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Special Edition

ELA PROBLEM-SOLVING IS MORE THAN ELA SKILLS

by Alton Higashi

This special edition presents English language arts (ELA) development among our Chuuk Campus students. There is good/encouraging, and there is bad/discouraging.

First, students in ESL/BU 096 (ESL for Business Purposes II) engaged in authentic learning projects. On page 2 are 10 samples of the students' "business cards". On page 3 are haiku poems which students in EN 201 (Introduction to Literature) wrote, following the haiku format of 5-7-5.

Second, student learning can be dismal as well. Twenty-six of 74 students (35%) in SS 150 (History of Micronesia) and SS 170 (World History) wrote essays on three questions: (1) Why do students fail to learn in class?, (2) What subject is least important for them to learn?, and (3) Should students graduate and receive their diplomas, even though they do not fulfill accreditation requirements? Fifteen of the 26 essays are published unedited (on pages 4-7).

Read some of the essays and determine the kinds of English-writing problems among our COM students. Problems include spelling, punctuation, capitalization, redundancy, non sequitur, and so many grammatical errors such as subject-verb agreement, verb tense, and pronoun-antecedent. The list goes on and on. To be sure, students need to upgrade their English-writing skills, and we must help them do so through recursive-writing strategies.

More problematic, though, is what the students reveal about themselves. Personal, interpersonal, and cultural barriers and attitudes run deep among many students. A former Chuuk Campus director (who taught one course every semester in order to better understand students' needs) said several years ago, "*Asking students in class to answer questions is like talking to a brick wall.*" This same non-response by students is common today.

Third, on page 8, a student essay presents students' perceptions of faculty. Without getting involved in personal reaction, we the faculty can learn to self-improve on several counts. After all, perceptions — real and imagined — inform us on how to relate better with students, and vice versa..

We can advise, encourage, and cajole. We can scold, rebuke, and ultimately give more Fs. We know the problems. We need now to know how to engage in President Daisy's "culture of problem-solving". ■

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Any expression of opinion or viewpoint of the writer(s) of an article in this Meseiset publication is solely the responsibility of the writer(s), not of the COM-FSM system.

**SAMPLES OF 'BUSINESS CARDS' FROM ESL/BU 096 STUDENTS
(Fall 2012)**

<p>JOVIANE RUBEN Bookkeeping Student</p>  <p><i>College of Micronesia Chuuk Campus P.O. Box 456 Weno, Chuuk, 96942</i></p> <p><i>Phone: (691) 332-3387 Fax: (691) 330-4712 E-Mail: roberjov@comfsm.fm Home Island: Rose, Tennessee</i></p>	<p>JAMES JUNO (Secretarial Student)</p>  <p>College of Micronesia-Chuuk Campus</p> <p>P.O. Box 202 Weno, Chuuk State, FSM 96942 Phone #: (691) 330-4342 Fax #: (691) 330-4546 E-mail: jamesjun@gmail.com</p>  <p><i>Roro, Tannaar (Roro Island)</i></p>
<p><i>Tommy Atala (Bookkeeping Student)</i></p>  <p>College of Micronesia Chuuk Campus</p> <p>P.O. Box 203 Weno, Chuuk FSM 96942</p> <p>Home Phone: 330-3577 Cell phone: 932-2210 E-mail: chuuklover@yahoo.com</p>	 <p>College of Micronesia Chuuk Campus</p> <p>P.O. Box 4 Weno, Chuuk, FSM 96942</p> <p>Cell phone: 691930-9118 rokeroy1@comfsm.fm Home Island : Polle</p> <p>ROYLEEN ROKE Bookkeeping Student</p>
<p>Erna Max Bookkeeping Student</p>  <p>College of Micronesia Chuuk Campus</p> <p>Orou Island Home Island</p> <p>P.O. Box 1622 Weno, Chuuk, FSM 96942 Cell Phone: # 9323323 maxerna@comfsm.fm</p>	<p>Ritensy Tokoishy (Bookkeeping Student)</p>  <p>College of Micronesia Chuuk Campus</p> <p>P.O. Box 571, Weno Chuuk State, FSM 96942 Cell Phone # 691-932-3028 rtheduce@comfsm.fm</p> <p>Feupe, Tol (Home Island)</p>
<p>College of Micronesia Chuuk Campus</p>  <p>Rianne Refleng Secretarial Science Student</p> <p>Phone No: 691-930-4362 reflirian@comfsm.fm P. O. Box 343 Weno, Chuuk State, FSM 96942</p> <p>HOUK ISLAND</p>	<p>Susian Inek (Bookkeeping Student)</p> <p>College of Micronesia Chuuk Campus</p> <p>P.O. Box 441 Weno Chuuk FSM 96942</p> <p>Phone No: 330 - 5551 inekusui@comfsm.fm Home Island: Nema</p> 
<p>JUNIOR PAUL (BOOKKEEPING STUDENT)</p>  <p>College of Micronesia Chuuk Campus</p>  <p>P.O. Box 117 Weno, Chuuk, FSM 96942 Phone: 401 330 4665 E-mail: jujupa80@gmail.com</p> <p>HOME ISLAND: DURLON</p>	<p>College of Micronesia Chuuk Campus</p>  <p>DICKSON AKKO Bookkeeping Student</p> <p>P.O. Box 123, Weno, Chuuk FSM 96942 Phone No. 691-330-8159 akkodick@comfsm.fm</p> <p>Houk Island</p>

