



The Two-Year College English Association

Characteristics of the Highly Effective Two-Year College Instructor in Englishⁱ

Preface:

The highly competent English instructor in today's two-year college—like highly competent faculty at all levels of education—is a skilled educator, an accomplished scholar, and an active learner, contributor, and leader within the profession. What distinguishes the two-year college English instructor is his or her dedication to open educational access, commitment to democratic participation and equity within higher education, and ability to help make these ideals a reality for highly diverse learners from backgrounds that cross conventional divides of age, race, ethnicity, class, and academic preparation.ⁱⁱ

Rationale:

The Two-Year College English Association (TYCA) of the National Council of Teachers of English has developed this document to offer guidelines for individual faculty, faculty groups, administrators, boards of trustees, accrediting agencies—in short, those who may screen, hire, assess, or evaluate two-year college English faculty. The document identifies and briefly describes the unique strengths of highly effective two-year college English instructors.ⁱⁱⁱ

Characteristics:

- 1. Highly effective two-year college English instructors are exemplary teacher-scholars.** Their teaching is informed both by reflective practice and by application of the best available theoretical approaches. Highly effective instructors recognize that ongoing scholarship legitimizes their expertise, informs their practice, and provides their students with models for intellectual inquiry. Moreover, teacher-scholars share their scholarship in a process of “critical inquiry and critical exchange” (cf. Slevin 6) through publications in professional journals and presentations at conferences of relevant professional organizations.^{iv}
- 2. Highly effective two-year college English instructors center their classrooms on students.** They involve students in the learning process through a variety of approaches from group work and projects to debates to individual presentations. They reflect on their own ways of learning so that they approach each class with a belief that others, too, can learn if teachers offer them ways to do so. Before, during, and after each of their classes, these effective teachers examine what has been most successful and use that reflective process to modify how they teach subsequent classes.
- 3. Highly effective two-year college English instructors understand and value student diversity.** Their curriculum design and teaching approaches are genuinely inclusive and responsive to the broad differences in age; social and economic backgrounds; racial, ethnic, religious, and international affiliations; learning styles; and academic preparation that reflect the democratic nature of the typical two-year college classroom.
- 4. Highly effective two-year college English instructors collaborate with full time and part time colleagues to maximize student success.** They work collegially to develop curriculum; assess classes, teachers, and programs; and create enriching professional development opportunities for all faculty. They are flexible and supportive in accepting varied teaching assignments and administrative responsibilities as needed in an effort to meet department and program needs.
- 5. Highly effective two-year college English instructors develop individual areas of expertise that contribute to well-rounded academic departments.** Over the course of their careers, they build deep theoretical and practical knowledge of one or more discipline-specific areas, such as curriculum design, writing theory, multi-modal composing, developmental writing/education, writing across/in the disciplines, writing center operation, English-language learner theory, distance learning and hybrid course design, educational technologies, experiential and service learning, course and program assessment, and dual credit/dual enrollment programs.

- 6. Highly effective two-year college English instructors accept the responsibility of college and broader community leadership.** Their academic credentials, ongoing scholarship, and classroom expertise offer invaluable leadership resources to decision-making groups addressing a variety of educational and societal issues. In the college setting, the trained instructor’s professional values and judgments are essential to making sound course, program, general education, and accreditation decisions. In the larger community setting, the highly effective instructor’s deep knowledge and well honed critical thinking abilities promise capable leadership of broadly-based ad hoc working groups.

Conclusion:

TYCA recognizes the many talents of two-year college English teachers amid the powerful forces that impact teaching in two-year colleges. In light of the growing momentum toward standardization of curriculum, such as via the Common Core State Standards and the Degree Qualifications Profile, TYCA affirms that the effectiveness of any curriculum is dependent upon the effectiveness of instruction, which is itself dependent upon public and institutional support of faculty and faculty development. Moreover, TYCA emphasizes that both effective curriculum and effective instruction are deeply embedded in local conditions. To that end, TYCA offers these characteristics of highly effective two-year instructors in the hope that they can form the basis for meaningful discussion of faculty hiring and professional development; of evaluating teaching effectiveness; and of decisions related to retention and promotion. Finally, we expect that these guidelines can become a foundation for fully recognizing and utilizing the professional expertise of two-year college English faculty.

Works Cited

- Conference on English Education. “Beliefs about Technology and the Preparation of English Teachers, a CEE Position Statement.” National Council of Teachers of English. <http://www.ncte.org/cee/positions/beliefsontechnology>. Online.
- . “Understanding the Relationship between Research and Teaching, a CEE Position Statement.” National Council of Teachers of English. <http://www.ncte.org/cee/positions/researchandteaching>. Online.
- Slevin, James F. “Keeping the University Occupied and Out of Trouble.” *Profession 2002*. New York: MLA, 2002. 63–71. Print
- Two-Year College English Association. “Guidelines for the Academic Preparation of English Faculty at Two-Year Colleges.” National Council of Teachers of English. <http://www.ncte.org/tyca/positions>. Online.
- . “Research and Scholarship in the Two-Year College.” *TETYC* 39:1 (Sept. 2011): 7-28. Print.

ⁱ Proposed new name: “two-year college” is more inclusive than “community college,” recognizing technical and “junior” colleges.

ⁱⁱ Adapted from “Guidelines on the Academic Preparation of English Faculty at Two-Year Colleges,” TYCA statement

ⁱⁱⁱ The bulk of this statement comprises statements and definitions in other TYCA statements, notably “Guidelines on the Preparation of English Faculty at Two-Year Colleges” and “Research and Scholarship in Two-Year Colleges” but also references “Beliefs about Technology and the Preparation of English Teachers, a CEE Position Statement” and “Understanding the Relationship between Research and Teaching, a CEE Position Statement.”

^{iv} This and the following characteristics are adapted from “Research and Scholarship” plus other documents as noted.

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