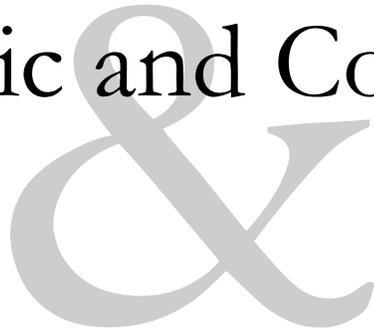


2014

# PUPIL

A Sourcebook for Teachers:  
Rhetoric and Composition



## **MANAGING EDITORS**

Emily King

E. Elle Mooney

Bob Neis

Sara Uribe-Barrios

## **DESIGN**

E. Elle Mooney

## **LOGISTICS**

Ashley Lunsford

Sponsored by the California State University, Fullerton Teaching Writing Club  
and the California State University, Fullerton Department of Literature, Comparative  
Literature, and Linguistics

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## Editor's Note

Conversation has become a key part of today's composition classroom, and it is in that spirit of engaged discourse that this journal was born. In the 1980's, when Kenneth Bruffee presented collaborative learning as the academic "conversation of mankind," he argued that we should encourage students to engage in conversation at every step in the writing process. The idea was that good conversation would lead to good writing. In keeping with that logic, we believe that pedagogical conversation can also lead to good teaching.

As new teachers of composition we are often advised to steal ideas from our colleagues. We've found that to be good advice. We've also found that it's beneficial to share our own ideas for the writing classroom, especially when those ideas are in their infancy, and to talk through and analyze our successes and failures in the classroom. We believe that our teaching practices are enhanced when we question our techniques, sample new approaches, and when we allow our pedagogies to evolve through reflection and good old-fashioned feedback.

This journal presents a collection of teaching materials used in writing classrooms across the nation, in colleges and universities, writing centers and workshops. They span from sample course outlines to pedagogical philosophies to daily exercises for teaching abstract concepts. None of them is perfected; they are simply offered in their present state. We see this collection of materials as a part of a larger conversation about how to teach rhetoric and best engage students in the writing process. We encourage you to use them in your own classrooms, adapt them as needed, and to, of course, share them with your colleagues for further development and implementation. It is our hope that they will inspire your teaching and, in turn, lead to success for your students.

—Emily King

## Mentor's Note

I am very happy to see the third edition of *Pupil* taking its final shape. The TAs of the 2013 class have worked very hard on this edition, bringing together a range of materials and observations—from course planning to reflections of their own teaching—in the hopes of making it easier for future TAs. The richness and depth of each of the sections are clearly indicative of the contributors' and editors' commitment to excellence on the one hand and, on the other, successes they achieved and challenges they came across as they grew in their chosen professional paths. I am as proud of their accomplishments as I am convinced of the value of this edition in helping future students who want to pursue the teaching of composition as a career.

—Heping Zhao

Teaching Associate Program Coordinator

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# Planning and Organizing the Course:

Syllabi

Outlines

Rubrics

Rationales

# ONE

**Fullerton College**  
**Spring 2014**  
**English 059 F: *Developmental Writing***

CRN # 20574 - MW 7:15 a.m. – 9:20 a.m. (Room 1029)  
CRN # 20582 - MW 10:30 a.m. – 12:35 p.m. (Room 3013)

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**Instructor:** Jacqueline Calabrese

**Email:** jcalabrese@fullcoll.edu

**Mailbox:** 470 (Campus Mailroom)

**Available to meet on campus:** MW 9:30 a.m. – 10:10 a.m.

**SI Leaders:** Kat Olvey (MW 7:15); Trevor Allred (MW 10:30)

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**Required Text**

- Mangelsdorf, Kate and Posey, Evelyn. *Choices: A Writing Guide with Readings*. Fifth Edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2013. Print. ISBN 978-0-312-61140-8 (will come with other materials offered by the publisher at no additional cost)
- Suggested: a recent, non-electronic collegiate dictionary for in-class essays

**Other Required Materials & Access**

- Reliable access to the internet & student email
- Reliable access to a functioning printer
- Five large blue/green books (available for purchase at campus book store)
- A mini stapler and refill staples

**Prerequisites**

Recommended score on the English Placement Test or a minimum grade of 'C' in ENG 39. Advisories: READ 056 F. Students who do not meet the prerequisite cannot receive credit for this course. Please be sure you have met the prerequisite early on in the semester.

**Course Description**

This course is four lecture hours per week and designed for native speakers of English who need to build basic English skills in writing, reading, and thinking. It provides instruction in writing effective sentences, organization of ideas into paragraphs and essays, fundamentals of English, reading short essays, vocabulary building, basic critical thinking, and study skills.

**Course Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- discuss main ideas and supporting points in pre-college-level texts
- compose an essay structured around a thesis statement and developed with personal experience related to material from texts
- employ various sentence structures appropriately and practice developing a variety of rhetorical strategies

- adopt strategies for time management, use campus support services to improve writing skills, and establish habits of personal responsibility

### Humanities Division Student Learning Outcomes

Students completing courses or programs in the Humanities Division will be able to:

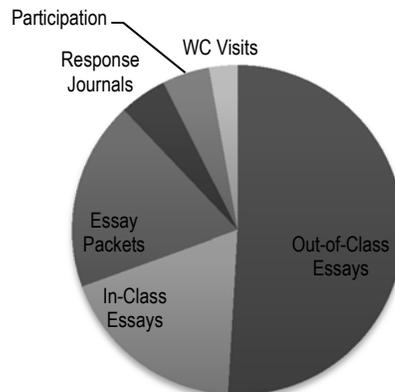
- Use language skills effectively in reading, writing, listening, or speaking to achieve personal, academic, or vocational goals
- Use critical thinking skills to examine information, events, and ideas from a broader perspective
- Recognize the significance of language and culture in human experience
- Apply principles of academic honesty and integrity
- Work cooperatively and collaboratively with others
- Use campus and/or community resources to participate actively in their own education

### Grading

English 59 is graded on a pass/no pass scale. Your final grade will be determined using a point system. There are 1,000 points possible; in order to pass the class **you must earn at least 700 points**. The breakdown of points is as follows:

- 3 out-of-class essays (120, 180, and 250 points each) 550 points
- 3 in-class essays (40, 60, 100 points each) 200 points
- Essay Packets 120 points
- 3 Writing Center Visits (10 each) 30 points
- Response Journal 50 points
- Participation 50 points

**TOTAL: 1000 points**



### Course Requirements

- **Essays** (750 points total)  
You will complete six essays over the course of the semester (three out-of-class essays and three timed in-class essays; see above for breakdown of points for essays). **Students must receive a passing grade on a minimum of two of the in-class essays in order to pass the course.**

Guidelines will be provided for each individual essay. All out-of-class essays must be typed using correct MLA format for both rough and final drafts. Use 12-point of only Times New Roman, double-spacing, with one inch margins at the top, bottom, and sides. Include the following four lines in the upper left-hand side of **every document you submit**, as well as a centered title (no underline, italics, bold, or quotation marks):

Your Name  
Calabrese  
ENGL 059, Days of Class, Class Time  
Date Month Year

All out-of-class essays will be submitted to turnitin.com by 11:59 p.m. on the day the essay is due. If you turn an essay in late, you must still submit the essay to turnitin.com.

*Our class turnitin.com information: Class ID: 7570393 Enrollment Password: fullerton1*

- **Writing Center Visits** (30 points)  
You are required to visit the Writing Center for each of the three out-of-class essays. The Writing Center will provide you with a slip as proof of your visit; you will turn in this slip with your essay. Tutoring sessions are 30-minutes long, and appointments are recommended (see p. 4 of this syllabus for contact information).

- **Essay Packets** (120 points)  
You will have various in-class and out-of-class assignments throughout the course. Select assignments will be stamped on the day they are due and will be collected as part of an essay packet, due on the same day as out-of-class essays.

If you are unclear on an assignment, please ask me immediately; do not wait until the night before or the day it is due to express that you did not understand it. Should you miss a day of class, it is your responsibility to contact a classmate and get the correct assignment. (You should be aware that due to the nature of some assignments, not everything can be “made up” if you are absent.)

- **Response Journal** (50 points)  
You will keep your responses in a blue/green book to be collected regularly throughout the semester. Each response should be fully developed. Partial responses will not receive full credit. Late journals will NOT be accepted.
- **Participation** (50 points)  
Full points can be earned in this category by not missing more than the allowed number of absences, arriving punctually to class, not using electronic devices, maintaining appropriate classroom behavior and attitude, communicating respectfully with the instructor as well as other members of the class, and by actively participating in group and class discussion and activities.
- **Basic Skills Initiative Supplemental Instruction (BSISI) Program**  
The BSISI program provides supplemental academic support and study skills, fosters connections between classmates, and increases student retention, persistence, and success. You will have the opportunity to attend one or two SI sessions held by your SI leader. During the 50-minute session, you will learn various strategies to increase your chances for success in the class. Weekly topics correspond to what we will be working on in class and will help you with essays, worksheets, and other topics from the course.
- **Extra Credit**  
Extra credit can be earned by attending SI sessions, where you will earn a ticket to be entered into a raffle. Raffle winners will earn extra credit points! You must stay for the entire session in order to earn a raffle ticket. Extra credit is also available by attending additional 30-minute tutoring sessions at the Writing Center or Tutoring Center. Each tutoring session is worth five points, and you can earn up to 10 points of extra credit.

## **Policies**

- **Attendance & Tardiness**

Attendance is mandatory for the success of passing this course. You are allowed **three** absences without penalty (or “excused”); *additional absences are grounds for being dropped from the course*. Please inform me of any absences ahead of time, if possible, so I can ensure your success in the lesson or assignment you are missing.

Note: The Fullerton College Catalog states: “after a student accumulates in any class more than a week’s absences (more than the number of times the class meets per week), ...an instructor may drop the student according to the drop deadlines.” Also, “students should not rely on the instructor to drop them from classes. Non-attendance does NOT constitute an official drop. Failure to officially withdraw may result in a failing grade” (p.19).

Habitual tardiness is a distraction for the class. I will allow you a five-minute grace period and after that you are tardy; arriving after the halfway mark of the class will count as an absence. Two tardies will count as one absence. Leaving class early will count as a tardy (i.e. leaving class early twice will equal an absence).

- **Instructor Wait Time**

If, due to unforeseen emergencies, the instructor does not arrive at the scheduled start time for class, students are to wait for fifteen minutes (unless otherwise notified by the division). If they do not receive notification to wait for their instructor to arrive, after fifteen minutes the students may leave with no penalty for absence or assigned work due for that class meeting.

- **Late Work & Due Dates**

Essays are due at the *beginning* of class. If you know in advance that you need to miss class on the day an essay or other large assignment is due, it is important that you make arrangements with me *before* the class you will miss. (See “Late Pass Coupon” at the end of this packet for more information about late papers.)

If an assignment is due for class, you must have a printed copy with you at the beginning of class. Therefore, expressing “my printer wasn’t working,” “my printer ran out of ink,” or bringing your laptop/tablet instead of a printed copy are not acceptable.

Missed assignments or in-class essays may only be made up if the student obtains my approval. Missed activities completed in class (journals, peer review, etc.), either individually or as a group, may not be made up. Essays may *only* be turned in via email if a student receives permission from me before the assignment is due.

- **Classroom Behavior**

All students at Fullerton College are required to follow the standards of student conduct and discipline policy as outlined on page 134 of the Schedule of Classes. In addition, to make our class a comfortable and productive learning environment, I expect you to follow these guidelines:

- Come to class on time, every time, and plan to stay the entire time. We will take a break during the class (one ten-minute break each hour *after* the first hour). Please use that time to use the restroom, make phone calls, text, or eat meals. Do not leave the class during instruction or group activities except for emergencies.
- Do not use your phones or listen to music during class time. Please turn your ringer off when you come into class. If you need to have your cell phone on for urgent matters, please discuss this with me before class.

- Be respectful to those who are talking by listening attentively. When others are talking, it is inappropriate to talk with a neighbor, or leave the class.
- Come to every class ready to work. Bring your textbooks, a notebook, the syllabus and course outline, paper, and a pen or pencil every day. Have your homework completed by the start of class.
- Laptops and/or tablets are not permitted.
- Vaporizers, chewing tobacco, and particularly smelly food (i.e., a cheeseburger) are prohibited in our classroom.

We will be sharing many ideas and opinions in this course. I have ZERO tolerance for anyone that makes another student feel uncomfortable, insecure, etc. Please maintain the highest level of respect when commenting on the work of another student.

- **Academic Honesty**

Students shall not plagiarize, which is defined as stealing or passing off as one's own the ideas or words of another, or using a creative production without crediting the source.

The following cases constitute plagiarism:

- paraphrasing published material without acknowledging the source,
- making significant use of an idea or a particular arrangement of ideas, e.g., outlines,
- writing a paper after consultation with persons who provide suitable ideas and incorporating these ideas into the paper without acknowledgment, or
- submitting under one's own name term papers or other reports which have been prepared by others.

Instructors may deal with academic dishonesty in one or more of the following ways:

1. Assign an appropriate academic penalty such as an oral reprimand or point reduction.
2. Assign an "F" on all or part of a particular paper, project, or exam.
3. Report to the appropriate administrators, with notification of same to the student(s), for disciplinary action by the College. Such a report will be accompanied by supporting evidence and documentation.

I take academic honesty VERY seriously, so please do not attempt any dishonest acts with your writing. If you have any doubts about whether you may have accidentally plagiarized, please discuss your writing with me *before* you turn it in.

- **Campus Resources...only a few of the many offered!**

Resource	What they offer	Contact information:
The Writing Center	One-on-one tutoring helping with the writing process (prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing).	Located in Room 808 in the Library/Learning Resource Center Phone: (714) 992-7153
The Tutoring Center	One-on-one or group tutoring helping with writing with a special emphasis on editing and helping ESL learners.	Located in Room 806 in the Library/Learning Resource Center Phone: (714) 992-7151

- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Statement**

Fullerton College is committed to providing educational accommodations for students with disabilities upon the timely request by the support to the instructor. Verification of the disability must be provided. The Disability Support Services office functions as a resource for students and faculty in the determination and provision of educational accommodations.

If you have a disability and would like accommodations or if you suspect you have a disability and would like a learning disabilities assessment, contact the DSS office at (714) 992-7270. You can also ask me for help working with DSS at any time. If you are already registered with DSS, you should give me your green "Instructor Letter" as soon as possible if you will be requiring accommodations. Plan for accommodations at least a week in advance.

- **Emergency Response Statement**

Take note of the safety features in around the classroom. Also, please study the posted evacuation routes. The most direct route of egress may not be the safest. Running out of the building during earthquakes may be dangerous. During strong earthquakes, it is recommended to duck, cover, and hold until the quaking stops. Follow the guidance of your instructor. Your cooperation during emergencies can minimize the possibility of injury to yourself and others.

- **Catalog and Class Schedule Statement**

The *Fullerton College Catalog* and the *Class Schedule* contains a number of policies relating to students that are important to you. Please be sure that you have read these publications thoroughly. You may purchase copies of these publications at the campus bookstore, or you may read them online at the Fullerton College website, [www.fullcoll.edu](http://www.fullcoll.edu).

***A Final Note: This syllabus and the course it represents may be modified at any time according to my discretion.***

**Peer Contacts**

1) Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Ph. # \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

2) Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Ph. # \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*\*\*\*LATE PAPER COUPON\*\*\*\*\***

Printer not working?

Dog eat your essay?

Still working on the perfect conclusion?

Got some other reason your paper is late?

Don't panic! ☺

You get a **ONE-time opportunity to turn in an out-of-class essay late with NO penalty (up to 48 hours late).**

**Attach this slip to the front of the essay** that you would like to turn in late (the next class session after the essay was due or 48 hours later, whichever comes **first**). If you turn in the paper more than 48 hours late, your grade will be deducted **10 points** for each day late over the 48-hour time period (with a maximum of one-week from the original due date).

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

Original Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date paper turned in: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor's signature \_\_\_\_\_

**REMEMBER, THIS IS YOUR ONLY COUPON! USE IT WISELY!**

***\*\*\*If you don't end up using this coupon,  
you may turn it in with your last out-of-class essay for FIVE extra credit points!***

Kimberly George

## ENGLISH 101 SYLLABUS

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Welcome to English 101! For many of you, this course is not only a GE requirement, but a pre-requisite for writing intensive courses you will take here at Cal State Fullerton. Therefore, this course focuses on the critical thinking and writing skills you will need as you continue on your academic journey. The reading, class discussions, writing assignments, and workshops/ group activities in this class are designed to help you develop these skills.

In this section of English 101, you will read and write about topics relating to education, technology, and issues in today's world. I will ask you to try new strategies to help you to develop and enhance your writing process for college level essays. The workshop design of this class will provide you with ample opportunities to practice using techniques flexibly, considering multiple perspectives, and supporting your ideas. You will also be asked to reflect on the evolution of your writing process, so I encourage you to think of yourself as a *writer* as you participate in all aspects of this class.

This course fulfills the GE Core Competency Requirement A. 2: Written Communications. After successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

- Develop and express your ideas clearly and effectively in writing.
- Support your ideas using sound reasoning informed through critical readings of relevant information.
- Consider the purpose, audience and tone for each piece of writing, and make structural and stylistic choices appropriate for effective communication.
- Constructively critique the writing of others and use these experiences to improve your own writing.
- Use writing to synthesize creative and innovative ideas, solutions, and knowledge.

### REQUIRED TEXTS & MATERIALS:

- *Writing and Revising: A Portable Guide*. X. J. Kennedy, Dorothy M. Kennedy, and Marcia F. Muth. (Bedford/ St. Martin's, ISBN: 978-0-312-67950-7)\*\*
- *50 Essays: A Portable Anthology* 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Samuel Cohen. (Bedford/ St. Martin's, ISBN: 978-0-312-60965-8)\*\*
- Five 8.5 x 11 blue books for Writing Logs and an in-class essay
- College ruled loose leaf paper or notebook for notes/ in-class activities
- Folder or binder for keeping handouts, drafts, essays, etc.
- A stapler for final drafts
- USB flash drive for saving your drafts

\*\*Both texts are available on one hour reserve at the library.



### ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:

Attendance and active participation are necessary to be successful in this course. Assignments are due multiple times a week, so absences and tardiness will directly impact your grade. **If you are absent, you will not receive any points for assignments due/ completed that day.** An absence means not attending class or leaving early for any reason.

Arriving late, leaving early and other inappropriate behavior greatly disrupts the learning environment for you and your peers. Please arrive to class on time, be ready to work and be respectful of your classmates. This means **no cell phones, texting, or unauthorized computer use during class.** Complete all the readings before class and be ready to discuss by bringing your opinions, reactions, and questions with you to class.

### LATE-PAPER POLICY:

Essays are due at the beginning of the class period. With very few exceptions, late papers will not be accepted. I do not accept late work or make-ups of in class activities. If you need to be absent, please arrange for your assignments to be submitted early for full credit.

#### **REVISION OPTION:**

You may revise one essay (#1, 2 or 3) to resubmit for a higher grade. Revisions need to make *substantial improvements* to earn a higher grade; therefore, if you decide to revise a paper, you should consider seeing me or a writer center tutor to discuss possibilities for improvement. Revised essays should be stapled or clipped to the front of the original essay packet. **The deadline to submit revised essays is Friday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>.**

#### **PLAGIARISM POLICY:**

Plagiarism can range from copying a sentence from an article you read, to turning in an essay that you did not write. Cal State Fullerton defines plagiarism as “taking the work (words, ideas, concepts, data, graphs, artistic creation) of another whether that work is paraphrased or copied in verbatim... without giving credit to that source.” Plagiarism and other instances of academic dishonesty may result in disciplinary proceedings.

**You will receive zero points for any plagiarized work which may result in failure of the course.** If you are unsure if you are plagiarizing or have questions about using sources, please ask me. For more information on academic dishonesty at Cal State Fullerton, go to <http://www.fullerton.edu/deanofstudents/Judicial/Policies.asp>

#### **ASSIGNMENTS & REQUIREMENTS:**

##### ***Reading Responses (5.5%)***

Over the course of the semester, you will write 4 reading responses (2 pages in MLA format). These reading responses provide you with an opportunity to thoughtfully reflect on assigned readings and will help you develop ideas for writing.

##### ***Writing Logs (3%)***

In class writing activities will be completed and collected in blue books. This may include activities such as quick-writes, invention activities or group work. You will submit a writing log (blue book) with each essay. You will need **four blue books** in order to submit your writing logs.

##### ***Writing Center Stamps (3.5%)***

Twice this semester, you will meet with a tutor at the Writing Center. Tutoring sessions are one-on-one and last approximately 30 minutes. Please bring your syllabus, essay prompt, prewriting, and drafts to the tutoring session. Also prepare some questions or concerns you have about your essay. See the course outline for due dates.

##### ***Topics Proposals/ Outlines/Summary of Sources/ Rough Drafts (21%)***

For each out-of-class essay, you will complete a topic proposal, an outline and a rough draft. For the fourth essay, you will also summarize the outside sources you found. Outlines, drafts and the summary of sources must be typed using MLA format. Further details on formatting and submission requirements will be included on the prompt for each individual essay. See the course outline for the due dates of each assignment.

##### ***Essays (55%)***

In this class, you will write a total of four essays. These must be typed using MLA format and submitted as a packet consisting of the following: final draft, rough draft, peer reviews, outline and assignment sheet. Please keep all of your graded essay packets throughout the semester.

##### ***In-Class Essay (7%)***

In-class essays will relate to the reading/ writing assignments from the course and will be written in a blue book. You will have two class periods (May 7<sup>th</sup> & May 9<sup>th</sup>) to complete this assignment.

### **Classwork and Participation (5%)**

This includes active participation in class activities and group discussions, as well as prompt attendance to class meetings and conferences. Failure to participate due to tardiness, absence or other reasons will negatively impact your grade.

### **Conferences**

You will attend two individual conferences with me (Week 7 & Week 14). These conferences will be held in my office (LH 534) and last 15 minutes. Tardiness or failure to attend your conference is equivalent to missing one week of class and will negatively impact your classwork and participation grade. Conference sign-ups will be circulated in class.

### **GRADING & POINTS:**

There are 290 points possible in this course. In order to pass English 101, you will need a “C” or better. I use the +/- grading option. There are no opportunities for extra credit in this class.

Assignment	Points Each		Total Points
Reading Responses (4)	4	=	16
Writing Center Stamps (2)	5	=	10
Topic Proposals (4)	2	=	8
Outlines (4)	2	=	8
Rough Draft & Peer Review (4)	10	=	40
Writing Logs (4)	2	=	8
Summary of Sources	--	=	5
Final Drafts (4)	40	=	160
In-Class Essay (Final)	--	=	20
Classwork and Participation	--	=	15
<b>Total</b>		=	<b>290</b>

\*You can calculate your grade with the following formula:  
 $Points\ earned / current\ points\ possible = current\ \%$

Grading Scale		
A+	=	97-100%
A	=	93-96%
A-	=	90-92%
B+	=	87-89%
B	=	83-86%
B-	=	80-82%
C+	=	77-79%
C	=	73-76%
C-	=	70-72%
D+	=	67-69%
D	=	63-66%
D-	=	60-62%
F	=	0-59%
<b>Passing= C or better</b> (73% or 212+ points)		

### **CAMPUS RESOURCES**

*The Writing Center* is a free service for students. At the writing center, tutors will provide feedback on your writing assignments for *any* of your classes (not just English!) in a one-on-one 30 minute tutoring session.

657-278-3506; Polack Library North, First Floor

[http://english.fullerton.edu/writing\\_center/](http://english.fullerton.edu/writing_center/)

\*\*To register and make appointments, go to:

[http://english.fullerton.edu/writing\\_center/appointments.asp](http://english.fullerton.edu/writing_center/appointments.asp)

*The Academic Advisement Center* assists in planning your courses and meeting your degree requirements.

657-278-3006; UH 123B

<http://fullerton.edu/aac/>

*Student Health and Counseling Center* provides appointments to help you stay physically and psychologically healthy.

657-278-2800 (Health), 6579278-3040 (Counseling); SHCC building

<http://www.fullerton.edu/shcc/>

Office of Disability Support Services provides assistance for students with disabilities. Please notify me or the DSS Office if you have a disability that requires extra assistance and support.

657-278-3117; UH 101  
<http://www.fullerton.edu/dss/>

Office of Student Affairs provides links to all the other programs, services and scholarships available here at CSUF.

<http://www.fullerton.edu/sa/departments/>

Campus Emergency Preparedness is available so you can familiarize yourself with procedures here at CSUF. Go to:

<http://prepare.fullerton.edu/>.

Your classmates are also an important resource for success in *any* college course. Use the space below to get the phone number or email of two or three other students in this class.

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### COURSE SCHEDULE

The following is the schedule of assignments for this class. This schedule may be subject to change.

