

Hello,

And, Welcome to our Advanced Placement Summer Institute (APSI) in AP Language and Composition!

It is all about Rhetoric, and You, and Your Students. We have good resources to explore, great ideas to discuss, and grand schemes to consider.

To that end, please cull your lessons, ideas, and files, and bring one thing that really works for you—a lesson plan, a unit, the name and Table of Contents of a text you're really fond of, and/or a list of short texts (speeches, letters, magazines, websites, blogs, etc.) that bring life to class. What energizes you could affirm or extend ideas for someone else. Each person (individually, in pairs, or in small groups) will make a Presentation during the week of a unit, lesson, or course plan that s/he has created or honed. Too, bring a short piece that you love so that you can read it aloud to us in our Moment of Voice. Bring questions and curiosity. Come ready to engage in discussions, to review and share our ideas, protocols, and products. In short, come to interact.

Our week is organized so that we move through the realm of rhetoric. We will focus on Argument, our epicenter, where each student is asked to form the individual argument. We will examine the skills of Analysis of Argument, where the student is asked to show what s/he knows about language and how someone else is using it. And of course we will explore Synthesis, where the student fuses both analysis of others and the making of her/his own case. We will keep before us an idea that we want students to develop an "essaying" mind as in Montaigne's *essais*, that skill of writing with a keen focus and a strong voice. And, we will examine multiple-choice questions to see how they can help shape our course, not terrorize it.

To begin thinking about our APSI, please respond to the three activities on the following page, and bring your responses with you. Circling, doodling, highlighting, drawing question marks or exclamation points—all that counts as response.

If, in the meantime, you want to meet me (Facebook may be in my future, but it's not in my present; I doubt that Twitter will ever be part of my life.) or to ask a question, make contact, or just chat for a bit, email me at sylvia.sarrett@sdhc.k12.fl.us. Yes, I look forward to meeting and working with each of you.

Collegially,

Sylvia

Sylvia Sarrett

Advanced Placement Summer Institute: APSI Course Description
Sylvia Sarrett, Consultant

1. Program

The Advanced Placement English Language and Composition course is a college-level course taught in high school which culminates in a three-hour examination administered in May and externally assessed by College Board/ETS. As articulated in the *AP English Course Description*, "an AP course in English **Language** engages students in becoming skilled readers of prose written in a variety of periods, disciplines, and rhetorical contexts, and in becoming skilled writers who compose for a variety of purposes." Therefore, this APSI will focus on "strategies to enable students to write effectively and confidently as well as on strategies to enable students to read complex texts with understanding." This APSI is designed to help the teacher of **AP Language and Composition** to understand and to teach its requisite skills and appropriate content.

2. Goals Addressed

Participants will deepen their knowledge and experience in ways to improve student achievement on AP English Language and Composition examination through

- Focusing on the rhetorical definitions, concepts, and skills of language, per se;
- Centering the course study on argumentation in all its modes;
- Expanding the concepts of text, of rhetorical analysis and synthesis, and of the individual essay modes;
- Understanding the complex needs of differentiated instruction that keeps its focus on the course goals; and,
- Understanding the role(s) of free response prompts and multiple-choice questions in both shaping and assessing the course content and skills.

3. Improvement Practices

Participants will expand their abilities to develop and/or scaffold materials appropriate for a college-level course in language and composition, and to use and develop appropriate assessments so that students are prepared for success in their college courses as well as for the format and language of the AP Language and Composition Examination.

4. Competencies

Participants will strengthen their abilities to

- Develop an overview of the course that will address the criteria defined in the AP English Language Course Description;
- Evaluate and adapt a variety of methodology (techniques and strategies) that will best suit their own students' entry level(s) into the course and continue to expand those entry skills toward college level performance;
- Use technology with specific focus on resources for teachers (websites such as AP Central, for example) and for students (various websites and search engines, for example), emphasizing technology as a tool for critical and analytical reading, thinking, and writing;

- Broaden their personal appreciation for and knowledge of the study of language as primarily the mode of non-fiction prose, complete with its own canon, its expanded definition of text, its realm of resources (including but not driven by the mode of literature), and the writing modes of expository, analytical, and argumentative prose, .

5. Performance Indicators

As a result of this APSI. Participants will demonstrate their ability to

- Use and design a variety of activities that will encourage critical and analytical writing and reading skills necessary for success on the examinations and in college;
- Use a variety of tools and strategies for monitoring student understanding and assessing student achievement;
- Work independently and collegially to create an academic culture with the class and the school itself that promotes levels of independence, responsibility and success representative of a college student; and,
- Use goals, modes, and criteria from previous College Board AP Language and Composition examinations to score sample essays, and to design instructional lessons and activities.

6. Preparation Phase

Instruction time for this course will be a minimum of 30 clock hours, excluding time allocated for meals. These hours of course instruction will be provided during the summer in four or four and one-half day AP institutes.

The instructor/consultant for this course is Sylvia Sarrett, AP teacher, AP Language and Composition Reader and Table Leader, Chair Emeritus of the Academic Advisory Committee in English to College Board, Fellow for the Harvard Project Zero Institute, Online Coach for Teaching for Understanding 1, a National Board Certified Teacher, and both an endorsed College Board Advanced Placement Language and Composition and SAT consultant.

