SME) volunteered to evaluate the instructional activities that were designed for this project. These SME's were English teachers at Arroyo Valley High School. Each of these teachers was familiar with the text of Beowulf, the literary concepts traditionally taught in conjunction with the text, and the specified standards outlined in this project. The SME's were each provided a packet that included a hardcopy of the following documents from the Beowulf Unit project:

- Beowulf Unit California Language Arts Standards
- Epic Analysis (Assignment from Module 2)
- Reading Selection: Grendal's Attack (from Module 3)
- Quiz: Grendal's Attack (from Module 3)
- Epic Analysis of Beowulf (Assignment from Module 4)
- Theme Analysis (Assignment from Module 4)
- Grade an Example Essay Packet (related assignments from Module 5)
- Plan Your Essay Graphic Organizer (from Module 5)

Each SME was then asked to review the activities and assignments and provide feedback of three general natures:

- 1) Identify any activities or assignments that <u>do not</u> address the standards
- 2) Propose needed clarification in the instructions
- 3) Suggest improvements in the structure of the activity or assignment

SME's were instructed to make notes and suggestions on the hardcopies of the documents they received. These notes and suggestions were collected and organized into a logical order corresponding to the path of learning which the project followed. Each suggestion was labeled by an ordered alphabetical designation (Alpha Suggestion A, Alpha Suggestion B, etc.) in order to describe and evaluate the ideas in a systematic manner. When revisions were deemed necessary, a note that effect admits and describes the revision; when revisions were not deemed necessary, a brief explanation details the rationale for which the suggestion was ignored.

Alpha Suggestion A. The original graphic organizer for the assignments titled "Epic Analysis" in Module 2 and "Epic Analysis of Beowulf" in Module 4 each had a subtitle within the respective word document designating a "Long

Adventure" as one of the elements of the epic. In the process of building the actual online resource, this subtitle was changed to "A Dangerous Journey" in the online lesson of Module 2, "The Epic and the Epic Hero." It was suggested that this switch in subtitles between the module lesson and the actual assignments might possibly create confusion in the minds of students. To avert such confusion, the subtitle "Long Adventure" on the word documents for the above mentioned assignments was changed to correspond to the subtitle "A Dangerous Journey," as in the module lesson.

Alpha Suggestion B. The previous graphic organizers for the assignments "Epic Analysis" and "Beowulf Analysis" originally included two additional components of the epic: supernatural forces the hero must confront, and supernatural elements that help the hero. In the subsequent design of the online module lesson "The Epic and the Epic Hero," these sub-categories were combined into a single less-specific category, "Supernatural Elements." The same change to the word documents was initially overlooked in the design stage; when this discrepancy was discovered during Alpha testing, the change was made to bring the word document assignments into conformity with the module lesson.

Alpha Suggestion C. SME's expressed a universal concern when reviewing the assignment "Theme Analysis" in Module 4. Doubt among all SME's expressed that students would be able to extrapolate themes from the text without some form of more guided instruction from the instructor. Further discussion identified that the identification of theme was a "higher-level" abstract skill with which the target population for this project would likely struggle. Research likewise supported that students benefited greatly from models of acceptable work (Strong, Silver, & Robinson, 1995). Subsequently, the revisions explained below were made to the Module 4 "Theme Analysis" assignment in order to provide models of acceptable themes more guided instruction in identifying themes within Beowulf.

Two podcasts were created and uploaded to the online Beowulf unit. Brief instructions were then added to the "Theme Analysis" assignment page in Module 4; these instructions explicitly guided students to click on and listen to the two podcasts. Students were encouraged to take notes on the information presented in the podcasts, and to use that information to help them complete the assignment that followed. Two links were then posted:

"Hints on Character Value Themes" and "Hints on Universal and Symbolic Themes."

The first podcast, "Hints on Character Value Themes," was designed to give examples of themes based on key characters within literature or popular movies—the ideals that they represented, and the actions they exemplified. At various points in the first podcast, students were specifically instructed to pause the recording in order to write down various information. The first podcast was an eight minute presentation that walked students interactively through the construction of a graphic organizer that identified character traits of Dori, a central character in Finding Nemo. After identifying a key trait, students were taken through the thought process of reworking this trait into a statement of literary theme. Near the end of the podcast, the process was reviewed in three basic steps:

- 1) Make a list of various key traits or qualities of a character
- 2) Identify one key quality or trait that sticks out
- 3) Turn the "key word" into a statement of theme that applies to real life

To augment student understanding, multiple examples were given of character traits from other characters in Finding Nemo, and ideas were proffered as to how those traits could be changed into thematic statements. To conclude the podcast, students were prompted to think about the character of Beowulf. They were given guiding questions to think about, and encouraged to pause the podcast at different points and write their ideas down in response to the questions; thus, students were systematically walked once again through each of the steps listed above as they analyzed the character of Beowulf and recorded their reflections on a graphic organizer. Before concluding, the podcast reminded students to return to the assignment page online, and listen to the second podcast.

The second podcast, entitled "Hints on Universal and Symbolic Themes," exemplified the more abstract themes implied through specific quotations and symbols rather than through direct character attributes and actions.

The ten minute audio presentation walked students interactively through the completion of the graphic organizer they began during the previous podcast. "Hints on Universal and Symbolic Themes" first focused students' attention on several quotes from the trilogy Lord of the Rings to exemplify models of universal themes; these

quotes epitomized various aphorisms that specific characters imparted in their dialogue with others. Guided questions about each of these quotes then invited students to consider what underlying message or theme extended beyond the movie and might be applicable in real life. Again, students were encouraged to pause the recording and list their ideas on their graphic organizers.

The second half of this podcast identified examples of specific symbols within Lord of the Rings and extrapolated those symbols into statements of theme. Symbols were first identified, and described in terms of their deeper significance. Guided questions then took students through the thought process of reworking the meanings of these symbols into statements of literary theme, and students were instructed to pause the podcast and record their ideas on their graphic organizer. A few final models of legitimate themes were given for students to check their own ideas against. Near the end of the podcast, the process was reviewed in three basic steps:

- 1) Identify specific quotes or symbols from the movie that have a deeper, significant meaning that extends beyond the immediate work
- 2) Explain what these quotes or symbols represent or suggest

3) Turn the quote or symbol into a statement of theme that applies to real life

The podcast concluded by prompting students to consider the tale of Beowulf. Additional guided questions identified specific symbols in text, and encouraged students to pause the podcast and write their reflections regarding the deeper significance of the suggested symbols on a graphic organizer. Students the derived legitimate themes from these insights, constructing their conclusions on the various models presented within the podcast.

Before concluding, the podcast reminded students to return to the "Assignment: Themes Analysis" page online to resume the lesson.