Photo credit: Eduardo Oliveros and Edson Asito

SAMPLES OF HAIKU BY EN 201 STUDENTS
(Fall 2012)

Down in the blue deep
I saw moving like a jet
Was a shark hunting.
- *Danis Rodriguez*

Fragrant mwaramwars
I received on my birthday
Was my mother's gift.
- *Lovelyn Smith*

Sound of flood water
Tall, big waves hit the seawalls,
People are frightened.
- *Erat Stephen*

A hungry old man
Wished to eat barbecued fish,
Instead, ate breadfruit.
- *Marlyn Selifis*

I miss my island.
Playing on my home island,
Makes me feel so good.
- *Florensa Rayphand*

My life is like fire
With the flame my life goes on.
With no flame, I die.
- *Evlyn Smith*

The pounding stone has
The sound of my heart, when it
Beats fast in my chest.
- *Flynn Fredy*

A CATALOG OR LIST POEM

I hate that I am not with you.
I hate myself.
I hate that I didn't know you.
I hate feeling sad.
I hate that I couldn't change you.
I hate you're not in my life.
- *Rosa Yeseki*

EDITORIAL ADVISORY TO STUDENTS:

Read the essays below (on pages 4-7). They are the writings of your peers. They agreed to share open and humbly their words/ideas with you. The essays contain three lessons for all peer readers. First, there are numerous English errors — find them. Second, they describe problems of thinking/feelings — compare them with your own thoughts/emotions. Third, all of us need to solve the problems of English-writing skills and attitude barriers — take the initiative to overcome your own barriers — and self-improve. That is a truthful obligation to yourselves, your families, your future. ■

Student Essay #1, by Sucie Kincho

According to the students their nothing they can do about taking AA degree with their stupid understanding.

First, students are not answering question, students also silence during class. Students are not giving out question to teachers about misunderstanding plus students don't even talk in class.

Second, students wanted to receive or take the AA degree without earning it by following the teachers instructions such as answering questions or else what they don't even understand about.

Third, students also don't even speak english everyday, in campus, in student center, in the library and also when they have lunched beside or behind the seawall, Especially students are not studied and doing their assignments. ■

Student Essay #2, by Isaias Peter

Some student are so stupid with the AA degree because when they attending collage the really confiuse, however, some of their course they haven't took in high school and elementary. that's why they really stupid when they attending collage. And some of them they confiuse because of many reason, For an example: Some of them are slow to understand what they are sposed to do in school. Those students are so stupid with the AA degree they need to improve their knowledge before they get the course, but those students are being so stupid in school with the AA degree they also need to ask more advise from their adviser before they select their course because some students in COM chuuk campus they select their course without their advisore because they select their course on their own. A collage student should need to follow everything from their adviser and their teacher.

