

Memo

To: Learning Community Members

From: Chris Buczinsky

Here is a rough summary of where we were in our conversation about the linked courses. We are still trying to identify **substantive academic links** between these classes. We are still largely in brainstorming mode (a fun, creative place to be). We need to do more thinking about the ways these courses are related.

Here are notes on what we have done so far, with some initial thoughts at the bottom.

In the first semester of the Learning Community, students take three linked courses: OMIS 115, English 103, and RSLT 110.

RSLT 110	English 103	CMIS 115
<p>Learning Attitudes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time Management • Goals • Strengths/Weaknesses <p>Learning Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading, Writing, Thinking, <p>Social Justice: Community, Empathy, Social Teachings on Work, Poverty, Class, Environment, Race, Sex.</p>	<p>Academic Structures (Intro, Body, Con) Compare/Contrast Cause/Effect Persuasion</p> <p>Paragraph Dev/ Unity/Cohesion</p> <p>The Writing Process</p> <p>Sentence Structure:</p>	<p>Files—structures for storage</p> <p>Memory—where do we store data</p> <p>Logic—the sequencing of instruction to achieve desired goals</p> <p>System—a group of related objects working to achieve a desired goal</p> <p>Software: Access, Word, Excel, PowerPoint.- Electronically emulating what we used to do manually</p>

<p>RSLT 110</p> <p><i>Social Justice</i> teaches freshman how to be effective students, how to manage their time, set goals, assess one’s strengths and weaknesses. It is a</p>	<p>English 103</p> <p><i>Rhetoric and Composition I</i> teaches students how to present information and ideas in a written form.</p> <p>It is a course in literacy per</p>	<p>CMIS 115</p> <p><i>Computer Literacy</i> teaches students how electronically manage information and use the computer.</p>
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Social Justice places the student's development of self control, self management, and personal discipline within the context of his and her responsibility to his and her community role, the search for meaningful work in the cause of a just society.

It seems like we touched on **two main possibilities** at our last meeting.

First, we could have Social Justice set the *theme* of the linked courses. We could organize Rhetoric and Composition I and Computer Literacy around the theme of Social Justice. I can imagine doing this in Rhetoric and Composition by having our course readings and writings thematically center on social justice issues. I wonder if George and Kurt could do something similar in their class.

Second, somebody (I think it was Gene) pointed out that the three linked courses share a common goal: to teach students how to be effective life-long learners. Didn't we also point out that one of the things all the courses have in common is the **management of information and ideas**. I am blueskying now, but I wonder if we could think about it in this way:

In *Social Justice* the students learn the basics of being a student. It focuses on the individual student's academic discipline and his/her developing role in the community. This is a course in the **role of ideas in one's individual and social life**. It is teaching them to be life-long learners, people who are effective at gathering, presenting, critiquing ideas.

Rhetoric and Comp is or would be a course in **getting ideas from texts and creating texts that present ideas**. The student would learn to read actively (i.e. study) and write academic essays. (The reading/studying element of English 103 would need to be developed—off loading the reading skills taught in Social Justice to English 103?).

In *Computer Literacy*, the students learn **the technology central to idea management in the 21st century** (i.e software skills and computer literacy)

After students take these three linked courses they should be able to:

1. Organize their life for successful academic work: setting goals, keeping a calendar, and studying effectively.
2. Write different types of academic essays with effective paragraph and sentence structure.
3. Understand computers and manage information electronically with basic computer software.

I wonder if we should come up with **one project** (evaluated with a portfolio) that combines all three:

Pick a social justice issue you are interested in that grows out of the Constitutional Amendment. Plan and execute a real life contribution to this cause of social justice. Write a variety of essays on this issue and on the experience of doing the project and present the results of their project using a variety of software...(etc.)

If my son were taking this course, I'd want him to turn in

1. A flash drive that shows me how he organized his computer files and documents in all the software he was being taught to use.
2. His calendar and an hour by hour log or diary of what he did for one week of the semester.
3. A set of essays that showed me he could write in many forms.

I'd also want him to show me he could read a text, identify main and subsidiary ideas, logical fallacies, etc. This would be done in a test format.

Well... Sorry I couldn't make the meeting, but I hope this summary of what we have already done and these initial thoughts help the conversation along.

Chris