After recording the podcasts and incorporating them into the online Beowulf resource, revisions were also made to the instructions in the actual word document for the assignment "Theme Analysis" in Module 4. The instructions in the initial document were expanded to include an explicit reminder that students refer to and use the ideas from the graphic organizers constructed during their consumption of the podcasts; thus students utilized concrete models of the abstract concept of theme,

and ultimately completed the assignment with an adequate degree of proficiency.

Alpha Suggestion D. Originally, a sixth module was conceptualized for the Beowulf Unit. The initial thought was that Module 6 would be a proctored objective test as the culminating assessment for the Beowulf unit. This assessment was mentioned to the SME's, although it had not been written at the time the SME's were asked to review the hardcopy packets of the learning activities. In further consultation, one of the SME's suggested that, after reviewing the stated objectives for the unit and the subsequent learning activities, the objective test was not necessary for the following reasons:

- 1. The reading comprehension module already assessed the mastery of comprehension of the written text, Beowulf, as stated in the Unit Objectives;
- 2. An objective test would not be adequately assess the other Unit Objectives; rather, the higher-level, advanced graphic organizers in Module 4 and the subjective essay in Module 5 were much more thorough and relevant assessments of the remaining objectives.

The remaining SME's agreed with the suggestion, and the final objective test was deleted from overall design of the *Beowulf* Unit. This, of course, eliminated the need for a sixth module, which was also removed from the design of the project.

Beta Testing

After revisions were made as a result of Alpha testing, the Beowulf unit was opened to volunteers to perform a Beta test. Beta test subjects consisted of three high school seniors who were willing to access the online Beowulf unit and follow the instructions through the five modules. They were not asked to complete the lessons and assignments in their entirety, but to address the following objective:

Follow through the Beowulf Unit module by module and link by link in order to verify the following objectives:

- a. The presentation of instruction follows a coherent, logical order that guides the student step-by-step through lessons and assignments
- b. Instructions were easily understood
- c. All links function correctly

Beta Test subjects were instructed to keep a written log that detailed any aspect of the resource that caused confusion or that did not function properly in connection with the objectives given above. These suggestions were collected, labeled, and organized in a similar systematic order as explained in previous testing. Each suggestion was likewise described, evaluated, and explained.

Beta Suggestion A. In the design stage, the upload feature for submitting assignments was inadvertently omitted from the "Epic Analysis" assignment page in Module 2. Beta testers were unable to upload work to the instructor for assessment of this particular assignment. As a crucial component of the course, the upload feature was quickly added to "Epic Analysis" assignment page in Module 2.

Beta Suggestion B. The Overview from Module 3 failed to explain the criteria for "passing" each quiz. Although this information was made clear in the individual quiz pages, it was deemed appropriate and helpful for students to inform them of criteria as part of the module overview; this explanation was clearly and concisely copied into the Module 3 overview.

Beta Suggestion C. In Module 3, the first three reading excerpts contained a note at the conclusion of the

reading passage that reminded students to return to the BW101 homepage and complete the corresponding quiz before moving on to other reading passages or other links in the lessons. This note was inadvertently omitted at the conclusion of the fourth and fifth read passages. To maintain uniformity in format, and better assist students in successfully maneuvering through the unit, the note was added to final two reading passages.

Beta Suggestion D. The Overview page for Module 4 was improved with two key content revisions:

- 1. The initial description of the assignment "Epic Analysis of Beowulf" was redundant. This description was revised to explain the assignment more concisely and direct students to key concepts for review that were helpful before beginning the assignment.
- 2. The initial description of the assignment "Theme Analysis" was vague. Information was added to the description to define the concept of theme more clearly, and students were informed that they would listen to two podacsts that would guide them through the formation of key themes in Beowulf that would be helpful in the assignment.

Beta Suggestion E. A link within the Overview page for Module 4 was faulty and failed to open. This internal link was intended to open the lesson "The Epic and the Epic Hero" from Module 2 as a review for students before they engaged the assignment to actually analyze Beowulf in terms of epic elements. The link was repaired so that, when clicked, a new window did open to "The Epic and the Epic Hero" lesson from Module 2, thus providing a beneficial review to students in preparation for the assignment that followed.

Beta Suggestion F. The interactive lesson
"Identifying Themes" in Module 4 contained a branch of the
lesson that utilized the movie The Lord of the Rings to
exemplify the concept of theme. Buttons within The Lord
of the Rings example guided students into different
applications of the concept of theme within the movie.
After students explored each of the different examples of
theme within The Lord of the Rings, a final button was
intended to take students back to the original lesson page
from which students could explore examples of themes in
other movies and literature. However, Beta testing
discovered that this final button had been inadvertently
omitted from The Lord of the Rings branch. Being
essential to the flow of the lesson, a final button

entitled "Done" was added to the selection of buttons for The Lord of the Rings branch in order to complete the circuit of the lesson, and return students to the original lesson page to continue experimenting with other examples of theme.

Beta Suggestion G. Module 5 quided students through the process of writing an analytical essay. The link entitled "The Essay Question" was a simple text page that delivered the writing prompt and basic instructions to students. Several Beta testing participants indicated that although the instructions with regard to writing the essay were clear, and the prompt was understood, they were unclear as to specifically where they should navigate after reading the prompt. Subsequently, a final paragraph of instruction was added after the writing prompt. paragraph specifically guided students to print the current page, "The Essay Question," as a constant reference in their writing. Further instructions directed students to use the "Back" button within their browser to return to the Module homepage, and progress through the remaining links in Module 5.

Beta Suggestion H. In Module 5, the links entitled "How to Organize an Essay" and "Understand the Writing Rubric," were originally categorized with the appellation

"assignment." These classifications confused several Beta test participants due to the fact that these links did not ask students to submit any work; rather, they delivered instructional content relating to the needed structure for an adequate essay and the criteria by which that essay would be graded. The appellation was changed from "assignment" to "lesson" in order to reflect the nature of the learning activity.

Beta Suggestion I. The links just mentioned, "How to Organize and Essay" and "Understand the Writing Rubric," suffered the same lack of explicitness explained in Beta Suggestion G: at the conclusion of the instruction, test participants were unclear as to specifically where they should navigate at the conclusion of the lesson. As a result, a final paragraph of instruction was added after the lesson content. This paragraph specifically directed students to use the "Back" button within their browser to return to the Module homepage, and progress through the remaining links in Module 5.

Beta Suggestion J. During the course of Beta testing, an observation surfaced pertaining to an inconsistency in the format of several online assignments. Some assignments specified a date of availability and a date of closure; this characteristic was a pre-programmed

default option within the design of the Course Management System (CSM), Moodle. The nature of the Beowulf unit was intended to accommodate the schedule and aptitude of individual students and allow them to recoup credits while working around their other traditional classes or employment; as such it was specifically designed without time constraints or forced deadlines as represented by these dates of availability and closure on assignments. However, an unintentional oversight occurred at the time the Beowulf Unit was created using Moodle, and the option for availability and closure was not de-selected for several assignments. In order to bring all assignments into conformity, every assignment was reviewed online, and all dates of availability and closure for assignments were removed.