- All readings and assignments are listed on the day they are *due*. Please come to class with all readings and assignments completed the day it is listed on the syllabus.
- **Bring your textbooks, notebook, writing log, and parts of your essays in-progress to class every day.**

WEEK	MONDAY	WEDNESDAY	FRIDAY
1	<p>1/20</p> <p><b>MLK Day: No Class Meeting</b></p>	<p>1/22</p> <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intro to course</li> <li>- Brief syllabus Intro</li> </ul>	<p>1/24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Read syllabus and develop 3 possible quiz questions</li> <li>- Look into text book purchases</li> </ul> <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Syllabus quiz</li> <li>- More introductions</li> </ul>
2	<p>1/27</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Writing and Revising</i> p. 1-6</li> <li>- Register with the Writing Center</li> <li>- <b>Bring Writing Log 1 (blue book)</b></li> </ul> <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Writing process</li> <li>- Instant essay activity</li> </ul>	<p>1/29</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Writing and Revising</i> p. 11-18</li> </ul> <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Critical reading</li> <li>- Explain reading responses</li> </ul>	<p>1/31</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>50 Essays</i> p. 15-19,239-243</li> <li>- <b>Reading Response #1 due</b></li> </ul> <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discuss readings</li> </ul>

<b>3</b>	<b>2/3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Writing and Revising</i> p. 41-52</li> </ul> <i>In class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assign essay #1</li> <li>- Invention activities</li> </ul>	<b>2/5</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Writing and Revising</i> p. 7, bottom of 9-10, 60-62</li> <li>- <b>Topic Proposal #1 due</b></li> </ul> <i>In class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developing focus</li> </ul>	<b>2/7</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Writing and Revising</i> p. 57-59, 83-87</li> <li>- Outline samples p.73-82 (optional, use as a reference)</li> <li>- <b>Outline #1 due</b></li> </ul> <i>In class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Essay structure</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>2/10</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Writing and Revising</i> p. 101-109</li> </ul> <i>In class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developing details</li> <li>- Descriptive language</li> </ul>	<b>2/12</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Writing and Revising</i> p. 142-145</li> <li>- <b>Rough Draft #1 due</b></li> </ul> <i>In class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Peer review</b></li> </ul>	<b>2/14</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Writing and Revising</i> p. 137-142</li> <li>- <b>Writing Center Stamp #1 due</b></li> </ul> <i>In class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review Rubric</li> <li>- Revision (HOC vs. LOC)</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<b>2/17</b>  <b>President's Day: No class meeting</b>	<b>2/19</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Final Draft #1 due</b></li> </ul> <i>In class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LOC: Proofreading &amp; editing</li> <li>- Grammar editing checklist</li> </ul>	<b>2/21</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>50 Essays</i> 72-75, 280-283</li> <li>- <b>Reader Response #2</b></li> <li>- <b>Bring writing log #2</b></li> </ul> <i>In class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discuss readings</li> </ul>
<b>WEEK</b>	<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	<b>FRIDAY</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>2/24</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Writing and Revising</i> p. 119-121</li> </ul> <i>In Class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assign essay #2</li> <li>- Choosing a subject for analysis</li> </ul>	<b>2/26</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Writing and Revising</i> p. 112-114</li> <li>- <b>Topic Proposal #2 due</b></li> </ul> <i>In class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Invention</li> <li>- Conference sign-ups</li> </ul>	<b>2/28</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Writing and Revising</i> p. 127-130, 97-100</li> </ul> <i>In Class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organization and structure</li> <li>- Conference sign-ups</li> </ul>
<b>7</b>	<b>3/3 - 3/7</b>  <b>Conferences: No class meetings this week</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Outline #2 due in your conference</b></li> </ul> <i>My conference time is _____ in LH 534.</i>		

8	<b>3/10</b> - <b>Rough Draft of Essay #2</b>  <i>In class:</i> - <b>Peer Review</b>	<b>3/12</b> - <b>Writing Center Stamp #2 due</b>  <i>In class:</i> - Expanding analysis	<b>3/14</b> - <i>Writing and Revising</i> p. 90-96  <i>In class:</i> - Introductions and conclusions
	<b>3/17</b> - <b>Final Draft #2 due</b>  <i>In class:</i> - LOC: Clauses and punctuation	<b>3/19</b> - <i>50 Essays</i> p. 196-202, 438-447 - <b>Reader Response #3 due</b> - <b>Bring Writing Log #3</b>  <i>In class:</i> - Assign essay #3 - Choosing topics and identifying audiences	<b>3/21</b> - <i>Writing and Revising</i> p. 190-191, 62-68 - <b>Topic Proposal #3</b>  <i>In class:</i> - Discuss readings (from 3/19) - Making a claim
10	<b>3/24</b> - <i>Writing and Revising</i> p. 30-40 - <b>Outline #3 due</b>  <i>In class:</i> - Structure of an argument - Using evidence to support claims	<b>3/26</b> - <i>Writing and Revising</i> p. 8-10, 200-201  <i>In class:</i> - Identifying and addressing counter-arguments	<b>3/28</b> - <b>Rough Draft #3 due</b>  <i>In class:</i> - <b>Peer Review</b>
	<b>3/31-4/4</b>  <b>Spring Break: No class meetings this week</b> - Revise essay #3 for Monday 4/7		
<b>WEEK</b>	<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	<b>FRIDAY</b>
12	<b>4/7</b> - <b>Final Draft #3 due</b>  <i>In Class:</i> - LOC: Academic Tone	<b>4/9</b> - <i>Writing and Revising</i> p. 267-279 - Video links on Titanium - <b>Reader Response #4 due</b> - <b>Bring Writing Log #4</b>  <i>In class:</i> - Discuss reading	<b>4/11</b> - <i>Writing and Revising</i> p. 37 (table), 19-20 - <b>Bring computers or tablets if possible for research demo</b>  <i>In Class:</i> - Assign Essay #4 - Using questions to research - Finding sources

13	<p><b>4/14</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Writing and Revising</i> p. 37, 204-208 (top)</li> <li>- <b>Bring in <i>at least one of the sources you've found so far</i> (electronic copies ok)</b></li> </ul> <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evaluating online sources</li> <li>- Using reading to develop ideas</li> </ul>	<p><b>4/16</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Writing and Revising</i> p. 201-203,</li> <li>- <b>Topic Proposal #4 due</b></li> </ul> <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developing problems &amp; solutions</li> </ul>	<p><b>4/18</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Writing and Revising</i>, p. 130-132</li> <li>- <b>Summary of Sources due</b> (<i>W &amp; R</i> p. 218-232 includes a reference for your source citations)</li> </ul> <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developing solutions</li> </ul>
14	<p><b>4/21-4/25</b></p> <p><b>Conferences: No class meetings this week</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Outline #4 due in your conference</b></li> </ul> <p><i>My conference time is _____ in LH 534.</i></p>		
15	<p><b>4/28</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Writing and Revising</i> p. 208-217</li> </ul> <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Integrating sources</li> </ul>	<p><b>4/30</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Rough Draft #4 due</b></li> </ul> <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Peer Review</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>5/2</b></p> <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MLA formatting and citation</li> </ul>
16	<p><b>5/5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Final Draft #4 due</b></li> </ul> <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eliminating wordiness</li> <li>- In-class writing strategies</li> </ul>	<p><b>5/7- 5/9</b></p> <p><b>In-class essay</b></p> <p><b>(bring a blue book)</b></p>	
<p><b>5/12-5/16</b></p> <p><b>Finals Week: No class meetings this week</b></p> <p><b>Office hours during finals week are _____ in LH 534.</b></p>			

## **English 101-Fall 2013**

Instructor: Amber Tavasolian

Office: LH 533

Email: atavasolian@fullerton.edu

Phone: 657-278-7349

Office hours: Tuesday 11:30am-12:30pm

& Thursdays 8am-9am, 5:50pm-6:30pm

or by appointment

Room: MH 685

English 101 (sec #22068)

TU/TH 10:00-11:15am

### **Required Text(s) and Materials:**

Fontaine, Sheryl and Cherryl Smith. *Writing Your Way Through College: A Student's Guide*.  
Portsmouth:

Heinemann, 2008. (WC)

(This text can be purchased at the Little Professor Bookstore, located at 725 N Placentia  
Ave, Fullerton at the corner of Nutwood and Placentia)

1 examination Blue or Green Book

1 Composition notebook

Blue or black pen for all in-class writing

Access to the Internet and Microsoft Word is essential for this class

A fictional book to be approved by me at a later date

### **Course Description:**

English 101 is an introductory composition course designed to foster your understanding of the writing process through the practical application of information provided in class discussions and readings. Throughout the duration of this class, you will develop your analytical and critical thinking abilities as well as improve your skills in written communication. This course is meant to demonstrate and emphasize the importance of writing in both the academic and professional realms, as well as its ability to encourage personal development. Hopefully, this class will also alleviate some of your fears and misapprehensions about writing.

The main goals of this course are to help you:

- Develop your own writing process
- Organize and identify your thoughts in writing
- Clearly and effectively communicate your own thoughts and your understanding of concepts in writing
- Learn how to be analytical about your own environment
- Become aware of the expectations of academic writing
- Gain confidence in your writing ability

**Prerequisite:** Passing ENGL 99 or score of T147 or higher on the English Placement Test (EPT).

## **Course Guidelines and Requirements:**

### **Participation:**

I do not expect everyone to speak during *every* class, but I do expect everyone to be actively engaged during each session. This class will require thoughtful interaction with your peers during in-class discussion and group work; as such, you will be expected to be present and prepared for each class session, your absence and absent-mindedness will be detrimental to yourself, your peers, and the class environment. In order to prepare yourself for class, complete the readings and your writing responses to be turned in during the next class session. Attendance will also affect your participation grade since you cannot participate if you are not in class.

### **Late Work:**

I will not accept late work.

### **Electronic Devices:**

I do not allow laptops in class. Cellular phones are to be kept on silent at all times and in your pocket or bag. Music players of any kind need to be stowed during class. If you have any concerns, see me outside of class.

### **Attendance:**

Life is a fickle and unpredictable journey. I understand that sometimes, things happen. In order to try to accommodate the capriciousness that is life, **you will be allowed 2 absences throughout the semester that *do not negatively affect your grade***, so use them wisely; any subsequent absences and missed participation points will be docked from your final grade. Tardiness will also threaten your grade. Role will be taken during every class session and 2 tardies (10 minutes or more) will be counted as the equivalent of 1 absence.

### **Responses and Weekly Assignments:**

Over the course of the semester you will be assigned weekly readings, which you will be expected to complete and respond to before class. Your readings will be assigned to you out of your textbook, posted online for your access, or will be given to you in handout form. You will be expected to respond thoughtfully and critically to all readings; some responses will be a free response to the reading, and other times you will be given a specific prompt to which you will be expected to respond. Do **NOT** summarize the readings in your response. I picked the reading, I am already aware of what they are about. Each response should be one page, double-spaced, 12 point-font in MLA format.

### **In-Class Writing:**

You will be expected to perform in-class writing several times throughout the semester, both formal essays and informal, impromptu responses. These assignments are designed to test and hone your writing skills in a restricted setting. More information will be provided later in the semester regarding the parameters of these assignments.

### **Essays:**

The essays assigned in this course are designed to employ the skills you will be learning in class (such as analytical, reasoning, and organizational skills) and will be based on the readings and class activities. Throughout the duration of the semester, you will write a total of 6 essays (4 out-of-class, and 2 in-class). Each out-of-class essay will need to be formatted according to MLA guidelines. *All essays* are required to be **4-6 pages in length**. All essays will be turned in at the beginning of class on the day that it is due along with all pre-writing work, rough drafts, revisions, and peer reviews. **I will not accept essays via email or essays that are turned in by a classmate.** If you have any questions or there are extenuating circumstances contact me at least 24 hours before the essay is due.

### **Revisions:**

Writing is something that is constantly in flux and never truly finished, but set aside. That being the case, I will allow you the opportunity to revise 3 out of your 4 essays. However, 10 points is the most your grade can increase with each revision. You cannot lose points in revising. In order to revise you must workshop with either me or a tutor at the Writing Center and write a 1 page long reflection on your revision process. Outlining, prewriting, and drafting will also be counted towards the points you can earn for revision work.

### **Writing Center Visits:**

You will be required to visit the Writing Center **2 times** throughout the semester. Failure to meet this requirement will result in the loss of points from your final grade. Be aware that the Writing Center will not “edit or fix” your essay. The Writing Center is designed to provide you with the tools to become a more confident writer, which means you will be expected to participate and interact with the tutor. In order to make an appointment at the Writing Center you will need to create an online account and schedule your appointments online (<https://fullerton.mywconline.com>). The Writing Center is located on the first floor of the north side (the newer side) of Pollak Library. If you have any questions, call the **Writing Center:** (657) 278-3650.

### **Grading:**

English 101 is a GE requirement that necessitates a grade of “C” or 73% or higher in order for the course to count. This course’s grades will be calculated based on a points system which is structured as follows:

Participation/Attendance:	100 points
Weekly responses:	100 points
In-class Essays	50 points (25 points each)
Essay 1	100 points
Essay 2	100 points
Essay 3	150 points
Essay 4	200 points
Drafting Work	100 points
Peer Reviews	50 points
WC Visits	50 points

Total:  
1000 points

### **Plagiarism (or the Big Bad)/Academic Integrity:**

Plagiarism is an all around awful act. It not only makes intellectuals cry but breaks your instructor’s heart. In case you did not know, plagiarism is: the act of taking someone else’s work, either their exact words; a paraphrased version of their words; paraphrasing their original ideas and claiming those ideas as your own; improper acknowledgement or citation of sources within a work; or the submission of a work that has been significantly edited by another person so that it drastically changes the writing style or content of the work. Plagiarism is a grievous offense and punishment for it is extremely severe, potentially resulting in your expulsion from the university. It is each student’s responsibility to be familiar with the University Policy Statement on academic dishonesty, which can be found at:

<http://fullerton.edu/senate/documents/PDF/300/UPS300-021.pdf>.

### **Special Needs:**

If you have any special needs that require accommodation, please let me know the first week of classes. CSUF requires that students with disabilities document their disability with **DSS (Disabled Support Services)**, located on the first floor of University Hall in UH-101. You may register online at: [www.fullerton.edu/disabledservices](http://www.fullerton.edu/disabledservices) or call (657) 278-3117. DSS can also be contacted online at: [dsservices@fullerton.edu](mailto:dsservices@fullerton.edu).

### **Emergency Information:**

Awareness of the university’s emergency preparedness statement can be found:

<http://prepare.fullerton.edu/>.

### Tentative Course Outline—English 101

Week	Date	In-Class	Homework
1	Tues 8/27	Introductions, Syllabus Overview, Rules of Writing	Read: “Happy Endings” & “Shitty First Drafts” (handout) Write: Writing Process Paper
	Thurs 8/29	<b>*Process Paper Due*</b> How and Why; Assign and Discuss Essay 1	Read: Chap 1 <i>WC</i> Write: Response due Tues
2	Tues 9/3	Language Communities and Audience; In-class essay	Read: Chap 2 <i>WC</i> ; “Just Walk on By” Write: Response due Thurs
	Thurs 9/5	Elements of Essay Writing	Read: Chap 3 <i>WC</i> ; “The Joy of Reading...” Write: Response due Tues
3	Tues 9/10	Identity and Language	Read: pg. 134-141 <i>WC</i> “On Being a Cripple” Bring 2 copies for peer review Thurs
	Thurs 9/12	Peer Review #1; Word Choice	Read: Chap 14 & 16 <i>WC</i> ; “The Jabberwocky”; “Me Talk Pretty One Day” Write: Response due Tues
4	Tues 9/17	Meanings of Words; Interpretation	
	Thurs 9/19	<b>*Essay 1 Due*</b> Assign and discuss Essay 2	Read: “This is Water”
5	Tues 9/24	Extended Metaphor	Read: “What Comes First?” Write: Response due Thurs
	Thurs 9/26	Logic and Logical Fallacies	Read: “Us and Them” Write: Response due at conference

6	Tues 10/1	Conferences	
	Thurs 10/3	Conferences	Read: Chap 6 <i>WC</i>
7	Tues 10/8	Organization and Effectiveness	Read: “Sweet, Sour, and Resentful” Bring 2 copies of draft for peer review Thurs
	Thurs 10/10	Peer Review #2 Social Conventions	Read: “The Ways We Lie”
8	Tues 10/15	Exemplification	
	Thurs 10/17	<b>*Essay 2 Due*</b> Assign and Discuss Essay 3	Read: “In the Early Morning Rain”
9	Tues 10/22	Logos, Pathos, Ethos	Read: “Jesus Shaves” Write: Response due Thurs
	Thurs 10/24	Evolution of Words; Definition	Read: “The Men We Carry...” Write: Response due Tues
10	Tues 10/29	Research Process and Citations	<b>Write:</b> Intro. & thesis for Essay 3, Due Thurs. <b>Read:</b> “On My Wayward Affections” & “Untitled” <i>*Bring 2 research articles for Thurs.*</i>
	Tues 10/31	Integrating Quotations Structure, Form, Audience	<b>Read:</b> “The Ritual of Fast Food” <b>Read:</b> pgs 65-68 <i>WC</i>
11	Tues 11/5	Finding Connections and Creating Meaning	Bring 2 copies of draft for Thurs.
	Thurs 11/7	Peer Review Assign and Discuss Essay 4	<b>Read:</b> “The Chase” Bring 3 items for analysis: song, ad, poem

12	Tues 11/12	<b>*Essay 3 Due*</b> Context and Meaning	<b>HW:</b> Select a text for analysis for Essay 4
	Thurs 11/14	Elements of Analysis: Visual Texts	<b>Write:</b> Intro. and thesis for Essay 4
13	Tues 11/19	Elements of Analysis: Audio-visual Texts	
	Thurs 11/21	Elements of Analysis: Written Texts	
14	Tues 11/26	Fall Recess—No Classes	HW: Work on Essay 4
	Thurs 11/28	Fall Recess—No Classes	HW: Work on Essay 4
15	Tues 12/3	In-class Essay	Bring 2 copies of draft for peer review Thurs
	Thurs 12/5	Peer Review # 4	
16	Tues 12/10	Multidisciplinary Relevance	
	Thurs 12/12	<b>*Essay 4 Due by 5pm*</b>	

# Essay Rubric

Jacqueline Calabrese

Element	High Pass (90-100%)	Clear Pass (80-89%)	Marginal Pass (70-79%)	Marg. No Pass (65-69%)	No Pass (64% & Below)	Score
<b>Essential Criterion (5%)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follows all formatting guidelines, exceeds page requirement</li> <li>Accurately addresses prompt (4-5)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some elements of formatting are incorrect, minimum pg. requirement</li> <li>Prompt is addressed (2-3)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guidelines not followed</li> <li>Prompt is not followed (0-1)</li> </ul>	
<b>Introduction (3%)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interesting "hook" and background information</li> <li>Leads logically to thesis (3)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average hook</li> <li>Adequate background information provided (2)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No "hook"</li> <li>No context</li> <li>Unrelated to thesis (0-1)</li> </ul>	
<b>Thesis (15%)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear, well-worded, and insightful thesis with both fact and opinion (14-15)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear thesis that establishes the main point with fact and opinion (12-13)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic thesis but still has both fact and opinion (11)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unclear or awkwardly worded thesis; fact or opinion missing (10)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Irrelevant thesis or no thesis provided (0-9)</li> </ul>	
<b>Paragraph Structure &amp; Development (25%)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Topic sentences included throughout that make clear, insightful points</li> <li>All paragraphs are externally focused</li> <li>Well-developed with reasons, details, &amp; examples</li> <li>Sophisticated &amp; varied sentence structures (23-25)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Topic sentences that make clear points</li> <li>Focused ideas</li> <li>Developed with reasons, details, and examples</li> <li>Variety of sentence structures (20-22)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average topic sentences</li> <li>Mostly focused paragraphs</li> <li>Adequate development or some paragraphs lack full development, details, reasons</li> <li>Limited variety of sentence structures (18-19)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some paragraphs lack topic sentences that make clear points</li> <li>Some paragraphs unfocused</li> <li>Some paragraphs lack full development, details, reasons</li> <li>Awkward sentence structures (17)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most paragraphs lack topic sentences</li> <li>Most paragraphs unfocused</li> <li>Most paragraphs lack full development</li> <li>Confusing sentence structures (0-16)</li> </ul>	
<b>Meaningful Analysis, Evidence, and Process Explanation (22%)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistently provides relevant and detailed examples</li> <li>Makes consistent and insightful comments about the significance of examples</li> <li>Strong process explanation with many interesting details (20-22)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides relevant examples with good detail</li> <li>Comments on significance of the majority of examples</li> <li>Process explanation provides many details (18-19)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides average examples</li> <li>Sporadic comments on the significance of examples</li> <li>Average process explanation with minimal details (16-17)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides few examples or some are irrelevant</li> <li>Does not comment on significance of examples</li> <li>Rushed and undeveloped process explanation (15)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides few or no specific examples</li> <li>Does not comment on significance of evidence</li> <li>Shows lack of understanding of the assignment (0-14)</li> </ul>	
<b>Overall Essay Structure (20%)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Logical sequencing and structure of ideas</li> <li>No filler ideas or sentences</li> <li>Smooth paragraph transitions throughout</li> <li>Satisfying conclusion (18-20)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Logical sequencing of ideas</li> <li>Transitions included throughout</li> <li>Basic conclusion (16-17)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some minor organizational problems</li> <li>Average paragraph transitions</li> <li>Less-than-satisfying conclusion (14-15)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Somewhat disorganized structure; filler ideas</li> <li>No transitions</li> <li>Underdeveloped or repetitive conclusion (13-14)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paragraph structure is absent</li> <li>Generally disorganized</li> <li>No conclusion (0-12)</li> </ul>	
<b>Spelling, Grammar, &amp; Turnitin.com (10%)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contains no sentence boundary or grammatical errors &amp; very few punctuation and/or spelling errors</li> <li>Submitted on-time; original work (9-10)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contains very few grammatical sentence boundary, punctuation, or spelling errors</li> <li>Submitted on-time; original work (8)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contains some sentence boundary, grammatical, punctuation, and/or spelling errors</li> <li>Submitted on-time; original work (7)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pervasive sentence boundary, grammatical, punctuation problems impair clarity</li> <li>Late turnitin.com; original work (6)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pervasive errors that drastically impair clarity</li> <li>Late and/or over 10% of the essay is from an uncredited source (0-5)</li> </ul>	

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Important Notes/Comments (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_ % / \_\_\_\_\_ /100

## Course Rationale

Sara Uribe-Barrios

The manner in which I created my syllabus and structured my classroom activities and practices heavily rely on the teaching philosophy I have developed throughout the given opportunities I have had throughout the Teaching Associate program. The syllabus has been modeled after what I hold to be valuable in the classroom to foster our growing writers in the classroom. Within it I provide the intention of each assignment section whether it is peer review, reading responses, essays, writing center, etc. so that students will realize the significance and purpose of the assignment and become aware of the effectiveness. My approach with this is not to be too directive, but I at least want to offer a model for students to follow, the execution of the assignment is in their hands.

Another integral part of the course syllabus is the books I have chosen for the class. I chose *50 Essays* as my reader only because it has quite a variety of essays. It includes essays that speak to the topics I want the students to discuss; it also has model writing for the students to follow and most importantly it lends itself to the value of the classroom. This reader is compiled of essays that are a staple of our education and history, but it also has modern writers with modern topics. I appreciate this notion because it permits for a conversation to happen where students can engage in critical conversations amongst themselves with my facilitation. To pair the essays in the anthology I have also assigned *Writing Your Way Through College* so that students learn about voice, language communities, collaboration, etc in a more approachable manner. By becoming aware of this students can situate themselves as students in the university and the text also allows for them to situate themselves in a writing process.

The essays assigned offer students an opportunity to expand the practices they are learning in regards to writing and apply the knowledge beyond the classroom. Since I stress the significance of personal voice I have attempted to create prompts that promote that and practice for students to gain authority over their personal voice. The argumentative essay they write is about an issue in a community that only they belong to, and by asking them to apply academic conventions to topics and relations they are familiar with the blend of the two becomes possible.

Another strong practice in the class to promote collaboration and the writing process is peer review. I have created a peer review worksheet in relation to *Writing Your Way Through College* that outlines the process of peer review and the purpose of it, so students are well aware of what their role is during the process of it. This worksheet reminds them of the collaborative aspect of having a conversation with our peers in regards to writing. In regards to the writing process I have implemented a need to turn in an outline and a first paragraph with a working thesis on different meeting days before each essay peer review date. This allows students to not only start thinking about their essays before hand, but it provides a window for them to recognize the process of writing. The entire course is modeled after my attempt in allowing students to become active authorities in their writing, so they can continue writing beyond the university.

Students enter the classroom well aware of their role as students and as learners. They are familiar with routine of coming to class ready to discuss and work with their peers. It is important that a community is built amongst themselves, so that their learning becomes more accessible and practical. The course I offer my students allows them to be the authority of their voice and yet they still have access to the conventions of college level writing. Blending the two empower our students beyond the walls of the university, so that once they leave our campus they continue to be effective writers and thinkers.

## **Fraternal Twins:**

### **Relating Reading and Writing in First-Year Composition Classrooms**

Zeba Khan-Thomas

Reading and writing are kin—they should never be divided. The processes involved in writing any piece of prose are directly influenced by what students read. Similar the development of fraternal twins, two factors contribute to the creation of student prose. If you consider reading and writing as the two zygotes (elements) needed to produce twin babies, which would be multiple drafts in this case, then the presence of both of these elements would be essential to producing thriving and compelling offspring (essays). My purpose in using this metaphor is to emphasize the degree of relation that reading and writing have with one another, and to pair the two as fraternal twins for first-year writing students to link synonymously in practice when producing their written works. Students learn how to write by reading and writing, which conjoins both of these seemingly independent zygotes (processes) together to create an undeniable pair. If instructors use literature to construct first-year composition courses, it enables students to write in various genres, while enhancing their critical thinking skills. To be clear, my definition of literature is any written prose about something that provides information or criticism for readers to digest. Students who claim not to love literature do not have to love it; students simply need to be able to use reading literature as a tool to become better writers. On almost any standardized test that is required for admittance into higher education today, and even in K-12 public schooling, students must know how to read and decipher different genres of writing to demonstrate their reading comprehension abilities. Interpreting different genres on various subjects can lead to students developing critical ideas and concepts to write about in first-year writing composition classrooms. Utilizing literature in first-year composition courses can also help student writers become better readers; thus, enabling them to effectively summarize, synthesize, argue from a given perspective, and condense research articles for their required disciplinary courses in the future. Students should not just read about writing to become better writers, rather students should be able to select the appropriate genres to structure their writing, and use those relevant texts to inspire their thought processes as they matriculate from course to course in their collegiate tenure.

