Zach Kelly Queensborough Community College

Spring 2013 zachkelly.cuny@gmail.com

Class 3A Day Office Hour: Wednesday 2:30-3:30

CUNY Language Immersion Program

**Work, Working, and Workin’ it**

**What is CLIP?**

CLIP (CUNY Language Immersion Program) is an intensive English as a Second Language (ESOL) program for CUNY students who need to improve their academic English language skills. Classes meet five hours a day, five days a week, in day, afternoon, or evening sessions. Students who have been accepted to any CUNY college can spend up to one year in the program. CLIP is offered on 9 CUNY campuses in all 5 boroughs.

Everything we do in class is aimed to prepare you for college classes. Because reading and writing are essential for college classes, we focus on reading and writing, but we also work with speaking, listening, and discussion skills. Our classes even look like college classes—we study one topic or theme for the entire class. Topics include American history, literature, environmental studies, and many others. We read whole books and articles about the theme, write essays about the theme, and do research and go on field trips related to the theme. This is not only a model of a college class, but it is also an excellent way to learn language. In this way, you will build knowledge and academic skills as you develop your English language skills.

**What am I going to learn in CLIP?**

Here are our goals for CLIP students:

1. CLIP students learn theme-related ***content*** that will be useful background knowledge for college classes and will help develop their critical thinking skills.
2. CLIP students practice ***reading*** skills that will make them stronger readers.
3. CLIP students leave CLIP with an understanding of many different kinds of ***writing*** and a stronger ability to write a cohesive essay that communicates ideas with clarity, organization, and relevant detail.
4. CLIP students practice ***listening and speaking in an academic setting:*** asking questions, participating in classroom discussions and debates, giving presentations, and listening carefully to lectures and other students’ points-of-view.
5. CLIP students learn to apply basic ***research skills*** to the content of their class.
6. CLIP students learn about ***CUNY colleges and college classes*** so that they will be prepared to start college classes.

**What is the topic or theme of this class?**

***Work, Working and Workin’ it***

**Work** is a place, an occupation, and an action. Consider, “I have to go to work.” “What do you do for work?” “I worked 60 hours last week.” or “Let’s work together.” Work is something we strive towards, dread, must do, and can’t wait to do. Work provides status and a sense of identity, and puts food on the table. Work is fundamental; it has been a part of humanity since the beginning, and yet it is dynamic and in a constant state of change. What does America’s workplace look like today? How do people feel about the work they do? Why do people choose the jobs they have? What skills are in demand? What college majors will help you land your dream job? What if you don’t know what your dream job is?

**Working** is an action as in, “I can’t talk, I’m working on my essay.” It is also a state, as in, “I’m glad to be working again (I’m not unemployed).” Working is what you are doing when you are in the middle of it. And when you are exerting effort, you are working hard.

**Workin’ it** is an expression that means trying your best and getting things done. Networking, hustling, being efficient, managing your time, and maximizing opportunities will lead to success in this course, your college career, and your professional career that follows.

The title of this course explains our central theme, and it also outlines our mode of inquiry. Throughout the semester, you will be encouraged to 1. Identify a topic/position/genre in a piece of **work**, 2. Actively engage with the text by **working** through it, and 3. **Work it** by applying the knowledge to your life. How can what you have just learned help you as a language student, as a college student, and as a positive and productive contributor to your community?

*Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:*

**Read** and **understand** college-level introductory texts in fields including sociology, economics, management and philosophy;

**Write** academic essays in a variety of organizational styles including classification, process, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, reaction, and argumentative;

**Participate** in college-level academic **discussions** with a classmate, in a small group, and with the whole class;

**Conduct** **research** related to our theme and academic/professional interests of the student including research of career fields, job listings, and the college course catalogue;

**Present** ideas orally and in an online learning portfolio; and

**Utilize technology** required to succeed in college including Microsoft Word and Power Point, Web-based search engines, online learning tools, website creation and digital archiving.

Texts:

*The Working Life: The Promise and Betrayal of Modern Work*- Ciulla

*Gig: Americans Talk about their Jobs-* Bowe, Bowe and Streeter

*Academic Encounters: Life in Society-* Brown and Hood

Supplemental texts:

*Blueprints 2: Composition Skills for Academic Writing-* Folse, Mahnke, Solomon, and Williams

*Transitions-* Bitterlin, Johnson, Price, Ramirez, and Savage

Exerpts from *Walden*- Thoreau

Various articles related to our theme from the following sources: *The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Forbes, CNN, Time* and *narrative.ly.com*

**How will I be assessed?**

Good question! As we will discuss in the *college knowledge* section of class, you should always ask this when you start a new class.

***Ongoing Assessments***

Every other week, we will have ***quizzes on the content, vocabulary, and grammar*** that we have learned in class.

For every essay, you will receive ***feedback on content, organization, and language*** from me and from your colleagues in class. You’ll apply this feedback immediately by editing your essays!

