

PORTFOLIO REGISTER
CURRICULUM VITAE

Date: September 15, 2009

Holly Ann Larson

Experience:

Lake-Sumter Community College	English Instructor	August 2005 – present
Broward Community College	Temporary Full-time English Instructor	August 2004 – June 2005
Beacon College	English Instructor	August 2003 – June 2004
Florida Atlantic University	Teaching Assistant English Instructor	August 1998 – May 2003
Faculty of Science and Technology (Peace Corps: Tangier, Morocco)	TESOL Instructor	September 1996 – June 1998

Education:

BA	English	State University of NY at Oswego	1993
MA	English	University of Buffalo	1996
Ph.D.	Comparative Studies	Florida Atlantic University	2003

1. TEACHING EXCELLENCE

1.1 Provide a statement of your teaching philosophy

“So why do you think you are the best candidate to teach here at a community college?”

I remember this question quite vividly. Four years ago I was asked this question by the search committee, interviewing for an English teaching position at Lake-Sumter Community College. Although it is an important and therefore predictable question I anticipated during my interview, I was, and I admit still am, taken back by this question. Are the students really that different from a four-year institution? Would one’s teaching style radically alter shifting from a four-year to a two-year school? And does an educator’s teaching style change as she moves from one learning environment to the next? My reply to this string of questions is yes *and* no. A dynamic and engaging educator is one who not only demonstrates her passion for teaching and commitment to her students, but also shares her love for knowledge and for creating a just world that begins in and moves out of the classroom. This type of teacher, one who is full of integrity and vision, is who I aspire to be, whether I teach at a two-year or four-year institution.

Yet, an effective and committed educator must adapt to her particular learning environment; the classroom is a socio-cultural space that is shaped by various variables, such as gender, race, class, (dis)ability, and age. It is never a neutral space; rather, it is a complex site of fragmented narratives, contradicting identities, and inchoate dreams. Within this space, students make meaning of their lives. The classroom reflects and is reflected by their struggles and hopes; that is, within this learning space, students weave together whole narratives, confront conflicting beliefs and values, and begin to actualize dreams. In this sense, every classroom is its own particular microcosmic world. Indeed, an instructor must listen quietly and attentively to

hear the students' spoken and unspoken desires and needs and accordingly shape her pedagogical style to reach these students and give meaning and life to their desires and needs.

The reply I gave that day of the interview, however, was neither a yes nor no. Instead, I paraphrased a passage from *Teaching to Transgress* by bell hooks: "To educate as the practices of freedom is a way of teaching that anyone can learn" (13). Indeed! Teaching is an ideologically loaded word, but at the root of its meaning for me is liberation. To teach is to liberate, to set free dreams of whom one can be, of what one can achieve, of how one can be an agent of change despite one's standing in life, whether one is disadvantaged economically or educationally. Teaching is always a transitive verb for me – it requires a "what?" and "so what?" after it. Teaching, then, is never a static performance or an ostentatious display of data, but an ongoing dialogue in search for a true and complete narrative amongst student, educator, and society.

This ongoing search for a whole narrative that affirms and supports students' visions and hopes demands a lot from educators. They must be ready to deal with students' fear, uncertainty, disengagement, and confusion, as well as their deep-rooted beliefs that may clash with others. Simply put, instructors must be ready to enter a classroom with a set agenda but reformulate it or even toss it aside to engage and captivate the students. "Professors," hooks claims, "cannot empower students to embrace diversities of experience, standpoint, behavior, or style if our training has disempowered us, socialized us to cope effectively only with a single mode of interaction based on middle-class values" (187).

It is this handbag of resources and tools that an effective and engaging teacher reaches into to move out of and beyond that single mode of interaction. Within this bag are Socratic dialogues, collaborative problem solving, relevant lectures, peer feedback, mentoring, and, yes,

even creative chaos. All these methods position the focus on learning to create a learning-centered environment by connecting students to their dreams, to their classmates' reality, and to the class material. "Good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness. They are able to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subject, and their students so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves into a complete narrative of affirming existence and action," writes education specialist Lynn Nielsen (266).