In the course of troubleshooting the dates of availability and closure for assignments, a similar time constraint feature was noted for quizzes constructed within the CMS, Moodle. Unfortunately, the CMS programming did not provide the same toggle feature for quizzes as it did for assignments; that is to say, Moodle did not allow the instructor to "turn-off" or delete the dates of availability, nor the date of closure for quizzes. Therefore, dates of availability and closure had

to be provided for each quiz. The decision was made to standardize all dates of availability and closure within all quizzes as follows:

- Date of Availability: 1 January 2006
- Date of Closure: 31 December 2020

These dates were arbitrary, and simply served the function of entering needed data in order for the CMS, Moodle to allow the creation of the needed quizzes for the Beowulf unit. In all reality, they did not affect the course nor students' ability to perform in any way.

Implementation

At the conclusion of Beta Testing, and when the specified revisions were completed, the Beowulf Unit was implemented as an instructional tool and data was gathered to evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction. The implementation group consisted of 9 high school seniors who were willing to access and complete the online Beowulf unit in its entirety. This group was a random sampling of students from a regular twelfth grade English class, and was composed of 5 male and 3 female students.

A preliminary meeting between the students and the instructor provided the opportunity for the instructor to explain the breadth and purpose of this project. During this meeting, students were assigned an anonymous identity, consisting of a username and password, and time was given to them to log on to the unit and verify the legitimacy of their anonymous identity. They were encouraged to explore the unit and begin the first assignment. At the conclusion of the preliminary meeting, students were instructed to continue their work on the unit by logging on using their given identity from any other computer to which they had access and at any time which was convenient. They were informed that they could access the unit when and as frequently as they needed. The instructor directed them to approach the unit as if they were completing this work for credit in their English class; they were also informed that they should plan to complete the unit within 3 to 4 weeks.

As students uploaded individual assignments as instructed within the various modules of the *Beowulf* Unit, these assignments were quickly graded by the instructor. In some cases, when mastery was not achieved, individualized instruction was provided through comments within the course management system, and students were

instructed to revise and resubmit their work. At the conclusion of four weeks, the data was collected and evaluated in order to gauge the effectiveness of the Beowulf Unit; this data was organized into three general categories for purposes of analysis:

- Completion Data
- Overall Academic Achievement Data
- Individual Assignment-based Data

Completion Data

Completion Data refers to statistics detailing students' attempts to complete the various assignments of the Beowulf Unit, regardless of actual academic achievement on those assignments; this data was gathered to indirectly assess if students were motivated and able to complete the work on their own initiative.

- 4 of 9 students (44%) completed all modules within the *Beowulf* Unit.
- 1 of 9 students (11%) were non-participants (did not complete any assignments).
- 4 of the 8 participating students (50%) ceased engaging the unit; 3 of these students (38%)
 ceased engaging the unit after beginning Module 4,

- and 1 student (13%) ceased engaging the unit after beginning Module 5
- 9 of 12 assignments (75%) were completed on average per participating student.

Overall Academic Achievement Data

Overall Academic Achievement Data detailed students' overall mastery of standards targeted by the Beowulf Unit; this data effectively correlated to the cumulative grade of each student, and assessed whether each student passed or failed the unit. Non-participants were not included in these statistics. This data sought to estimate the degree to which the Beowulf Unit could potentially decrease the rate of failure for seniors who would enroll in the course.

- 3 of initial 9 students (33%) achieved the required 70% mastery of standards to pass.
- 3 of 4 participating students (75%) who completed all modules achieved the required 70% mastery of standards to pass.

Individual Assignment-based Data

Individual Assignment-based Data detailed students'
mastery of specific target standards as measured by
individual assignments; this data was gathered by
instructor evaluation of individual completed assignments
and the subsequent assignation of grades for each
assignment. Non-participants were not included in these
statistics. This set of data analyzed the effectiveness
of individual assignments in assisting students to achieve
mastery of the target standards; assignments were deemed
instructionally sound if they met the following criteria:

- Average Score exceeded the specified 70% degree of mastery, and
- 2) A high majority (60% or more) of participating students achieved the 70% degree of mastery for that assignment.

By analyzing individual assignments, it was possible to evaluate how one or more poorly designed assignments may have negatively affected the overall effectiveness of the unit.

Overall, data suggested that 3 of 12 assignments (25%) were not instructionally sound. Of these 3 assignments, 1 assignment (8.3% of the initial 12

assignments) failed to meet both criteria. The other 2
(16% of the initial 12 assignments) met only one of the
qualifying criteria. As a result, these assignments were
deemed to be sub-standard for the purposes of instructing
the target audience. Table 3 details student achievement
assignment by assignment.

Table 3. Individual Assignment Data

Assignment English Language Arts Standard	# of Students Who Completed Assignment	Average Score on Assignment	# of Participants Who Achieved Required 70% Mastery
Introduce Yourself	9	15 (100%)	9 (100%)
Epic Analysis Standard: ID Literary Forms	6	23.83 (79%)	4 (67%)
Quiz: Grendel's Attack Standard: Reading Comprehension	8	8.5 (85%)	8 (100%)
Quiz: Arrival of Beowulf & Test of His Character Standard: Reading Comprehension	8	7.75 (77.5%)	8 (100%)
Quiz: The Battle with Grendel Standard: Reading Comprehension	8	7.75 (77.5%)	7 (87.5%)
Quiz: The Lair & Battle with Grendel's Mother Standard: Reading Comprehension	8	8.21 (82.1%)	8 (100%)
Quiz: The Final Battle & Farewell Standard: Reading Comprehension	8	9.71 (97%)	8 (100%)
Epic Analysis of Beowulf Standard: ID Major Literary Forms & Relate to Time Period	7	25 (83%)	5 (62.5%)
Theme Analysis Standard: Analyze how the theme represents a view on life	6	17 (57.7%)	3 (50%)
Grade an Example Essay Standard: Structure Ideas and support with relevant details	5	15.8 (63.2%)	3 (60%)
Plan Your Essay Standard: Structure Ideas and support with relevant details	4	17.75 (71%)	2 (50%)
Write Your Essay Standard: Analyze the universal themes; support with details	4	80.25 (80.25%)	3 (75%)

Evaluation

Data was evaluated in the same basic categories in which it was collected. A final stage of evaluation compared the data to the target standards for the Beowulf Unit in an attempt to address whether the bulk of standards had been mastered by students as a result of their using the resource.