First, She or he need clear their mind in the registration day. And they need to follow the stepped clearly. As i said some student did not follow their advisor, that's why when they attending their class they really stupid because they did not follow the stepped.

Second, a students need to know what course she or he are able to get in semester, some of them mixed up on their course, that's why they really stupid in school but they get their degree.

Nowadays I realized that all of them, they just need to get their degree in collage but the really so stupid. If they follow their advise they will be okey; And also to follow the stepped when they begins to select their course. It is true, the students are so stupid. ■

Student Essay #3, by Franky Kaminanga

In my words and opinion, I strongly agree to get my AA degree even though I'm a terrible student, I don't rarely read hand-out nor speak English on campus, but "HELLO!" This is Chuuk, we learn by mistake and learn by oral teaching, by doing it on hands. For this, thats what makes me learn and keep it in my brain. The main point is, people where born with sins, and I know I've made alot sins already but eventually we all die. Me, you and them and thats why I believe to graduate with my AA degree. ■

Student Essay #4, by Bernadita Seady

The AA students so stupid because they were to hurry to earn their AA degree. Even though they didn't pass their courses.

First, they only want and think about taking their AA degree without earning it.

Second, they don't want to study hard. They just pretend to sit in class without doing nothing.

Third, but not the least, they don't know english. They don't want to practice their english every time and everywhere. Example at home, in class and on campus.

In conclusion, students so stupid because of pretending. ■

Student Essay #6, by Lizaraka Stephen

It happens in the College of Micronesia that students graduating with an AA degree are truly stupid. And, there are main problems of stupid students receiving an AA degree. First, students don't know English. Second, students don't know business. And lastly, people don't know math.

Most students they don't know how to speak and write in the english. But they receive their AA degree. in that case, if they become teacher they will teach stupid lesson to the students. Most students they receive their AA degree they don't know how to write and read. That can also affect our children education.

Students that receive their AA degree they don't also know business. And these can also include the economy. For example, if they don't know business, we have foreigner to come in our states and do business. In other word, the foreigner sent out our money to their states.

Lastly, students with AA degree don't know math. In these case, this can effect the infrastructure. Such as, school, business, hospital and all building that we need. For example, here in chuuk we need builder and other to build our school building, our hospital building and any kind of building our community wanted to build. Also our road in chuuk.

All in all, stupid student that receiving their AA degree need to learn more. And of course, student are so stupid to graduate with their AA degree will cause the problem in our states. First, they will teach stupid english and math. ■

Student Essay #5, by Marcy Ichios

Some students here in COM that may consider that stupid.

First reason, lack of knowledge. They don't study hard. They don't make use of the library. For example, the stupid students don't study at home or they don't have time to study.

Second reason, students they don't attend class, they just come to COM chat with friends, or cruise around. They don't want to go to class.

Third reason, ever since of elementary they don't have good education and when they came to college they struggle because they can not meet the standard. Some stupid students they don't want to speak English in class from elementary to college that why they are struggle in school.

In conclusion, this are some reason why I believe there are some stupid in here COM are AA degree. ■

Student Essay #7, by Jasrel Saimon

There are several possibility effect for stupid student graduated with their AA degree. Firstly, that student may become a stupid teacher. Secondly, it can effect the system of the school learning skills. Thirdly, students may receive less learning from the stupid teacher.

Firstly, I would like to talk about the stupid student graduated with their AA degree, in this reason, the stupid student may become a stupid teacher. For some reason, a stupid teacher can't teaching student, because student may will receive less learning skill from the stupid teacher.

Secondly, I would like to talk about, how the stupid student effect the system of the school. for example, some of the stupid student that are graduated with their degree and stay in the school system for teaching and student may lazy to come for their school system, because of the stupid teacher may teaching them in the way like a stupid student.

Thirdly, I would like to talk about, how the stupid student can become a teacher and teach some of a smart student. In fact, the smartest student may receive a stupid learning skill from the stupid student't become a teacher.