My developmental English class I taught a couple semesters ago illustrates this "complex web of connections." It was the most challenging, yet the most rewarding, class I have ever taught. Several of the students entered the class the first day expressing to me how they hated their English classes in high school; others stated that they resented taking a non-college credit course. "Oh boy," I responded. I was at a loss with words.

I have been teaching developmental English for a few semesters now. I have gathered a compendium of useful lesson plans and activities. But this class was different. Many of the students had a terrible experience in their English classes, where writing, reading, and grammar were not only a laborious lesson but also a punitive activity. How was I going to change this relationship they have with the written word? To begin with, I had to make it relevant and interesting for my students. But how does one make grammar, say comma splices and fragments, relevant and interesting? I dug deep into my handbag of resources and pulled out songs, video clips, comics, jeopardy, and scrabble to demonstrate grammar skills and create activities. For example, over a four-week period, the students learned about fragments, compound and complex sentences, and descriptive essay by referring to the song "Wake up Call" by the band Maroon V. The activity began by the students listening to the song while following the lyrics to identify any fragments. Then they composed compound and complex sentences out

of these fragments. Once they did this, they watched the video to this song and wrote a descriptive essay on how certain violent images perpetuate myths about men and masculinity. Finally, the students read their paper to the class, explaining how they developed their thesis and body paragraphs.

Popular culture made this class enjoyable for the students – at times they were so engrossed by the music – that they forgot they were working on subject-verb agreements for the past thirty minutes; it also taught the students about the existence of diverse discourse communities and how each has important knowledge to share. For example, by using the films *Spanglish* and *Born Rich* I was able to point out how word usage and grammar rules are different according to one’s own linguistic and cultural group. So saying “I is going here” is not correct; it is a particular discourse that has meaning, though this discourse is not used by academia. This discussion was important because several of my students identified with a targeted English, mostly Black English and Spanglish, that is not American Standard English. By acknowledging their language reference group, I was able to create both a linguistic and cultural space for these students within academia, emphasizing that indeed they come to school with important knowledge from their own discourse community. As their instructor, I was responsible to help them create an open bridge they could cross back and forth with ease from their targeted English to academic discourse. So popular culture allowed my students to have agency over their learning; that is, they were asked to build out of and upon their own knowledge from their particular discourse community instead of having to leave their language identity at the door every time they entered class.

Several semesters have passed since I responded to the question stated early about my candidacy as a potential English instructor at LSCC. The question I now address is, “So why do

I think I am now an optimal candidate for promotion?” I can list a litany of reasons, for this is the time to “showcase” what I have done and learned. This is not what I want to do, though. Modesty is not restraining me; rather, it is the realization a couple of semesters ago that this is where I belong. Not only do I connect with many of my students who, like my past, come from struggling working-class families and who mirror the anxiety I had as a student wondering if there was a space for me in academia; I also feel like I can educationally grow and expand with these students through scholarship and professional development. The past couple years I have done the following: worked under the tutelage of Dr. Mary Huffer, learning to operate and create a Blackboard class for ENC 1101; taken three graduate courses in TESOL at UCF; written two essays, one on emotional labor, the other on Whiteness Studies that I have recently submitted to the journals *Feminist Teacher* and *Race, Gender & Class*; and read at one conference on race and language in January 2008 and presented a paper on composition theory in April 2008. Simply put, I can be both a teacher and student at LSCC. These roles are critical because teaching and learning are synonymous. As an educator, it is my responsibility to mirror this to my students. Thus, as a teacher and student, I am not the “sage on the stage,” as Dr. Melanie Wagner states it. I am sitting down eye-to-eye with my students, exploring and growing as a collaborator.

Works Cited

- hooks, bell. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York: Routledge, 1994. Print.
- Nielsen, Lynn E. “Teaching from the Heart . . . It’s about Max and Maureen: A Personal Narrative.” *Childhood Education* 80.5 (2004); 266-69. *Info Trac Professional Collection*. Web. 26 Feb. 2008.

1.2 List the classes you have taught during the time period for which you are being considered, and the number of semesters for each. Include any information on special circumstances, such as Web enhanced, fully online, Special Topics, etc.