When a students' mind is ignited by something interesting that they read, their writing will show it. First-year composition students have the opportunity to utilize didactic and relevant texts at their instructor's discretion. Considering that many of their daily lives involve them decoding or reading status' and tweets on social media, first-year composition students should be reading and writing about reality and fiction interchangeably in classrooms too. During a recent spring semester, within the last two years or so, I constructed an argumentative lecture on the Trayvon Martin case. Trayvon was a young black Florida teen, who was fatally shot by a white Hispanic male, because the self-proclaimed "neighborhood watchman" felt that Trayvon looked suspicious walking around in his father's gated community with a hoodie on. The legislation in question for this incident was Florida's "Stand Your Ground" law, which the neighborhood watchman claimed to be enacting in this case. When I received a confirmation to guest lecture in a colleague's classroom to facilitate an argumentative writing lecture, I decided to focus my lecture on the Trayvon Martin case, since it was a popular topic among students around the University at the time. As a former graduate student and

current adjunct instructor at an HBCU, I realized the importance of incorporating reading material that was relevant to minority students. I also crafted an assignment to accompany my lecture, which required students to read several news media articles about the case in order to distinguish their understanding and relevance of point-of-view in argumentative writing. They had to consider rhetorical devices such as ethos, pathos, and logos, which are often used in media or any other subjective prose form, and determine whether these media outlets' abilities to persuade audiences to "sway" left or right on their given topic was successful. For the formal assignment to accompany the lecture, students were to select one of several news media articles regarding the Trayvon Martin case, digest it, and determine in their own writing what the author of the media article was arguing for or against. It was important to have students contextualize different genres of writing with some form of reading, so that they came to class prepared to contribute to the genre of essay that they would be producing. While the students completed their assignment before-hand, I prepared their class lecture to consider other conventions of argumentative writing such as logical fallacies, hasty generalizations, and oversimplification. If students could review various media articles from different critical written perspectives, their writing would inevitably challenge and include which of those methods was most effective in their own essays. The best thing about having these students read several articles about the same topic was that it showed them how facts could be manipulated and interpreted, and that they would need to evaluate credible sources for their own argumentative papers in that class and other courses. Needless to say, reading about the Trayvon Martin case sparked the interests of students, which encouraged them to think critically about the facts surrounding the case, and the legal contingencies involved with it as well. The assumed pathos that could have governed their argumentative responses about the case was subsided with various critical perspectives that showcased ethos and logos regarding its legislation and public perception. Students became both socially and intellectually conscious with this case, and the arguments in the media regarding it. The fact is, students will see and hear about the things that are happening around them every day, which is why it is important for first-year writing instructors to incorporate aspects of digital literacies in their classrooms through reader-response blogging, and argumentative responses to news and social media.

Writing in first-year composition classrooms often focuses on specific essay genres or prompts that lead to several draft processes. It is easy for first-year writing instructors to fall into the monotony of assigning the same essay genres, with the same rubrics to measure them. However, when first-year writing instructors simply administer their essay instructions with no contextual reading(s) to accompany them, students often feel the pressure to produce a "one-size fits all" work that is error free, and rubric compliant. Now, if you're anything like me, you don't like to feel like the warden of your classroom, reprimanding students constantly for grammar and mechanics when grading their essays. Rather, first-year writing instructors need to learn how to be flexible to the processes and anxieties of student drafts and peer-review sessions in the way that content is collected and interpreted to reinforce essay genre competency. The truth is, many students believe that their writing should automatically meet a level of professional writing in their first drafts, without them having to practice writing in different genres when they first enter our classrooms. What first-year composition students need to know is that scholarly, published authors have read tons of supplementary literature that has shaped their writing content and genre familiarity. Published

authors quickly learn to adjust their writing for different genres through extensive research and extensive revision processes. Whether aspiring authors are reading their own drafts, or gathering supporting material for their work, they must use reading and writing synonymously in order to achieve a successful final written product. In “Teaching Writing/Teaching Literature,” Charles Moran describes how he used a published author’s drafts in his freshman writing classroom to show students that professional writers were not “error-free,” and that they had several writing processes to adhere to before succumbing to a final draft that they were comfortable with:

Treating the authors as writers was relatively easy. I mimeographed letters from the novelists in which they talked about their writing. I photocopied manuscript pages with the author’s corrections clearly evident, to give the students a window on the author’s writing process, and to counter the impression that the book along inevitably gives: that the finished book appeared just as it is, magically, or at least by a process absolutely distinct from the students’ own writing processes. I searched for mistakes the novelists made, not to suggest they were in some way deficient but to demonstrate that writers are human and that in any human endeavor, as Samuel Johnson told us, ‘error creeps in. (21)

In the excerpt above, Moran had his students read drafts by a selected author to help them establish credibility for the drafting process that was unique to each one of them. He also wanted them to work towards producing a publishable final product each time they wrote something in the course, whether they aspired to be authors professionally. Moran’s pedagogical technique here also reinforces authority for student writers, which I would argue, is one of the most important contributions that the first-year writing composition classroom can offer students. Many students often mimic the language and styles that they read. First-year writing students may also feel compelled to assimilate to what they consider the “right” way to write, which is an injustice to them and their identity as writers. Moran’s main goal, a noble one I might add, was to get his students to shy away from “error-free” work, and the educational ideologies that had been instilled in them about it. Additionally, Moran used creative writing assignments to help his students better identify with themselves as writers, and he explains his reasons for doing so with the following:

I brought into the course assignments normally given in creative writing classes. I attempted to discover for myself an essential component of a particular writer’s performance, a component that the writer used often, and with variety, throughout the piece in question. The component might be a short dramatic scene involving two people, or a description of place, or an interior monologue. I then asked the students to perform this same act, in writing, before they had read the writer’s novel, and before I had made any reference to this author. (22)

Many times in education, we try to formalize what we teach students in order to make them more objective and less subjective as learners. However, Moran argues that English, as a humanities field of study, provides composition and literature instructors with the rare opportunity to challenge formality with creativity by developing assignments that bring the human experience back to the center of learning and self-discovery (22). Let us consider our own childhood as the beginning place

for self-discovery in first-year composition courses. As a two-part assignment in my first-year writing course, I had students select their favorite childhood super hero movie, and consider alternative settings and powers for them to have. Students would write a summary on a review one week, and then create a modern, revised narrative of a movie featuring their favorite superheroes based on the plot and characterizations in the film for the following week, using the review as supplementary information for drafting. For the summary, I asked students to highlight the information in Christian L. Pyle's essay review entitled "The Superhero Meets the Culture Critic," which addressed Richard Reynolds' essay "Superheroes: a Modern Mythology," in one page. Below is an excerpt of Pyle's essay review discussion of Reynolds' argument that superheroes have been overlooked and under studied by cultural critics:

Although the 'superhero' has been a staple of American mass media since the emergence of Superman in 1938, a definitive study of the genre has not appeared. Parallel to the 'earthbound god' tradition of costumed heroes stemming from Superman is the 'masked man' tradition of heroes with no real 'superpowers.' The best-known comic book example is Batman, but he was preceded by other comic book heroes, pulp fiction heroes, and radio heroes. One could argue that Batman's above-average intelligence, athletic ability, weaponry, or fear-instilling costumes are 'powers,' but Reynolds does not go into that. (1-2)

Students had to read Pyle's references carefully in order to understand and summarize his review of Reynolds' argument. Pyle's essay review on the construction of superheroes in America led to the narrative portion of the assignment, where students had to consider how their superheroes would camouflage themselves as everyday people, and how they would use their powers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Students also needed to include one dialogue, and one monologue for their superheroes to partake in. The assignment was three to five pages in length, APA format, with a cover page of the hero that they chose, and any supporting characters in their narrative that they intended to introduce briefly. Their cover page was a collage of sorts, as opposed to your traditional name, date, University, etc. The ultimate goal of this assignment was to have students utilize their imaginations and logic by addressing constructions of reality, and what we consider useful skills or strengths in our society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. After all, most superheroes that we are exposed to in America are human, or possess some human quality that we tend to rationalize and make applicable to our daily ideologies. At first this assignment might have seemed a bit random, but it is actually just what the students needed in order to get them to rationalize the characterization of superheroes as adults. There is also some fundamental composition writing genres at play here with the narrative and summary prose forms being produced. Everybody wins, especially our first-year writing students. In young adulthood, many students are defining their morals and values from their interactions and experiences, past and present. When they enter the first-year composition classroom, they must quickly learn to relate zygotes together (reading and writing) in order to gain a deeper understanding of life and its occurrences. Many of these superhero movies carry over into their adulthood, which can alter or remain consistent with the perceptions that they held before. Students were encouraged to think critically and consider the themes of power, happiness, realism, and fantasy in their own lives. They should be inclined to think out-side of the box, and also consider some of the potential

problems with having special powers or talents in the real world. Students were also encouraged to question the concepts of good versus evil, and whether there was any grey area in between those strict categorizations in real life. Instead of the status quo, linear method of thinking and writing, students should develop their own rational and critical notions of superheroes as adults; thus, encouraging them to decipher why superheroes and superpowers may be attractive both in childhood and adulthood. This assignment enabled students to read in a different genre (essay review), to establish a personalized writing product (critical narrative). Lastly, implementing this kind of assignment into a first-year composition classroom as a narrative exercise, with a creative element, allowed students to open their minds to writing critically about commonplace experiences in order to humanize the writing they were to produce as conscious beings. They gave their writing some character, literally and figuratively.

In “Freshman Composition: No Place for Literature,” Erika Lindermann highlights that “some teachers regret that freshman English has become an unholy ‘service course,’ stripped of the imaginative literature we love to teach” (311). Honestly, I am one of those teachers that Lindermann is referring to. Lindermann presents a cynical counterargument to my claim that literature should be incorporated into first-year composition courses, by suggesting that the fraternal zygotes (reading and writing) be divided into two independent practices. If students only read and write about writing, they do not utilize a critical thinking strategy, which ultimately limits their ability to write in various essay genres effectively. Arguably, first-year composition classrooms are one of the only places that students can be creative and use their imaginations, so why take that away from them? My summary and narrative assignments incorporate literature in a way that is not overbearing for non-English majors, with lots to read or digest, which allows them to read and write in a meaningful way that they can enjoy. Providing students with some direction in writing is not necessarily a bad thing. In “Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.,” Ruth Spack discusses the ways in which literature can assist ESL students improve their writing, as well as the benefits that literature inclusion can have for all composition students: “By interpreting texts and considering alternative interpretations, students come to understand in a fundamental way how meaning can be created through reading” (706). Spack also provides a rebuttal to Lindermann’s claim that literature interferes with writing instruction. Spack suggests that the inclusion of literature in composition instruction can make students “aware of different ways writers create texts to engage readers,” which essentially refers back to Moran’s implementation of a selected author’s manuscript into his classroom (706). For another one of my lectures, I had a class of 25 first-year composition students read the poem “Somebody Blew Up America” by Amiri Baraka. Because students read this poem shortly after 9/11, and there were several controversial stereotypes and conspiracy theories in Baraka’s piece, the students were very eager to discuss the poem and their take-home assignments during our class lecture. Now, while Lindermann argues that “teachers talk 75 to 80 percent of the time” in courses that feature literature, I would have to say that I only lectured for about ten minutes out of the 50 minute class period that I used Baraka’s poem (313). If more first-year composition instructors prepared their students with discussion-based assignments before class, it would help them to facilitate their lecture discussions, and encourage more in-class participation from their students. It seems as though the only non-biased assertion about the use of literature in freshman composition by Lindermann was given when she stated, “Freshman English does what no high

school writing course can do: provide opportunities to master the genres, styles, audiences, and purposed of college writing” (312). A first-year composition course is one of the only places, besides a literature course, that English instructors can introduce poetry, short stories, and essays to help their students learn to write critically about subjective or objective fiction and non-fiction. While I do understand Lindermann’s argument to have students write more than they read in order for them to become more effective writers, my counter-solution to Lindermann’s argument would be to have students read as much as they write in order to become effective collegiate writers for any subject.

Separating reading and writing disrupts the harmony of their co-dependent existences because it overestimates and privileges one zygote (practice) over the other. In “The Cultures of Literature and Composition: What Could Each Learn from the Other?” Peter Elbow uses a marriage analogy to refer to the relationship between literature and writing courses from his experience:

Composition has been the weak spouse, the new kid, the cash cow, the oppressed majority. When writing programs are housed in English departments, as they so often are, teachers of writing are usually paid less to teach more under poorer working conditions in order to help support literature professors to be paid more to teach less under better working conditions. I won’t even address the much-discussed question of whether writing and literature should marry, stay married, or divorce. My essay could be read as an argument for maintaining the marriage; and I certainly admire the situation in many high schools and few smaller liberal arts colleges where members don’t actually feel tension between literature and composition. (533-34)

Elbow’s marriage analogy is similar to my fraternal twin’s metaphor regarding reading and writing in first-year composition courses because it stresses the importance of literature and writing as a codependent practice to bring the subject of English to life. Most first-year composition courses receive less affection than literature courses because their instructors are ever-changing, and so are their students. With the pressing need for more rigorous writing assessments and standardized testing regarding first-year student writing, composition instructors are giving less inventive and creative assignments. We find that first-year composition students are writing for more generic essay prompts that have no focus or critical subject matter. The separation of literature and composition can often lead instructors who teach both subjects to feel a type of double-consciousness that has almost become the norm in English departments. Elbow shares his conflict of interest, and identity issues as an English writing instructor, who also loves literature, in the following:

I started full-time college teaching in 1960 and, having made it to age sixty-six, I’ve retired from full-time university employment. I’m continuing busy in my professional career, but this new step makes me look back. One thing I notice is my recurring sense of being torn between my identities as a literature person and as a composition person. I’ve long been seen as a composition person, and I’ve been a writing program director at two universities. But all my training was in literature, my first book was about Chaucer, and I didn’t experience myself as a member of the ‘field of composition’ till at least twenty of these past forty years had passed. (534)

It is a shame that Elbow felt he had to live a double-life as an English instructor, because the two zygotes (literature and composition) that he was equally passionate about, couldn't coexist in one fetus (department). When students witness the segregation of literature and composition instruction, they feel that the two elements can succeed without one another. Elbow goes on to discuss how his composition and literature background both contributed to his development as a well-rounded instructor of English: "I can now teach a 'product' of literature by using active, experiential workshop activities I learned as teacher of writing-and thereby increase the chances of students' actually experiencing the literary work and the critical concepts we are studying" (535). The most profound comment that Elbow makes is provided when he elaborates on his expression, "I miss literature," and all that it entails pertaining to him teaching composition and literature courses:

But I am sad that the composition tradition seems to assume discursive language as the norm and imaginative, metaphorical language as somehow special or marked or additional. I'd argue that we can't harness students' strongest linguistic and even cognitive powers unless we see imaginative and metaphorical language as the norm-basic or primal. (536)

Furthermore, the compatibility that reading and writing have here is obvious. We shouldn't try to break-up a happy home, or manipulate the way anatomy works. When two zygotes (elements) happen to compliment the same fetus (subject) naturally, who are we to distinguish them as non-relative entities that were put into existence to produce healthy fraternal twins (essays) in the first place? First-year composition instructors need to work in partnership with literature professors to gain new ways to approach and ignite student writing processes. As long as English departments and faculty continue to reject the notion that literature and composition work best together, then the humanity and creativity that surround our beloved subject will remain bastardized, singled-out, and yearning for the partnership that they were born to have.

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Creating Community:

Activities for Building  
Cohesion in the Classroom

&  
and Approaches  
to Peer Review

**TWO**

## **Every Voice, Every Day: Using a “Go-Around” Question to Create a Comfortable Discussion Environment**

Maria L. Soriano

I first experienced the “go-around question” as a junior in an undergraduate literature course, with a professor who assigned daily participation grades based on the number of times students spoke during each class. In addition to holding us responsible for our own success, her seemingly strict guidelines reinforced the value of *each voice* as a part of our class community. Because I thought it was fun, I adopted the go-around question when I started teaching as a Graduate Assistant, but did not truly examine it until I attended a workshop led by Kate Ronald, who was visiting from Miami University and spoke on methods of managing class discussion. Most notably, she set forward a challenge that struck a chord with my teaching philosophy: to make students feel like their contributions were appreciated and crucial to the creation of knowledge in my classroom, creating and fostering the principle of *every voice, every day*.

Feeling like this was an unreachable ideal, I reflected on the lively, vibrant environment of the undergraduate literature class I took and realized that it stemmed from the go-around question. Though I clearly state my expectations for class participation in my syllabus, I was limiting my definition of “participation” to the “academic” part of the class. Rather than simply telling my first-year writing students that the classroom is a collaborative learning environment and that I want us to learn from each other, I needed to *show* them the necessity of their voices. Beginning the class with a go-around question would generate energy and conversation, which I could harness to smoothly continue into lessons and activities about writing. Using the “non-academic,” informal opening moments of the class would be the perfect way to set up the participation standards.

In order to set a talkative tone for the semester and embrace social constructivist theory to intentionally blend students’ voices and levels of experience, I take on the role of introductions manager and moderator, following Ronald’s advice to incorporate the learning techniques I value most from day one. That means I start the class with a go-around question right away, asking each student to share his or her name, major, hometown/high school, and a vacation highlight. We all hear every voice, but the students probably believe the introductions are just to help me start matching names with faces – until the second day of class, when I formally introduce the concept of the go-around question. I explain that I like to start every class with a question, and aim to get to know them, while helping them get to know each other.

I choose questions that everyone can answer—ones unrelated to readings, homework, or even class that day. The questions are, instead, informational and entertaining, centering on music (“What song are you obsessed with lately?”), movies (“What movie could you watch over and over again?”), or memories (“What is the best vacation you have ever been on?”) during the first few weeks of the semester, while we all get to know each other and become more comfortable with hearing our voices aloud in the classroom. As the semester goes on, my questions get more thoughtful and insightful: “If you had an empty room in your house with unlimited space and funds what would

you put in it?” or “What is something we would be surprised to learn about you?” are two examples. To moderate and promote discussion, I respond to each student’s answer and sometimes ask another or just comment on the response to show my interest and model attentiveness to the other students. In addition to helping me improve my ability to manage discussion, this reflective practice also places value on each student’s voice as a necessary part of the classroom. After all of the students have answered the question, I do so as well, in order to show that in this portion of the class, students and teacher are equally important. Socially, the go-around question creates a comfortable environment where conversation is both an expectation and a norm and becomes a time where I *want* to hear their voices.

I also make direct correlations between students with similar answers, connecting their names and interests – and therefore, in a sense, introducing them to each other. After awhile, students begin to connect with each other during the go-around question without my prompting. They get excited when a student says something they can relate to, or pretend to be mad when someone “takes” their answer. Over the course of the semester, friendships form, and groupwork and peer review become much less awkward. As a result, students are less hesitant to collaborate over paper topics, reading discussions, or evaluations of their writing; the sense of familiarity benefits the learning environment and results from my encouragement of “fun” conversation that everyone participates in.

The go-around question assists in the process of teaching writing by promoting involvement and discussion. Students become accustomed to answering additional questions or providing further explanations that I ask of them during reading discussions or writing workshops. They learn to intently listen to the responses of their classmates in order to find a point with which they can agree, disagree, or elaborate. Therefore, they become more engaged in what others have to say, take an active stance in the academic conversation, and feel more comfortable supporting or refuting another student’s contribution – plus they can refer to that person by name.

Extending conversations and asking students to explain further mimics the lessons that students learn about academic writing. During the go-around question portion of the class, I may ask a student to elaborate more on why a particular family vacation was so memorable, drawing out more specific details, anecdotes, or moments. Such description connects to my lessons on creating arguments that are particular and well-developed; it also demonstrates how readers need detailed explanations to truly understand the writer’s stance. The specificity provoked during the go-around question or in class discussion lends itself to individuality and the clear expression of ideas. Connecting back to the social construction of knowledge, students begin to see throughout the semester how they can learn and discover more when other voices are involved – and when it comes to learning academic writing, the more voices, the better.

As with any practice, the go-around question has its drawbacks. In a class of 20-22 students, listening to every student’s answer takes time, especially when talkative students ramble on or start telling a story. A 75-minute class may have more room for a daily question, but my colleagues who teach 50-minute classes save questions for the end of the week, when the lessons or readings may be a little lighter. Though the *every day* part of Ronald’s mantra is dropped with these modifications, the

room for and importance of *every voice* is still retained—especially for students who are silent learners. For these students, a go-around question sends an open invitation for them to enter the class discussion.

Ultimately, students will grow accustomed to constant speaking in the classroom with the incorporation of a go-around question. Students learn their peers' names and find similarities that spawn conversations and familiarity outside of the classroom. In addition, teachers can demonstrate that sharing ideas, opinions, interpretations, and experiences is an integral part of a collaborative learning environment. Such positive support through student-focused moments will help them understand themselves as equal contributors, and can also help them feel more connected to both their teachers and peers. Together, they will support each other through the challenges of learning academic writing by sharing ideas and suggestions, getting ideas from others, and becoming better writers together.

## Using Conversational Roles to Support Class Discussion

Emily King

As a teacher committed to teaching writing through discussion and collaboration, I have found that students often want to take part in academic conversation but are unsure about how exactly to contribute. They also wonder if their contributions are worth sharing and are concerned about the validity of their ideas. These roles, which I adapted from Brookfield and Preskill's exercise in *Discussion as a Way of Teaching*, give students a sense of purpose during conversation and often give quieter students the confidence they need to become active participants in discussion. With a job to do, students are often more willing to speak up and make their opinions known.

I begin by assigning roles randomly, shifting them according to the characteristics of individual discussions. As students become familiar with this approach, they often provide their own ideas about what roles we should add to certain discussions and what roles they want to inhabit. This is, of course, very exciting because it means that they are thinking critically and taking charge of their own learning. After students complete their group discussions, we reconvene and share ideas amongst the class. It is also effective to then regroup students with matching "jobs" (i.e. put all of the devil's advocates together, etc.) to see how they interpreted their role and what they learned from occupying that perspective.

### Conversation Roles for Discussion Groups of 5

1. Reader/Problem Poser – This person has the job of *reading/introducing* the discussion question to the group. If necessary, the reader can begin the discussion with a personal idea or experience in relation to the topic.
2. Recorder – This person *records* the conversation's development (keeping track of the group members' shared concerns, emerging common themes, or issues the group may be skirting).
3. Devil's Advocate – This person listens for emerging consensus and then formulates a contrary view. The purpose is to help the group explore *alternative interpretations*.
4. Detective – This person listens for *unchallenged biases* related to culture, race, class, or gender and brings them to the group's attention. This person also listens for any *judgmental comments* that go unchecked.
5. Reporter – This person takes notes and shares a *brief summary* of the group's conversation to the class once the group work is complete.

It is important to make clear that these conversational roles are the students' jobs in addition to their shared responsibility to maintain ongoing discussion about the topics and complete any work assigned during the exercise. In other words, the reporter doesn't simply stay quiet while constructing a summary to share later. All group members participate while also serving the group through their roles.

## ESSAY STRUCTURE

Kimberly George

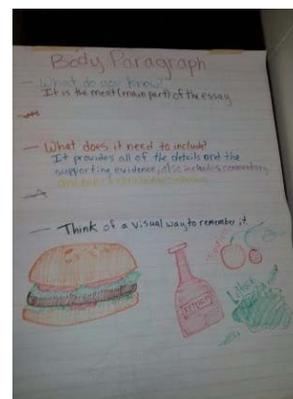
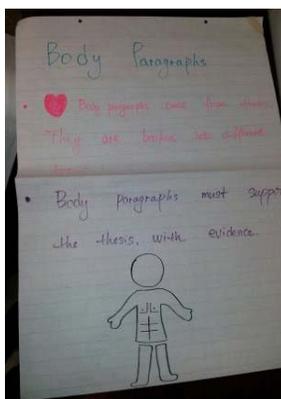
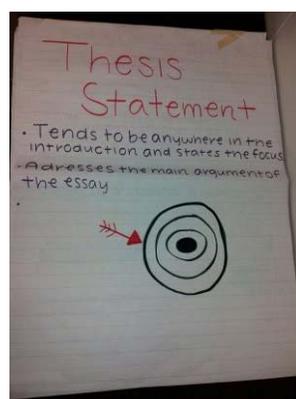
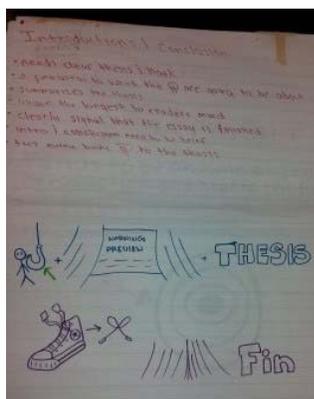
During my first semester teaching English 101 I found that many of my students had a lot of prior knowledge of essay structure and the function of the different parts in an academic essay. So I developed this activity as a fun and collaborative way to review the basic elements of an academic essay.