You’ll do frequent ***self-assessment*** in class. I’ll ask you to reflect on your work that day in class, and identify what went well and what was difficult. Use this reflection to make a plan for the next class—should you ask for help, redirect your focus, sit with a different group of students, or change your studying strategies? For example, if you were confused in class about grammar, ask me for help!

***Stand-Alone Assessments***

On week 9 of this semester, we will do a formal ***midterm evaluation***. You’ll start by evaluating yourself in a full-length essay about your experiences and learning in this class. I will also write up an evaluation of you, and we will sit down together, compare notes, and make goals for the rest of the semester.

***Final research project***: Throughout the semester, you will conduct research related to your career and educational goals. Your culminating project will be a presentation based on a personal work interest. We will discuss this project in more detail following the midterm.

On the final week of class, you will retake the ***CLIP assessment tests***: the CLIP essay exam and the Michigan test, which evaluates listening, reading, vocabulary, and grammar skills.

**What are the classroom policies?**

Together, we will create a set of classroom policies to create a space where everyone can learn as much as possible this semester. What does that involve? What can we do to make our classroom a space of learning for every student? We will discuss this in class. We will also review the program’s policies on absences and lateness.

**How can I do well in CLIP?**

Self-assess frequently. Find the best writer in the class and ask him/her to give you feedback on your essay. Work hard. Constantly think about what questions you might have. Try to connect new information with what you already know. Organize information in a way that makes sense to you. Take risks and be wrong -- you will learn much more if you talk a lot and make a lot of mistakes instead of only talking twice, but perfectly.

It’s simple but powerful: *You learn and remember what you think about*. If you think a lot about cooking, you’ll learn about cooking. If you think a lot about history, you’ll learn about history. This isn’t as easy as it sounds—thinking takes energy, focus and an active mind. Challenge yourself to think about the vocabulary words that we use in class. Apply the grammar to your writing and to the text we are reading in class. Think about the content and ideas presented in class—how do they connect with or against what you already knew? What are other related topics that we should discuss or explore in class?

**Are there any important dates I need to know about?**

**Feb. 4 Classes begin**

**Feb. 12 No classes: Lincoln’s Day**

**Feb. 17 No classes: President’s Day**

**March 5 No classes: Program Day**

**Apr. 14- Apr. 22: No classes: Spring break**

**May 26 No classes: Memorial Day**

**Jun. 10: Classes end**

**What else should I know?**

This is such a good question! You should use it frequently—in the doctor’s office, with your teachers, at job interviews, and in the bank. Why is it so good? Because you need to be in charge of what *you* need to learn. No one else will be in charge of it for you, not even your teachers. Even if people explain things to you clearly, ask this follow-up question! You never know when it will save you time and money.

**CUNY Language Immersion Program**

**College-Preparatory Language Skills**

*The following is a brief overview of what you will learn in this program and this class. It is written in the form of an interview with a teacher. Imagine that a student has written the questions and her teacher has responded to them. When you read the interview, write in the margins your own questions and ideas in response.*

***I understand that CLIP teaches language skills through a theme, so I know that I’m going to be learning about a certain theme this semester. Can you tell me more about the language skills that I will be learning? How will they help me pass the CUNY tests and start college?***

Good question! See below.

***How will I improve at reading?***

In order to strengthen your ability to read many kinds of text, we will focus on three reading issues in this class:

1. Background Knowledge;
2. Reading Skills; and
3. Vocabulary.

***1. Background Knowledge***

What is ***background knowledge***? It’s information that you already know before you read a text. Imagine that you are a lawyer. If you are a lawyer, you already understand a lot about law. Reading a legal document will be easy for you since you are familiar with so much of what it says. You are also probably familiar with its structure (the way the information is presented). On the other hand, if you aren’t a lawyer, it’s difficult to understand a legal document.

What can you do to build your background knowledge? That’s what we will practice in class. We’ll work at building layers of understanding by choosing texts that present ideas in a simple way first. For example, in order to build background knowledge about President Obama, you could start by reading a children’s book about him. By reading a book that is easy for you to understand, you will quickly build background knowledge about Obama’s life. With this knowledge, you can then read a longer book about Obama more easily.

Before we start reading, we will do a number of ***pre-reading activities*** to get ready to comprehend and analyze the text. Many of the pre-reading activities that we will do in this class are related to background knowledge. As we do these activities, I will explain why and how they work.

***2. Reading Skills***

What are reading skills? If you have skill, you have the ability to do something well. Reading skills are the different things you do when you read that make you a good reader. For example, if you are able to quickly understand the most important idea of an article, this is a skill that makes you a better reader. There are many other reading skills that will make us better readers. Here are a few.

1. *Identify* ***common text types and elements****:*

There is so much text in the world, but there are a few common types, including narrative, informational, and persuasive. Understanding and recognizing these types—and elements of each type—will help you read quickly and more accurately. We’ll also learn how to read the charts, graphs, and maps that are often a part of nonfiction texts.