ENC 0001 (two sections)	Fall, 2005
ENC 1101 (two sections)	Fall, 2005
ENC 2300 (one section)	Fall, 2005
HUM 1211 (one section)	Fall, 2005
ENC 1101 (three sections)	Spring, 2006
ENC 1102 (two sections)	Spring, 2006
HUM 1230 (one section)	Spring, 2006
ENC 1101 (one section)	Summer, 2006
ENC 1102 (one section)	Summer, 2006
ENC 0001 (two sections)	Fall, 2006
ENC 0010 (one section)	Fall, 2006
ENC 1101 (three sections)	Fall, 2006
FIL 2001 (one section)	Fall, 2006
ENC 0010 (one section)	Spring, 2007
ENC 1101 (two sections)	Spring, 2007
ENC 1102 (one section)	Spring, 2007
FIL 2001 (one section)	Spring, 2007
ENC 1101 (one section)	Summer, 2007
ENC 2300 (one section)	Summer, 2007
ENC 0001 (one section)	Fall, 2007
ENC 0010 (one section)	Fall, 2007
ENC 1101 (three sections)	Fall, 2007
ENC 1102 (one section)	Fall, 2007
ENC 0010 (one section)	Spring, 2008 [Web enhanced]
ENC 1101 (one section)	Spring, 2008 [Web enhanced]
ENC 1102 (two sections)	Spring, 2008 [Web enhanced]
ENC 2300 (one section)	Spring, 2008 [Web enhanced]
FIL 2001 (one section)	Spring, 2008 [Web enhanced]
ENC 1102 (one section)	Summer, 2008 [Web enhanced]
ENC 2300 (one section)	Summer, 2008 [Web enhanced]
LIT 2930 (one section)	Summer 2008 [Web enhanced, Special topic: Women's Literature]

ENC 0001 (one section)	Fall, 2008 [Web enhanced]
ENC 0010 (one section)	Fall, 2008 [Web enhanced]
ENC 1101 (two sections)	Fall, 2008 [Hybrid, Mixed]
ENC 1102 (one section)	Fall, 2008 [Web enhanced]
ENC 2300 (one section)	Fall, 2008 [Web enhanced]
ENC 0010 (one section)	Spring, 2009 [Web enhanced]
ENC 1101 (one section)	Spring, 2009 [Hybrid, Mixed]
ENC 1102 (two sections)	Spring, 2009 [Web enhanced]
ENC 2300 (one section)	Spring, 2009 [Web enhanced]
FIL 2001 (one section)	Spring, 2009 [Web enhanced]
ENC 1101 (one section; hybrid)	summer 2009 [Web enhanced]
ENC 1102 (one section)	summer 2009 [Web enhanced]
ENC 2300 (one section)	summer 2009 [Web enhanced]
FIL 2001 (one section)	summer 2009 [Web enhanced]
ENC 0001 (one section)	Fall, 2009 [Web enhanced]
ENC 0010 (one section)	Fall, 2009 [Web enhanced]
ENC 1101 (one section)	Fall, 2009 [Hybrid, Mixed]
ENC 1102 (one section)	Fall, 2009 [Web enhanced]
ENC 2300 (one section)	Fall, 2009 [Web enhanced]
LIT 2930 (one section)	Fall, 2009 [Web enhanced, Special topic: Cracker Literature]

1.3 Briefly describe any special techniques or tools you use in the classroom, and their impact on teaching and learning.

I believe an effective class is one where the students have various methods at their disposal to connect to the assignments being taught and to their classmates as learning partners. There are many modalities I use to engage my students: PowerPoint, my faculty website, film, documentaries, music, games, presentations, group debates, and class discussion. It is important that students make a connection to what they are learning to their other classes and to society at large. This is why I frequently use popular culture and current events to help my students see the relevancy of what they are learning. Also, I strongly believe that community college students should be challenged as any university student. I always emphasize to my students that they are