Completion

1 of the 9 students (11%) within the implementation group chose not to complete any of the work provided to them as part of their participation in this project. 4 of the remaining 8 students (50%) chose not to complete the unit, although they accomplished approximately half of the work. Only 4 of the initial 9 students (44%) within the implementation group completed all work within the Beowulf It should be noted that 2 students uploaded the wrong assignment at different points within the instruction. One student submitted the Analysis of Beowulf in place of the more generic Epic Analysis assignment; another student did the opposite, submitting the Epic Analysis in place of the Beowulf Analysis. Students were informed of the mistake via the course management system, Moodle, and separate emails were sent in addition, but students did not respond nor did they

resubmit the correct assignments to remediate. The mistaken submissions were not graded and applied to the student scores; data was therefore impacted by the mistaken submissions. Given more time to remediate, students may have taken advantage of remediation; completion data and final scores may have then reflected different results regarding the effectiveness of the Beowulf Unit.

Nevertheless, in analyzing the completion data alone and as it stands, only 44% of students completed the instruction within the Beowulf Unit; these statistics suggests that this online resource, the Beowulf Unit, may not be a highly successful tool for the target audience. The possible reasons for the low completion rates are myriad, and far beyond the scope of this study; reasons may include external demands on time, lack of time management or proper self-motivation, confusion with the directions or lack of confidence with technology, fallibility of the instruction, or any number of other variables. It is safe to say that further study would need to be conducted to validate these speculations.

Overall Academic Achievement

3 of the 9 participants (33.3%) from the implementation group "passed" the unit by achieving the

specified 70% degree of mastery. According to a traditional point of view, this rate of achievement would be unacceptable in an educational setting. However, considering that the implementation group theoretically suffered a 0% pass rate when the project began-that is to say, all students were failing their Senior English course—it may be concluded that the Beowulf Unit increased the pass rate to 33.3%. If the non-participating students were eliminated from the statistics, the pass rate of participating students increased from the above mentioned baseline of 0% to 37.5%, with 3 of 8 students having passed at the conclusion of the unit. If only those students who completed all 5 modules of instruction were considered, results seemed more positive: 3 of 4 participating students (75%) achieved a mastery of standards. However, considering that this project was designed to target all at-risk seniors, data analyzed only by a sub-group of those who completed all modules cannot be considered as sufficient grounds for evaluating the effectiveness of the resource, at least not within the stated parameters of this project.

Individual Assignments

Overall, 9 assignments of 12 (75%) were deemed to have been instructionally sound, bringing students to a

mastery of the standards and developing in the students the targeted academic skills that determined the focus of this unit. Conversely, 3 assignments of 12 (25%) failed to achieve an average score above the 70% degree of mastery or failed to attain a high majority (60%) of minimum mastery among the participating students of the implementation group; these sub-standard assignments were as follows:

• Assignment: Theme Analysis

• Assignment: Grade an Example Essay

• Assignment: Plan Your Essay

These assignments appeared to be poorly designed, and contributed to the ineffectiveness of the Beowulf Unit for several of the students. It may be concluded that these assignments restricted the overall pass rate as indicated in previous data. Consequently, if these assignments were to be redesigned to be more effective, the overall effectiveness of the Beowulf Unit as a whole would likewise improve, making this resource a legitimate tool in improving the ability of seniors to graduate.

Comparison of Data to Target Standards

Table 4 represents students' mastery of target standards according to data from specific assignments within the *Beowulf* Unit.

Table 4. Comparison of Data to Target Standards

California Content Standard	Assignment	# Of	# Of
	f rom	Students	Darticipant
	Beowulf Unit	who	s who
		Completed	Achieved
Desding 2 0-Commencion	- 1	Assignment	.
אבמתדווא .	Quiz 1	∞	8 (100%)
read and under	Quiz 2	80	8 (100%)
material. They analyze the organizational patterns,	Quiz 3	80	7 (87.5%)
argumentes, and posterons advanced:	Quiz 4	8	8 (100%)
	Quiz 5	ω	8 (100%)
Reading 3.2-Literary Response Analysis	n toys [care canonical	u	2 (E08)
Analyze the way in which the theme or meaning of a selection represents a view or comment on life, using textual evidence to support claims.	Ineme Analysis	0	
Peading 3 7-1.iterary Response Inslysis			
works of world lite	Epic Analysis	9	4 (67%)
variety of authors:			
a)Contrast the major literary forms, techniques, and	Analysis of	7	5 (52%)
characteristics of the major literary periods.	Beowull		
b)Relate literary works and authors to the major themes			
and issues of their eras.			
Writing 1.3-Writing Strategies	Theme Analysis	9	3 (50%)
and arguments	,	,	
persuasive, and sophisticated way and support them with	Plan Your	4	2 (50%)
precise and relevant examples.	ьззау		
Writing 2.2-Writing Applications: Response to	;	L	ł
a) [Not to be addressed in this unit.]	Grade an Essay	n	3 (60%)
Analyze use of imager	Write Your	4	3 (75%)
and unique aspects of text.	Essay		
c) support Ideas and Viewpollits unfough accurate & detailed references to the text and to other works.			

Exhibiting scores in excess of 80% for all reading comprehension assessments, the data assures that this unit reinforced the mastery of reading comprehension for those students who participated in the assessments measuring Reading Standard 2.0. Data also suggests that this resource was an effective tool in assisting those students who engaged the assignments in the practice of Writing Standard 2.2—Writing Application: Response to Literature; 75% of students who engaged the writing task were successful in the construction of an adequate essay.

However, the Beowulf Unit was less successful in bringing students to a mastery of Reading Standard 3.7—Literary Response and Analysis. Two assessments measured mastery of this standard. The Epic Analysis assignment demonstrated that an acceptable 67% majority of students who engaged the assignment mastered this standard; however, the Analysis of Beowulf assignment demonstrated that as instruction progressed, only 52% of students maintained a sufficient grasp of theme and continued with an acceptable degree of mastery. Although this data did indicate that a simple majority of students did master the standard, the 52% majority was not deemed an acceptable high majority (60%) when reflecting upon the initial goals and purpose of this project.

Therefore, when considering the whole of the implementation group, the Beowulf Unit was therefore entirely unsuccessful in bringing students to a mastery of Reading Standard 3.2 and Writing Standard 1.3. The Themes Analysis assignment sought to develop the concept of literary theme from Reading Standard 3.2, and the ability to identify and explain those themes from a literary text. This assignment also dovetailed into the Plan Your Essay assignment, both tasks seeking to work together to assist students in developing the structure and textual support designated in Writing Standard 1.3. Data indicates after the assignments assessing mastery of these concepts, students began to disengage the unit. Of the 4 students who continued beyond these standards and the assignments that pertained to them, 3 did well in achieving ultimate mastery of all standards. However, it was within the span of these two specific assignments that 4 students chose to discontinue their work within the Beowulf Unit, and did not arrive at a mastery of these standards.