The posters gave them an opportunity to be creative and get to know one another. I also used this activity to emphasize the value of peer feedback and collaborative knowledge in order to prepare students for future peer reviews.

Although thinking outside the box about essay structure was challenging for some students, this activity ultimately provided an opportunity for some productive playfulness in class.

- 
- A. I assigned students to groups of four. (Since it was early in the semester, assigning groups was also a means to get students to meet their classmates.)
  - B. Once students were in groups, I asked them choose roles (scribe, artist, researcher, presenter), and I distributed essay elements (thesis, introduction, conclusion, body paragraphs).
  - C. Using their knowledge from other English classes and readings from the course textbook, students designed a poster teaching the class about their essay element. I asked students that these posters be informative while also including some sort of visual metaphor to help us remember their topic.
  - D. After the posters were designed, each group presented them to the class, and qualities of each element that were missing were added to the boards.
  - E. In the last few minutes of class, I gave students some time to check the essay structure developing in their outlines.
- 

Check out some samples of the posters they came up with:



## **Exercise: A Class-created Rubric**

E. Elle Mooney

A week before the synthesis/analysis essay was due my class expressed some anxiety about the evaluation process for this essay. Their first essay had gone well, and despite the normal range of scores, the goals I had for the students were within their expectations. However, for this essay I was asking them to take risks, and they were worried about how those risks would be evaluated. So, I decided to ask them how they would like to be evaluated. I got this splendid idea from Bob Neis, who may have gotten it from someone else; Who knows? Doesn't matter because good ideas often come from your colleagues – so listen, share, and talk with everyone!

After the expected jokes (which were awesome because I agreed with their most outrageous ideas) the class brainstormed and collaborated with one another. I acted as facilitator and recorder, writing all their ideas on the whiteboard. Then, I asked them to group similar ideas and goals. Once the ideas were organized, I asked them how I should weigh each category using 100 points. I was impressed with their deliberation, and acted as devil's advocate when it appeared that LOCs became a little too important.

After this class meeting, I typed up their ideas and had them review the rubric during the next class. They noodled with some wording, and at the end of the exercise, all approved it. Truly, this was a class-created rubric.

The rubric I offer here is the one they created. While I was prepared to have the rubric deviate from my assessments, within reasonable limits, I found that theirs was pretty much spot on to the one I would have used, just with a slightly different look. It was fun to use, and their scores landed within the expected range.

While this was a thoughtful class, in the future I will offer this exercise again if my class needs it—maybe even if they don't. I feel that students do their best writing when they take ownership of their work and have an understanding of the evaluation process because, for the most part, each student knows his or her reasons for being at the university, and student writing should reflect those goals.

Let me know if you try this! I can see how this exercise could get crazy, but wouldn't that be great? What a great opportunity to talk about writing: purpose, literacy, language, audience, and expectations!

## Essay 2 Rubric: Analysis and Synthesis: Phenomena



### Connections, Observations, Explanations:

Do the connections go beyond the obvious? Does the writer create a “text” from the observation that can be used in conversation with the author/s? Are the concrete details of the observation integrated by “showing, not telling”? Does the essay show a unique perspective in response to the norm? Did the writer take on a challenge? Are the ideas exciting?

\_\_\_/40

### Thesis, Synthesis, Conclusion:

Is there a clear connection between thesis and evidence? Is the “so what” of the paper expressed? Is there a creative conclusion that entices the reader to consider more?

\_\_\_/30

### Integration, Flow:

Does the essay stay on track? Does it follow a clear, logical train of thought? Is there a sense of control over the topic?

\_\_\_/20

### Word Choice, MLA format, Grammar:

Does the writing at the sentence level follow conventions (syntax, word choice, verb agreement)? Is MLA formatting followed? Is the writing free from inconsistencies that might hinder a reader’s experience?

\_\_\_/10

## **Integrating Peer Review as a Process**

Courtney L. Werner and Nicole I. Caswell

### **Why continue to peer review?**

Peer review has been used with mixed success in composition classrooms for many decades. Clearly, peer review has value for students, but it does not always go as planned (Holt, 1992). Students can be jaded from negative peer review experiences (Brammer and Rees, 2007), and sometimes teachers have to “sell” the activity, which undermines the pedagogical value. Our system--based on our experiences as writing center tutors and now writing center researchers--helps us teach students how to be successful peer reviewers, making them better writers along the way. Because peer review has such potential yet is so often dreaded, we offer several strategies for promoting stronger peer reviews by making them more integral to the classroom. While our suggestions may require more work up front, the payoff is a successful, useful peer review (which leads to stronger papers and more developed critical thinking skills). Our suggestions include strategies for teaching students how to engage in peer review, generating peer review handouts based on assignment criteria, engaging students in creating peer review documents, and constructing feedback-oriented writing groups.

### **Aligning theory and practice**

One of the cornerstones of composition pedagogy that writing center pedagogy accentuates is the idea that writing is always a recursive process. Because we draw heavily on the writing center theory that intelligent conversation about writing creates both better writers and better writing simultaneously, we showcase peer review as both a part of the writing process and as a process in its own right. Getting strong feedback is part of an ongoing conversation about writing: peer review is not a one-day activity that assures a “better” or “edited” paper. Our process for peer review frequently follows this model and takes place over multiple classes:

First, as a class, analyze the prompt and highlight the most important components.

Introduce students to why peer review is important.

Look at examples of what we believe are successful peer reviews: we include both conversations and written feedback in our examples, allowing us to utilize multiple forms of review in the classroom.

Give students the space to practice and ask questions.

Help students connect peer review practices to the specific assignment.

Do it (have one or more specific peer review class days)!

Respond to the feedback students gave each other.

Have students integrate feedback by writing memos/responses to received feedback in their own way. For digital peer reviews, assign students video responses (enhancing their digital literacy skills, as well!).

Repeat when students are ready to tackle the next step in their writing processes.

### **Peer review suggestions**

#### *Focusing on the assignment criteria*

One of the most effective techniques we have used to help students connect a peer review to a writing assignment is to first allow students the opportunity to dissect and negotiate the prompt.

One way to do this is to break the class into groups of four. Make sure each group has a copy of the assignment prompt, then ask students to develop their own rubrics based on what they think the most important parts of the assignment are. Then, ask two groups to come together and negotiate their rubrics. Students should haggle with each other to come up with a rubric that incorporates or balances their ideas. Then, combine groups one more time until the class is working as a whole, piecing together two rubrics. This process allows students to have a voice in the most important aspects of the assignment. While they haggle with each other about the rubric, they begin to understand the assignment more fully.

### **Engaging students to create review documents or process**

Giving students a say in the process is integral to achieving their engagement. By telling students *they* are going to design the review and *they* are going to be the guiding voice of the review, they will become more invested in it. Some ways to generate student investment include allowing students to translate the rubric into a list of questions or a checklist of what to read for when reviewing drafts. Research in teacher response practices suggests that teachers read student writing for what *teachers* value and expect out of the text (Huot, 2002). We can allow students to translate those teacher-envisioned values and expectations into peer review documents.

Another option is to allow students to construct *how* the peer review will take place. Will it be handout driven? Email driven? Google doc? Blackboard (or other course management system)? Writing center conference style? Each context allows for our goals and expectations of response to be met, but in giving students agency to decide on the process, they become more invested. Allowing students agency over how the process is constructed also allows them to draw more readily on their own writing processes and prior knowledge, not to mention peer cueing (Navarre Cleary, 2013). By affording students their own spaces for peer review, peer cueing becomes more kairotic, and peer feedback comes at the point of need. The more students see this network of process build, the more likely writing skills are to “click” for them, and the more engaged they become in their processes and the processes of the writers around them.

### **Constructing peer review/writing groups**

Our final peer review suggestion includes being active role models which means more than *simply* modeling our own work as scholars for our students: being an active role model means integrating peer review groups, which we refer to as writing groups. Our students’ writing groups meet weekly (sometimes during class and sometimes outside of class), and each week students share their writing no matter where they are in their processes. The consistency of the writing groups allows students to constantly be engaged in writing and reviewing as a process. Each week, students share writing (regardless of the stage) and offer feedback. As instructors, we take on more active roles within the writing groups during the first few weeks of the semester to make sure students learn how to critically read and offer feedback. As the semester progresses, we become less and less involved. At the start of the semester, when we initially set up the writing groups, we give students these guidelines:

The goals of these sessions are to help you improve as a writer--to do so, you will provide feedback to others and consider the feedback you’ve been given. You will need to remember comments you’ve been given for your project memos.

As the writer, set the agenda for what kind of feedback you would like. What are you worried about?

As the reader, read your group members' drafts thoroughly and thoughtfully (consider making notes and questions in the margins--put to use those annotation skills we're learning!).

Always say something positive. Be specific, too: what is it you really liked about the piece?

Talk about your responses while reading or reference the paper when talking: "When I read this sentence, I wondered if the paragraph was going to be about \_\_\_\_\_ (topic)."

Critique the writing, not the writer.

Be specific in your comments, and offer examples: "this is good" or "I like it" isn't helpful. How can you improve a paper on comments like that? If a particular section of the paper is confusing, be specific about what confused you. As the reader, what are you stuck on?

Ask questions of the writer.

Always focus on bigger issues (argument, thesis, structure, transitions/flow) before moving onto grammar/punctuation/spelling.

Remember that your group members are offering suggestions--YOU, as the writer, get to choose what suggestions to use and which ones not to use. Remember, too, there is *always* room for improvement. No matter what stage the writing is in, there is always something you can do to make it better. Writing is a process--sometimes a long process, but a rewarding process.

## Conclusion

Peer review should be used to further classroom learning, and we hope our suggestions will help you construct a peer review process that is an integral part of your classroom. One of the things teachers need to remember is when we ask students to engage in peer review, we are really asking them to engage in critical thinking and reflective writing to be used and understood by someone else; critical, reflective peer reviews are writing situations to which few students have been exposed. Therefore, instructors should model how and why peer review is a significant writing experience (even by offering up personal examples to the class). Once we show students how valuable the peer review process is, they take ownership of the activity and impress us in new ways, with new writing sophistication.

## References and Further Resources

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## **Inquiry Essay Peer Review**

E. Elle Mooney

### **Peer Review: Inquiry Essay**

Name of Writer:

Name of Reviewer:

#### 1. Integration of Research:

- Is the writing fluid? Does it flow?
- The quotes should not stand alone. They should not be their own sentences.
- Are the quotes explained fully? Do you know how the quote or piece of research connects/relates to the essay topic?
- Are paraphrases cited? Are summaries concise?

#### 2. Development:

- Do you have any questions about this topic that could be answered?

#### 3. Purpose/Thesis:

- Can you identify the “so what” of this paper? Is it implicit or explicit? If it is implicit, put it into your own words to help out your classmate. Remember, for this essay, the thesis needs to be explicit!

4. How is the diction? Is it academic? Are the verbs varied and active? Are there slang words or casual phrases that could be reworded? Circle them.

5. Offer some advice based on your experience as a writer and a reader that will help your classmate further his or her ideas in this paper, then point out something that works well, explain why you think so.

6. Organization: Complete a reverse outline on the back of this paper. Analyze the flow of the paper.

## **Analysis and Synthesis Essay Peer Review**

E. Elle Mooney

### **Peer Review: Analysis and Synthesis Essay**

Name of Writer:

Name of Reviewer:

First, read through the essay without a pen. Be open to the unexpected! Enjoy as a reader :)  
Next, answer the prompts:

1. Write the essay's main idea in your own words, here:
  
2. Opening: In the first few paragraphs, are you given enough information, background to follow the trajectory of discussion? Explain what is working. What more do you need?
  
3. Connections: What is triggered in your thinking by the connections offered here? Do they dig beyond the obvious? Explain what works. Do you have any suggestions?
  
4. Is the organization of ideas logical? Does the organization help you understand the purpose of the essay? If not, can you offer a suggestion? Was a step missed? Does a particular idea need more development?
  
5. How effective is the description of the observation? Can you "see" the phenomenon in your head? Circle passages where "showing" is effective. Are there areas in the description that tell instead of show? Underline these.
  
6. Conclusion: The writer has free rein here, but what ideas did this paper spark? Talk to the writer. Join in on the discussion presented in the conclusion:



Presenting Concepts:

Ideas for  
Teaching Rhetorical

&  
and Abstract  
Concepts

**THREE**

## **Modes of Perception**

Jodie Childers

### **Looking Inward, Looking Outward**

“There is always an inside and an outside. And there is always a boundary separating the two, even if we pretend otherwise. Sometimes it is as thick and stubborn as a brick wall. Sometimes it is as thin and immaterial as the visual field, or the limits of our imagination. I often wonder: Does it belong to the inside or to the outside? Is the boundary between me and the rest of the world a part of me, or is it out there? I don’t know the answer. But I love my window and keep looking at its glass, for it reminds me that the question is an important one.”

-Achille Varzi, *The View from my Window*

In the composition classroom, I encourage my students to think about the complicated relationship between “the inside” and “the outside” to understand the writing process as both an intuitive, inspired art and a consciously constructed craft. My interest in distinguishing between looking inward and looking outward is informed by my own creative work. As a writer and a documentary filmmaker, I am intimately aware of the different modes of perception I use in my own creative process; when writing, I tend to move from the mind to the page; whereas, when framing a shot, I analyze the exterior space around me and the subjects within that setting. While both processes ultimately involve a merger of intuitive and sensory perception, there is a distinct difference in the starting point, and it is through the disentangling, that we can better understand what is actually happening in the mind when we create. By training students to differentiate between and enact both modes of looking separately, I want them to see that any strong creative project, whether in writing, film, or even music, comes from looking inward *and* outward. The following two prompts stress, then, not only the act of writing but also a metacognitive analysis of how we think and how we perceive.

### **Writing Prompt #1: Looking Inward: Memory Maps**

Take a walk through your neighborhood, and rather than describe its external characteristics, look at it, instead, from the inside out. What memories are triggered by your walk? Create a memory map in writing to guide the reader along the blocks of your neighborhood and through your mindscape. Feel free to take pictures. The essay can be structured anecdotally around the various spaces that trigger memories. Another option is to interview yourself at each corner and turn your mini-interviews into a coherent essay.

### **Writing Prompt #2: Looking Outward: Walking Description**

Now take another walk through your neighborhood, and describe it as if you’ve never seen it before. Include vivid, sensory details that place the reader in this setting. Like a photographer, always remember to pan and zoom, so that the reader can experience both the overall setting and the fine details that may go unnoticed by the less observant eye. The essay can be structured chronologically around the narrative of your walk or thematically based on what you see, hear, taste, and smell.

## **The Differences Between Telling and Explaining: An Approach to Teaching Students How to Develop Body Paragraphs in Expository Essays**

Anna Krauthammer

I teach several large first-year writing courses that are not part of a stand-alone expository writing program; therefore, literature is required. I use an anthology for the literature and a grammar text in addition to my own materials. I teach a diverse population, many of whom are not traditional students or are non-native English speakers. My course outline divides the week into a literature lesson followed by a lesson containing writing exercises of varying lengths and topics.

A critical, recurring problem in my students' writing is a lack of development in body paragraphs in their expository essays. They tend to use narration and description as their strategies. They hardly use transitions to generate text. When I write on their papers that they need to develop their paragraphs, they invariably ask, "Do you mean more details?" In their expository essay rewrites, they add more facts, rather than use ideas or develop ideas they already have. I have used materials that clearly define and demonstrate the use of reasons and examples; the differences between facts and ideas, and thesis and topic sentence development; and included model essays that use comparison/contrast, cause and effect, and persuasion to develop ideas. I have also given them exercises that require the use of transitions. Development still remains a problem. In cases in which I have used models, it has been apparent that their ability to see the development of argument and develop arguments themselves is due to deficient critical thinking skills.

Furthermore, many full essays I have used as models combine a variety of rhetorical patterns to develop the argument and therefore make it difficult for my students to both identify the patterns and realize how they advance the argument. I decided, therefore, to use materials for which my students can identify the clear division between reasons and examples, analysis and narrative, facts and ideas. In this way they can emulate the models. My goal is for my students to actually place sentences within a paragraph they have written, which require the use of higher order thinking skills such as drawing inferences, hypothesizing ideas, and synthesizing ideas, thus facilitating the creation of body paragraphs that explain, advance, and develop their topic sentences, while at the same time relate the paragraphs to the thesis.

One of the ways I try to remedy the problem is a process that begins with my assigning for homework an eight-sentence paragraph summary of a story we read and analyzed in the prior class. The assignment is to summarize plot, setting, and characters only. When they bring in their summaries, I have several students read theirs aloud and put them on the board. As a class, we evaluate whether they are factual, whether the order of information is correct, if all essential information is included, and if any information is not factual or is extraneous.

I then ask all students to revise their paragraphs in accordance with these criteria. Then I ask everyone in class to rewrite their summaries in accordance with the criteria, but this time to select 3 sentences in their summaries after which they are to insert reasons, causes, results or an observation

about the content of the sentence they have chosen. The inserts are limited to two sentences and need to include transitional words or phrases. We go through the same process of reading and placing a few paragraphs on the board. The first question I ask is what differences they notice between the first version and the second. Usually the first response concerns length. I then ask: What was added? What transitions were used? Did the additions logically connect to the sentences that preceded them and then to the next set of sentences? I make sure we all agree that what was used to explain and analyze the facts of the plot or the characters added understanding and meaning. We also make sure to note that while the facts can be located directly in the story, what they had to add needed to be inferred, although there was evidence in the story to support their inferences.

This process establishes the connection between the literature and the analytical skills they used to get meaning from a text they have read, and create meaning in their own texts. One aspect of this process is the understanding that they have a choice as to what to explain and where to place the explanation, which leads to the need for coherence and the concept of a paragraph as a unit that has to make sense, and focus primarily on a major idea connected to the thesis.

I want my students to make meaning through the use of critical thinking skills that can be applied not only to literary analysis, but also to their literary and non-literary expository writing assignments. In the above process they also practice revision, and develop criteria with which to evaluate their writing; they distinguish and use different rhetorical patterns and use transitions to make connections that establish coherence and help develop ideas. Thus, they can independently and confidently produce expository essays that are accurate, thoughtful, and reflective, and contain arguments that are logical and well-developed.

I cannot emphasize how important my readings in critical thinking skills in addition to rhetorics are to developing content and structuring syllabi exercises and assignments in the composition class; they have not only informed what I teach, but how I teach composition, and thus have enabled me to stretch and grow in terms of the ways I teach, think, and write.

## Loren Eiseley's "Our Own True Notebook": Engaging Students in Effective Reflection

Jessica Rose Corey

### The Assignment: A Reflective Essay

Asking students to engage in formal reflection remains a common practice in higher education; however, one of the main issues teachers can face with assignments that ask for reflection remains that of surface-level responses that contain little more than "I learned a lot." Therefore, I set out to develop an assignment that would yield more critical responses from my students and, thus, demonstrate increased personal awareness and a relational understanding of the semester's readings.

To create the assignment, I turned to the work of Loren Eiseley. After all, it was my undergraduate experience with Eiseley's book, *The Night Country*, which led to my career in teaching. As an anthropologist who wrote poems, essays, scholarly books, and what can be described as creative nonfiction, Eiseley "intertwined autobiographical, scientific, figurative, and metaphysical elements" into his writing (Carlisle 185). For students, then, he illustrates how writers can develop their own styles and form connections between that which is generally considered "scholarly" and that which is "creative."

The assignment I present here, given to students at the end of the semester, engages students in the reading of Eiseley's poem, "Our Own True Notebook":

Where the night overtook us, there we bedded  
in storm or frost, or summer heat on stones,  
knowing the light would find us in the morning,  
daylight would lift us on our aching bones

to totter onward for a little while, then dark,  
then dry again, until, a lifetime spent,  
amidst leaves, litter, waterfalls and rills,  
we would assume that what it was we meant

would have been listed in some book set down  
beyond the sky's far reaches, if at all  
there was a purpose here. But now I think  
the purpose lives in us and that we fall

into an error if we do not keep

our own true notebook of the way we came,  
how the sleet stung, or how a wandering bird  
cried at the window. It is not the same

for all, or what they would dissemble or narrate.

Infinte millions have passed this way  
expecting sun at morning. Now at last  
I muse content on this one single day

thinking that through these hours light was flowing  
into the eyes of cheetahs, condors, men,  
and how they made of it their separate worlds,  
diverse and agonized, then slept again. (p. 224-25)

As a class, we analyze the meanings of the poem, discussing our duty to reflect. Students must then use the poem and our discussion to write about how the course—and the student’s approach to the course—has been a part of his or her “own true notebook.” For instance, the assignment poses the following questions: What have you learned about yourself as a writer, a student, and/or as a person? How have the context you live in and the context in which you completed your assignments influenced this awareness? What about you as an individual may have developed over the semester as a result of this course or otherwise, and how can you apply it to future contexts? How has your interpretation of the contents of your “notebook” (metaphorically, not literally) changed during the course of the semester? In other words, how have you come to “read” and “write” differently the materials in class, knowledge about yourself, and your attitude toward writing? In essence, as the semester comes to an end, my goal is for students to understand course material and themselves as composed and revised. With this as the final assignment, students can critically analyze and reflect on the course holistically and have a clearer understanding of the knowledge and skills they gained by completing the course. The following assignment sheets can be modified to serve teachers’ own needs and purposes.

### **College Writing I Assignment Sheet**

**Length:** 3-4 pages

**Percentage of Grade:**

**Due:**

**Purpose:**

Throughout the semester, I have asked you to view reading and writing as a social practice. We have examined the ways in which social contexts influence the writing and reading of texts, and the ways those texts, in turn, influence social contexts. As a proactive student and citizen, it remains important for you to examine your epistemology, ideology, and personal growth as they intersect with the world around you and how you rhetorically and responsibly respond to a variety of social issues.

**Audience:**

To some extent, I serve as your intended audience. Assignments, however, are always designed to contribute to your personal and/or professional development. This assignment, in particular, remains one of the primary opportunities for you to reflect on your experiences in this course and the lessons you learned. Please use it for *you!*

**Assignment:**

We read and analyzed Loren Eiseley’s poem, “Our Own True Notebook.” In your Reflective Essay, reflect on how this course, and your approach to it, has been a part of your “own true notebook.” What have you learned about yourself as a writer, a student, and/or as a person? How have the context you live in, and the context in which you completed your assignments, influenced this awareness? What about you as an individual may have developed over the semester, as a result of this course or otherwise, and how can you apply it to future contexts? How has your interpretation of the contents of your “notebook” (metaphorically, not literally) changed during the course of the semester? In other words, how have you come to “read” and “write” differently the materials in class, knowledge about yourself, and your attitude toward writing? You may write about the course as a whole or write about a significant experience you had with one of the readings and/or writings. Your essay should follow the convention outlined in your previous work for this course. You may choose to include quotes from specific works, and even from your own previous work.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

\*Appropriate and complete response to the assignment

- \*Evidence of critical thinking
- \*Incorporation of discussion about Eiseley’s poem via quotes from the text
- \*Synthesis of concepts explored throughout the semester
- \*Proper citation of additional sources (if included)
- \*Presentation of error-free prose

### **Argument Prose Writing Assignment Sheet**

**Length:** 3-4 pages

**Percentage of Grade:** 20% (200 points)

**Due:**

#### **Purpose:**

An important part of learning is reflecting on what you learn—checking in with yourself every now and again to solidify your understanding of ideas, synthesize these ideas, and consider how you might apply them. This course has aimed to engage you in critically thinking through arguments presented in a variety of forms, styles, and discourses. You will encounter many instances in which people will try to talk/write/compose above and around you. My intention was to further develop your ability to respond to such instances. This course has also pushed you to think deeply about your own, original ideas and the way you communicate them. In your final assignment, I would like you to reflect on your experiences in this course and the meaningful ways in which you will take them with you into your future.

#### **Audience:**

Okay, I serve as your intended audience. Assignments, however, are always designed to contribute to your personal and/or professional development. This assignment, in particular, remains one of the primary opportunities for you to reflect on your experiences in this course and the lessons you learned. Please use it for *you!*

#### **Assignment:**

At the beginning of the semester I asked you to answer the questions: “Who are you?” and “How do you know?” I then asked you to submit to me a list of arguments about yourself. I will return your responses to you. In your final paper, reflect on how this course, and your approach to it, has changed or revised these notions of who you are. What have you learned about yourself—as a writer, a student, a professional, and/or as a person? What about you as an individual may have developed over the semester, as a result of this course or otherwise, and how can you apply it to future contexts? What can you now argue about yourself, or argue better, as a result of having taken this class? You may write about the course as a whole or write about a significant experience you had with one of the readings and/or writings. Your essay should follow the conventions outlined in your previous work for this course. Please cite some of the ideas presented in this course, and perhaps even from your own previous work.

#### **Evaluation Criteria:**

- Appropriate and complete response to the assignment
- Evidence of critical thinking
- Inclusion and synthesis of concepts explored throughout the semester
- Proper citation of outside sources (if included). No need to cite the texts from the course
- Presentation of error-free texts

### **Outcomes of the Assignment**

The assignment guides students toward critical reflection by asking them to think metaphorically about how they have come to “read” and “write” differently about course content and materials, knowledge about themselves, and their attitudes toward writing. Their reflections, therefore, help me as a teacher assist my students in meeting the objectives of the courses I teach. The reflective essay holds them accountable for synthesizing ideas presented throughout the semester and applying those ideas to social awareness and personal development.

