

AN EXAMPLE OF A SENTENCE OUTLINE FOR A RESEARCH PAPER

Some professors require you to create a sentence outline for your paper in advance of writing the final draft. They ask you to do this to ensure that you are progressing with the assigned paper, to encourage you to pay attention to how you are organizing and structuring your ideas, and to help you think about how to integrate the sources you are using.

Different professors might require different things in a sentence outline, but here is one example on an “education” topic. Note that it begins with a thesis statement, then divides the topic into three main points. In the final paper, each main point would have a section devoted to it. Each main point is broken into sub points (a, b, c) to show how that section will develop in the paper. Sub points usually include a source for their information.

THESIS STATEMENT:

For adult second language learners, improvement in speaking the second language progresses significantly only if the learner is engaged in functional use of the language beyond the traditional classroom setting.

1. There are distinct stages of language learning for adults.

- a) Haynes (1990) reports five stages of language learning.
- b) During the third and fourth stages, “speech emergence” and “intermediate fluency” Haynes (1990, p.1) says that opportunities to practice speaking the language are essential for progress.
- c) Grammar learning should not be dealt with in isolation. Noonan cautions that students should not be encouraged to “let the memorization of grammatical rules dominate their English study” (2005, p. 4). Instead, she advocates encouraging students to listen carefully and notice grammatical differences as they hear language in everyday use.

2. Within-classroom speaking practice can be handled in various ways.

- a) Educators should create opportunities for students to practice speaking the second language with native speakers within the classroom.
- b) When a fluent speaker and a less fluent speaker interact they negotiate meaning, using the situational context to maximize comprehension (O’Neill, 1999).
- c) Within-classroom speaking practice has limitations, however, partly because of cultural differences in learning preferences. Beekes (2006) points out that in class, students [from the Far East] are not used to responding instantaneously for fear of giving the wrong answer and “losing face” (p.5).

3. Practice beyond the classroom is important for students' progress.

- a) According to De Rolf (1995), “going outside the classroom to learn a foreign language is vital to the practical learning component” (p.3). She builds frequent trips and visits into her course curriculum.
- b) Creating opportunities for students to engage in volunteer activities is another dynamic strategy. Springer and Collins (2006) explore the benefits of using a volunteering situation as a medium for students to develop their second language skills through tutoring other students in an academic subject, using the second language. Their objective was “to obtain a better understanding of the relative contributions classroom and community experience may make to the language learning process” (p.1).

References

A list of references formatted in whatever documentation style the course requires, accompanied by a the title (“References”, “Work cited” or other) should be included at the end of the sentence outline.