

Chapter 8: Accelerated Learning Program (ALP)

What is ALP?

ALP stands for the Accelerated Learning Program. In short, it allows you to take ENG 101 at the same time that you take developmental writing. It is called “accelerated” because it allows you to finish your writing classes sooner than if you were taking a regular ENG 096 class. *See your instructor for eligibility for ALP.

This means you will be able to enter the classes that need ENG 101-readiness and/or completion at least a whole semester earlier. It also means you are enrolled in six hours of writing classes in one semester. ALP is a special arrangement that allows you to work with the same teacher for both classes. Because of this special arrangement, you cannot withdraw from one of the two classes without being withdrawn from the other class too.

You may have already seen this rule in your class syllabus:

Students in an ALP class must regularly attend both of their writing classes. If a student does not abide by the attendance policy in either of the classes, he or she could be withdrawn from BOTH classes. The courses are linked, and students may not remain in only one of the courses. The exception to this rule is if the student has attended through the 13th week of class in the ENG 101 class but will not be able to complete it with a passing grade, the student may withdraw from ENG 101 at that time and still complete ENG 96 with his or her End-Of- Semester portfolio.

Your instructor may have additional requirements about attendance and/or coursework that you will need to fulfill in order to remain in both courses. These requirements will be listed in the syllabus under Course Policies.

Tips for Taking Six Hours of English Classes

1. Find a place and time where you can work on your English assignments. Do not wait until you find time to complete them. Make time!
2. If you are having problems with the assignments, talk to your instructor. Your instructor wants you to succeed in both classes! You are not interrupting him or her if you visit during office hours. Many instructors respond promptly to emailed questions.
3. Use the Success Center as a resource. You can visit the Success Center for help with any stage of your writing assignments. The Success Center is also a great place to work if you have questions about using computers or other classroom technology.
4. When you feel comfortable doing so, exchange phone numbers with other ALP students. If you are absent, you can text to find out what was missed.
5. Do not miss more than one day of class in a row without contacting your instructor.
6. Find a way to keep all your assignments organized. For some instructors, that may mean having a binder of materials specifically for your English classes. You will need to have your files saved in the cloud or on a flash drive so you can access them for later revision. You will need to keep all of your work all semester in order to revise your papers for the ENG 096 portfolio.
7. Keep an eye on your attendance and grades in both classes. Remember, you need to stay in one to remain in the other. Also, you must pass ENG 096 in order to pass ENG 101.

As the Semester Draws to a Close

Somewhere around Week 13 of the semester, your grades in both classes become much more important. If you are not going to be able to pass ENG 101, you have some decisions to make. Some of these decisions may already be outlined in your instructor's syllabus. Some instructors will allow you to withdraw from ENG 101 after the 13th week if you are not going to pass it with a C or above. Students who are not going to pass ENG 101 still need to pass ENG 096 in order to take ENG 101 the next semester. The only way to pass ENG 096 is to have a strong portfolio.

What if you are earning good grades in both ENG 096 and ENG 101? You still need to have a strong ENG 096 portfolio. Again, the only way to pass ENG 096 is with a portfolio that receives a proficiency rating from the committee. For a better sense of how strong your portfolio should be, flip to the section of sample portfolios at the back of this book that scored a proficiency rating.

Portfolio Strategies for ALP Students

The advice about the portfolio in this book was written for traditional ENG 095 and 096 students. Much of it still applies to you as an ALP student. Your instructor may assign portions of this book to you, or it may be used as a reference.

When assembling your portfolio, you should choose the two essays that show how much you have accomplished as an ENG 101 student. Look at more than the grades you received on the papers; for instance, look at the depth and quality of the papers. The committee will want to see that you can write different types of papers, so the topic and the structure of your two best papers should not be overly similar. Also, you should include work that is all your own. Any papers that were worked on with a group should not be included in the portfolio. The committee wants to see what you can do and what you have learned.