Strategies used in this course will include presentations, small and whole group discussions, interactive activities, and shared information and materials.

7. Course Assessment

Where course credit is desired, district and/or university criteria will be met. Two of the following competencies and performance indicators must be completed during the APSI, including evaluation and feedback. The participant will

- Design a *working* syllabus that develops the criteria of the AP Course Description in English Language as established and approved by the AP AUDIT;
- Develop (a) a collection of assignments and/or activities that foster critical reading, thinking, and writing skills in language per se, and (b) organize those materials into a sequence that addresses AP Language and Composition criteria; and/or
- Demonstrate an understanding of rhetoric per se, including its particular focus on the issues of language, its lens of rhetorical analysis, argument, and synthesis.

Lists, lists, lists!

Complete as many as you can... or as few as you wish...

10 Rhetoricians you know and use

10 Things—concepts, processes, skills—to know in AP Language

10 Different kinds of text in a language course; rank order by your preference

5 favorites from AP tests: prompts, passages, purposes

5 rhetorical strategies and 5 rhetorical devices, and the difference between them

5 ways that access and equity matter

5 ways that you can use technology in this course

5 specific, tried, activities/sources/materials and/or sequences for differentiated instruction

4 kinds of rhetorical questions

4 kinds of discussion

4 pieces of literature (novel, poem, play, or short story) that absolutely must be taught

3 rhetorical ways Aristotle, Toulmin, Lincoln, and Homer Simpson are similar

3 entry points (Begin? End? Mid-way? Of the course? During life "after the test"?)

3 definitions of argument

2 teaching texts that you feel are essential to this course

2 units or lessons that work wonderfully well for you and your students

1 reason—or goal—to attend this APSI

Interaction, interaction, interaction!

Select ONE of the following

Summaries. Each morning and afternoon a pair or so of participants will present a summary of the previous session. They will make a claim, use qualifiers, offer data, backing and a warrant. They can be as creative as they desire (game, song, Smartboard, questions, other).

MOMENT OF VOICE (MO VO). Each morning and afternoon a volunteer will read aloud a piece of rhetoric s/he loves (or hates) and then briefly discuss it for its appeals, claims, languages, connections, or "other."

FOCUS DISCUSSIONS. We all come to these APSI's for various reasons, one of which is to join collegial conversations about course content and methodology. Each day has designated time(s) for such conversations. Select a topic you would like to lead, and pick the day!

Focus Discussion Question Sets.

Choose one of these ten sets of questions. We have set aside time for five, so we will vote on which five seem to matter the most to everyone. Plan to lead or co-lead a discussion on them. Jot down resources, more ideas, more questions, activities as you focus on your students and your

context. Bring your direct experience and your willingness to expand that experience to bear on the issues. Think in terms of 25-30 minutes for the discussion. Design ways to get the discussion started and keep it moving; think of issues and resources, more ideas, more questions, and various activities or needs. Keep foremost in mind the idea that it is a discussion and not a presentation. The goal is to explore a range of point of view and experience. Sign up for your date and time.

Question: Do we want the role of Recorder for each discussion? In case some good ideas, resources, lists emerge, and we want to put them on a list-serve?

- **TEXTS.** What should be the seminal texts (anthologies, FRQs, visuals, technology, and so on)? Their sequence, pacing, focus? What drives the course? (ahh, metaphors—drives—what about “centers”?) What organizational patterns are possible?
- **COURSE CONTENT.** What should the best APLAC course include? How does the teacher’s knowledge and vision shape the course? How focused, balanced, engaging can a course be? How much Aristotle? Toulmin? Multiple-Choice? Literature? Grammar?
- **ASSESSMENT.** What are the best assessment practices? Ongoing? Summative? What does APLAC want the students to understand? What do they need to know to reach that understanding? How will they and you know what they understand?
- **DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION.** What are the needs? What are the resources? What are some ways to design differentiated instruction? How can you have various levels of learning going on simultaneously? How can you scaffold skill levels? How many choices will/can you give the students?
- **RESOURCES.** How can your use of resources help or block students’ understanding of what the meaning(s) can be? What strategies/sources are available to develop more effective rhetorical analyses from the “beginning”—wherever that “beginning” exists (9th? 10th? Mid-semester? First days in the course?)
- **CHOICES.** What techniques, ideas, and/or sources will you use (or modify and use) from this APSI? Have any “assumptions” changed? How? Why? Where? When? What do you think about the First Ten Days or So Idea?
- **TEACHER KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS.** What should the teacher know about rhetoric and be able to do, to teach? In skills? In designing instruction and assessment?
- **ACTIVITIES.** What are some really good activities? To what end? Pacing? Sequence? In Discussion? In reading? In writing? In thinking? In pleasure?
- **FIGURES OF SPEECH.** Quintilianus’ Ideas on Traditional Tropes and Schemes are excellent. And Dangerous. Should they be taught? Or is it “Viewer Discretion Advised! Use only as directed!” What do you think about whether to teach figures of speech?
- **OTHER.**