Moreover, the assignment lends itself to adaptation in a variety of courses; I have used some version of this reflective essay in College Writing I, College Writing II (Research Writing), Business &

Professional Writing, and Argumentative Prose Writing. Even when I forego having students read the poem, I still use the concepts it presents as the basis for the assignment.

Finally, this assignment can be paired with more creative endeavors. For example, teachers can have students write the reflective essay in the form of a montage essay, allowing students to experiment with creative nonfiction and non-linear forms of writing. Also, the assignment works well accompanied by a course soundtrack; students write the essay in traditional or montage format and then create a soundtrack that complements the written communication of their experiences. The students can justify their musical choice for such a project in the reflective essay or in a separate paper or with the creation of a CD booklet.

The sample essays included here not only demonstrate the outcomes of the assignment, but also serve the practical purpose of providing models for students.

### College Writing I Sample Essay

The author of this work has granted written permission for its use and prefers to be credited rather than remain anonymous. An excerpt of this essay appeared in *Barnolipi: An International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*. 3.2 (August 2013): Web. I own the copyright to this material.

#### “Did It My Way” by Matthew Amendola

Too many strange coincidences came up when I first started writing this paper. I was listening to a song by Frank Sinatra called, “My Way,” while I was reading over Eiseley’s poem. If you have never heard it, I recommend watching the 3 Tenor’s version on YouTube. The words in the song and the words in Eiseley’s poem are eerily similar. Both talk about the seen and unseen struggles in life.

College Writing I has made me step back many times and do a double-take. The older I get, and the more aware I become, I see that things in life tend to have more than one meaning and, at times, these meanings are not very clear. I used to see things strictly as they were, and not having the ability to be anthropomorphic, I “blamed” this on how my brain worked. I am a very scientific thinker. Science tells me that rocks do not have feelings, and trees do not talk to people. But creative writing tells me that those things can happen. Not literally, but metaphorically. And I was always scared to answer questions about pieces of work like, “Our Own True Notebook.” I never wanted to risk sounding stupid and embarrassing myself. But you taught us the complete opposite. I cannot remember how many times in any given class period you would ask for our answers. Someone would give one. They would be correct. And you would ask for another. I could just imagine the look on my face the first time this happened. It had to have been a mixture of utter confusion and anger. In science, there is generally only ever one answer, and that answer has been scientifically backed up. The more this happened, the more I liked coming to class, and the less stupid I felt about answering questions. I found that I was getting braver, not just in College Writing I, but also in all of my other classes! Even in biology. My ability to think critically has increased drastically due to this class. These critical decision-making skills are needed in everyday life, whether or not to go through the yellow traffic light, or even choosing what clothes to wear. I know that with practice, and daily exposure to these experiences, the responses to these tasks can come easier and be more accurate. But exposure to in-depth and difficult pieces of literature is a whole different ball game. The higher cognitive thinking that is required to break down a Loren Eiseley or Kate Ronald piece greatly supersedes the mundane task of picking out clothes, giving the brain a much needed breath of fresh air.

Another of many strange coincidences that happened to me was the location in which I came up with ideas to my reflective essay, and made the corrections to the argumentation paper. I was outside, in the woods, on a dock, by a lake. Eiseley’s, “Our Own True Notebook, was also in nature. It talked about finding yourself in nature:

to totter onward for a little while, then dark  
then dry again, until, a lifetime spent,  
amidst leaves, litter, waterfalls and rills,  
we should assume that what it was we meant  
would have been listed in some book set down  
beyond the sky’s far reaches... (lines 4-9).

I also found myself doing this. I would find a spot and then people, my darkness, would come and ruin the peace and tranquility that I thought I had found. So I would get up and continue down many paths until I found my inner sanctum. Although I faced this darkness, I did not confront it angrily, nor did I wish any bad thoughts upon these people. For I knew inside that these people also had come to write their own notebook. They came to escape just like I

had. And who was I to tell them that they could not find their peace here? That is what you, as an instructor, have been trying to teach us this whole time.

I used to get up in the morning and just “live my life.” I was never openly thankful for much, never appreciated the beauty of life or nature, and took many things for granted.

...But now I think  
the purpose lives in us and that we fall into  
an error if we do not keep  
our own true notebook of the way we came (lines 11-14).

We are in charge of keeping track of how we live our lives. We, and only we, have the power to affect our lives, and to make life how we want it to be. Things happen for a reason, and nothing ever goes unplanned.

All of these revelations that I have had at age eighteen (pre mid-life crisis?) can also be transferred to my academic abilities. I will no longer see the essays that I write as just boring pieces of paper with boring words on them. They are my creations with my name on them. I am to be proud of them, just as if a parent was proud of their child. I now have a deeper understanding of my ability as a scientifically creative thinker. The complexities that I used to have about writing are no longer there. I now know that there is a true place for “anthropomorphism” in everyday life. My life will be my own, and no matter how hard it may get, I shall never get defeated. Try as they may, I will never be silenced as a student, a writer, and as a human. For too long, things go unheard and unsaid, and bad things happen. What if Alice Walker or Marge Piercy had gone unheard? Who would have heard their stories? No matter what type of essay, research paper, or comic strip I come across or write, I will know that there is a living thing behind those words. Someone’s “word baby,” my word baby, that reflects an individual (me) as a human being. Bits and pieces of our own true notebook to take apart and spread out for all of humanity to find, like a scavenger hunt. Who knows, maybe one day someone will find all the pieces. But for now, the rest is still unwritten.

### Argument Prose Writing Sample Essay

The author of this work has granted written permission for its use in this article but wishes to remain anonymous.

#### Keeping My Chin Up

It is a wonderful thing to be able to define yourself. Most people work hard every day to emulate the type of person they wish to be. Regardless of how hard we try to be that person, there will always be moments in our lives that test our ability to stay true to who we are and what we believe in. With this being said, I suppose every person finds themselves questioning who they are at some point in their lives. Or perhaps they are asked to define themselves in their Argumentative Prose Writing class and therefore must face the reality that is their true identity. Perhaps. When we were asked to write down some arguments about ourselves which we could defend, I confess that mine were written in half-confidence. It was definitely hard for me to come back to Kent this semester. Not playing basketball this year was something I had to accept and it was difficult to face that reality. Writing down those arguments in full confidence would not have been a problem for me last fall. But this year, because things were different, I suppose writing them down signified a commitment I was making to prove to myself that I am still the same person I always was. One of my goals this semester was to return to that feeling of “normal,” to regain the confidence in myself that I had lost. And if *your* goal, Professor Corey, was to help me to believe in the arguments I wrote about myself on that paper, then you have surely succeeded and I could not be happier that you did.

The first paper we wrote in this class was very important to me, mainly because it helped me tremendously to express what I had recently been feeling. I’ve talked to a lot of people about my experience and I’ve shared what I went through, but I guess there was still a lot that I needed to get off my chest. I never shared with anyone how hard it was for me to call my dad and tell him that I wouldn’t be playing basketball anymore; I never told anyone how I felt walking around at school afterwards; and I never shared that it was probably the lowest point in my life that I have ever experienced. By arguing in my paper that it is what we overcome in our lives that essentially makes us better, stronger people, I admit that I was clarifying this statement even for myself. It was when I turned to Maslow’s theory, the idea that self-awareness involves making the growth choice rather than the fear choice, that I found what I had been looking for (Maslow 45). Reading this helped me to realize that I needed to make this choice sooner than later. After experiencing what I did, it’s safe to say that I was no longer as confident in myself as I used to be. I was afraid of what people would think of me. Would they consider me a failure? Would they be disappointed in me? Would their opinion of me change? And I realized after reading Maslow’s theory that it was very unproductive of me to feel this way. I initially made the fear choice and not for a very good reason. What truly matters is making the growth choice, which is learning from your experiences and doing your best to take something positive from them. Through reading different works and deeply analyzing them, this course has helped me to better analyze who I am as a person. Relating to what an author is saying is one of the best feelings I had in this class. It is thanks to Maslow that I am aware that even though sometimes I make the fear choice, I have learned that the growth choice is the better path for me. After learning this about myself, I have confidence in my first argument; I am strong. I am a strong human being who perseveres through obstacles and

grows as she overcomes them.

My second argument is that I am thankful. I have always been thankful for the life I have, though I have to admit that at one point I wished my situation was different. I wished that I was still playing basketball at Kent and failed to have an open mind to any other person I could be besides a basketball player. I guess I was most afraid of coming back to Kent and being alone. I had my teammates before, and they're still my friends, but we don't see each other as often as we used to. While reading Eiseley, I gained a new appreciation of "the outsider" that helped me to go through being an outcast from the group I was once a part of. I grew a lot as an individual this semester and I feel that learning to be comfortable with being alone was a huge part of this growth, perhaps exactly what I needed at this time in my life. I think that being in Kent, alone, without the assurance of having teammates by my side, allowed me to figure things out for myself, which further contributed to my growth as an individual. Writing the paper on Eiseley helped me to relate what he was saying to my own life. I particularly liked the story he told of the man that said "give me a ticket to wherever it is" (Eiseley 63). Eiseley notes that many people are content with taking the path to "wherever" and seldom have any direction or purpose in their lives. As long as I have some sort of direction, purpose or meaning in my life, I am confident that things will work out. I admire Eiseley's ability to be honest and to be proud of being an outsider. I argued in my paper that there is great value in being different, which is something I fully believe and respect. I wouldn't go so far to say that I can relate to being a fugitive, though I do see where he is coming from and found this particular piece of his work to be enlightening. It would be difficult, growing up the way he did, having parents that he felt he could not relate to and feeling different than most other children. He had a hard life growing up and I admire his ability to persevere and create a name for himself. From reading Eiseley's work, I gained the insight that there is value in being different, in being yourself. I became more independent, and with that, more *comfortable* with being independent. And for this, and the life that I have, I am most thankful.

My next argument is that I believe in hard work. I always have, and I always will, I think because of the way I was raised. My parents both grew up in the projects, with little opportunity for success. However, they created their own opportunities through their hard work and dedication to achieving their goals. My dad truly worked so hard to become the police sergeant that he is today. My mom was nearly laid off from her job at a department store and was forced to take a completely new career path, and eventually became a successful coordinator of the University of Windsor medical school. I admire both of my parents for the hard work they have instilled in me, as they were the sole reason that I had the opportunity to earn a basketball scholarship. I think part of the reason that I was so crushed in losing my scholarship is because I worked so hard to attain it. When I lost my scholarship, I lost a little faith in what hard work can do. With this being said, I was listening very intently in class to your response when people were complaining about how difficult the Fenske text was to read (yes I was one of them). You told everyone to keep going, to push through, and that EVERYTHING WILL BE OKAY. I laughed a little bit when you gave us this advice because the way we were complaining it seemed as though our issue should have been much greater. Yes, Fenske was a difficult text. Yes, it seemed it would be near impossible to write a paper on this difficult text. Though it required hard work to complete the assignment, we all did it. We survived. What I can take most from the Fenske text is nothing is impossible if hard work is applied and an open mind is present.

I have also learned a lot about myself as a writer in this class. I really appreciate the time you took to correct our papers and to write a lot of input at the end of each one. That meant so much because most professors won't take the time to do that, and your feedback really helped me to gain a different perspective. A key piece of advice that I will be moving forward with would be to think of other angles when writing about a particular topic. For example, in my Eiseley paper I solely discussed the value of being an outsider, and failed to mention the complexities or difficulties they face, which is a large portion of their lives. This advice definitely helped me to grow as a writer and will certainly improve the quality of my future papers. As a student, I feel more confident in my ability to analyze a particular text and to think critically about what the author is trying to convey. The texts we read in this course were challenging, but those challenges certainly assisted my growth as a student. Moving forward, I can apply many of the concepts I have learned in this course to the rest of my academic career and to my life in general. I have gained confidence in myself as a student, writer, professional, and as a young person with goals in her life. This confidence has led me to be sure of the final two arguments I made about myself at the beginning of the semester. The first is that I believe I control my own future. In future contexts I will have confidence in myself that I can overcome any obstacle and ultimately, control my future destination. My final argument is that I am worthy. This is a big one. Losing this feeling is a horrible experience, one which I will never experience again. I will face adversity, of course, but I will face it with a different outlook, one that requires me to take it one step at a time and to believe in my ability to persevere. Every single time I call home, my mom never fails to tell me to "keep my chin up." Though this is a great piece of advice, for a while I struggled to achieve this feat. I am positive that this class has helped me, through reading, writing, and your guidance, to have confidence in myself. It is because I was asked in this class to define and provide arguments about myself that I have returned to my state of "normal." I can confidently say that I am strong; I am thankful; I believe in hard work; I control my own future; and I am worthy. And this realization in itself, to me, means more now than it ever did.

### References

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### Conclusion

I have used my experience as a teacher, scholar, and creative writer to try and expose students to a broad understanding of literacy, and to teach writing as a social practice that can rhetorically, effectively, and pleasantly combine critical thinking and creative modes of expression. For example, I have used the reflective essay to incorporate metaphor and, at times, non-linear forms of writing or supplemental compositions, such as course soundtracks. Pushing students to engage in true critical thinking remains a challenge in many ways, for students and instructors. But reflecting on academic lessons, how those lessons intersect with one another, and how those lessons become internalized as a part of one's epistemology and ideologies remains crucial to experiencing education as a human endeavor and not just an economic advantage.

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<sup>i</sup> Due to the scope of this journal, I have excluded from this article the pedagogical theories grounding this assignment. Individuals interested in this information, along with course objectives met by the assignment, can contact the author at [jcorey4@kent.edu](mailto:jcorey4@kent.edu).

## A Lesson on “Tone”

Rachel Murphree

This is a lesson that I use for my English 101 students after they have completed a first draft of their first essay, which is usually a personal narrative. The purpose of this assignment is to get the students to think more about their audience when revising, and to consider the way that they can create a mood or tone with their words. Additionally, I use this activity to emphasize what revision can really mean, since they will make changes to their draft in this activity that extend beyond proof reading.

To begin, I briefly introduce the idea of tone and voice, emphasizing how we often think of it as something that is hard to put your finger on. Then we watch a film clip from the Disney version of *Alice in Wonderland* where Alice falls down the rabbit hole. (I should emphasize here that the students also read the book *Alice in Wonderland* throughout the semester). I ask them to describe the tone or mood of the scene, and the students mostly describe it as light-hearted, whimsical, lazy, and silly. Next, we watch the same scene of Alice falling down in the Tim Burton movie version; this time the students usually describe how frightening and suspenseful this version was. We compare the two and discuss how Alice's expression, her screams, the pace of the fall, the background music, and so on, give us this sense.

I then have the class come up with different emotions/moods that we list on the board. Once we have a few moods listed, I break the students into groups, assign them a mood, and have them rewrite the same scene (which is a passage they've already read for homework). The scene is only a paragraph or two, and I let them add whatever dialogue and adjectives they want to convey moods like anger, excitement, fear, sarcasm, and so on.

The students usually have a lot of fun with this activity, and after about 5 minutes I have each group read out loud their new paragraph to the rest of the class. We talk about how different this same scene can be when revised for a different tone.

Then I have the students take out the drafts of their essays and brainstorm for a moment about what mood or tone this narrative should have. I have them select one paragraph to begin revising in class, and have them pencil in whatever adjectives, adverbs or dialogue they think will give that paragraph that tone.

I find that this activity is a good way to engage students with revision early on. I think that having them first revise someone else's paragraph makes it seem less daunting and shows the students how even a "finished" product can be manipulated to produce a different effect.

## What is a Rhetorical Situation?

Emily King

When students hear the term “rhetorical situation” they often respond with confusion and frustration. It’s an abstract concept, and I can empathize with their annoyance. But what I want my students to understand is that all writing represents some transaction of communication. And, beyond that, all communication represents a rhetorical situation. When students are able to expand their concept of communication to include any exchange of ideas, they begin to understand the power of rhetoric. In order to make this concept more concrete, I use several in-class exercises.

First, I provide a working definition of the term (see “handout”) which we unpack through analytical conversation. Then, we look at tangible examples of rhetorical situations, such as my 2<sup>nd</sup> grade daughter’s homework log (see “class discussion”). This example is effective because, although it appears to be a simple piece of paper that lists assignments, when analyzed, it becomes a complex transaction of communication between my daughter, her teacher, the team of school administrators, and myself. We also discuss the possible additional voice of the government in the document, represented by the presence of core curriculum standards that mandate the assigned materials.

I have also used timely materials to help students recognize rhetoric in the world around them. Last semester, we were studying rhetorical situations just before Halloween. On the morning of class, I came across a news story about a woman in North Dakota who, instead of candy, was giving overweight trick-or-treaters notes about the dangers of obesity (see “class discussion”). The woman’s note sparked an interesting discussion on the power of language in society and allowed students to see the impacts of our rhetorical choices.

Once students begin to grasp the concept of the rhetorical situation, I ask them to provide their own examples to share with the class. Their homework assignment is simply to choose a document that represents a rhetorical situation and bring it to class. Before we discuss them, I ask the students to, in groups, analyze their documents and then choose one to display to the class (see “document analysis”). For this exercise, students must come up with a physical and creative interpretation of their rhetorical situation. Through short skits or silent (“still life”) representations, the groups invite their classmates to define the situation and then uncover the meanings behind the rhetorical “event.” We then discuss the documents in relation to the complex situations that they represent. These exercises give students a better understanding of the ways we use language in everyday life while demonstrating the complexities and social impacts of rhetorical situations.

## Rhetorical Situations: Handout

### What is a Rhetorical Situation?

A rhetorical situation is a broad term for a situation involving examples of rhetoric or particular kinds of speaking. The specific parameters of a rhetorical situation differ according to opposing viewpoints. Some define a rhetorical situation as consisting of an issue, an audience, and its surrounding context, where others would define the term as being composed of the speaker, the audience, and the relevant issue.

In general, rhetorical situations are often observed or analyzed in an academic context. Instructors in some areas of the humanities may ask students to contemplate a rhetorical situation, and provide detailed, intelligent commentary on it. This kind of research also takes place in secondary education, as a high school class might include analysis of rhetorical situations. Also, in some kinds of standardized testing, students may be asked to read text that represents a particular rhetorical situation, and to identify parts of the author's intent in order to explain them on the test. Students may use strategies like "text mapping" to figure out how a writer works within a rhetorical situation.

In its broadest sense, rhetorical situations are simply part of a theory of discourse. It is a construct that helps readers or other audiences to make sense of a "piece of communication," such as a text or transcript. It leads to a wider recognition of the events and relationships surrounding that individual piece of communication. In other words, it helps audiences to analyze text or speech from a more intelligent standpoint.

Homework assignment:

Choose a document or piece of communication that represents a rhetorical situation and bring it to class.

Some examples of these kinds of documents are:

1. A parking ticket
2. A report card
3. A credit card statement
4. A user agreement
5. An invitation
6. A note or email from teacher

Rhetorical Situations: Class Discussion



“Halloween letter to trick-or-treaters”

Happy Halloween and  
Happy Holidays Neighbor!

You are probably wondering why your child has this note; have you ever heard the saying “It takes a village to raise a child?” I am disappointed in “the village” of Fargo Moorhead, West Fargo. Your child is, in my opinion, moderately obese and should not be consuming sugar and treats to the extent of some children this Halloween season. My hope is that you will step up as a parent and ration candy this Halloween and not allow your child to continue these unhealthy eating habits.

Thank you  
(unsigned)

“Charlotte’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Homework Contract”

Name Charlotte King # 4 Week of Oct. 28 - 31, 2013 CHALLENGE

- Spelling Words - Henry & Mudge (Week 2)** Skill: Frequently Misspelled Words
- |              |               |               |                  |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|
| 1. hamburger | 5. cheese     | 9. disapprove | 13. gourmet      |
| 2. sauce     | 6. great      | 10. fracture  | 14. blizzard     |
| 3. chicken   | 7. restaurant | 11. miniature | 15. Thanksgiving |
| 4. juice     | 8. favorite   | 12. leisure   |                  |

	Spelling	Math	Reading	Language Arts
Monday	Write spelling words three times each.	Homework & Remembering pgs. 71,72 Marathon Mile  5 min. Fact Practice	Read for speed ★Read 20 minutes	Mercury and Pluto
Tuesday	Select one activity from the Spelling Sheet.	Homework & Remembering pgs. 13,14,15  POW #7 5 min. Fact Practice	Read for speed ★Read 20 minutes	Changing Sentences.
Wednesday	Take a practice spelling test at home. Write missed words 2 times.	Homework & Remembering pgs. 16,17,18  Missing Addends 5 min. Fact Practice	Read for speed ★Read 20 minutes	Colorful Tens

I have reviewed my child's homework each night.

No School Friday, homework is due Thursday.

★ Please read every night!

For some reason, pgs. 13/14 & 15/16

have already been torn from Charlotte's math book. not sure what??

### Rhetorical Situations: Document Analysis Class Exercise

As a group, choose one document and discuss the following:

1. What speakers or voices are represented by this rhetorical situation?

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2. Is there a separate outside audience or is the audience a part of this conversation?

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3. What are the possible issues tied to this document/rhetorical situation? Consider the potential for disagreement within this rhetorical situation. Are the issues personal, social, political, cultural, etc?

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4. Now, with your group, plan a physical representation of this rhetorical situation and present it to the class, either as a short skit or as a “still life.” This will require that you select the most important features of the rhetorical situation so your audience can identify and understand the situation/document. Be prepared to relay why you chose to represent the situation in such a manner.

## Rebranding the Leviathan: Recognizing Milestones in Grammar

Brewster Swanlund

When asked what their biggest concern or question about English is, the majority of students will say something to do with grammar, or perhaps grammar itself. But what do these students mean when they say this? As an instructor and a former tutor in the Writing Center, I recognize that grammar has been built up to be something extremely scary, a leviathan, if you will. And while I agree that the finer points of syntax can be truly daunting, I think it is important to draw people's attention to their triumphs over this beast thus far. I like to show my classes exactly what grammar is and why it is not as scary as it might seem. Starting from a very broad context, I offer students a look at the following paragraph:

“i cdnuolt blveiee taht I cluod aulaclyt yednatnrd waht I was rdanieg. The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid, aoccdrnig to a rsheearh at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it dseno’t mtaetr in waht oerdr the ltteres in a wrod are, the olny iproamtnt tihng is taht the frsit and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it whotuit a pboerlm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Azanmig huh? yaeh and I awlyas tghuhot spleling was ipmorantt!”

While you might be skeptical that this was ever part of any Cambridge study (it wasn't), to your surprise, and much like my students, you might have discovered that you could read that paragraph with little difficulty. Perhaps, you found yourself mouthing the words or muttering under your breath, but you made it through the paragraph and were able to understand the content within!

The reason for this is grammar, or more specifically, the language software of your brain. In fact, I like to think of grammar as nothing more than that: decoding software. A more detailed definition, perhaps one offered by linguists such as Saussure, might say that grammar includes the technical categories of *phonology*, *morphology*, and *syntax*, but that still points back to how humans make sense of language. Firstly, since the majority of humans learn to speak long before they learn to write, they are going to be pretty good with phonology, or how words sound. This is further helped if, as you tried to read the paragraph, you spoke the words as you figured them out, as this engages just a little more of that grammar software as you tap into the auditory part of your brain – checking to see if what you are reading “sounds right.” Even ESL speakers with heavy accents will find themselves making better sense of the words when hearing them spoken aloud. Virtually everyone can be better understood when they speak than when they write their ideas – even though some writers might feel they are still writing with an “accent.” As social animals, our brains quickly adapt to different or unorthodox phonology and offer a temporary cipher. Additionally, and ideally, the social interaction between two people and the genuine desire to “get it” offers up an additional motivator to facilitate the communication. Furthermore, we usually understand how to make up a word or change a word from one word class (part of speech) to another, regardless of the rules. You might have found yourself inventing words when the “proper” word eluded you. Suffixes like “-ness,” “-ly,” “-er,” and

“-ed” frequently get tacked on to a word that otherwise would not receive such an ending for users to emphasize a certain quality or interpretation to an audience; and almost magically, the audience, though never having heard this construction before, understands what the author is trying to say and even understands the emphasis placed on the words. Again, this is because of our understanding of morphology or the *morphemes* (the smallest units of language) that allow us a way of making sense of these arbitrary sounds.

Finally, and perhaps most important, syntax allows us to focus our translation of the above “broken paragraph” not because it has the first and last letter in the right place, like the paragraph says (although that helps), but because we know what type of word to look for in each position of the sentence. Additionally, the syntax demarcations let us know how to parse, or chunk, the ideas in order to aid that search. The capital letters, periods, and even commas let us know how units in the sentences relate to one another, and then the translation can begin. First off, it begins with the most used word in the English language: “I.” This single-letter word cannot really be mixed up, and it also gives the reader the most important part of the sentence: the subject. This is something that all English speakers understand – though we might not have the jargon to express this knowledge. We have a subject-verb-object language (mostly), and so when the paragraph starts with such an easily recognizable agent, the reader has an essential clue to figure out what comes next – and we know how to do this search because of our grammar software.