When writing your cover letter or reflective essay, you are not allowed to mention that you are an ALP student or that you are in an ENG 101 class. You will need to think about what your audience needs. Your instructor has gotten to know you very well by the end of the semester, but this cover letter audience does not know you at all. Think about the lessons you learned (both about writing and about being a student). Explain the assignments that are being included in the portfolio. What was the instructor looking for? How did you achieve your final draft of the paper? What did you struggle with along the way? Your instructor may provide you with an assignment sheet or specific additional pages in this book to consult as you work on the cover letter or reflective essay. If you are already writing a reflective essay for an ENG 101 portfolio, you will need to revise it for the portfolio audience.

A Sample ALP Portfolio that Scored “Proficient”

Dear Writing Assessment Committee,

When I started this class, I was determined to improve my writing and be successful in this class. I set some goals for myself and learned new writing strategies that I applied to my writing throughout the course.

Before I started applying these new writing skills, I already thought I was a good writer, but I wanted to make my writing better. For one, when I wrote essays before taking this class, I never really thought about time management. When writing, it's good to plan days and times to work on your project so you'll have time to get your thoughts on paper. Also, you don't have to worry about rushing to get it done because you didn't wait until the last minute to do it. Now when I'm writing, I plan days to go to the library to work on my papers so I can be prepared. It has helped me because it's easier to have my projects done before deadline. Revising is another strategy that has helped me throughout the course. I used to try to get my essay done all at once, but I've learned that it's okay to keep working on your paper to make it better. There is always something that you can change and add in your paper to make it better than the last draft, it's not going to be all the way perfect the first time. Even famous authors and journalists have to revise their writings. You can always find something to change in your drafts.

Therefore, getting all your thoughts down on paper is great for your first draft but organizing is the key to bringing your paper together later. Organizing your paper is important because your writing needs to flow and make sense to your readers. When organizing you have to create a transition through your paragraphs with each topic to make your paper sound smooth. Nobody likes to read a paper that is all over the place with their topics. Those type of papers make it hard for readers to understand and pay attention to. I have gotten stronger with my organization because I have created outlines for my papers to organize my information. Also, my vocabulary has grown and my reading skills have improved. I am able to

use more professional wording to get my point across in a paper and have the skill of reading critically.

I have also started paying more attention to the audience. The audience is very important because these are the people you are trying to appeal to. They are the ones that are going to be critiquing your thoughts. When you think more about the audience when writing your paper, you'll also understand your purpose more. Even with reading, you see how the author tries to appeal to their audience and what type of audience they try to appeal to. I paid attention to those things when reading *Promise of a Pencil* by Adam Braun for example. To explain, the book *Promise of a Pencil* is about a college student starting a non-profit organization that helped build schools all over the world, not for money but "for-purpose" as he stated. He talks about the trials he faces with starting this organization and how he overcame and succeeded. He never thought that his small organization would turn into something so big and inspire people all over. I believe his primary audience are college students wanting to better the world and their community. When he started the organization, he was just a college student himself wanting to do something better than just partying and working at a job that didn't interest him. He talked about his personal experiences that college students could relate to and they could possibly look up to, His purpose for writing this book was to shed light on the fact that anybody can do what they aspire to do as long as they're passionate about it and make time for it. He wanted to speak to people with the same mindset as him and persuade people to make a difference.

Last but not least, I have learned to make a connection between two different essays on the same topic. The theme of this course was volunteering, and I was instructed to write papers on volunteering but in a different way. In Writing Assignment 1, I talked about volunteering and why volunteering was beneficial for people wanting to find a job. The audience for this assignment were SWIC students-- I had to basically persuade them to want to volunteer. With Written Assignment 2, I talked about forming a "volunteer vacation" trip for students to do during the summer. The audience for this assignment was the staff that work in the SWIC

College Activities office. I had to persuade them to consider my proposal to do a "volunteer vacation" over the summer. I picked a location to go to and a project to participate in that I felt would be helpful. I wanted to make Written Assignment 2 different from Written Assignment 1 by putting more thought and feeling into my paper. I also wanted to make the voice of the paper more professional. I used a lot of voice, mature level of thought, and call to action in my writing to add professionalism. I wanted the audience to actually consider the proposal that I made in my paper in a serious way.