not getting a “diluted” education at LSCC; I teach the same material to my students at LSCC as I did at Florida Atlantic University. As such, my students engage in high theory; I present it through popular culture to help them fully understand the concepts. For example, in my ENC 1102 class, I introduce Marxist theory when we discuss author Ursula Le Guin’s “The Ones Who Leave Omelas” that explores a town’s utter neglect of a helpless, malnourished child. The students learn about superstructure and infrastructure and the alienation of the anomic self – some pretty heavy and dense theory – through documentaries on sweat labor, personal narratives of factory workers in North Carolina, and union labor songs and chants. Likewise, in my LIT 2930 (Cracker Literature) class, I present high theory on Pierre Bourdieu’s *Social Distinction*, a socioeconomic view on different forms of cultural, social, economic, and symbolic capital through popular culture. The students engage in some heavy and complex issues surrounding class, sexuality, and race in the United States by analyzing representations and images in popular culture. Our first class session, the students watched a two-minute segment of television shows, *My Name is Earl*, *Trailer Park*, *Kath and Kim*, and *The Anna Nicole Show*. Applying the dense theory of Bourdieu to these TV programs, the student were able to see how social class is not exclusively about income, but about behaviors, dress codes, body image, and language .

(Syllabi can be found in attachment section 1.3)

1.4 Briefly describe your particular areas of teaching competence or specialization.

I have a Master’s in English and a Ph.D. in Comparative Studies. I put particular emphasis on my doctoral degree because it has provided me a panoramic view of each discipline; that is, by training, I do not see each department as a separate entity but a continuing conversation amongst each other. Thus, every time I walk into my classroom, I bring an

awareness of political, historical, sociological, and psychological issues to the material I teach. I believe this helps enrich my class discussions. For example, in ENC 2300, all of these perspectives come into play. This past semester, we explored the use of language through social policies and the current town hall meetings on health care. My students not only looked closely at the politicians' and constituents' use of rhetoric and how they positioned their arguments relying upon ethos, pathos, and logos; they also examined political structures and media outlets that shape how a citizen can speak and present himself/herself. I have the knowledge to take my students beyond the written word and look at the various institutions that control the national dialogue.

1.5 Briefly describe what you regard as your major fields of interest within your discipline.

My major field of interest within my discipline is marginalized knowledge. I am passionate about epistemology, that is, the way people generate knowledge. In particular, I am interested in how marginalized groups, who have been overlooked as limited and "simple," generate knowledge. For instance, I am interested in how women on government assistance navigate the welfare system and miraculously stretch a monthly \$800 salary to feed and shelter three family members. This is critical knowledge that is generally dismissed as having no significance in academia. Yet, by denying the significance of this information, we are dismissing several of our students' ways of knowing, particularly our non-traditional students. Students cannot claim ownership of their education if they feel the way they think, act, and live is not respected and acknowledged in the classroom. The classroom is a reflection and extension of society at large. Therefore, our students' realities must have a place in the classroom. This is why recognizing their ways of knowing is critical. Epistemic access to these

ways of knowing opens up the classroom and invites them to invest a part of themselves into the class.

This fall 2009 semester, I am teaching a course on Cracker Literature that explores the very issue of epistemology: how a subculture of an economically disadvantaged white community is reduced to mockery and humiliation that dehumanizes and dismisses its critical knowledge of resilience and perseverance. Through literature, my students will have the opportunity to question and challenge stagnant stereotypes and examine the construction of race and class in American society, gaining an awareness of how reality and ways of knowing are grounded in the material world shaped by economic, cultural, and social lifestyles.

1.6 List your peer-review committee, indication the chairperson. Attach the committee's final report.

Dr. Melanie Wagner	Chairperson
Dr. Pat Campbell	Instructor, English Department
Danielle Reites	Instructor, English Department
John Shea	Instructor, Math Department

(Classroom observation reports completed by peer evaluation and letter of recommendation can be found in attachment section 1.6)

2. COMMUNITY SERVICE

2.1 List and briefly describe evidence of service to the community, particularly where such service involves your professional training or experience.

I strongly believe that a solid, well-rounded education is an integral part of being an active citizen. Citizenry without education and education without citizenry are like jigsaw puzzle pieces: they are only fragmented pieces of the “big picture.” As an educator, that “big picture” is sharing my years of experience with the community to help address social concerns, such as illiteracy, poverty, and domestic abuse. Trained through the Victim’s Advocacy Program at the Lauderhill Police Department several years ago in 2002, I use this awareness to speak to young women to help them recognize and avoid abusive relationships. Although I have not spoken to a formal group recently, I regularly speak to informal groups, such as the young women I am coaching at the YMCA in downtown Orlando: I not only show them how to strengthen their breast stroke, I also listen to their stories and guide them through difficult and painful relationships where emotional and/or physical abuse is present.