1. *Improve* ***metacognition*** *(awareness of & reflecting on your reading process):*

Have you ever missed your subway stop because you have been so absorbed? Have you ever gotten to the end of a page and realized that you had no idea what you just read because you were thinking about lunch? Reading is not a passive activity. Your mind is active and alive as you read—making connections, thinking about meaning, reacting to what is being said—and maybe getting distracted when you remember that you need to buy milk on your way home. How can you redirect your attention back to the text when you get distracted? This is one example of how we can use metacognition to become a better reader.

1. *Interact and react to a text by* ***asking questions and annotating****:*

People who annotate or take notes as they read will remember the information from the text better than people who don’t. As we read, we’ll work with ways to take notes on our responses to the text. For example, if you read a sentence two or three times and you don’t understand it, you might write “?” next to this paragraph. Or, if you read something that reminds you of an experience you had at JFK airport, you might make a note to record this connection.

1. *Identify* ***main ideas, supporting details and examples****:*

When you read for a college class, what is usually tested? Do you see the big ideas on a test, or the small details? Most professors test students on the big ideas. The big ideas are more important than the small details. Distinguishing between these two is not always easy. In every text we read, we’ll ask the questions: What’s the main point here? What details or evidence does the writer provide in support of the main point?

1. *Make logical* ***inferences****—explicit vs implicit*

Texts say some things explicitly. For example, “The man with the cane moved slowly down the hallway.” What is explicitly stated? Only what is in the sentence—there is a man, and he’s using a cane, and he’s moving down the hallway slowly. Based on this, what can you assume about this man? Do you think he might be weak, ill, or injured? The sentence doesn’t say this, but since you know that he’s using a cane and moving slowly, you can *infer* that he is weak, ill, or injured.

***3. Vocabulary***

The juice is good. The juice is sweet and delicious. The juice is tangy with a slight floral scent. The more words you know, the more specific you can be. We take vocabulary seriously in this class, since a large vocabulary also makes you a better reader. We’ll discuss in class how to select and work with the most useful words to incorporate into your vocabulary. Finally, we’ll learn a set of word parts (prefixes and suffixes) that repeat throughout the English language. These short pieces of words help you figure out the meaning of new words. We’ll also learn about the multiple meanings of words, and how to determine the meaning of a word used in a text.

***How will I improve at writing?***

College classes assess your understanding and learning in two main ways: tests and essays. We’ll work on writing essays in this class extensively. What is an essay? What does it do? Who is the ***audience*** for the essay? How does knowing the audience impact the writing? We’ll consider these questions and look at many examples of essays—both effective and ineffective essays. We’ll learn about different kinds of essays, including ***persuasive, narrative, compare/contrast, descriptive, process, and research papers***.

As we write essays, we’ll evaluate our work in terms of ***content, organization, and language***. By working with these three categories, we’ll make our essays more focused, organized, and interesting. We’ll work on developing the content of the essay with ***appropriate details and examples***. For organization, we’ll think about ***how to begin and end an essay*** so that the reader feels oriented and easily understands the important ideas. We’ll consider the essay’s overall ***cohesiveness***—does it feel like one complete piece, or does it feel like many different parts sitting next to each other? We’ll work on ***clarity*** by improving sentence structure and vocabulary.

We’ll work on all of the above writing skills by writing three or four drafts of each essay. The key to good writing is ***revision and editing skills***. You will use feedback from me and other students to work on revising content and organization first. Once the content looks good, we’ll look at the language. What grammar mistakes do you commonly make? You’ll make a list of your most common grammar mistakes to use when you proofread. We’ll also work on varied sentence structure and appropriate vocabulary.

All drafts of each essay will be stapled together, so that both you and I can see your progress. We’ll keep all essays in a folder called a ***portfolio***. We’ll use the portfolios throughout the semester to support your development as a writer.

Besides the essays, we’ll also do many other types of informal writing. Most of this writing will be related to our class’s reading and theme. Most importantly, we’ll work on ***summarizing and responding to*** the texts we read. This is an excellent study strategy to take with you into your college classes.

***How will I learn more about college?***

What’s a credit? A GPA? A registrar? A syllabus? College has its very own vocabulary. To help you get ready to start college classes, we spend time every week on ***college knowledge***. We’ll meet and interview college students to learn about their experiences in college classes. We’ll navigate the college website. We’ll look at textbooks from introductory college classes so you know what to expect in those classes. Our work with college knowledge falls into three categories:

1. *What do you want to do with your life?*

You’ll research majors and careers that are interesting to you.

1. *Nuts and Bolts*:

These are the basics of college, including vocabulary such as registrar, GPA, syllabus, prerequisites, and other college-specific information.

1. *College Skills:*

When you attend a lecture, you need to take good notes to have a record of the lecture. What’s the best way to do this? And how do you study for a test? We’ll learn about the most efficient ways to study and learn.