I have acquired a lot of information in this class, and I believe my writing has improved. I didn't just learn these strategies, but I applied them in my writing and see the changes when I read my old papers compared to my recent papers. I have created my own voice and sense of creativity to make my paper different from others, I've broadened my vocabulary to sound more professional and my grammar has also improved.

Even though my writing has improved a lot, there are still some things I could work on. I could put more detail into my essays and not be so straight forward and to the point all the time. I feel like if I put more detail into my writings I wouldn't have to revise that much, even though revising is definitely not a problem for me now.

In conclusion, my writing is very different from how I used to write before I started this class. I can say it definitely has changed for the better. I have seen a lot of growth and so has my instructor. Writing has always been something that I liked to do because it allows me to share my feelings safely and allows me to share my thoughts creatively. I have grown tremendously, and I definitely have the art of writing down pat. I believe that with all I have learned I am ready to take on the next course and learn more.

Work Cited

Braun, Adam. *Promise of a Pencil*. 2014.

Volunteering: Key to the Future?

Volunteering or helping at a nonprofit organization is a good way to find a job if you are unemployed, and on a job search. It is good for your resume, finding contacts, and at helping you acquire new skills and knowledge. After all, when you're unemployed it is better to do something than nothing. Even as a student, I understand that you're in school and getting things done with your assignments, but there are still things you can do to help you in the long run.

Statistics show that unemployed individuals who volunteer are 27 percent more likely to find work than non-volunteers, The federal search accumulated ten years of data from the Census Bureau and analyzed 70,000 individuals that were looking for work and from this analysis found a 27 percent increase in odds between volunteering individuals and non-volunteering individuals ("Volunteers More Likely to Land Jobs, Study Finds").

With reading the best-seller *Promise of a Pencil* by Adam Braun, I learned that even with just volunteering and starting your own organization to volunteer at, it can turn into something bigger and open doors for a lot of things, Braun expressed that doing something you're passionate about without profit can possibly turn into something good and inspire people. He was just a college student trying to find himself when he figured out that he could make a difference, by just volunteering. I am not saying volunteering is a big stepping stone in your life to become a philanthropist and have a big organization that inspired many all over the world like Braun did, but you never know - it could be a start to something good, and you'll never know until you try.

Volunteering can also be used as work experience; just because it's not a paid job doesn't mean it's not a job at all. Using volunteering as work experience can be significantly good for teens with no job experience and graduates from high school with no work experience. It can also show job recruiters that you are just not sitting at home doing nothing, but are out there trying to get new skills.

An article "7 Reasons Volunteering Can Lead To a Job", stated that "Acquiring skills or Knowledge as a volunteer and then putting them to use might 'demonstrate higher levels of

capacity, potentially making the volunteer more attractive to and productive for employers" (Shifman). This is true because volunteers can learn many skills and learn about a lot of things while volunteering. That doesn't mean just volunteer for something that you know that you are not capable of doing, but it doesn't hurt to try something new. One of the skills that I required were people skills. With being an introvert, volunteering kind of broke me out of my shell because I got my first experience with working with people.

To elaborate, one of my first opportunities with volunteering is when I was about eleven. I spent my Christmas Eve giving food to the homeless. I was glad that I could contribute in getting them meals. My second volunteering opportunity was when I was a senior in high school. I volunteered at a food pantry at a local church by preparing food boxes to get to people who just needed a little extra help, These things were beneficial because they almost got me my first job and it looked good on my college applications, which got me accepted in a few colleges. Volunteering also got me through high school, mostly because it was required for graduation, but it still put a boost on the students getting accepted into college.

When finding a job, some job seekers might feel sulky and down because they feel there is no hope and might get frustrated because they feel that no one is trying to hire them. Volunteering can lift those sulky and sad spirits and make people more productive and feel like they're needed in the work place. Hey, it happened to me! When I volunteered I felt like I was important and it was great learning new things. Now I'm more confident in looking for a job because I know what skills that I have and how I can contribute to any job I'm interested in. No one will want to hire someone that doesn't have confidence in themselves, so get confident!