Equally, as a teacher, I bring this awareness to the classroom. Students know that I am a safe and caring individual. Although I have to be wise and cautious about setting boundaries and not counsel my students (I am their educator, not counselor), I still have the resources to help them navigate some very painful events in their lives that prevent them from fully functioning in the classroom. For example, last semester I was able to provide a non-traditional female student the name and number of the Victim’s Advocacy Unit and a women’s shelter in Lake County. Unfortunately, my experience with this student is not an isolated situation. Every year, I have at least two to three students in crisis.

I am also a strong advocate for animal’s rights. I am currently a member of Care Feline Rescue that helps neuter and spay cats to stop the overpopulation of abandoned cats and kittens.

This may seem like a separate issue from what I do everyday in the classroom, but, in fact, it is not. Not only am I emblematic of “praxis,” the combination of theory and practice, I am also bringing my awareness of ecofeminism that underscores how certain living beings are objectified and commodified to the community. Every Friday I make phone calls to individuals about controlling the cat population in Orange County, where I reside, and speak to them about strategies to teach their neighbors and friends to understand animals as living beings that deserve respect and dignity.

3. SERVICE TO THE COLLEGE

3.1 On what College committee have you served? (Give dates of service, and position held, e.g. Chairperson). [Give a brief description (approximately 200 words) of the project or projects the committee has worked on and your specific contributions including any leadership role(s) you played.]

2005-2006 Title III Developmental Facilitators: I was invited by Drs. Melanie Wagner and Sherie Lindamood to assist this group in strategizing effective pedagogical methods and classroom organization to maximize developmental students’ interest and understanding of basic foundational knowledge.

2006 (spring) Search Committee: I was a member of the search committee for a full-time Developmental English instructorship position.

2006 (summer) Search Committee: I was a member of the search committee for a full-time History Instructorship position.

2006-2007 Title III Oversight Committee: I was asked by Dr. Wagner to join this committee to help brainstorm possibilities for a new Title III grant.

2007 (spring) Search Committee: I was chairperson of the search committee for a full-time English instructorship position.

2008-2009 Developmental Facilitators: Working with Sybil Brown, chairperson of this subcommittee, I helped identify strengths and weaknesses in the developmental courses. One of the strategies I took from this committee is implementing Math vocabulary words in my ENC 0001 and ENC 0010 courses to help students understand math-word problems. Also by implementing math vocabulary, I am able to demonstrate to the students that there is an interdisciplinary connection amongst their classes, highlighting the relevancy of all their courses in regards to each other.

3.2 List and describe other responsibilities/activities beyond regular assignments or service on college committees. (Give dates).

2006 Brain Bowl, Assistant Coach: For the fall 2006 semester, I attended weekly brain bowl practice meetings on the South Lake Campus. In addition, I attended three tournaments.

2007-2008 EAP (English for Academic Purposes) Committee, Member: Working with Dr. Wagner as English Department Chair and EAP specialist Alexandria Jameison, I assisted in brainstorming possibilities creating EAP courses on South Lake campus as a pilot program to serve the needs of a growing population of non-native English speakers in South Lake County.

2007 – 2009 Community Charity Club, Advisor: Upon the request of former student Shainna Ali, I created the Community Charity Club on the South Lake campus that focuses on helping the immediate needs of Clermont. The first semester, the club had 13 members who worked with Kids Central, Inc., an organization that helps young adults who grow out of the orphanage system transition into adulthood. The club held a fundraising event with home baked goods, live music, and games. We raised close to \$500. More recently, last semester we worked with Boys and Girls Club, holding another fundraising event raising close to \$400. We donated this amount

to Boys and Girls Club who are in the process of developing a new facility in Clermont. We also attended a special event for the Boys and Girls Club in Leesburg, providing snacks, games, and crafts.