In conclusion, I myself want to say that stop at like a stupid student in the school system. ■

Student Essay #8, by Best Sichiro

Of why students do not learn English importantly, is because they do not know when and where they will use English. Yes, students learn English here on COM-FSM Chuuk Campus, but, some some or maybe most of the students would say, "I will be in English class just to pass this course," but without understanding what English class really mean to all students. Therefore, English rely's on three reasons. Firstly, students are expecting to get's A's in English class just to pass the course but without understand and know about English mean to them. Secondly, English class could be terminate, and start Chuukese class, if that is what the students wants. Thirdly, English class is not important to learn it for their future. ■

Student Essay #10, by Jayann Chipulo

Some people don't know anything about math they say it is not important. First, it is hard to remember the steps of solving math problems. Secondly, some problems in math are too long to solve. Finally, math is a hardest subject to study. It can give head ache to someone who study it. It sometimes give hard time to students. ■

Student Essay #9, by Junior Poch

There are several reason why math is not important. But I choose only two things that math is not important to the student. Firstly, It can make the student confuse about their homework or their test. secondly, It can affect their skills their skills in other subject.

Let me begin first one. It can make the student confuse about their work. most student believe That math is important to their AA degree. what a stupid student! math is not important. yes! Because it really confuse about everythings, For instance, It can make student lazy all the time ur everyday.

Let me continue with the second. It can affect their skill in other subject. most student are crazy because they only do their work in math and forget in their other classes. As I said before student are stupid because they think that math is important to their AA degree. In other word, we are stupid.

These are the two reason why math is not important to the student. It can make student confused and It can affect their work in their other classes. I think need to make this subject to disapeare or make it out of our college. ■

Student Essay #11, by Tayuri Dungawin

History is not important to study here in COM. There are three main reason why I said history is not important to study here at COM. The first reason is because our leader don't make our history to be important to us. Chuukese people don't care about our history, this is the second reason. Finally, COM students are too lasy to study the history in COM. These were the three main reason that I choose to focused on in this essay.

Our leader here in Chuuk don't care about our history. They don't want to learn what will help our island from our history. For example, the history that help the people of Chuuk long ago. But yet our leader don't want to bring it back to help improve our island of Chuuk State. This is why I said history don't important to study in COM, because our leader don't want to learn history also.

Second reason why history is not important to study in COM is because us the Chuukese people don't about learning our own history. For instance, many Chuukese now they want to learn modern but they don't want to learn history. They think that history is our past and we don't have to learn it. Modern is the way to help our people and our island to improve but not history. This is the second reason why we don't have to study history.

The third reason is the students of COM Chuuk Campus. The students are too stupid to learn and study the history. ■

Student Essay #12, by Inthefensus Risin

Psychology is not important to me because Psychology is hard for me to take it. And psychology class we have to talk in English in class all the time and psychology is not important for me because I don't really think I can't speaking English all time in Psychology class because I just like to talk in my own language because every time I speaking all my class looked at me. that the reason why Psychology is not important to me because I don't like the way when my classmate looked at me when I try to speaking in English.

Psychology is not important to me because the Psychology class is too much thing to take in science. In science you have to study about human being and animals and other kind of resources to study science. ■

Student Essay #13, by Flynn Fredy

Why am I deserve to graduate as a AA degree if I am still lazy? There are several reasons comes to my mind when I see this question. Now, here I will put three of these reasons. First, is I want to know whether the student is also lazy or not. Second, I want to prove how lazy I am. Last, is when I'll become a teacher I will make sure the student won't lazy.

Lots of students are very lazy at this time Maybe not just me who face this problem but maybe the whole students. Teachers who are very lazy in college school might know or realize students who are very lazy. That is why my first point say that the reason why I am still lazy is because I wanted to know whether the students are very lazy or not, when I become a teacher.

Are you lazy? well, how to I prove myself if I am. Now, Lazy are students therefore, students are lazy. Who ever had heart problem won't be able to work or come to school ■

Student Essay #14, by Anonymous

I deserve to graduate in this college as a AA degree because I strongly agree that I am smart enough or capable of passing all my classes.

This school, I should say is somewhat just a place to expand knowledge very little. To be honest, I learn only a little in this school. I know that I am capable doing it because its already there in my head. This college hasn't improve since the last time I came (2009).