In addition, with volunteering you can gain new contacts from the people you are volunteering for and maybe even the people you are volunteering with. Gaining these contacts can give you a boost in finding a job quicker because the people you are gaining these contacts from can put in a good word for you, and that can give you an advantage. Also, it is important to not always depend on these people to put a word in for you because sometimes the recruiters might not be as compliant. Just because someone puts in a word for you doesn't mean it guarantees you a job but that doesn't mean don't try.

You can also gain knowledge about a specific cause. When you volunteer for an organization, you are basically learning about the cause that they are working for. Gaining this knowledge about the cause can land you a job with them or another organization with the same cause. When I volunteered at a couple of food pantries, I learned what food pantries were about and how to work at one. I had experience from the first food pantry I volunteered at and it helped me to work successfully at the next food pantry I volunteered at. Working in the food pantry gave me customer service experience and experience working with food.

Through my own experience, I know that volunteering can be a great thing. With volunteering it made me see that I can make a difference big or small. It made me feel proud that I was helping people get without gaining anything in return. It made me feel good that I was giving back.

If you want to start volunteering and don't know how to go about it, just Google some organizations in your area and pick one that is beneficial for you, or you can go around to ask organizations what you can do for them. I'm sure they would love the extra free help. Picking up trash around the neighborhood, giving out packs of food and so forth to the homeless, and even reading to children at a local elementary school are just a few examples about how to volunteer. Any type of help can get you where you want to be as long as you're passionate about what you are trying to do.

I know college students mostly have jobs and are focusing on when that big essay is due, but students can simply volunteer at their school whether directly on campus. If time management is a concern for you, when you're not working and you're done with all of your classes, you can ask people around your campus if you can help out with clubs, college fairs, or just things to do around the school that will help students. Everything you need is right in front of you. Helping other people can help you also. People pay attention to the little things because sometimes something little can turn into something so big and life changing. Just take it from Adam Braun. Plus, you never know what can happen unless you try.

In conclusion, volunteering is a great thing to do! Whether you are volunteering at an organization or creating your own organization, it could be the start of something big. Who

would want to waste the opportunity of helping the people around them or even people throughout the world? It's possible! So I hope the information I provided changes someone's mindset on volunteering and that they will use this information to do great things. After all, you never know what volunteering has in store for your future until you pass the starting point to success!

Works Cited

Braun, Adam. *Promise of a Pencil*. 2014.

Collamer, Nancy. "Proof That Volunteering Pays Off For Job Hunters" (2013).

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Dear SWIC College Activities Office,

I would like you to consider my proposal for SWIC students. I am proposing a volunteer vacation for students and believe it would be an amazing activity to do for the summertime. The volunteer vacation will certainly be a non-profit but "for-purpose" activity (Braun). So with that being said, this activity is not to benefit me financially or anyone else. It's simply for a learning experience. The volunteer vacation place will be held in Costa Rica.

Isn't vacationing and volunteering two eye opening activities? With vacationing, you get to experience the culture of another place outside of the United States, and with volunteering, you get to help people and make a difference in someone else's life. Now, think about how great it would be to vacation and volunteer simultaneously. Vacationing and volunteering at the same time is a great idea that I want our SWIC students to experience. It could really be a life changing experience for these students. I believe it would benefit students in the best way because this will not only give them a great volunteering and traveling experience, but it might help them get into the career of their dreams. Job recruiters appreciate volunteer actions.

Having a volunteer vacation during summer break is a great opportunity for students to learn about different cultures and help people at the same time. This trip would be a fun learning and eye opening experience that could change students' view on real life problems that people go through every day. There are so many places in the world that need help. So instead of students just wasting their summer break partying, they could be doing something beneficial and helpful for others. We will be having fun, learning, and helping people at the same time.

I chose Costa Rica because while it may seem like a nice place to vacation, they do have problems of their own that will not get better unless we step in and help make a change. Some people in America love to travel and vacation to these places but go back home to their lives where they don't have to worry about the things that people go through in different countries. I feel like now it's time for us to make a difference in these places. Traveling is a great thing, but it would be even better if we just weren't thinking about ourselves but the people that have to live in these exotic locations every day. We can always go back home, but

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the people struggling there can't escape because that is their home. What motivates me is the children affected by this and I feel if we can help the children we could be on to a start to improving the conditions of this city.