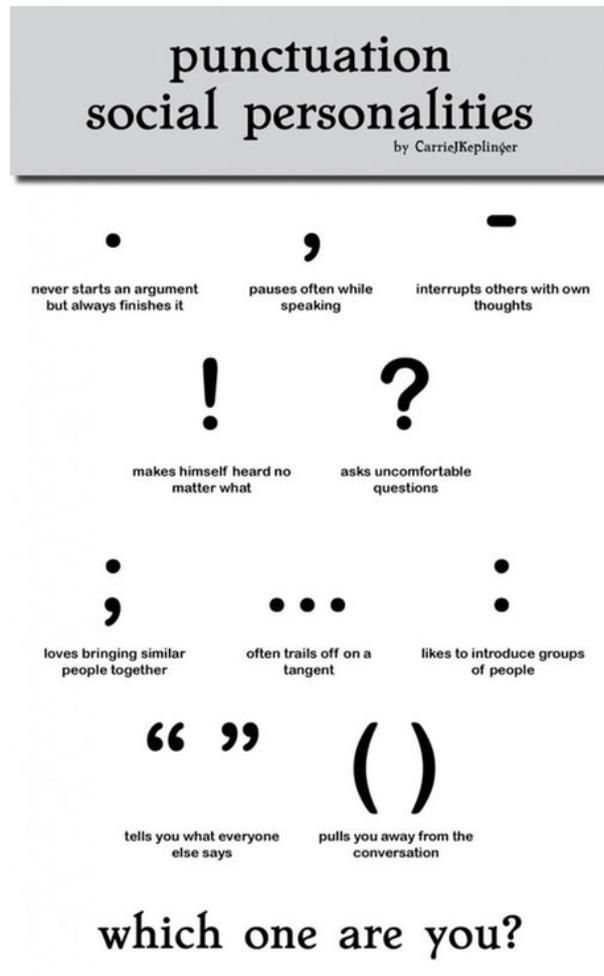
It is our intuitive understanding of the basics of grammar, word order, or sentence parts that allows us to know what class of word to look for in each area – further refining our search through our mental word hoard. Conversely, if the paragraph did not have the words in the right place in the sentence, if it were written as Yoda speaks perhaps, then we would have a much harder time interpreting the paragraph’s meaning.

Since things like word order and the importance of capital letters and periods are already understood, in fact they are learned very early on in our childhood (or earliest explorations of a language), it is only the finer applications of syntax with **intent** that makes people a little more uncertain. As an author, we tell our audience how to apply their grammar software, as each little speck of punctuation conveys to the reader’s grammar software, whether he/she is aware of it or not, how to interpret what comes next – mainly because we as readers expect our authors to mean what they say. But not all authors know how to utilize these marks with intent in order to guide their readers. That is where a college English class can ideally come in – to drag these rules out into the light.

It is good to remind people that they are not starting from scratch. For instance, we already at least have a few understandings of how different punctuation marks function. We might even be able to personify them, as the following Internet meme does. We know that periods end sentences while question marks make sentences into interrogatives, and exclamation marks end sentences as well show intense emotion. But what of the comma, semi-colon, dash, and colon? These punctuation marks, although internal, also have functions just like the other more easily understood punctuation marks. And while it has been shown in various studies that it is nearly impossible to teach grammar

to other people, I think that helping people recognize the grammar they already have learned does have some value.

Getting a better handle on these additional “meaning” marks are an aspect of grammar, but they are not the only things that constitute grammar. And while some writers might continue to struggle with grammatical conventions, like subject-verb agreement or dangling modifiers, I would like to see students stop thinking that the placement of the comma is the only thing holding them back from that “A” and that this “problem” has a name: Grammar. I think that it is time that we help rebrand grammar as “advanced syntax” and show that even this scary sounding new level of English mastery is built on a foundation of a basic syntax that is already understood.





Prompts and Exercises:



Activities for  
Writing  
In and Out  
of the Classroom

**FOUR**

**Essay # 2: Profile Essay**  
**DUE DATE:**

Everyone has a story to tell. Whether it involves a struggle, accomplishment, goal, passion, talent, background or experience, everyone has the material for an interesting story. For your second essay, you will be interviewing someone of interest to you. A profile **does not** tell a person's life story but attempts to give the reader insight into an important aspect of the subject.

For this essay, you will become journalists. I want you to compose a profile of an individual whom you have interviewed and closely observed. The person may be well known in the community (politician, local musician, etc.) or relatively anonymous (relative, friend, server in a restaurant, college professor, etc.). **The purpose of this essay is to convey—through close observation and factual investigation (interview)—the distinct, unique qualities of an individual.** I want you to bring out what is interesting about your subject—no matter how ordinary this individual may appear at first.

**Elements to include in your profile:**

- **Theme:** Try to develop one aspect of the person's life that sums the person up. Obviously, one aspect does not sum up a person's life, but it can sum up the aspect you are presenting. This is the most important element of a profile story, *but* it often does not emerge right away. You may not know what your theme may be until you start to write, **so take good notes.**
- To be able to illustrate your theme you will need in your profile:
  - **Observation:** Use details you observe of your subject that support your theme
    - Body language (laid back, uptight and stiff, etc.)
    - Language (Casual and informal or formal and academic sounding)
  - **Dialogue:** Get direct, first-hand quotes from your subject!!
  - **Anecdotes:** Short, detailed stories or experiences can be very effective in illustrating your theme. Be sure to *go beyond the obvious* and dig for details that you will need to make the anecdote interesting and effective.

**\*\*Look at profiles in magazines (*Spin, Rolling Stone, Marie Claire, Elle, Sports Illustrated, Vanity Fair, The New Yorker*, etc.) and newspapers (*Los Angeles Times, New York Times, OC Register, USA Today*, etc.) to see how professional journalists engage readers. Also, see how they develop their own unique voice in their profile and a theme of their subject.**

**\*\*\*NOTE\*\*\* NO email, phone, or Skype interviews for this assignment.**

### In-Class Midterm Essay

Please write a clearly-focused, well-developed academic essay in response to **one** of the following prompts. On the inside cover or first page of your Blue/Green Book, include some form of prewriting (freewriting, outlining, listing, clustering, etc.). Some form of prewriting is mandatory for this essay, and points will be taken off if it is not included.

- 1.) You are the only survivor on a ship which is sinking off the coast of a deserted tropical island in the Pacific. You have time to save only four items from the following list to take with you to the island.

a religious text (Bible, Koran, etc.)  
a battery operated radio receiver  
writing paper and pens  
two complete changes of clothing  
a first aid kit  
a rifle and ammunition  
matches

a box of canned food  
a package of your favorite books  
a 10' by 12' piece of canvas  
a knife  
a compass  
a case of bottled water  
an ax

Decide which four items you would take, and give your reasons for choosing them. Consider all aspects of your life on the island and how different items may interrelate. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers. The effectiveness of your essay will depend in part on how well you support your choices.

- 2.) At one time or another most of us have had the disturbing experience of being “a stranger in a strange land.” It might have been, for instance, when we stepped on foreign soil, drove into an unfamiliar neighborhood, or entered a new school or college. The experience may have been marked by anxiety, loneliness, suspicion and, in some extreme cases, even by despair. Describe a moment or period in your life when you felt like a “stranger in a strange land.” Pay special attention to how the experience affected your dealings with people and your perception of the things around you.

You have all of class Monday to complete your essay and all of class Wednesday to revise your essay.

When you are finished, please place this prompt sheet inside your Blue/Green Book before turning it in.

### **In-Class Final Essay**

Please write a clearly-focused, well-developed academic essay in response to **one** of the following prompts. On the inside cover or first page of your Blue/Green Book, include some form of prewriting (freewriting, outlining, listing, clustering, etc.). Some form of prewriting is mandatory for this essay, and points will be taken off if it is not included. There is NO length requirement—just write what you think is sufficient. You will be graded on your organization and focus, whether your essay is fully developed, etc. NOT on your opinions, so be honest!

- 1.) English 101 focuses on helping students produce college-level writing. Discuss how the activities and assignments this semester have either made you a “college-level” writer or not. *Be specific.*
  
- 2.) Analyze the semester’s activities and assignments and write an essay in which you discuss what you found *least* helpful and *most* helpful. *Provide specific examples and details to support your conclusions.*
  
- 3.) Explain the grade that you think you have earned in the class—not what you deserve, what you think you should receive or what you hope you will get—but what you have earned. *Be sure to provide sufficient supporting details for your argument.*

You have all of class today to complete and revise your essay.

When you are finished, please place this prompt sheet inside your Blue/Green Book before turning it in.

## “Power in Spaces” Writing Unit

Roza Suzie Gabrielyan

### Pedagogical Explanation:

In this academic era, I feel that students are demanding a sense of purpose behind their assignments and, I'd argue, rightfully so. Therefore, I try to make my assignments critical yet beneficial to my students as writers and individuals. The traditional notion of argumentation has expanded.

Arguments exist beyond books; they inhabit our television screens, our gestures, and the spaces that surround us. The purpose of this assignment is to get students to realize that what they learn in the classroom can be used in their daily lives to interpret power structures, social institutions, and change. Several students have seen the film *The Hunger Games*, yet most of them view and read only for plot, ignoring the implicit messages the text reveals. Aside from teaching them that arguments are everywhere, this assignment requires students to read texts critically and view the world around them critically. Ultimately, it is an exercise in critical reading and writing skills. I emphasize that students should write unique arguments because it provides their essay with purpose. I explain that if they were to write yet another essay on the topic of *The Hunger Games* and gender they would contribute nothing to the academic conversation surrounding the novel and film. Instead, by reading critically, they should provide a new perspective to a familiar text. Knowing that there is an audience that extends beyond their professor, one that includes other academics writing about the same matter encourages them to work harder to find their own perspective and angle. Because their argument may be complex and controversial, they know their thesis statements and main points must be clearer. Each of these smaller assignments directly relates to the final essay, allowing students to have much of their prewriting done before they even start the full essay. Because of the unrestrictive nature of the prompt, I have received essays ranging in arguments, yet almost all realize that in order to corroborate their argument, they must find the right support and analysis. These essays have been insightful and unique and several students have told me how liberating it feels to have the opportunity to find their own argument in a novel.

### Exercise 1: Character Analysis

Choose a character from *The Hunger Games*. It can be any character as long as the character undergoes a transformation. Consider the factors that contribute to the character's change. The goal here is to be a critical thinker and observer. Does the character change in various spaces? With certain people? You may want to discuss how a change in character affects other characters or settings. Regardless of whom or what you choose, you have to prove it. Yet another writing task that involves argumentation! Be sure to select evidence/quotes from the novel to support your argument about that character.

As you may have noticed, each and every single one of your exercises directly ties to your final essay, so really take the time to think through your responses.

The total word count for the entire assignment should be at least 300 words. Please include the word count on the bottom of the page. Times New Roman, size 12.

## Exercise 2: Literary Ethnography

As we discussed, an ethnography is a critical observation of a culture or space, or in this case, specifically how a space affects a group of people. For this assignment you will choose any space in the book. Remember, there are many different types of spaces. After you have chosen the space, describe it. What does it look like? Who occupies it? Who has the power in that intended space? How is the space divided? What themes do the original space present? What language is used to describe the intended space? After you have done this, you should revisit the space later on in the book. How has the space been transformed? Who has the power now? What is the purpose of the space? Etc.

I expect a thorough analysis of the space. I expect specific details that describe how characters' actions or moods change depending on the use of a space. I expect you to meticulously evaluate the themes presented and changed, the language used, etc. This assignment should be at least 400 words. It should be double-spaced. Times New Roman, size 12.

## Power in Spaces Essay Prompt

Over the last two weeks, we have been discussing “space.” Exploring Foucault’s heterotopias and realizing the heterogeneous potential of space, we have learned that space transcends beyond the physical realm. More than its geographical location and architectural layout, spaces embody notions of power, notions that affect the ideologies, occupants, and actions of a space. Like texts, spaces can be read and analyzed in terms of characters, themes, rules, and society. Our emphasis on the transformation of spaces (from intended to potential) has shown us which factors may change a space and what the larger repercussions of that change may be. For your essay, you will be required to choose one of the four following essay prompts:

- 1. Compare a space in *The Hunger Games* and the transformation that occurs to an actual space in the real world. How are the ideologies representative of the space?**  
*Remember, you must have an argument. Do not just compare and contrast one space with another without any critical thinking. Consider why you have chosen to compare those two spaces. What is the underlying message you are trying to provide to your audience about space?*
- 2. Consider the use of power in the book and its changes depending on which space is occupied/controlled. Consider how space can determine ownership of power.**  
*Again, there must be an argument. Don't just list the ways the Capitol used power in each space. Think of how Katniss may utilize space to her advantage and how the Gamemakers can do the same. What does that tell us about how power functions in a space?*
- 3. Consider how each space affects Katniss. What does each space provide her? Deprive from her? How does space help determine her identity or the evolution of her identity?**
- 4. Analyze the change in a space from *The Hunger Games*. What causes the transformation? How does that change affect the citizens of Panem?**  
*You may pick any space, however concrete or abstract it may be (the arena, the space of the television, the space of one's past).*

Although I have provided you with potential essay topics, I have not provided you with an argument. Since this is your second semester of freshman composition, you should be able to find your own argument and voice in the topics listed above. Trust me; you can all do it! ⇒)

Requirements:

- Must be 4-5 pages, double spaced
- Must have at least 4 quotes from the book to support your points. However, you may have no more than six. I don't want the quotes to overpower your argument. They should serve as support, not your main ideas.
- Must have a clear thesis that has an argument or controlling idea, not a fact or obvious statement.
- Must be proofread and free from grammatical mistakes and syntactical errors

## **“A Profitable Identity” Writing Unit**

Roza Suzie Gabrielyan

### **Pedagogical Explanation:**

Rhetoric is a critical component of any composition classroom. My goal with these assignments was to get students to recognize how rhetoric is used in popular culture, corporate sectors, and society. Once they can identify the effects rhetoric can have on individuals, they can then use these tools in their own writing to be more persuasive, knowledgeable, and effective. The topic of consumerism is extremely effective because all students can relate to it. The first exercise requires students to recognize that audience plays a large role in advertising. By revealing the generalizations marketers make, students understand that audience does really determine content. This is especially helpful when writing their own essays. They realize that they must account for their readers' prior knowledge, emotional associations, and concerns in their own writing because writing is communication. The second assignment asks that they analyze an advertisement for its use of rhetoric (ethos, pathos, logos, and visual). Since the ad may be in any form, they realize that genre dictates content as well. You cannot include the same things in a magazine print ad as you would a commercial. This awareness then permeates their own writing. They cannot write an argumentative paper the same way they would a narrative essay. Audience's expectations inform genre rules. Finally, their presentation asks that they verbally explain their arguments. The question-answer period afterward allows them to see that the questions their classmates have about their presentation mirrors the questions readers may have about their potential papers. The essay itself, then, springs from these exercises, allowing students to take their knowledge of rhetoric and consumerism in any direction. Using the rhetorical appeals they identified in their advertisements, they write convincing essays that explore the various facets of consumerism and its effect on identity conception.

### **Exercise 1: Analyzing Audience Appeals**

Watch an hour of television on one channel. It can be any channel, just be sure to state which channel it is. While watching, make a list of all the ads shown. What are they selling? How are they advertising the products? Why do they choose the advertising strategies they choose? Who is their audience? Why? Do the ads relate to the show? How so?

Be as detailed as possible. Your assignment should be at least 500 words. Remember, you are not just summarizing information; you are critically analyzing and making conclusions about the ads on that given network.

### **Exercise 2: Advertisement Awareness**

Choose an ad. Later on, you will show this ad to the class. Deconstruct it. What network it was on? What form of media was it on? What time was it airing? What assumptions did the ad make about the audience? What visual rhetoric is at use? Is the ad convincing? What is the ad's theme? What other industries or companies may profit from this ad? How does the ad affect the consumer?

Be as detailed as possible. Your assignment should be at least 500 words.

### Exercise 3: Presentation

Now you will present on your critical ‘reading’ of the advertisement. You will create a dynamic presentation with the three members of your group. It will be up to the group to determine which ad is best, write a script, assign speaking parts, provide visuals, etc. Your presentation will be 5 minutes long; the ad should be no longer than a minute. Your presentation should provide the information listed in Exercise 2 but also explain the visual rhetoric at use and *how the ad impacts consumers*. I am not looking for a superficial analysis about how the ad uses humor to sell products; I am looking for a critical observation. Advertising agencies make billions of dollars a year; your insightful analysis should prove that it is money well spent. You will be graded as a group, so make sure every group member contributes.

### Profitable Identity Essay Prompt

It is no secret that America, more than any other country, revolves around money. As a capitalistic society, companies are in constant competition to produce the best goods at the cheapest prices. H&M, Target, Forever21, and more strive to make products that are so cheap that they are easily replaceable. Meeting the consumers’ needs has become the manufacturers’ number one priority. In all actuality, however, the goods that manufacturers create are projecting notions of identity onto consumers. Certain women refuse to wear certain brands, men do not spray certain colognes, and teens dismiss an array of goods because it does not “fit” their style or personality. Who you are is often determined by what you buy. This manufactured notion that the product defines the consumer has become a large misconception in society. In this essay, ask yourself why individuals believe their identity depends on the things they purchase? Who deems what is acceptable for which age group, gender, race, and why? How do advertisements change depending on the audience and genre? We have learned about the rhetorical appeals and visual rhetoric. Now you must take that knowledge and apply it to the real world. Consider what lengths advertisers go to in order to sell a product (think *Mad Men*).

In a 4-5 page essay, discuss an aspect of consumerism and how it affects identity. Ultimately, your essay should respond to the following prompt:

**Write an essay that defends the extent to which you agree or disagree that consumerism is a part of modern identity.**

You may choose any of the following, but remember, your focus is on one’s identity as a consumer, not consumerism in general.

- Consumer-based identity (correlation between our identity and what we buy)
- False advertising and its effect on identity
- Identity- based marketing techniques (certain products for certain groups of people)
- Overexposure of advertisements and its effect on a consumer’s identity
- Strategies used by media to influence spending habits/consumerism and how does this benefit or harm how we conceptualize our identity
- Can consumers be immuned to the effects of advertising?

- Evolution of advertisements and its effect on an ever-changing consumer identity

Remember, this is an argumentative essay. Your argument will enter a larger conversation about consumerism. Be sure not to state obvious arguments or make unqualified assertions. You will need to support your argument with at least 3 quotes from at least 3 credible sources. Two of your quotes may be related to the ad you deconstructed, the articles we read (“Which One of These Sneakers is Me?” by Rushkoff), or any of the videos we viewed in class (*Logorama* or *Story about Stuff*). The other source must be an article from a respected newspaper or academic journal. Remember to explain the relevance of your quote to your argument.

## **The “Connections” Essay: An Appropriated Assignment**

Amanda N. Reyes

### **Pedagogical Explanation:**

Multimodal scholarship has recently been solidified by anthologies such as Tracey Bowen & Carl Whithaus’ “Multimodal Literacies and Emerging Genres” and foundational works like Patricia Sullivan’s “Experimental Writing in Composition: Aesthetics and Pedagogies” and “Writing New Media: Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Composition” by Wysocki, Johnson-Eliola, Selfe, and Sirc. Multimodal composition expands writing from solely textual literacy to include visual, audio, spatial, and digital forms of rhetoric. By broadening our understanding of textuality, we open up the possibilities of what can be *read* and what can be *produced/composed*. It is for this reason that I emphasize the blurring of “essay” and “project” so as to call attention to the conceptual and practical aspects of composing that – in traditional writing courses – has led to a singular exploitation of text-based, linear thinking, and Quintilian mode-based essays.

Composition instructors on every side of the pedagogical spectrum ask students to write an essay of some kind. The transaction of a text-based essay for a grade (or, as many students see it, a reflection of their intelligence and/or capability) via writing as a singular alphabetic form of communication and the traditionally linear interpretation of synthesis as understanding has limited the ways in which the instructor and student are able to rhetorically interact and engage with reading, writing, and critical thought. This is not because “writing” or “synthesis” or an “essay” is restrictive; rather, our traditional associations and experiences with the process and end production of such terms are limited to purely “alphabetic literacy” and standard academic English as the most recognized and esteemed measure of academic success (Wysocki, Selfe, Sirc).

### **Practical Application:**

I would like to focus on one form of essay, the “connections” paper, which emphasizes synthesis by means of illuminating direct and indirect connections, in addition to conscious and unconscious connections. The traditional model of the “connections essay” first introduced by David Bartholomae in *Ways of Reading Words and Images* made its way into my tool-box when my advisor, David Sherman, adapted it to include a multimodal twist by incorporating an “extension” piece that allowed students to construct a multimodal “extension” as a possible topic for the final written assignment. I infuse Sherman’s expansion of content from lowbrow to highbrow – academic to nonacademic – as well as his expansion of mediums/genres/modes into my own variation of the assignment.

Given the tradition of pedagogical and practical appropriation, I was inspired to create my own connections “project” that includes both multimodal “extension” and written components into one holistic *essayistic project* that allows students to write for themselves and an audience (both academic and nonacademic) without being constrained to a single textuality. Personal, social, and cultural experiences, as well as academic research, are utilized to make otherwise unforeseen *connections* to the readings, theories, themes or topics that are discussed in the classroom. Students are asked to utilize

a multimodal approach at each phase of the writing process (prewriting, drafting, revising) including the end product, for each aspect is equal in importance as I emphasize process through critical attention to the relationship between content, form, genre, audience, and purpose.

My connections assignment is geared towards getting students to consciously compose their insights in *juxtaposition* to others so that perspective is turned into perspectives(s) at all times regardless of the style(s) used as the essay is no longer directed by the terms: narrative, compare and contrast, persuasive, or research paper. Rather, my connections project is a melding and expansion of these essayistic modes, allowing students to take ownership of and consciously manipulate some or all forms/genres/mediums within their project depending on the specialized direction of the given assignment/topic/theme/content.

Below is a brief outline for how to set-up a connections project. Each step can be broken up or meshed together, depending on instructor taste and class purpose. The broad sections are meant to serve as a guide for further adaptation, appropriation and experimentation.

**1. Introducing a Concept/Strategy/Technique:**

- a. Introduce a strategy/technique for students to experiment with. Have materials ready for students to go over. I like to begin with the materials that are more conceptual and/or theoretical as a way of giving a context and framework for the strategy.
  - i. EX: “In-Voicing: Beyond the Voice Debate”- George Otte, excerpts from Bakhtin’s “Heterglossia” & “The Dialogic Imagination”

**2. Examples (artistic & scholarly):**

- a. Provide multiple examples of the strategy/technique in practice in multiple situations/circumstance by different sources. As Peter Elbow famously advocated, I tend to flatten the field and neutralize hierarchy not by ignoring it, but by consistently calling attention to its presence, construction, and effects. I do this by incorporating several high and lowbrow examples across cultures & socio-economic status as well as both academic and creative works done in various mediums. This does not get rid of the hierarchy of languages that exists in our world, but rather highlights how students can learn to recognize and then choose how to participate in such a world.
  - i. EX of Theoretical works used above : Anzuldua’s *BorderLands* and Kendrick Lamar’s “No Make-Up On”

**3. Connections Project:**

- a. Give students the opportunity to try his or her hand at the technique or strategy. Grading of this is problematic for many instructors, however, given that the connections written component is tied to this possible multimodal production (depending on how each students approaches it), I believe that the two work hand in hand and are thus equally graded.
  - i. EX: try to use “in-voicing” as you free-write about a topic or use in-voicing to describe a conflict or confrontation based off the examples of in-voicing

discussed in class or create your own in-voice project that revolves around

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#### 4. **Connections Written Component or Essay:**

- a. Students now have the opportunity to *write* about his or her experience using the technique/strategy. This writing can also take an alternative twist, depending on instructor preference and guidelines and each students' personal way of composing. This piece is similar to process explanation, however, it can also further expand or connect the "project" piece.
  - i. EX: What did you compose? What connections can you make to the readings, artists, and/or other outside connections? How have you expanded, challenged, or adapted the strategy/technique? If you struggled, or found the strategy useless, describe that experience and why this is not a fruitful way to compose.

#### **Student Expectations:**

Students are asked to not focus on the idea of "expectation," whether that be finding a definitive thesis or receiving a letter grade as proof of competence and/or success. Instead, students are urged to self-reflect on his or her awareness of their current body of knowledge in regards to academic and nonacademic reading and writing, so that they can then re-evaluate composition as a conceptual space for making connections and insights that are supported by the rhetorical aspects of inventing and revising in no subsequent order, rather as many times as necessary – sometimes in a back and forth, outward, inward fashion. The student, not the instructor, designs the relationship between content, form, genre, purpose, and audience. The instructor, instead, facilitates and lays out strategies and techniques for making meaning and emphasizes how the intertextuality of multiple approaches and examples/content is that individual's way of shedding light on a particular topic and ultimately communicating information. An expectation for a traditional grade is challenged, as the direction of the assignment may not be known; however, that is a part of the process of discovery. As composition instructors, we are not focused on the end product solely; we are there to give students an opportunity to see how their ultimate purpose of rhetorical communication is connected to the constructed relationship between substance and approach.

#### **Works Referenced**

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## Essay Four Prompt: That's Entertainment!

Bob Neis: English 101

Our text, *Remix*, poses the question: “Why are we so bored?” In some capacity, everyone experiences this wave of ennui – the dissatisfaction arising from a lack of excitement, a sudden realization of life’s routines. For essay number four, we will attempt to respond to Latterell’s question, and explain *why*.

Look back and think of something you used to find fresh and entertaining, but now find boring and old; this could be anything, really—a hobby, a celebrity fixation, a song, a style of clothing, a movie, or even a friend! What was initially exciting about your subject? Go deep with your analysis here—if something was new, what did you like about that? If it was fun, why was it fun? Attention to detail and care in explanation are key in performing well on this assignment (well, every assignment...but especially here).

What changed and caused you to look elsewhere? Was it a shift in taste? Did familiarity settle in and novelty wear off? Resist the urge to simply say “you got over it” or you “just got bored,” because we already know that. Try to express the shift in interest.