Subsequently, this resource successfully taught or reinforced mastery of two of the five target standards, Reading Standard 2.0 (Reading Comprehension) and Writing Standard 2.2 (Writing Applications, emphasizing the Response to Literature). The resource marginally

approached but did not adequately attain its goal of mastery with regard to Reading Standard 3.7 (Literary Response and Analysis, emphasizing the classification of the literary form of the epic and its relation to major issues of the time period). Finally, the Beowulf Unit did demonstrate a simple majority of students (50%) achieved mastery in two of its five target standards: Reading Standard 3.2 (Literary Response and Anaysis, emphasizing the analysis of theme) and Writing Standard 1.3 (Writing Strategies, emphasizing the structure of ideas and the ability to sustain an argument with concrete textual examples). However, it failed to develop the specified 60% for a high majority of students in these two target standards.

Summary

The Beowulf Unit was designed as an online instructional tool intended to assist at-risk seniors

recoup lost high school English Language Arts credit in order to complete graduation requirements and receive a high school diploma. To design this resource, target standards were identified from the Standards for English Language Arts provided by the California State Board of Education for the Eleventh and Twelfth grades. Chosen

standards focused on three general categories of Reading Comprehension, Literary Response and Analysis, and Writing. Specific learning objectives were further developed from the language of those standards which identified concrete skills the unit sought to develop. Finally, lessons were developed to present content and skills specified in the standards, and instructional activities were built to practice and assess student mastery of the targeted skills.

The basic design of the Beowulf Unit consisted of 5 The first module served as an introductory modules. module that identified the target standards and assisted students to become familiar with the resource, including the technological skills needed to successfully download and upload assignments. The remaining modules focused on specific standards and skills. Module 2, "Defining the Epic," addressed Reading Standard 3.7, the analysis of a work of literature which identified characteristics of major literary styles or periods and the way in which a work of literature represented themes and issues of their era; activities and assessments in this module focused on identifying and explaining the traditional elements of the classic epic as a literary genre and relating events from an epic to its historical context. Module 3, "Reading

Comprehension," addressed Reading Standard 2.0 in general, the ability to read and understand grade-level appropriate material; this module consisted of traditional reading selections and comprehension questions. Module 4, "Literary Analysis," addressed Reading Standard 3.2, the derivation of a theme from a work of literature through the use of textual evidence; podcasts and graphic organizers within this module helped students derive analyses of various themes and identify specific quotes from the text to support their claims. Finally, Module 5, "Write a Response to Literature: Analytical Essay," addressed two writing standards. Writing Standard 1.3 addressed the structuring of ideas and arguments in a persuasive and sophisticated manner, complete with relevant examples and support. Writing Standard 2.2 addressed the actual writing genre of Response to Literature, emphasizing the analysis of universal themes within literary works and the support for these themes drawn from textual examples. Assignments in this module consisted of various graphic organizers guiding students to organize their ideas preparatory to writing, and then authoring and original essay to analyze important themes they found in Beowulf. If students failed to attain a specified 70% mastery on any assignment, additional

instruction was given by the instructor via comments through the course management system, Moodle; students were then required to revisit their work, complete it more thoroughly, and resubmit their assignment.

Alpha testing was conducted; instructional assignments and activities were previewed by content matter specialists who critiqued the efficacy of the assignments, and revisions were made to various instructional activities. Beta testing followed; a test group of students previewed the online resource, looking for functional or technological shortcomings. Critiques were then offered and more revisions were made to the resource.

At the conclusion of both Alpha and Beta testing, an implementation group was recruited; 10 high school senior volunteers, selected randomly, were instructed to approach this unit as through it were for credit in their English class. Students completed the unit within four weeks; assignments were graded as they were submitted, and constructive feedback was given as needed, after which remediation was initiated. At the end of four weeks, data was gathered, organized, and analyzed. Initially, data gathered from this project indicated low levels of effectiveness. Only 33 % of the implementation group

students actually attained the mastery of target standards. 1 student did not even participate in the use of the instructional unit after the initial introductory meeting. 3 assignments produced results that were less than desirable for adequate mastery, and suggested a fault in the effective design of instruction; this inefficacy of instruction undoubtedly had adverse effects on the overall effectiveness of the Beowulf Unit.

Nevertheless, comparative analysis of the Beowulf
Unit data to the initial assumption that the
implementation group was failing prior to the unit
demonstrated some growth or improvement in students'
academic mastery of standards. That is to say, whereas
all 9 students were assumed to be failing prior to the
study, 3 students had attained sufficient mastery of
standards after the unit to theoretically be awarded
credit. This correlates to a 33% improvement in
achievement as a result of the Beowulf Unit.

However, when data was analyzed to evaluate the efficacy of the resource in assisting students to attain mastery of the target standards, results were less than satisfactory. Specifically speaking, the unit adequately demonstrated mastery of two of the target standards, namely Reading Standard 2.0 for Reading Comprehension and

Writing Standard 2.2 for Writing Applications, referring to the authoring of a response-to-literature essay based on themes. The unit approached a sufficient degree of mastery for a third standard, Reading Standard 3.7 for Literary Response and Analysis, focusing on the identification of elements of literary forms.

Ultimately, the Beowulf Unit failed to develop the final two standards target by the project: Reading Standard 3.2, Literary Response and Analysis, emphasizing the use of themes in literature, and Writing Standard 1.3, Writing Strategies of structural organization and the use of textual evidence to support claims.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

At the conclusion of this study of the Beowulf Unit, several conclusions were drawn with respect to the effectiveness of this resource as a means of remediation for at-risk seniors. It should be remembered that the goal of this project was to assist at-risk seniors to recoup credits they had failed to receive because they had failed the first semester of Senior English. In additions to the conclusions, various recommendations became apparent that would improve further studies and development of educational resources such as the Beowulf Unit. Effective resources such as the Beowulf Unit could have a great deal of value, for they have as their purpose the presentation of content to assist at-risk students to achieve a mastery of standards in order to graduate high school and move effectively into the real world as an educated, productive member of society.

Conclusions

The conclusions extracted from the project follows:

- 1. The Beowulf Unit did assist a significant percentage of the implementation group (33.3%) to attain mastery of target standards; subsequently, the academic performance of the implementation group did increase from a pass rate of 0% of 33.3%.
- assist students to master all of the standards it targeted. The following standards were met to a degree of 70% mastery for a high majority of the participating students: Reading Standard 2.0 (Reading Comprehension) and Writing Standard 2.2. The resource approached but did not adequately attain a similar degree of mastery for Reading Standard 3.7. Finally, the Beowulf Unit did not demonstrate an acceptable degree of mastery in two of its five target standards: Reading Standard 3.2 and Writing Standard 1.3.
- 3. Although a high majority (60%) of mastery was not attained as a result of this project, improvement was noted in all students. The data

did suggest that they had partial mastery of the skills and concepts embedded in the target standards; although they failed to achieve full mastery and pass the course, they did develop more skills and closer approach a mastery of the standards.

