For my analysis of a University text, I one text I chose to look at was the “General Syllabus for Language and Composition I, English 101.” Since my research project is on the English 101 course and the benefits gained by its students I thought it would be good to get a jump start on the material associated with the course. The introduction and overview section establish that the writing learned in this course will provide students with the general foundation to build upon in the student’s specific area of study later on. “The skills you develop in this class will reinforce and complement the skills you are developing in your other General Education courses and will underpin your future development as a writer.” For this text, I think it is important to recognize the rhetoric used, in that this course is a foundation for writing comprehension that other courses should build upon.

The department also gives the required texts for the course and the course policies for English 101. The other requirement is saving all documents on two discs for the class and for personal use. They also outline the course and what to expect in terms of work load throughout the semester. “Your writing will include drafting, asking questions of readers, responding to other writers, and revising.” Furthermore, the department also gives a time frame of how much time in and out of class students can expect to be working on this course. This allows students to understand ahead of time what to expect and to be prepared for their assignments.

http://english.illinoisstate.edu/firstyearwriting/eng101/syllabus/index.shtml

Discussion #10 Interview
I interviewed a student who is a graduate student in the Accounting program at ISU. I thought that her opinions of her English 101 experience could be beneficial to our study because she is further along in her educational career and it would be interesting to see if she uses any tools from her class freshman year.
She explained that she felt her composition class from high school was more intense and informative than the English 101 at ISU. I thought that this was significant because it is often assumed that a course in a higher level of education would be more difficult or challenging. She also stated that her friends and roommates (who were English majors) were more helpful in developing her writing techniques than her English 101 course.
I think it is important to note that previous classes on composition and utilizing individuals who were knowledgeable in the English field were more helpful than the introductory class that all incoming students are expected to take. And maybe a change in the English 101 curriculum could help fix a gap from high school to college level writing and in different disciplines within the school.
The outside and inside environment of the English 101 classroom is an area that can impact the students and their work significantly and that is why I chose these two pictures. Stevenson, is undergoing construction which has already impacted many other courses that utilize the building. Since most of the English department was based out of Stevenson, and now part of Williams Hall, the construction could also change the way English 101 is taught. However, they have kept the same room structure and seem to be little effected by the construction (maybe it is only an outside distraction).

English 101 and other English courses are taught in a classroom with computers around the walls and a long table in the middle of the room. This seems as if it would be a productive layout because the teacher can see most of the computers and students at the same time and monitor what they are doing and how they are utilizing their class time. However, it is also difficult to be watching every student all the time and the computers can also be a distraction for students with easy internet access. Discussions can be held around the room for the whole class and small groups can meet at the table for quiet discussions or partner revisions. From an outside perspective this area seems to provide both positive and negative functions for the course.

I found that my path on campus is not very interesting and because of my area of study I do not see as much of the campus as I did earlier in my academic career. The buildings that I usually frequent are Stevenson and Williams, and I had never even been in Williams until this year. I also have one class in Schroeder, but the way my schedule is broken up, I usually drive to this class because it is later in the afternoon, where I usually walk directly between the other two buildings.

The university environment and the area of the quad have a unique feeling during and in between classes. Clubs and other groups use the area by Schroeder and the library for stands to hand out information or sell other items. Students are often walking in this area, especially because the library placement and the diverse classes offered in Schroeder make it a high travel area. This semester I had felt that there was less of these groups on campus but I was really just not in the same area that they were because of my classes. It is interesting that these groups move around the campus independently but are still involved and attached to the university as a whole. In renaming the building for this discussion I would change Schroeder to “Shrader” because that is how many freshmen think the name is pronounced and those are the students often in the building.

I also took some interest in the way that buildings are used and reused over time on the university. Williams has especially become a building that is used for many different uses by many departments. Once the library, Williams is now home to different departments and left over classes that cannot fit in other buildings. Because of its wide and different uses, I would rename Williams the “land of misfit classes” because everything can find a home here!

Stevenson, the last building I spend my time on campus, I would call ‘Asbestos Hall’ because of all the construction going on there. I have heard many students who think that Stevenson is the cause for being sick so often and not understanding where their flu or cold symptoms could be coming from, I would also call this building the Scapegoat because of the students I heard blaming the building for always being sick (although I wouldn’t doubt it adding to their health problems). Many English majors also compare the COB’s newer facilities to Stevenson and it is interesting the stereotypes and things that can be said about other major’s simply because of the building they are housed in.
For our topic we are interested in figuring out how English 101 benefits students who take it and its impact on their later academic area. I am really interested and excited to interview students and see how their experience is similar or differs from my own. After taking English 101 here I formed a strong opinion on the course and many ways that it did not seem to benefit me. I know that a problem may be my original feelings on the course and the need for change or improvement for the class. I have to begin to understand the limitations that the university and professors face in the course to see the other sides of the problem and create a new perspective and approach to change.

Another problem we may run into is determining how to gage someone’s writing development over time. Instead we can use personal interviews to see how a person feels their development has changed and not based on the work itself.

I think that our research on the English 101 course will be beneficial for future courses and their curriculum. We will try to understand how English 101 works and how the students feel it functions in their schedule and in furthering their language comprehension and composition. I am particularly interested in this topic because I am an English major and while taking English 101 I had a lot of input about the course that I never was able to voice. But, I know that my experience in 101 may have been very different from other students so it is important for me to keep an open mind and understand the way English 101 works for other students. I believe that through interviews and classroom observation we will be able to better see and understand how English 101 course works. Interviews with students who have taken the course can reveal a lot about the impact the course had for the student in general, if the course is or is not helpful in whatever major they have now decided on, and if they have any suggestions or comments on the course or areas of improvement. I think that we also need to observe and interview students in current classes of English 101. As upper level students, we have been removed from the course for a few years and these interviews can help us see if there are changes from when we had taken the course. Observations of these classes can help us see how the students utilize the time they are given in class and how the classroom environment works towards their benefit.

I had trouble pasting the document with my track changes and one of my partners onto the whole rough draft w/ my track changes. But i added her section onto the rough draft ,and also attached the document with my track changes and hers...sorry for the confusion!

Attachments: **11-11-09 ANT 295 DATA 2 Trackchanges 3.doc**; **11-11-09 Ant 295 Track Changes.doc**