Now think of something you currently turn to for entertainment. Similarly, spend some time explaining why it holds such fascination for you; what is so enjoyable about it? What do you get from it?

Present a comparison of the two—what is similar about the pair? Do they share a quality exposing something about you? How are they different? What makes one more appealing than the other? Eventually, you should use this comparison to draw a conclusion—attempt to articulate what you as an individual and we as a culture seek though entertainment. Try to explain why we perpetuate this cycle, and as Louis C.K. puts it, why “everything is awesome and nobody is happy.”

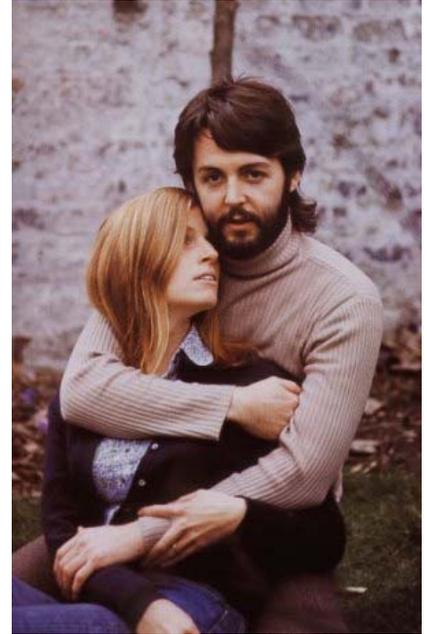
**Due: 12/09**



### Essay 3 Prompt: You've Lost that Lovin' Feeling

Bob Neis: English 101

Is romance a natural feeling, or is it all just learned performative behavior – something seen in a commercial? In class we have been investigating the cultural construction of romance in various forms, thinking about why “every kiss begins with Kay.” Mass media, advertisements, television broadcasts, and pop radio hits reach thousands of people instantaneously, communicating a message in an incredibly short timespan. In order to connect with such a large audience, these messages largely push universalities, truisms on the public that are widely accepted to the point where they are almost invisible. Used as a rhetorical device, the sincerity of romance falls into question.



For this essay, I would like you to analyze the implied message of a “love song,” be it about new love, a tough break up, staying together, a crush. Try to find what message the singer is communicating to an audience. What assumption about love is the song playing off of?

For your thesis, develop a criticism regarding this message; what myth about romance does the message perpetuate? Keep in mind the difference between “love” and “romance” in your discussion. We aren’t saying that love isn’t real, but could we say “romance” is unrealistic at times? Consider the purpose of your analysis; why should a reader care about your reading of an R. Kelly song? A strong thesis should answer that “so what?” question. The message you find in the song should potentially reflect the way the masses feel about romance.

Remember: what literally happens in the song or the story is less important for discussion than your **critique of how romance is presented**. Your analysis should apply outside of the song, exposing a cultural assumption we as a culture make about love.



Alternate assignment: If you are more of a visual person you are welcome to write about a movie or television show. Pick an onscreen couple and break down the dynamic of their relationship—what message do they convey to an audience regarding love?

**Peer Review: 4/7**

**Final Due: 4/21**



Process Tools:

Exercises for  
Starting and Engaging  
& the  
Writing Process

**FIVE**

## Generating Topics through Identity Groups

Emily King

Some students are full of ideas and know exactly what they want to write about. Others struggle to find topics that interest them. I use this chart early in the semester to help students locate interesting topics that relate to their everyday lives. In conjunction with a “writing territories list” that lists things they often wonder about, students use this chart throughout the semester as they choose topics for essays. After handing out the blank chart, I ask them to list at least eight activities that they do almost daily. These are usually things like “go to school,” “walk my dog,” or “listen to music with friends.” To help them along, I create my chart on the board as an example and we complete the chart together, one column at a time. This helps students understand the purpose of each column. I make it clear that insiders are people that would either be a part of the activity or understand the activity on a personal level. Outsiders are the opposite. We then unpack recent conversations that occurred during those activities and talk about how to pull topics from those conversations. I make clear that topics and issues can come from interactions with insiders or outsiders. Sometimes the topics drawn from outsider interaction are the most interesting. A couple of my own examples are found in this sample chart. I use my examples to discuss what kinds of papers I could create from my own last column. For example, I could write an argument about the ineffectiveness of my kids’ school’s pick up line, demanding that changes be made.

Daily Activities	Roles/Identity Groups	Insiders	Outsiders	Recent Conversations	Topic/Issue
Pick up kids from school	Mom	Other moms	People with no kids	The pick up line is a joke and needs to change	What can we do about it?
Lunch with girlfriends	Friend, Woman, Vegetarian	Other women, vegetarians	Men, meat-eaters	It’s almost impossible to eat healthfully at a fast food restaurant	What fast food places have decent food?
Garden	Gardener, people who enjoy gardening/ the outdoors	Green-thumbs	People who kill plants	Succulents are trendy; they used to be “old-lady plants” but now they’re cool	New gardening trend/ good for non-gardeners

## **A Compilation of Ideas for Generative Invention Activities**

E. Elle Mooney

Much like speaking, writing becomes a skill that improves through practice and dedication. In order to establish a classroom that acknowledges a personal and generative access to writing, I start most class sessions with playful engagement of the student voice.

This is accomplished through a variety of invention exercises that loosen up and challenge the expectations of first-year composition students. Playing with words allows something authentic, joyful, and connective to emerge in journaling and narrative work. It also enables the student to break out of rote writing habits and helps him or her to recognize preconceived language patterns or vague phrasings that hinder communication.

Later, these playful exercises are used to discuss critical thinking, rhetorical strategies and revision techniques.

These are a few of the invention exercises I have used in my themed composition class, which explored our relationship with the natural world. Any of these exercises can be adapted to suit your classes' themes or they can even be used generically. Some of these may sound familiar, perhaps with a twist. So, take, enjoy, add your own twist, and then share!

### **A. Memory Free-write:**

Memory is composed of part fact and part fiction. Our stories and rhetorical frames of reference come from memories that we may now take for granted or may disregard. This exercise is to let you try and reclaim and reground your sense of place and space within the natural world. Whether your relationship is ambivalent, harmonious, or adversarial, you have a relationship. Before you write, close your eyes and reflect on your earliest memory of nature. Now, free-write (I limit this time to 10 minutes.) Next, share your ideas with a partner. Discuss: How far back were you able to go? What senses were the most useful in memory? Does this memory relate to your relationship with nature now? Were you surprised by what you were able or not able to recall?

### **B. Point of view Exercise**

Break the class up into small groups and hand each group a section of story to rewrite (I use several scenes from N. Scott Momaday's "The Way to Rainy Mountain" because several selections are the first readings in my class, so the students have previously analyzed and discussed the material.) Then, assign each group a new point of view -- either a different narrator or rhetorical situation. I allow 15 minutes for the groups to generate stories. I circulate to remind them to use sensory concrete language. Then, the groups read their creation aloud. Discuss: tone, plot, audience, etc. How does each change? Why? If there is no change, why?

### **C. The "taboo" Game:**

I've seen this game in a few composition classrooms, and even though students might protest at first because of the drawing component, the exit feedback is always positive. This exercise works well

with my theme because students find it difficult to describe environment in specific ways, and instead rely on trite phrasing, such as “the waves were so peaceful,” or “the sunset glowed red.” To help them practice descriptions, I project a series of natural images, the clichéd and the unexpected. With a partner, students take turns (One facing the screen, the other with his or her back turned away.) The student facing the screen describes the image and the other draws a picture from the description. After the first round, I start to limit the kinds of words they can use to describe the image. I eliminate general words like hill or tree, and increase the list of banned words in order to have students reach deeper to describe their images. While students are describing the images, I walk around and record overheard phrases to share with the class later. The most successful teams end up using unexpected metaphor or detailed specifics in order to have their partner draw as accurately as possible. Discussion: Compare attempts. How was this difficult? How was it successful?

#### **D. Ekphrasis:**

This exercise is used to develop conversations with images or experiences from other mediums. Here, I introduce the idea that images can also be considered texts and so can be analyzed in a similar critical manner. Additionally, I point out that it is one thing to describe a text, but another to be in conversation or in an exchange of ideas with it. This exercise can feel a little esoteric, but it lays the groundwork for critical analysis of texts, and for choosing an effective rhetorical voice. For this exercise, I provide magazine cutouts of various nature photography, the sublime to the disturbing, and I have the students choose one image to work with. Then, I have them describe their chosen image using third, first and second person p.o.v. This exercise could be offered as a group activity using projected images.

Through each rhetorical move I remind them to ask: What is the piece trying to communicate? Talk to that.

1. Write a description using third person. Write what you see, and not what you know. Stick to third person. Get specific, but remember to consider what the piece is trying to communicate. What is limited by third person? What is gained? What tone or voice emerges from the third person p.o.v.? How objective can you the writer be? Should we assume third person is unbiased? Why or why not?
2. Now, use first person. Remember to consider the text’s purpose. How does first person differ from third person? What details were you able to add? What details were left out? Were interior motives and emotions are revealed? Why? Can bias be effective? Is a connection to audience implied or direct? What are some advantages to this p.o.v.? Disadvantages?
3. Now write the final description in the second person. This may be difficult at first because it is conversational: your persona is talking to a perceived persona. Who is “you”? Remember to ask, what is the text trying to communicate? Why is “you” important to consider and define? How might it be a problem if it is not? How has the tone changed from the third and first person? Are there problems here? Misspeaking, presumption, mis-telling? Can you imagine when an essay might be best in second person? Why?

#### **E. Beginnings:**

Starting an essay is a struggle for many students, so I like to have them “start” an essay as much as possible. So, before they draft, they’ll have numerous “hooks” to adapt or reuse for other purposes.

This activity was used to begin their narrative essay on their relationship with the natural world. For this activity, I had the students begin by meditating on any encounter with the natural world. The first three prompts, I have them develop in class as a free-write, and then I offer the other “beginnings” as journal activities because they require more time or research to develop.

1. Begin with a setting -- 5-minute free-write:

A setting contains and defines context.

A setting might be place. A setting might contain a motion or an interaction.

What kinds of boundaries delineate the setting?

Is the setting ephemeral or lasting?

2. Begin with a speaker -- 5-minute free-write:

A speaker implies immediacy.

First person? Second person?

Witness something. Choose the least likely connection and speak from there.

What happened? How does this compare to an obvious connection?

3. Describe an object in the setting -- 5-minute free-write:

Why is that object there? How did it get there? Is it unlikely that it would be there?

Try to create resonance between the object and the setting. What is the conversation here?

Or what are the suggested images or memories, emotions in this coupling?

(This move sounds weird, but a lot of students have luck here, such as describing a carabiner on a key chain which is inside their designer handbag. Or, one student began by describing the spider in the corner of the shower which had been there for a month.)

4. Note an interesting fact/statistic. For example, “Old Faithful, the best known geyser in Yellowstone National Park--though not the largest, erupts every 40 to 70 min and shoots c.11,000 gal (41,640 liters) of water some 150 ft (46 m) high.”

5. Examine a philosophical statement: “‘I never saw a discontented tree. They grip the ground as though they liked it, and though fast rooted they travel about as far as we do.’ John Muir.”

6. Start at the end of your story: “It was hard to look at her as we left the hospital. Her small cold hand gripped mine, and her thumb rubbed over my knuckles, over and over. I hurt how much she hurt, and I wondered at the craziness of that afternoon. The chance we took now felt indulgent and foolish. But, we were flying for a moment. Flying. At great heights, and we’d soon know how far we had left the ground.”

7. Start in the middle of your story -- in media res: “His sweaty grip slipped and then readjusted, inching its way down the frayed slack line. I adjusted for the shifts in weight by wedging my toes deeper into rock’s crevice, balancing him between my hip and the rock. With my left hand, I wrapped the line under his foot to give him a moment’s rest, pressing him against the rock to relieve my spasming muscles. I took a breath. A fly, attracted to the head wound probed the blood and the hair inches from my eye. I closed my eyes tight, pressed my nose

into his sweaty hair and inhaled the sweet metallic blood, whispering, again, “Dude, hang on. I gotcha.”

### F. Topoi:

I use a variation on Aristotle’s topoi for my analysis/synthesis essay in which students have to observe a phenomenon. This exercise is to generate ideas for analysis and critical thinking. This is fun because it can get ridiculous, and the students enjoy the plug and chug “Mad Lib” method as a nice change of pace from some of my more poetic, creative exercises. And, this type of exercise really does generate some compelling points of view! Try inserting “Rainbow.”

#### Definition:

1. How does the dictionary define \_\_\_\_\_?
2. What earlier words did \_\_\_\_\_ come from?
3. What do I mean by \_\_\_\_\_?
4. What group of things does \_\_\_\_\_ seem to belong to? How is \_\_\_\_\_ different from other things in this group?
5. What parts can \_\_\_\_\_ be divided into?
6. Does \_\_\_\_\_ mean something now it didn't years ago?
7. What other words mean approximately the same as \_\_\_\_\_?
8. What are some concrete examples of \_\_\_\_\_?
9. When is the meaning of \_\_\_\_\_ misunderstood?

#### Comparison:

1. What is \_\_\_\_\_ similar to? How?
2. What is \_\_\_\_\_ different from? How?
3. \_\_\_\_\_ is superior to what? How?
4. \_\_\_\_\_ is inferior to what? How?
5. \_\_\_\_\_ is most unlike what? How?
6. \_\_\_\_\_ is most like what? How?

#### Relationship:

1. What causes \_\_\_\_\_?
2. What are the effects of \_\_\_\_\_?
3. What is the purpose of \_\_\_\_\_?
4. Why does \_\_\_\_\_ happen?
5. What is the consequence of \_\_\_\_\_?
6. What comes after \_\_\_\_\_?
7. What comes before \_\_\_\_\_?

#### Testimony:

1. What have I heard people say about \_\_\_\_\_?
2. Do I know any facts or statistics about \_\_\_\_\_? What?
3. Have I talked with anyone about \_\_\_\_\_?
4. Do I know any well-known saying about \_\_\_\_\_?
5. Can I quote proverbs or poems about \_\_\_\_\_?

6. Are there any laws about \_\_\_\_\_?
7. Do I know any songs about \_\_\_\_\_? Have I read anything about \_\_\_\_\_ in books or magazines?
8. Do I want to do any research on \_\_\_\_\_?

Circumstance:

1. Is \_\_\_\_\_ possible or impossible?
2. What qualities, conditions, or circumstances make \_\_\_\_\_ possible or impossible?
3. Suppose that \_\_\_\_\_ is possible. Is it feasible? Why?
4. When did \_\_\_\_\_ happen previously?
5. Who has done or experienced \_\_\_\_\_?
6. Who can do \_\_\_\_\_?
7. If \_\_\_\_\_ starts what makes it end?
8. What would it take for \_\_\_\_\_ to happen now?
9. What would prevent \_\_\_\_\_ from happening now?

## **Thesis and Topic Sentence Boot Camp**

Jacqueline Calabrese

### **Pedagogical Explanation:**

I recall a lesson in Dr. Blaine’s course on ancient rhetoric where we discussed a rhetorician named Erasmus. In the orator’s work, *De Copia*, he describes an exercise where he would have his students write the phrase “your letter was pleasing to me” 150 different ways. This exercise stuck with me because I recognized how often we as scholars rely on the same vocabulary and phrasing, a concept that definitely applies to a developmental English population. Even though these Basic Skills students do not typically trust their vocabulary, they DO know more words and ways to phrase an idea than they think. Subsequently, I created a “Thesis & Topic Sentence Boot Camp” where students are asked to not settle with the first thesis that pops in their mind. Instead, they write, and rewrite, and rewrite yet again, circling words or phrases they like. They string those circled components together and nine times out of ten, they smile saying something along the lines of: “oh my gosh, that sounds so much better.”



## **THESIS & TOPIC SENTENCE BOOT CAMP!**

**Original Thesis:**

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Re-written Version #1: \_\_\_\_\_

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Re-written Version #2: \_\_\_\_\_

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Re-written Version #3: \_\_\_\_\_

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**ALL-STAR THESIS:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Topic Sentence #1:** \_\_\_\_\_

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Re-written Version #1: \_\_\_\_\_

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All-Star T.S. : \_\_\_\_\_

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**Topic Sentence #2:** \_\_\_\_\_

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Re-written Version #1: \_\_\_\_\_

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All-Star T.S. : \_\_\_\_\_

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**Topic Sentence #3:** \_\_\_\_\_

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Re-written Version #1: \_\_\_\_\_

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All-Star T.S. : \_\_\_\_\_

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**Topic Sentence #4:** \_\_\_\_\_

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Re-written Version #1: \_\_\_\_\_

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All-Star T.S. : \_\_\_\_\_

## **Getting Started: Thesis Construction**

Emily King

Sometimes, finding an interesting topic is the easy part. When it's time to create a working thesis we often wonder what it is we really want to say about the topic. Perhaps we struggle because we have yet to learn very much about the topic. To generate a working thesis for an essay that requires research consider this approach. It works especially well for essays shaped by an argument.

After you've done some basic research on the topic, freewrite for 10 minutes answering these questions:

1. What did I think about this topic before I did any research?
2. What did I discover?
3. What do I think now?

Write quickly and lower your standards!

Then, answer these questions to form a working thesis:

1. What do I want others to know or do? (Claim)
2. Why should they do it? (Reasons)
3. How do I know that it's the best option? (Evidence/Support)

Using your response, construct a working thesis that includes your claim and a summary of your reasons for the claim.

## **Topic Sentences**

Amber Tavasolian

### **Pedagogical Explanation:**

I created this handout to help students recognize topic sentences in assigned readings. The point is to identify the rhetorical structure of a topic sentence so that when they write their own, they have an example at hand for reference. This exercise doesn't need to be assigned with any specific text, but I recommend using it with a text where the topic sentences are not too abstract or indirect. I've found the best examples are the most straightforward ones.

I begin the class discussion on most subjects by asking questions to ascertain how informed my students are on the topic. Once I have an idea of how familiar or not the students are with the subject, I conduct a lecture that either fills the gaps in their information or clarifies the knowledge they have demonstrated. After a brief class discussion on the subject of topic sentences and transitions, I hand out this worksheet as an in-class activity to assist students in the practice of identifying these structures from the assigned reading. I found this assignment to be successful. Students seemed responsive and were engaged with the activity. Assignments like these—ones that require active participation, group collaboration, and examination of composition before practicing composition—fit into my pedagogical approach of using the classroom as a space for students to engage with both their peers and me in the composition process.

## Topic Sentences

What is a topic sentence and where is it located?

Topic sentences are statements that establish the focus of individual paragraphs. Generally, topic sentences are located at the beginning of a paragraph.

In the reading, “Just Walk on By” identify two separate sentences that function to establish the focus of each individual paragraph. Write them below:

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What features or aspects identify these sentences as the topic sentences? How do these sentences clearly establish focus? Below try re-writing the sentences in your own words in a way that maintains the focus of each topic sentence.

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## Transitions

A transition is a sentence that connections one idea to the next and allows a writer to smoothly move on to the next topic; transitions usually provide the setup for a topic sentence, which ultimately allow the writer to demonstrate how and why the ideas being discussed are related. Transitions can change form depending on the purpose of the writing as well as the target audience. Sometimes transitions are full sentences, sometimes they are a quick phrase, and sometimes a single word can signal a connection to readers. Ultimately, transitions make it easier for a reader to follow along with and understand a writer’s ideas as well as how those ideas are organized.

Using the reading, “Just Walk on By” identify two examples of transitions below.

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Select one of the transitions and, in your own words, re-write it while maintaining its purpose.

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Below are a few examples of transitional words and phrases.

Logical Relationship	Transitional Expression
Similarity	also; in the same way that...; just as...so too, likewise; similarly; as well as
Exception/Contrast	but; however; in spite of; nevertheless; yet; still; on the contrary; regardless; despite
Sequence/Order	first; second; third; next; then; finally; subsequently
Time	after; afterward; at last; before; currently; during; recently; simultaneously
Example	for example; for instance; namely; specifically; to illustrate
Emphasis	even; indeed; in fact; of course; truly; as made clear by...
Cause and Effect	accordingly; consequently; hence; so; therefore; thus; as a result
Additional Support or Evidence	additionally; in addition to...; again; also; and; as well; besides; equally important is...; moreover; furthermore
Conclusion/Summary	finally; in a word; in summation; in the end; on the whole; ultimately

## Introduction to Workshop

TJ Reynolds

The concept of workshopping was inspired by a surprising lack of self-esteem and a perceived ability in students who engage in writing creatively. Incoming freshmen are loaded down with six or more years of remembered English lessons. Often, the result is a frozen author: a writer who thinks and feels but no longer trusts either the impulse of what to write, and also how. I believe by engaging in writing creatively, a student could regain the creative joy of writing. Also, by pushing and pulling at the English language, I think that students might see improvements in reading and writing of all types; this, of course, includes the academic/argumentative essay that so culminates the undergraduate experience. Finally, by approaching language from a more personal and emotional standpoint, I hope to find that students – some at least – might find the flame of purpose in the act of writing and the wheels of passion that find and create change.

This workshop idea presented here should be given in segments that move from learning the concepts – using them in practice and then thinking of how these techniques apply to argumentative essays. Discussion should be encouraged throughout, but should allow for at least two or three periods of writing lasting at least ten minutes.

### Creative Approaches to Essay Writing

#### Talking Senses

When writing descriptively, a good author attempts to allow their reader to literally “feel” and “experience” what is going on in the story. Using the five senses is one effective way to do this. By showing a reader how something looks, smells, tastes, sounds, or feels, a world of meaning can be constructed. If you want your audience to understand you, put them in your shoes.

#### Writing (E)nertia

Absolutely, significant experience in the human spectrum is experienced emotionally. This extends to important debate topics, politics, Facebook’s lack of diverse gender options, or the price of a Starbucks Café Espresso Frappuccino. Anything you write should be significant; therefore, it should be imbued with emotion, even if this is just the force and precision in which an argument is constructed.

#### A Metaphor *is*; a Simile is *like*

A Metaphor is a word or phrase that is used to refer to something else by some shared attribute or quality. But... so is a simile. A simile is a type of metaphor, and there is a distinction. A Metaphor calls the cat “a cow” to show that it is overweight. A simile says, “the cat is like a hippo; the cat is as big as a barn.”

In short, one might say that the metaphor makes a slightly stronger assertion, because it is saying that something literally “is” something else. I think it largely comes down to style, though. Make comparisons between objects and discover the new information that can be obtained. Some might

call metaphors “artful exaggerations,” but they can also be seen as a way of helping a reader understand what you are trying to say.

**So What Does Creative Writing Look Like?**

Okay Example – I saw the dog. It was big and scared me. As I turned to run, I knew it was after me cause I heard its hot, stinky breath.

Better Example – I saw the dog. It hunched under an off-white cargo van just twenty feet away. Its hair stood up in tufts, like an electrically charged throw-rug. The beast’s teeth hung crooked and yellow from its bear-trap jaws. Ribbons of steam came off its back into the frigid morning air. I felt panic race through my limbs, hot and fiery blood. As I turned to run I heard the dog’s chain rattling as it bounded after me. Metallic fear was on my tongue as I fled.

**Now You Try...**

1. Pick three or four objects, situations, or moments worth writing about. Maybe something you saw on your ride to school today or an image, object, or moment of significance.

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2. Write one to three sense/emotion driven lines of prose that describe one of your subjects. Let the reader “feel” what you felt.

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3. Write two metaphors related to one of your topics. Be creative or strange if you’d like.

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4. Continue to “Narrate” your idea/story. Don’t summarize. Expand, explain and explore the issue in depth so the reader learns more. Try to write one or two paragraphs on the topic that most excites you so far.

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### **How Does This Relate to Academic Writing?**

**A.** Using sense and emotionally driven content works in academic writing too. Pathos goes way back. Using “sensational” writing can help to win over a resistant reader.

**Example:** It seems that the supporters of capital punishment have chosen not to think of the issue from the prisoner’s perspective. They choose not to image the icy prick of the needle or the rag-doll seizures and swollen faces of those put to death by electrocution.

**Note:** This passage is disturbing to read, but just so. If my argumentative position concerns an idea or topic that I am passionate about, then I will want to evoke passion.

**B.** By admitting emotional reactions in an argument, an author might elicit that same emotion in a reader. It is appropriate to show emotion for some serious topics like genocide, rape or global starvation.

**Example:** The relentless and perverse slaughters of the Sudanese people are a prime example of a global conflict that might have actually been worth intercepting. If my President tells me that we are going to fight a war for humanitarian reasons, I say let’s go to Africa first!

**Note:** Emotions can be conveyed in the type of words you use and the intensity of the argument, itself. Using phrases like, “This makes me sad” is less effective than showing sadness through your tone and word choice.

**C.** Metaphors, or “symbols” used to describe something, can greatly enhance a readers understanding of your point in an argument.

**Example:** Politicians seem to have all but vanished, rats in a box factory, ever since “water-boarding” became a topic for discussion on this year’s debate.

**Note:** This can be fun. I literally just got away with comparing politicians “rats” but did so without losing my academic tone.

## **State, Support, Explain:** **A Quick Way to Develop a Paragraph**

Beth Walker

Though I am a stickler for citing sources, I cannot remember where I first heard the phrase, “State, Support, Explain.” Nevertheless, it has been one of my mantras throughout my twenty-year teaching career. Every day in the writing center, I get the privilege of saying it to students who struggle with developing paragraphs, especially in papers requiring sourced material.