Recommendations

The recommendations resulting from the project follows:

1. The implementation group used for this study was composed of volunteers, and may not have accurately represented the type of student for whom this resource was designed. Participants in this study were not screened for academic achievement, nor for demographic information to ensure they represented a realistic sample of the student population of at-risk seniors. As a result, data from this study may not purely reflect the true achievement of at-risk seniors. Further care would need to be taken in subsequent studies to recruit volunteers that

- are sure to accurately reflect the target population.
- The tests groups for this study were small, and results gleaned from this study may not be accurately transferable to form generalizations relating to larger population. For further study, test groups could be larger groups for more detailed results that would likely be accurate for larger populations.
- English credit for their work on the Beowulf
 Unit. As such, it is possible that their work
 was not of equal quality as if it were completed
 for credit. Subsequently, data produced in this
 study might be different if the quality of work
 was more motivated by the actual awarding of
 credit. In future studies, it would be
 beneficial to incorporate the use of this unit
 into actual curriculum for a senior English
 class; data would then more accurately reflect
 the performance of at-risk students.
- 4. In the structure of this study, participating students were bound by time constraints that would not be experienced were this resourced

being used as a remedial course. Those time constraints imposed artificial deadlines in a very short amount of time, namely, the specified 4 weeks during which the resource was implemented. Some students needed more time to adequately complete specific assignments; other students had need to remediate and resubmit work, but expressed concern that they could not do so under the time constraints. Consequently, the data in this study may have been different had the time constraints been removed. In further study, resources similar to the Beowulf Unit could be implemented with time constraints more realistic to the real-life use of the resource.

5. In further study, it would be beneficial to recruit several subject matter experts to evaluate submitted student work. Agreement between multiple subject matter experts would assure that the quality of student work did in fact meet or exceed an acceptable level of mastery of the target standards and skills.

Such collaborative evaluative efforts of subject matter experts may more solidly validate the

conclusions of the study in preparation for legitimately using this resource as a means to award high school credit to students, and allow them to obtain a high school diploma.

6. Several recommendations regarding the substandard assignments would be in order. Each assignment is listed below with the reflective considerations pertaining to it:

Assignment: Theme Analysis. The standard reason for the majority of failure in this assignment seemed to be a misunderstanding of the concept of theme. Within the instruction of the Beowulf Unit, theme was defined as "a message or moral behind a story." Although examples and non-examples were given during the Themes Lesson from Module 4, many students failed to grasp the idea that themes represented a generalized "message." Quite often, students chose generalized ideas, such as "honor" or "bravery" but failed to proffer a message behind it that would adequately qualify it as a theme. Therefore, by way of recommendation, this assignment would need to be revised to emphasize the aspect of a message as it relates to the

efficacy of literary themes; additional examples and non-examples of theme can be constructed into instruction in order to emphasize this shortcoming, and attempt to correct the majority misunderstanding.

Assignment: Grade an Example Essay. This assignment generated almost universal results from students: they were not specific nor thorough in their rationale with regard to qualifying the grade they assigned to the essay. As a result, it was difficult to evaluate the degree to which they understood the rubric; in turn, it was not an effective tool in assuring that students understood what elements they would need to include in their essay to meet the requirements. Recommendations regarding the effectiveness of this assignment surfaced in remediation with students as a result of this assignment; when students were willing to revisit the assignment after further clarification and examples were given regarding how best to explain one's rationale, students were able to complete the assignment and move on to write satisfactory essays. The

recommendation would be to clarify, and perhaps give examples of appropriate and thorough rationale and comments.

Assignment: Plan Your Essay. Although not many students accepted remediation and redid the assignment based on instructor comments, this proved to be a worthwhile assignment for those who continued on-essays incorporated ideas as a result of instructor feedback, and some students went on to demonstrate mastery in writing as a result. However, many students were again vaque in their completion of this assignment. did not include specifics in the graphic organizer, but stayed far too general for the instructor to accurately assess the future of their writing. One recommendation for this assignment would be to specify clearly in the instructions the need to be specific and concise, even though it is only an outline form of their writing. A further suggestion might be to provide a sample of the Plan Your Essay assignment for the example essay already incorporated into instruction for this unit. With an example not only of the final essay, but of the outline of the essay, students may have been able to conceptualize a more thorough outline prior to drafting.

Summary

Success is often a subjective concept that lies entirely within the perspective of individuals. With respect to the Beowulf Unit and this study, some might satisfactorily say that a 33.3% increase in the attaining of standards, and the subsequent awarding of credit would be success. Others would argue the converse: a remedial course that results in 66.6% failure was unable to accomplish its purpose. This is likewise a valid observation, and one shared by the author of this study.

Nevertheless, educators and administrators would need to decide if the results published in this study are satisfactory in terms of improvement for purposes of their respective schools. An improvement of 33.3% in the pass rate may be acceptable to educators struggling to improve their graduation rates; subsequently, those schools might be willing to implement a resource such as the *Beowulf* Unit in order to provide the opportunity of graduation to more seniors. This would entail being willing to

implement an online class proctored by a faculty member and absorb the cost for paying that instructor for additional duty. To some, this might be an acceptable sacrifice at remediation in order to offer 33.3% more of the failing student body to qualify for graduation.

On the other hand, while some degree of improvement was noted, a large bulk of students (66.6%) continued to fail even after participating in the Beowulf Unit; these students still fell short of the mastery of standards and, under the theoretical assumptions of this study, would not have qualified for graduation. Considering that the students of this study were theoretically failing seniors at the beginning of the unit, 66.6% seems to be an unacceptable casualty of failure—an even more severe wound when we recognize that this was, for all intents and purposes, a second chance.

Based on the original goals of this project, the intent was to produce an effective unit of study in which instructional activities would guide students to master targeted content standards, and then receive credit once mastery was demonstrated by instructional assessments. As noted through the analysis of data, this unit was not as effective as intended. Not all target standards were

adequately met, although the project did demonstrate a degree of student improvement.

APPENDIX A

ELEMENTS OF DESIGN COMPARED TO ATTENTION, RELEVANCE,
CONFIDENCE, SATISFACTION MODEL AND OTHER RESEARCH

Elements of Design Compared to ARCS Model & Other Research

Key		· AI	RCS Model		
Elements of Design (Hoffman & Ritchie, 1996)	A(rousal)	R(elevance)	C(onfidence)	S(atisfaction)	Other Effective Strategies
Motivating the learner	 Hook interest (Small, 1997) Arouse curiosity (Brewster & Fager, 2000) 				
Identifying what is to be learned		,	Clear Objectives/ expectations (Skinner & Belmonte, 1991) Understand criteria & give work samples (Strong, 1995) Break into smaller tasks (Lumsden, 1994)		• Linear Instruction (Handal & Herrington, 2004; Phelps & Rynolds, 1999; Hsu, Fredric, & Chung, 1994; Brown, 1998)
Reminding learners of past knowledge		Contextualizing (Lepper, 1988) Link to real life (Lumsden, 1994; Skinner & Belmonte, 1991)			
Requiring active involvement (student-to- content)					Use of graphic organizers (Meng & Patty, 1991) High level "Thinking Skills" (Dodge, 1995; Marzano, 1992)
Providing guidance and feedback			Written teacher feedback (Strong, 1995)		Build Relationships (Brewster & Fager, 2000) Motivation enhanced if students feel welcome (Lumsden, 1994)
Providing enrichment and remediation			• "Mastery Learning" (Anderman, 1998) • Redo work (Dev, 1997)		

