

**Long Beach City College
SABBATICAL LEAVE PROPOSAL**

Name:

LBCC students seeking to satisfy the English requirement for transfer or graduation face significant obstacles in improving their English skills. Though English classes must focus on a wide range of skills such as critical thinking and reading, composition, research, and analysis, the need to help students incapable of communicating in standard written English—that is,

2. Give all pertinent details of your proposed plan. This should include all activities, projects, research, itinerary, study, employment, expected outcomes, relationships with current coursework, etc. connected with your proposed leave.

One of my favorite classes to teach is English 24, College Grammar. Yet despite my enthusiasm, I find myself constantly bound to and frustrated by the textbooks available for this class. Many are thoughtful and interesting; I admire the virtues of several. None of them, however, meets our students' needs. Let me provide some examples. For example, Martha Kolln's *College Grammar*, an innovative approach that links grammatical concepts to composition and rhetoric, begins in chapter one by assuming that our students can not only grasp such concepts as complements and direct objects but also identify the seven main types of English sentence. Our students often enter the class, unfortunately, without a concept of what a verb is or where it might appear in a sentence. Thus, using Kolln's text requires the instructor to scramble to provide materials that could fill three chapters before hers even opens. Kolln's longer work, the authoritative *College Grammar*, compounds this problem by adding nuanced, sophisticated, and entirely overwhelming discussions of the concepts she presents. Other texts present different problems. *College Grammar*, by Alice Calderonello, Virginia Martin and Kristine Blair, provides an intelligent discussion of how to think about learning grammar and nicely ties basic concepts to clause structure. However, despite these attributes, the text is densely written and formatted, has few exercises, and strikes our students as irrelevant to their interest (only a few are there to learn how to teach). So too, the best option for the class I have found—*College Grammar*, by Anita Barry—unfortunately breaks her chapters into a study of nouns, adjectives, adverbs, etc., without linking these discussions to clause structure until very late in the book. Thus, though it is a solid approach in some ways, the book fails those students who wish to address such common problems as run-on sentences, comma splices, and fragments; nor does it help students think about the subtleties of coordination or subordination. As the instructor, of course, I have found ways to compensate for these weaknesses—I make up handouts, I lecture on additional concepts, I have students construct their own sentences, I photocopy supplementary materials, I direct students to online resources. In my scant spare time, I can find ways, in other words, to make the course work. None of these, however, makes up for what I see as a flawed approach to the pedagogy of grammar. I need time to think through how to present these concepts clearly and well. I need to compose cogent explanations. I need to make up exercises—many exercises—that allow students time to make these concepts their own. Furthermore, I need to consider how these advanced concepts can be

II. Considering the limitations of existing materials regarding our student population, how should these concepts be approached?

- Mapping of important concepts
 - Correlation to English 24 course outline
 - Correlation to course outlines of composition classes
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