For this particular volunteer experience, students will be working in childcare. This is a project that I am interested in because if we can make a difference in these children's lives we can do something very major in this country. Costa Rica is increasing tremendously because neighboring countries like Nicaragua are migrating to Costa Rica because of their natural resources. This migration is causing an increase in unemployment, homelessness, and poverty. In 2014 INEC released results of the 2014 National Household Survey and it revealed that 318,810 people are living in poverty in Costa Rica. In fact, San Jose (the city we are visiting) had the lowest poverty rate at 17.2 percent (Dyer). I believe this poverty that is going on has the potential to directly affect many children.

The Childcare Project provides attention and assistance to the children of Costa Rica that come from challenging backgrounds in hopes to change their lives any way that is possible. SWIC students will work with local staff to improve the lives of these children, Therefore, SWIC students will work in orphanages, community centers, day care centers, schools, soup kitchens, and kindergartens.

I chose the Childcare Project because I believe that making a difference in life starts with the children. I believe that helping the children might inspire them to want to do what we're doing so they can make a change. Then that can give them a mindset that they can help the people right there in their own hometown and possibly overcome this trial. Whether the change is big or small it, can still be tremendous if it's passed on. Travel dates for this volunteer vacation will be from May 18 to May 31 The students that choose to volunteer will volunteer through a service called International Volunteer HQ (IHVQ). Students are responsible for all fees. SWIC College will not be responsible for any expenses. We will not know what lessons or services that will be provided to the children yet because that is something we will discuss at one of our volunteer meetings with IHVQ but whatever it is we will try our best to influence these children to be better than what they are experiencing right now. What we are thinking

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about doing is getting them involved and school (if not already) and other activities that might help them.

I chose the IVHQ organization because it's the most affordable way for students to travel across the world and it's also a safer way than trying to do this on our own. We will have supervision so safety won't be an issue. Also, on their website they have quotes for affordable plane tickets to purchase. The following chart (Trip Money) is of the total of expenses that will be paid at the end of this letter to give a better understanding on how much will be needed and what it will be used for.

Up to 40 students can be able to go on this trip for the simple fact that it would be sort of difficult to keep up with more than 40 students, and I just want to make sure it is a safe trip for everyone, This trip is open to all SWIC Students that want to participate. It will be from the start of summer break and completed in two weeks. I recommend that everyone interested in the field of childcare or education to look into this volunteer vacation trip because it would be especially beneficial for them. Students looking into childcare or education will be able to learn teaching skills as they will be working alongside educators. They will be learning childcare skills as they will be working in daycares. They will also be learning a new language

According to IVHQ, students need \$610 for two weeks of volunteer vacation time. The registration fee will be an additional \$279. Other additional fees will be for flights, travel insurance, vaccinations, lunch, criminal background check, souvenirs, in-country trips or tours, and spending money. According to former volunteers in Costa Rica, \$80 seems to be sufficient for basic weekly expenses. The registration fee pays for program marketing costs, information pack, administration costs, IHVQ fund, travel costs to inspect programs and communication costs with volunteers. The program fee pays for airport pick up, orientation, program supervision, accommodation, breakfast and dinner during volunteer program period, in country 24/7 volunteer support, and in country administration costs.

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Registration Fee	\$279
Program Fee	\$610
Plane Tickets	\$427.45
Spending Money	\$80-\$100
Total	\$1396.45-\$1,416.45

Figure I: Trip Money

In conclusion, I hope that you will consider this activity so SWIC Students can have a learning experience that will help them in the future. Other colleges participate in similar activities so why not us? I stress that you look into this opportunity and support this project by promoting it to students. I promise that if you decide to add this to the list of school activities, it will give students an opportunity to learn, travel, and make a difference in others' lives and even their own. I know that you will make the right decision. Thank you!

Works Cited

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Dyer, Zach. "Troubling statistics: Nearly a quarter of Costa Ricans live in poverty. Troubling statistics: Nearly a quarter of Costa Ricans live in poverty" (2014).

IHVQ. *IHVQ*. 2007.