It's like a habit of teachers just sticking to the level of a students understanding, lowering the standard just for students. I don't get it, its better if a students work hard to achieve it. I am

referring to me, because thats what I did in the past (2009 Fall). Now that I came back it is still the same, I know that I deserve my degree because I am a person that works hard to acheive the goal. Now, presently I am doing nothing but mostly to much of peer pressure wanting to hand-out cos I know I can do it, but it is just not in my interest to the courses here at COM. I am actually waisting and not waisting my time here, its just that this COM is always just the same, it has never changed, and to be honest, hasn't improve. So, what is it for me, when I know it's all easy courses which I can do. ■

Student Essay #15, by Beatrice Martin

There are several reasons why I deserve to graduate with AA degree but I didn't deserve it. The main reason for that is maybe we just want to finish early eventhough we didn't earn it. Maybe we just need to achieve our goal earlier. That's why we deserve that.

An additional reason for that is because some we just want to show off. In other words, we pretend that we are achieving the goal and we are very fast because we're so smart that why. ■

If you are not willing to learn,
no one can help you.
If you are determined to learn,
no one can stop you.

taken from justequotes.com
by Lynn Sipenuk

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF OUR FACULTY, by Soster Tither

Perception is a tricky tool in human relationships. It may be correct, and sometimes wrong — that is what we learn in PY 101 (General Psychology). Good or bad, we use perception to know and understand the world around us. Here, at Chuuk Campus, we the students perceive our faculty, and with our perceptions we think and feel something in our relationships with our instructors.

I want to discuss three kinds of perception. The first is observation, and we need to be as empirical as we can be in what and how we observe. The second is from our Chuukese culture — and it is called “máfenpuch”. When students think that an instructor is wrong, they say nothing any way because our culture demands that we must still respect him or her and show courtesy. The third is “tipitipingaw” or “sokongaw”. When an instructor scolds us, we feel scared or afraid to relate with him or her.

The first is observation. We use our physical senses (such as seeing and hearing) to observe instructors. In this way, we see his or her behavior, we make eye contact, and we check out his or her body movement. We reach a conclusion — right or wrong — about the instructor’s personality and attitude. In this way, we decide how to interrelate with him or her. For instance, we notice when an instructor smiles or frowns or whatever. A smile becomes a positive classroom environment, and an angry face becomes a time for us to be scared in class.

The next is “máfenpuch”. For whatever reason, students sometimes think that an instructor is bad or wrong. They choose to remain silent in class. They do not want to answer the instructor’s questions, or they do not ask questions in class. They may even think that it is a waste of time to sit in class and to listen to a bad or wrong instructor, so they cut out of class. They find the class boring and they lose interest in learning. Sometimes, the instructor uses a teaching strategy that students do not like or understand. The students say nothing, and they learn nothing. Since students shut their mouths, the instructor may conclude that they understand his or her lesson, and the instructor continues teaching in a bad or wrong way. This is not the problem of student learning of English. It is a problem of human relations in Chuukese culture.

The third is “tipitipingaw”. There are two kinds. For one thing, when the instructor gets angry and scolds, often in harsh words, including “kapas ngaw”, students become afraid and remain silent. Also, when the teacher gets upset but does not scold, the students know that it is their own fault — for not answering the instructor’s questions, for not asking questions, for being embarrassed or shy in speaking in English, for not studying lessons, for not handing in their assignments on time. The end result is the same — both kinds of “tipitipingaw” — and the positive relationship between instructor and students is lost.

The way we perceive instructors can destroy our relationship with them. A simple fact remains — the instructor fails to teach, and we the students fail to learn. A big regret is that students have to pretend to learn. There is no honesty between instructor and students.

All of us at Chuuk Campus — administrators, faculty, staff, and students — we know these problems in perception, and we really need to find solutions. I read somewhere that our honorable President Daisy wants everyone to communicate better, and this is where we must begin to solve our problems. I just hope that our faculty can perceive us in ways that will help the instructor to improve both teaching and learning. I am not a teacher, and I alone do not have answers or solutions, but I call upon our Management Council, Faculty/Staff Senate, SBA, and campus committees to solve the problem of two-way perception as well as two-way misperception. ■