CREATING STUDENT-FRIENDLY ASSIGNMENTS AND TESTS

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Roadmap

- Research Findings
- Student-Friendly Assignments
- Student-Friendly Tests
A. - There has been some debate whether students in college should get homework or not.
B. On the other hand, students often perform differently based on the test questions they get.
“The Battle Over Homework” by Harris Cooper, 2007

“Rethinking Homework” by Cathy Vatterott, 2009

teacherweb.com/MA/.../Effectiveness-of-Homework-combined.doc

“Evidence About the Effects of the Assessment Task Format on Student Achievement” by Robyn Caygill and Liz Eley, 2001

www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00001841.htm
Research has shown that overwhelming college students with homework does not have positive results.

- My advice: Give students some relevant homework that will not take too much of their time.
- Always give them a choice if possible.
- Have enough time to discuss the homework assignments to make sure that the students understand the directions.
- If you assign a research project, make sure that you break it into several steps and give students enough time.
Student-Friendly Assignments

- Technology:
  - A. Online workbook from Grammar in Context
  - B. Quizlet.com [http://quizlet.com/_373mv](http://quizlet.com/_373mv)
C. YouTube videos
   - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJg138YlwvA
     How to structure your essay
D. English with Light and Sound
   - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TrBMtsn3JiA
Student-Friendly Assignments

- Give the students a list of questions (7 for example). Have them answer 3 of their choice.
- Fill in the blanks or make sentences with new vocabulary:
  - *In my country* women usually ..........
  - *Doctors in my country* ..........
Do you want to praise the students for what they learned or punish them for what they don’t know?
- Get the students familiar with the format (show them a model and also have the students create possible questions or grade possible answers).
- if possible, review the questions or give them a list of possible questions
- give them something similar to what they did in class or something that they can study.
1. When I teach them the essay structure, I ask them to bring three important things or pictures of three people in their lives. They talk about them and they write an essay.

2. We practice writing the essay in class during a few class sessions. After introducing the chapter about introductions, I ask my students to write an introduction on a given topic individually or in groups. If they write in groups, each group writes their introduction on the board.
Practicing writing an essay in class: I write the topic on the board, split the class into groups and each group picks a paragraph to write. Then, they either email me the paragraphs or write them on the board and we analyze them.

Day 1: Write one paragraph about one aspect that you like about the place where you live.

Day 2: Write one paragraph about another aspect that you like about the place where you live.

Day 3: In-class essay:
- 1. Describe the city where you live. What do you like about it? Write about three different aspects? OR
- 2. Describe the country where you used to live before you came to the USA. What are three important aspects that you like about your country?
When we study different rhetorical modes (i.e. classification or process essays), I have the students read the chapter at home. In class, I ask them to brainstorm possible topics for that type of essay. I list them up on the board. Then, I split the class into several groups and each group chooses a topic and write a paragraph. I correct each paragraph, and then, I ask students to choose any topic they like and to write an essay.
2 prompts. If the students cannot answer any of them, I add the 3rd prompt.
For the Midterm or Final, I tell my students to study some chapters. They will have to answer some questions.

Sometimes I ask the students to create possible questions.

Sometimes I give different groups some questions to answer. They write down or report their answers to the class. The rest of the class grades the answer.
Student-Friendly Assignments and Tests