APPENDIX B

INTRODUCE YOURSELF: STARTING THE BEOWULF UNIT

Introduce Yourself Starting the Beowulf Unit

ype Your Name	Here	Type Your ID Number Here ID #	e Type the Date Her	<u>e</u>
vame		10 #	Date	
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APPENDIX C

EPIC ANALYSIS: LITERARY ANALYSIS OF BEOWULF UNIT

Epic Analysis Literary Analysis of Beowulf Unit

Type Your Name Here	Type Your ID Number Here	Type the Date Here
Name	ID#	Date
identify the elements listed by watching the movie, fill in the click in the highlighted section computer. When you are readinstructor using the direction.	ns and type your answers, the ady to turn in the assignment,	ne Epic Hero. First, while he boxes below. To do this, just en save this document to your you must "upload" it to your signment: Epic Analysis). Grades
The Epic	•	
Summarize the "Dangerous J	ourney" in this Epic:	5 pts
Delete this message and type	pe your answer here.	
		·
Name and describe the "Hero	o" of the Epic:	5 pts
Delete this message and type		
Explain one "Universal Pro	oblem" or "Societal Value" with	nin this Epic: 5 pts
Delete this message and type		
	•	
List at least 3 of the supe	rnatural elements within this E	Epic: 5 pts
Delete this message and type		

The Epic Hero	
List and explain 2 "Traits of the Culture" that this hero symbolizes: 5 pt	ts
Delete this message and type your answer here.	
	}
	į
	1
Briefly summarize two (2) "Deeds of Courage" that this hero accomplishes: 5 pt	t-c
Briefly summarize two (2) "Deeds of Courage" that this hero accomplishes: 5 pt Delete this message and type your answer here.	12
Delete this message and type your answer here.	
Tragic Flaw	
Note: this movie is only the first episode in the trilogy, and the tragic flaw does is not	
developed until the second and third episodes (<i>The Two Towers</i> and <i>The Return of the</i>	
King). For extra credit, you may view one or both of these movies and identify the Tragic	:
Flaw of the hero below (you will need to research this on your own): Extra 5 points	
Delete this message and type your answer here.	
· ·	

APPENDIX D

BEOWULF ANALYSIS: LITERARY ANALYSIS OF BEOWULF UNIT

Beowulf Analysis Literary Analysis of Beowulf Unit

Type Your Name Here	Type Your ID Number Here	Type the Date Here
Name	ID#	Date
Instructions: You will be relisted below regarding the Epappropriate information in the and type your answers, then to turn in the assignment, you online (see the link Assignment)	equired to read the epic <i>Beowulf</i> and to bic and the Epic Hero. First, while reading the boxes below. To do this, just click in save this document to your comput by must "upload" it to your instructor us ent: Epic Analysis of Beowulf). Grades were must fit in the space provided.	identify the elements ng the epic, fill in the the highlighted sections er. When you are ready ing the directions given
Name and describe the "Hero	o" of the Epic:	5 pts
Delete this message and ty		
Explain one "Universal Proble	em" or "Societal Value" within this Epic:	5 pts
Delete this message and ty		
List at least 3 of the supern	atural elements within this Epic:	5 pts
Delete this message and ty		

The Epic Hero:
List and explain 2 "Traits of the Culture" that this hero symbolizes:

Delete this message and type your answer here.

Briefly summarize two (2) "Deeds of Courage" that this hero accomplishes:

Delete this message and type your answer here.

APPENDIX E

THEME ANALYSIS: LITERARY ANALYSIS OF BEOWULF UNIT

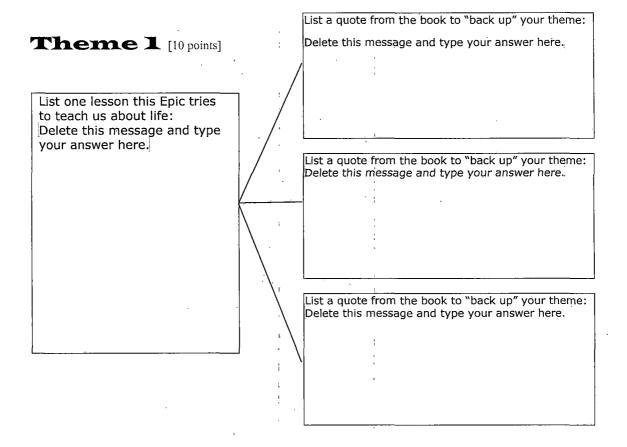
Theme Analysis Literary Analysis of Beowulf Unit

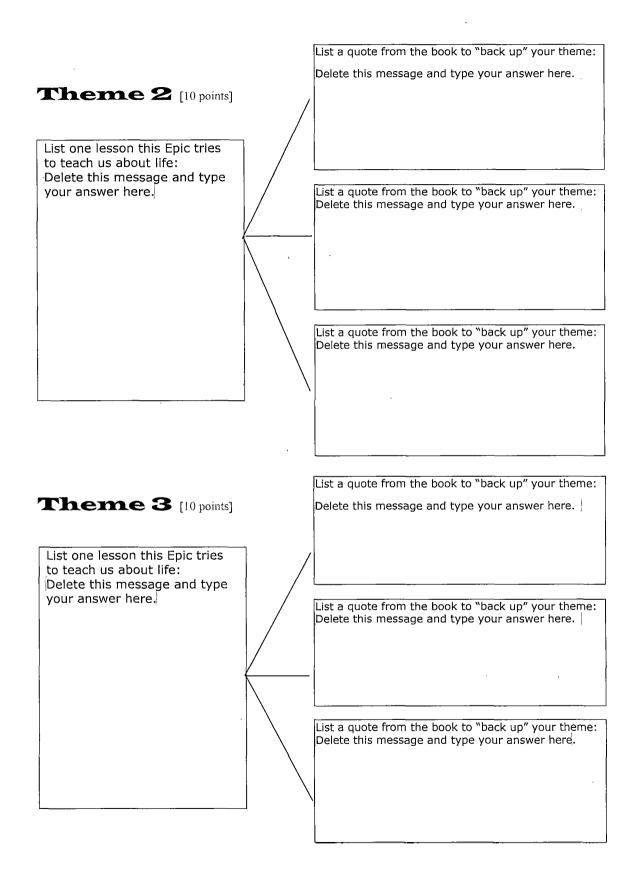
Type Your Name Here	Type Your ID Number Here	Type the Date Here
Name	ID #	Date

Instructions: You will be required to identify three (3) themes from the epic *Beowulf*, and then provide quotes from the text that support or illustrate these themes. First read *Beowulf* and listen to the podcasts online (see the link Assignment: Theme Analysis and click on the two PODCAST links). Then, download and save this document to your computer and fill in the appropriate information using the ideas you wrote down from the podcasts to complete your Theme Analysis. To do this, just click in the correct section below and type your answer. Then save the document, and send it as an attachment to your instructor. Note: Your answers must fit in the space provided AND you must cite the text correctly.