(*Angler* article on my role as the assistant coach in Brain Bowl and the advisor for the Community Charity club can be found in attachment section 3.2)

2009-2009 Mentor: I worked closely with Margie Grey last school year, helping her ease into her temporary full-time position as instructor of Psychology. Margie's office was next to mine, so I was able to meet with her regularly to discuss with her successful teaching strategies that have worked well in my classrooms. Because Margie had never taught prior to teaching at LSCC and was hired a week before the term began, she was, at times, overwhelmed and perplexed. We had many conversations about classroom management, particularly because Margie was dealing with some difficult behavior issues her first term, and about managing a heavy work load in order to have ample time for course preparation, grading, and office hours.

4. PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN YOUR FIELD

4.1 List professional organization memberships, including offices held and/or committee service. (Give dates).

Race, Gender & Class Association	member, 1999 - 2008
National Women's Studies	member, 2001 – present
Modern Language Association	member, 2005 – present
Florida College English Association	member, 2009 – present
National Council of Teachers of English	member, 2009 – present

4.2 Indicate professional, regional and national organization meeting attendance. Include here any participation such as papers given, panel discussions, etc. (Give dates).

- 15-16 Oct. 2009** Palm Beach Community College: Florida Fountainesque.
I have been invited to present a paper entitled “Why I Am Teaching White Trash Literature” based on the reading material and class activities I have planned for the fall 2009 semester.
- 24-26 Apr 2008** Baton Rouge Community College: Writing Matters Conference.
Presented a paper, “Moving beyond the Five-Paragraph Essay.”
- 28-29 Feb 2008** University of Illinois at Chicago: Race in Writing Centers Program.
Presented a paper, “Competing Cultures: Working the Academy and Making Work Academic.”
- 25-26 May 2006** Diversity Mini Conference: Achieving the Dream for Colleges.
Attended workshops on developmental education, retention, and student diversity.

(Abstracts on the papers delivered at conferences can be found in attachment section 4.2)

4.3 List and describe any grants, fellowships, prizes or other honors received or won.

FACC Professor of the Year 2009: I was notified by Dr. Gary Sligh that I received at least one vote as a nominee for the 2009’s Professor of the Year nomination.

4.4 List and describe any honorary societies to which you belong. Provide a complete listing including items that predate the evaluation period.

Marquis Who's Who in America: I was selected into the Who's Who in America 63rd edition 2009

4.5 List any academic courses (credit, non-credit, or certification) taken beyond degrees listed under "Curriculum Vitae." Provide a complete listing including items that predate the evaluation period.

Summer 2008 TESOL Graduate Course: I took one TESOL graduate course (3 credit hours) at UCF: Cultural Diversity. This course gave me insight on how different cultural and subcultural groups and communities think and learn.

Summer 2007 TESOL Graduate Courses: I took two TESOL graduate courses (6 credit hours) at UCF: Grammar for Non-Native English Speakers and Teaching TESOL. These courses helped me become more aware of the academic needs of my non-native English speaking students.

2005-2007 Woodstream Writing Workshop: I was an active member of a writing group that meets weekly to craft and share creative writing.

(*Orlando Sentinel* article on my participation at the Woodstream Writing workshop and an outline on English for Academic Purposes workshop can be found in attachment section 4.5)

4.6 Bibliography.

In addition to the conference papers that I referenced in section 4.2, I have published in the online journal *Currents in Teaching and Learning* 1.1 (fall 2008). The title of my published paper is "Emotional Labor: The Pink-Collar Duties of Teaching" pgs. 45-56. I recently submitted a paper entitled "Resilience and Perseverance in White Trash Literature" to the journal *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*. I am also making revisions on my paper "Whiteness Studies

vs. Liberal Multiculturalism: An English Teacher's Stance on Race and Language" that has been accepted to *TESOL Quarterly* upon approved correction.

(Submitted papers to scholarly journals can be found in attachment section 4.6)

4.7 List and describe other professional or scholarly activities not covered in questions 4.1-6 above. (Give dates).

(Two instructional performance appraisal forms and five individual classes of student evaluations can be found in attachment section 4.7).

To the best of my knowledge, I certify this information to be complete, correct and current.

Signed: *Holly A. Larsen*

Date: 09-15-09

Current Rank: Instructor