Note: A theme is a message or lesson that a piece of literature tries to teach to all who read it. To help you identify your themes, ask yourself such things as:

- What can I learn from Beowulf?
- What lessons about life or culture can I learn from this Epic?





APPENDIX F
WRITING RUBRIC

Writing Rubric

<u>DIRECTIONS</u>: This rubric explains the way in which your essay will be graded. Scores of "4" or "3" indicate sufficient work to pass this portion of the unit. Any score less than these will require you to revise and resubmit your essay to your instructor. Study each element listed on the left and understand what you need to include in your essay to obtain a sufficient grade. Click on any of the blue words within the rubric and further instructions will pop-up to instruct you.

	4: A/B	3: C	2: D	1: F
ANALYSIS OF THEME	Develops interpretations that demonstrate an accurate, insightful, & comprehensive grasp of the themes within the literary work			Themes are identified briefly, but no attempt is made to develop an interpretation of proposed themes; OR does not demonstrate understanding of the concept of themes
SPECIFIC DETAILS & EXAMPLES	relevant references to	Provides some reasons and examples; a few quotes may not be relevant to the themes proposed; citations are correctly formatted	Uses quotes and references to the text; however, most quotes do not relate to the proposed themes; citations are formatted with many mistakes	Provides simplistic generalizations or summaries, but makes no attempt to use references to the text; does not use quotes or citations
STRUCTURE	Essay includes clear paragraphs including an engaging introduction, appropriate body paragraphs, & a though-provoking conclusion		Essay is not fully or clearly organized; seems to be missing one or more key elements (introduction, body paragraph, or conclusion)	Essay completely lacks structure; ideas seem randomly thrown together and do not flow; no paragraphs are evident
FORMAT	Essay is formatted correctly according to APA format	Essay is formatted correctly in most cases; slight errors exist.		No attempt is made to format essay according to specified APA format
WORD CHOICE & CONVENTIONS	Language and vocabulary are mature & used correctly in context Almost no errors in punctuation & grammar	Attempt is made to use mature language and vocab Some errors in punctuation & grammardoes not interfere with understanding	Persistent errors in word meaning and/or conventions interfere with understanding.	Serious errors in writing and conventions make the paper impossible to understand.
	4: A/B	3: C	2: D	1: F

APPENDIX G GRADE AN EXAMPLE ESSAY

Grade an Example Essay Write an Analysis of Literature: Beowulf Unit

Type Your Name Here	Type Your ID Number Here	Type the Date Here
Name	ID #	Date

Instructions: You are required to evaluate and grade an example essay before you write your own. This will prepare you to understand the rubric and know how you must write your essay to successfully pass this course. First, print the *Writing Rubric* as found online (see the link Assignment: Understand the Writing Rubric). Then, fill in the appropriate information in the boxes below. To do this, just click in the highlighted sections and type your answers, then **save this document to your computer**. When you are ready to turn in the assignment, you must "upload" it to your instructor using the directions given online (see the link Assignment: Grade an Example Essay). Grades will be posted later for you to see.

Grades & Explanation

Item to Grade	Grade On Rubric	Explain why you give the essay this grad	de
Analysis of Theme	Delete this message; give the essay a grade of 1,2,3,4 according to rubric	Delete this message and briefly explain your reasons for awarding the grade for this category.	Your instructor will award you points for your evaluation here. (5 points)
Specific Details & Examples	Delete this message; give the essay a grade of 1,2,3,4 according to rubric	Delete this message and briefly explain your reasons for awarding the grade for this category.	Your instructor will award you points for your evaluation here. (5 points)
Structure	Delete this message; give the essay a grade of 1,2,3,4 according to rubric	Delete this message and briefly explain your reasons for awarding the grade for this category.	Your instructor will award you points for your evaluation here. (5 points)
Format	Delete this message; give the essay a grade of 1,2,3,4 according to rubric	Delete this message and briefly explain your reasons for awarding the grade for this category.	Your instructor will award you points for your evaluation here. (5 points)
Word Choice & Conventions	Delete this message; give the essay a grade of 1,2,3,4 according to rubric	Delete this message and briefly explain your reasons for awarding the grade for this category.	Your instructor will award you points for your evaluation here. (5 points)

APPENDIX H PLAN YOUR ESSAY

Plan Your Essay Response to Literature: Beowulf Unit

Type Your Name Here	Type Your ID Number Here	Type the Date Here
Name	ID #	Date

Instructions: You are required to make a graphic outline of your essay. Write a <u>brief summary</u> of each paragraph in the following boxes. This is not intended to be a full report of your essay—it is a guideline summary. Note: <u>Your answers must fit in the space provided.</u>

Delete this message & write a summarized intro here

Delete this message and put your topic Topic Sentence for this paragraph here

Delete this message and type your quotes, your support, your explanation here. \mid

Delete this message and put your topic Topic Sentence for this paragraph here

Delete this message and type your quotes, your support, your explanation here.

Delete this message and put your topic Topic Sentence for this paragraph here

Delete this message and type your quotes, your support, your explanation here.

Delete this message & write a summarized conclusion here

Introduction [5 points]

Think of how you would like to begin your essay. Remember to start with a "big idea" and then move into your essay—for reminders on writing the introduction or other parts of your essay, refer again to the section 5 online. Keep your answers here short—you will expand on them later.

Body ¶ 1 [5 points]

Your topic sentence here should express the 1st theme you have chosen to discuss—it might begin like this: One theme expressed in *Beowulf* is . . .

Remember to give quotes to backup your ideas—use appropriate citations for your quotes; then give in depth explanations to help me understand your ideas.

Body ¶ 2 [5 points]

Your topic sentence here should express the 2^{nd} theme you have chosen to discuss—it might begin like this: Another theme in *Beowulf* is . . . OR *Beowulf* also suggests a theme of . . .

Again, give quotes, citations, and explanations to really express your thoughts.

Body ¶ 3 [5 points]

Your topic sentence here should express the 3rd theme you have chosen to discuss—it might begin like this: A final theme within Beowulf is . . .

Again, give quotes, citations, and explanations to really express your thoughts.

Conclusion [5 points]

Briefly review your main points. Then, remember to end your essay with a final "big idea"—a good, "deep" thought that will keep readers thinking. For reminders on writing the conclusion or other parts of your essay, refer again to the section 5 online.

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