To develop a paragraph, structure it in three parts. First, **state your point** in a sentence (or two). That point can be the topic sentence for the entire paragraph, or it simply can be any sentence that contains an idea. Next, **support the point** you just made. One or more sentences may be necessary to build this support, including specific details, evidence, facts and statistics, quotes, or other researched material. Essentially, this part answers the question: “How do you know what you have just said (in your stating sentence) to be true?” Third, **explain or comment on your supporting material**. Again, this part may require more than one sentence. After explaining, you may introduce another piece of support, or you may move on to the essay’s next major point in the next paragraph. **Use transition words or phrases** to signal the change from one part to the next as well as to signal the relationship of that part to the whole. In this manner, the top and bottom of each paragraph contains the student’s original thinking.

Perhaps more importantly, “State, Support, Explain” helps students to organize paragraphs within the entire essay and to support the thesis. In fact, when students ask me whether their essays “flow,” what they really are asking about is whether they have stated their point clearly, supported with enough detail, and explained their rationale. I show students how to quickly assess the focus and flow of their essays by reading only the first and last sentence of each paragraph. With the “State, Support, Explain” method, those first and last sentences actually become the essay in miniature. Do those sentences reflect the thesis in some logical and orderly way? Do they drive the point home? Indeed, I have never seen “State, Support, Explain” fail. It may be formula, yet its very simplicity accounts for its flexibility and usefulness.

To illustrate this method, the following sample paragraph is about my favorite writing text, *Writing Down the Bones*, by Natalie Goldberg. I have color-coded the “State” part in orange, the “Support” in blue, the “Explain” part in green, and the transitions in purple. Although I have formatted this paragraph to project nicely on a white screen, it also works well viewed on the student’s computer screen. By following the color-coding, students visually can grasp the function of each sentence in the paragraph and better appreciate focus and flow.

### State, Support, Explain

#### Model for Developing a Paragraph Using Sourced Material and **Transitions**

In her classic book on the freewriting process, *Writing Down the Bones*, Natalie Goldberg practices what she preaches. Using a simple writing style and short chapters, Goldberg discusses the “bones” or the basics of learning to write quickly and without dread. **In fact, her chapter called “First Thoughts” briefly states the only rules a beginning writer needs to know. First, Goldberg says, “Keep your hand moving” (15), for that is the only way reluctant writers will get anything down on paper. Furthermore, as beginners are writing, they should resist the urge to make changes. “Don’t cross out,” she says (15). Otherwise, beginners might never complete a draft. Besides, you can always change things later in the editing stage. But for right now, it is best if beginners “lose control” (16) by going wherever their creative minds take them. Following Goldberg’s three simple rules will truly free the writer within.**

#### Comments

- The paragraph is of average length, ten sentences.
- It opens with a topic sentence that identifies the source.
- The second sentence further develops and supports the topic.
- The third sentence states the point (in **BOLD**) that will be supported by the quoted material.
- The three quotes (in *ITALICS*) are evenly distributed throughout the second-half of the paragraph.
- Transitions (in **SANS SERIF**) show the logical relationship between the supporting points.
- Sentences and/or clauses (UNDERLINED) explain or comment upon the quotes.
- The paragraph closes with a final thought (in **BOLD**) that echoes the key words, “rules” and “free.”

**Editors’ Note:** Beth Walker’s original assignment shows the bold face as orange type, the italic face as blue, the underlined face as green, and san serif face as purple. Try using this exercise in color! It’s quite eye-catching!

## CRACKING THE CODE: How to Unlock the Secrets of Your Assignments

There is so much to think about when working on a writing assignment or project for a college class that many students overlook a valuable resource—the assignment sheet handed out by their professor. In these assignment sheets, instructors include important tips on how to do the assignment and what they are looking for. But sometimes the language and organization of the assignment sheets can be difficult to follow. Completing the 5 simple steps on this handout will help you unlock all the secrets your assignment sheets hold.

### Step 1: Read It.

Though some assignment sheets may be long, it's important to be aware of the guidelines and where they are located so you can double check them as you work.



### Step 2: Identify the Parts.

Usually an instructor will include any (or all) of the following sections in an assignment sheet. Locating these parts can help you figure out what sections to focus on at each stage of your assignment.

- **An overview of some kind**  
This could be background on the topic, or reminders discussions/ issues from class.
- **The task of the assignment**  
This part tells you *what you need to do when you write the paper*. Pay close attention to the verbs.
- **Additional material to think about.**  
Here you might find some questions or ideas you could use as a starting point as you begin thinking about the assignment.
- **Style tips.**  
This is where your instructor might comment on his or her expectations for you writing or presentation.
- **Technical details.**  
These instructions usually explain format rules and guidelines.



\*\*adapted from: "Reading Assignments" by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Writing Center <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb>

### Step 3: Verbs as Clues (Especially in the “task” section.)

These words tell you what you need to do as you complete your assignment. Often verbs can help guide you're thinking about the topic and the formats. Below are some common verbs to watch out for.

- **Information Verbs** ask you to *show what you know* about the subject. Some common information verbs include:  
*define, explain, summarize, research, and illustrate.*
- **Relation Verbs** ask you to *explain how things are connected*. Some common relation verbs include :  
*compare, contrast, apply, relate.*
- **Interpretation Verbs** ask you to *defend your own ideas about the subject*. This is **not** just your opinion, but your opinion supported by concrete evidence such as specific examples, personal experiences, and outside research. Some common interpretation verbs include:  
*assess, prove, justify, evaluate, support, analyze, argue.*

**\*\*If you come across unfamiliar words, *always* look them up. One word might reveal *a lot* about what you have to do in your assignment.**



### Step 4: Ask Questions!

That's what your professors and classmates are there for! And if you have a question, someone else probably does too. Never hesitate to get more clarification!



### Step 5: Explain It.

You can explain it to yourself out loud or in writing. You can explain it to a classmate, friend, family member, tutor, or even your professor. Whatever you choose, explaining your assignment will allow you to make sure you understand it. If you have trouble explaining your task, you may have a few more questions to ask classmates or your professor.

\*\*adapted from: “Reading Assignments” by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Writing Center <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb>

## Revision Workshop

E. Elle Mooney

**Inquiry Essay:** Remember a revision asks that you consider your paper in a fresh new light.

1. Read through my comments and feedback. Ask questions if remarks are unclear. Look at what is working in your paper. Make a note of it:

2. Next, look at where the paper has issues.

Using the rubric, decide if the issues are HOCs or LOCs.

Choose two strategies that will benefit your problem areas to work on in class. (Do not choose two LOCs):

### HOCs

**Thought and Development:** Reread the prompt. Did you address our class's definition of sustainability in an engaged way? (Recall: We have examined present day, current practices to question and investigate their impact on a future outcome.) If not, find those connections now. Write a paragraph explaining how your topic speaks specifically to the issue of sustainability.

Look through your topic and examples. Are you fully and deeply analyzing the data you are presenting? Are you moving beyond the obvious? Take one idea or support point that is underdeveloped. Ask WWWH questions of the point. Write a paragraph in response to these questions.

Now that you've had time away from the paper, what are some new thoughts and insights you have on your topic? Free write these ideas. How might these ideas enhance your current paper? Write a paragraph or a new outline showing how you might integrate these new ideas into your thinking.

**Focus and Clarity:** Thesis issues? Recall that this essay required an explicit thesis. Rewrite your thesis to be succinct and explicit. Examine, rewrite each topic sentence to reflect your changes to the thesis. Reread your discussion points. Do you bring your ideas back to the thesis? What do you need to add? Make a list.

Unclear and rambling? More information needed? Unsure of what you're talking about? Outline the moves you need to make to bring the idea in focus. Rewrite a problem area with explicit language and transitions. Go over the top. You can reel it back in once you've made your point.

Off topic? Locate where and determine why. Is it tangential information, or does it relate to the thesis and is just missing the analysis and explicit connections? Write a paragraph diagnosing the focus issues and explain two ways of correcting these issues.

**Organization:**

Over-all organization issues? Construct a reverse outline. Each paragraph needs to contain one idea that relates back to the topic sentence. Draw up a map showing your new organization. Make notes to show where transitions will need to be reworked and where topic sentences will need to be reworked or added.

Interior paragraph organization? Rewrite the paragraph to improve order of ideas and thoughts, add necessary transitions and details.

Introduction issue? Ineffective or confusing hook? Topic not introduced effectively? Rewrite introduction to clarify your paper's purpose. Perhaps your conclusion does a better job of introducing the topic? If so, flip it and rework it so that it is your introduction. Add thesis with appropriate transitions.

Conclusion problems? Just restating your thesis? Did your paper taper off? Think of the so-what of your paper, its purpose. Rewrite the conclusion so that it moves your paper into a larger conversation. Did you lose your conclusion to your introduction? Write a new conclusion now.

**For LOCs:**

**Diction:** Are sentences varied to keep reader interest? Are slang phrases and words a problem? Is second-person voice being used? If first -person voice is being used, is it essential to the paper? Might third person voice work better? If contractions are present, consider expanding them. Are verb active and compelling? Rewrite a problematic paragraph and make changes according to these standards. Eliminate vague words and "to be" verbs.

**Grammar:** Read paper backwards. Consider each sentence separately. Look for fragments and run-ons, sentence clarity, word choice and typos, verb tense, incorrect modifiers. Using the Writing and Revising handbook and your grammar notes, make corrections for at least two problematic paragraphs.

**MLA:** Using the Writing and Revising handbook, correct your formatting and citation issues. Write corrections on a separate piece of paper neatly.

**3.** Write a reflection on this revision process. What worked? What didn't work? Note, if you are going to revise this essay for a new grade, it is due May 16th before 5pm (same time as your final essay.)

The revision must include the original graded paper, rubric, this workshop, and your reflection!

## Revision Assignments

Stephanie Flint

Below are two revision assignments that I give my students. The first—**Essay 1.5: Revision Assignment**—I assign right after I return Essay 1 at conferences. The students must revise their essay based on my comments and what we discussed at our individual meeting while utilizing at least one revision technique of their choice.

The second—**Midterm Essay Revision Assignment**—I assign the same day they turn in Essay 2. This requires that they revise their own essay based on the higher order concerns that they think would best improve their essay. This requires a reflection that explains why they made the changes they did.

These assignments first show the students how to revise with a teacher's help, and then they must use effective revising on their own. The goal is for the students to realize that they do have the tools to effectively revise their essays, so they will hopefully put these practices to use before turning in a final draft.

### Essay 1.5: Revision Assignment

English 101 Instructor Stephanie Flint

As we have discussed in class, the most important part of writing is re-writing. For this assignment, I want you to put this concept into practice as you **re-write and revise your narrative essay**.

In addition to this revision, **you must provide a sample of your revision process** based on revision practices discussed in class or the reading, plus **a reflective paragraph** on your experience with this revision practice. Choose from one of the below options. If you have another revision practice in mind that is not listed below, you must have it approved by me before it can be counted for credit.

Possible revision processes:

- Printing out and cutting up your essay, then re-arranging the pieces
- Storyboarding
- Reverse outlining
- Keeping only one paragraph, then re-crafting the essay around this left over paragraph

This revision will directly affect your grade on this specific essay. The more focused revision you do on this assignment, the better grade you will receive. The grade on this revision assignment will average out with your previous grade. For example, if you got a 73% on your narrative but a 90% on your revision, your final grade for the paper will be 81.5%. Make sure to focus on larger concerns, such as thesis and organization, before you revise smaller concerns such as grammar (unless I have addressed a large recurring sentence-level issue).

I highly encourage you to visit the Writing Center or see me in office hours for further assistance. Although it is not required, I cannot stress enough that outside help is the most effective way to approach revision.

It is also very important that you review the prompt for the original essay, while keeping my comments on your draft in mind. Let me know if you need another copy of the prompt. This will help you focus on the higher issue concerns while not veering off in the wrong direction.

What is required for this assignment:

- A. Submit a new copy of your essay
- B. A copy of your original draft that was turned in for a grade (with my comments)
- C. A copy of your revision process (options listed above)
- D. A minimum 1-paragraph reflection on the revision process that you chose
- E. A cover letter (written in class)

### **Midterm Essay Revision Assignment**

English 101 Instructor Stephanie Flint

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*“I have rewritten—often several times—every word I have ever written. My pencils outlast their erasers.”*  
- **Vladimir Nabokov**

*“We are all apprentices in a craft where no one ever becomes a master.”*  
- **Ernest Hemingway**

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As we have discussed in class, and as has been mentioned by great writers before us, revision is one of the most important elements of writing. Because we do not always have the benefit of having a guardian angel editor on our shoulder, we must learn to become our own editor throughout the writing process. This is never an easy task, but knowledge of the most important elements to revise first is a helpful step toward successful revision.

For this midterm assignment, I will give you back your final draft of Essay 2 for revision. In order to successfully complete this assignment, you will need to revise at least 3 elements of your essay, and explain the reasoning behind these revisions in a 1-page, typed, double spaced (minimum) reflection.

I encourage you to reflect on the higher order concerns that we have been discussing in class, and to name these specific elements in the explanation of your revision. This is an open book and open note assignment, so you may use any resources from this class that you feel will be helpful.

Some questions to keep in mind when writing your reflection:

- F. What changes did you make?
- G. Why did you make the changes you did?
- H. What makes these changes the most important for the improvement of your essay?
- I. What specific higher order concerns are you addressing with these revisions?

How did these changes improve your essay as a whole?



Philosophies and Journals:



Reflections on  
Teaching

**SIX**

## Teaching Philosophy

Denise Schumaker

The teaching of writing, perhaps unlike the teaching of math or technology, is at its core the teaching of a conversation. This is how I approach my classroom and all of my interactions with students. As a first-year composition instructor, I believe that I am there in part to help initiate students into the world of academia, to set the expectations, and to spark an intellectual curiosity that will drive their academic pursuits in whatever their chosen fields might be. I strive to get my students to ask questions: about the world around them, about their writing, about the very thoughts that fuel their writing, and to be prepared to answer when others ask them questions. I tell them that the academic world is a conversation amongst critical thinkers, a conversation that they are just beginning to enter. It is my goal to encourage my students to see writing as an opportunity for communication and self-expression, not as a threat or a source of anxiety.

I have structured my assignments in such a way as to encourage my students to see the acts of writing and responding to writing academic conversations. The three out-of-class essays, based on assignments from Fontaine and Smith's *Writing Your Way Through College*, are designed as a series of interactions. The first assignment asks students to have a critical conversation with themselves by examining their own memories to discover something about language or writing. The second assignment asks them to look to others, to take real-world conversations and observations and critically analyze them in order to make sense of something about the world that they live in. As we move into the third assignment, which asks them to use scholarly journal articles to inform their thinking and support their ideas, I begin to heavily emphasize the idea that all scholarly writing, no matter the discipline, is an academic conversation, and that for this assignment, they will be entering that conversation. Also at this point I explain the responsibility that comes with entering the conversation—that they are making a commitment to academic integrity as they draw from and respond to others' writing.

If writing itself is the first subject of the conversation, then revision is the next logical topic. My classroom is process oriented and revision based; for this reason my written comments on student writing are conversational and ask questions that expect responses. Every essay that students turn in to me, from the very first diagnostic in-class essay, is treated to a greater or lesser extent as a draft that can always be improved upon, and mandatory revision continues up until the very last day of class when the Final Revision Project is due. Even when my students earn a near-perfect score on a graded draft, I make sure to provide suggestions and opportunities for revision, and emphasize that all writing can always be improved.

This semester, I have added the text *Understanding Rhetoric* to my English 101 curriculum. This text teaches the elements of academic discourse through the format of a graphic novel. Student responses have been mixed but most students are enjoying the book. In fact, *Writing Your Way Through College* and *Understanding Rhetoric* have worked well to complement each other, with the former being a practical, straightforward explanation and the latter providing a visual representation

of difficult concepts. This has reached out to the more artistic and visually oriented learners, and even dissenting students have expressed that they can see the value in using both texts.

Just as I encourage my students to be constantly continuing the conversation and always improving upon and revising their work, I know that my teaching philosophy is never finished. In particular, I would like to continue to incorporate more technology into my classroom, and perhaps work towards a computer-based course at some point in the future. I continue to look critically at the decisions I make as an educator, and at the responses my students have to those decisions to determine whether I need to make adjustments. I know that I will continue to grow and develop, to change my mind and my practice as I get to know more students and gain more experience. In the meantime, I will strive for what Glenn and Goldthwaite deem “the two most important traits of a good teacher: humanity and competence” (46). If my students believe that I *want* to help them, and that I am *capable* of helping them, I believe that they will trust me and that I *will* help them—to give them a voice and to show them that their voice is valuable, to prepare them for the infinitely rewarding academic journey that lies ahead.

## Teaching Philosophy

Kimberly George

In the four years I worked as a “near peer” tutor in writing centers, many students shared with me their writing anxiety and doubts about their academic abilities. Sometimes I was best able to help these students by showing them new methods and resources. Sometimes they benefited most from a friendly face offering some encouragement. It didn’t occur to me that this dynamic would change when I was a teacher instead of tutor. However, during my first semester as a TA, the differences became clear as students with trembling hands and voices filed in and out of my office during a round of conferences. I still felt like the same supportive tutor, but interactions with my students made me conscious of my new position of authority. It became my goal to get some of that authority back in my students’ hands, so they could develop confidence in their ability to tackle complex writing tasks.

In my classroom, I strive to increase students’ collective and individual knowledge through the frequent use of peer activities and workshops. Although during the first peer review many students “didn’t see the point,” some later wrote in reflections that “peer reviews help a lot.” I use guided handouts and self-evaluation questions included on the writing prompt to provide support for the peer review process. However, in the final revision assignment of the semester, my students synthesized and applied their knowledge of academic essays by developing these evaluation questions in groups and filling in the blanks on the assignment sheet. Through such activities, I hope students will begin to see their peers as valuable resources and trust their own rhetorical choices.

I also believe communication with instructors is important for a student’s active participation in the learning process. I encourage my students to email me, which they do frequently, and I have been told my feedback is “easy to understand.” I’ve made it a habit to “check in” with students who miss

major assignments or in-class activities, and I am willing to provide additional support when it is useful for the student. For example, after approaching one student about her many missing assignments, we worked out “sub-deadlines” to help her complete the next paper. In class, I often conduct activities that give students opportunities to provide me with feedback, such as writing responses to my comments on their graded essays. Through such measures, my goal is to help students to feel comfortable, rather than intimidated, when communicating with their instructors.

My writing assignments were designed to encourage engagement by allowing students to choose topics reflecting their diverse backgrounds and interests. I believe this enables students to be invested in their writing. Initially, students found broad topics challenging, but they soon started to see their personal experiences and insights were effectively engaging their readers. In a final reflection activity, one student said she felt more like herself when writing about topics that she chose. Overwhelmingly, students also reported they chose to revise essays that were “interesting” on topics they “still liked,” rather than focusing on the ease of revision. It is my hope that with personal investment in their topics, my students will take more ownership over their writing by making choices and voicing their unique perspectives.

In *Seeing Yourself as Teacher*, Elizabeth Rankin advises new teachers to “sit back and listen.” Listening to students in the writing center, I was able to get to know them and provide more nuanced assistance. In the classroom, I’ve found listening to my students and encouraging them to listen to each other has helped develop a supportive writing community and allowed me to discover the personalities of each individual. Listening to my mentors and colleagues has also been critical to my development this semester as their advice has helped me adjust to the unexpected challenges of teaching; I look forward to future opportunities to revise my teaching methods and continue growing as an educator.

## **Teaching Philosophy**

Emily King

Because I believe that writing is a teachable skill and one that is crucial to learning in any context, I teach with an awareness of the personal and social value of literacy. My pedagogical approach relies heavily on eliciting the power of inquiry. When students learn to question themselves and their environment they foster a desire to think critically and creatively. But I know that rhetorical skills take time to develop, so I focus my curriculum on important foundational concepts, like effective argumentation, strategies for analysis, and awareness of audience and rhetorical contexts. I also encourage students to accept that writing is a process and that it can be used to locate ideas and find meaning through self-reflection and multi-perspectival thinking. Ultimately, my goal is to help students learn how to take charge of their own learning.

Over the course of the semester, I work to expand student awareness of individual writing processes. Through reflective writing activities, I encourage students to develop a sense of ownership over their work and to make connections between process and product. To emphasize

the natural ongoing process of writing, I incorporate revision exercises into class activities, and I require that students write a revision plan for each major essay as well as a periodic reflection on the development of their writing process. Rather than require students to revise one essay, which I have done in the past, I now invite students to revise essays at any point during the semester for additional credit. I find that this strategy allows for more genuine engagement in the revision process, especially when it is supported by focused in-class activities.

I have learned that adaptability is crucial to effective teaching. Since each writing class has its own dynamic, I try to be flexible and responsive to the needs of my students. Because I believe in collaborative learning as the best model for education and for productive citizenship, I take a community learning approach in the classroom asking that students engage with their classmates through regular discussion and peer-response activities. Most days begin with some type of freewriting or brainstorming which often provides the basis for class discussion. By presenting strategies for organization, analysis, and critique, I help students make connections between abstract ideas and concrete writing skills. Much of our in-class essay preparation involves generative work and the rigorous development of ideas. I use extensive heuristic tools (charts, maps, lists, etc.) to help students create writing material that is individual and meaningful. These activities allow students to reflect before they are asked to share ideas. Still, there are days when students present writing challenges that need more immediate attention than the material planned. Those days can be highly productive, especially when students engage with one another. I often use student feedback to create writing exercises and essay prompts. I also give occasional polls or ask students for verbal feedback on lessons or activities, and I incorporate that feedback into future classes. In this way, the class is shaped by the needs and interests of those present.

I believe that mutual respect and open communication are necessary for a positive and productive learning experience. I have high expectations for my students, and I make those expectations explicit in writing and in the classroom. However, I also know that most first-year writing students are new to college, and that sometimes they need additional support. Because of that, I make myself available in multiple ways (by phone, email, and extended office hours). I also encourage students to use campus resources to help their transition into higher education. My hope is that my students will gain a firm appreciation of the role of language in everyday life and that they will feel empowered as writers in and out of college.

## **Teaching Journal**

### **Teaching Journal 10/14/2013: “Finding the beat”**

Bob Neis

After nearly two months of goofing up roll call and feeling sort of oblivious, I finally have a sense of knowing my class--I can't help feeling like a phony asking so much of a student and not even being able to match a face with a name. Forming this very basic connection of course builds trust with the student, makes interactions friendlier, but I'm finding it also enables me to better adjust my teaching style. I am noticing patterns in behavior during class discussion and group work; I see the students who feel confident and tend to lead, and I also am more aware of my more insular students who may need more one on one time. I really enjoy seeing the students become more comfortable in class, both with me and each other. I catch myself interacting more regularly with certain students, and depend on them to speak up; this is scary because I don't want to play favorites, but there are absolutely people who put out more generative energy into the room, and may inspire others to chime in. I want a comfortable but engaged energy in the class; I want to alleviate the anxiety commonly associated with ENG courses and writing in general, and I feel as though I am slowly getting there. Rather than an awkward silence, I walk into a lively commotion when I open the door in the morning. There is more laughter in group work. One might worry about off topic discussion, but this is good too--I want them to feel relaxed enough to goof off in class, so long as they can contribute. Oddly enough, the louder I let them get, the more invested they seem overall. At times channeling that chaos into something productive proves challenging, but this part of my growth process inspires me to improve. In general, I feel less weird addressing the class now as the authority figure; I also have a better sense of when an activity hits or misses. In addition to my knowing them better, the class seems to be learning more about me as well--what I am looking for when I ask a question, or when I am just telling a joke.

Most interesting to me is getting to know the students through their writing. I have been consistently impressed with how open my students are, with what they are willing to share in their papers without me even asking them. I'm happy with the level of sincerity I see; rather than students writing their construction of what they think an academic paper might look like, they seem comfortable responding in an authentic way. Reading their writing showed me more about who they are as people in ways that talking rarely does in this setting. I don't know if this is due to time restraint, setting, or just the instructor/student dynamic. After reading their work I feel more connected to the class. I particularly enjoy comparing the student in class to the student on paper--sometimes I am astonished how just how closely even the quietest students are paying attention to the readings in the book or the class discussions.

## **Teaching Journal**

### **Captain's Log: Dissension Among the Ranks Turned into Teacher-ly Pranks**

Amber Tavasolian

That feeling of sheer panic that I felt taking on the role of teacher seems to gradually diminish with each subsequent class, possibly because I no longer feel like I have no idea what to expect; a routine has been established: I pass back papers or they hand papers in; I lecture; we have class discussion and then some sort of activity ensues. However, one cannot always rely on a routine to follow the routine.

During one particular activity a group of boys that sits in the back of the room decided not to participate in the activity (practicing pre-writing techniques on a specified topic in a group of three) and instead engaged in what I can only assume was a hilarious conversation by the amount of giggling and smiling that occurred. At first, I began to panic—they were already dissenting.

I knew that I could not ignore their disregard for the activity otherwise their behavior would more than likely recur. I decided to subtly call them out on their disobedience by informing the entire class that I would select three random groups to showcase their practice prewriting techniques on the board. Immediately, the aforementioned group of boys began to panic. They seemed to be calculating the odds of whether or not they would be chosen; when I called their names they collectively panicked. I'm not going to lie that panic made me smile, just a little bit.

This anecdote may seem a little sadistic, but I found this experience rewarding. Not only did I take a situation that could have led to me being undermined in my own classroom and turn it into an empowering experience instead, it also taught me the importance of being flexible to making changes and adapting to the situation you have before you rather than mourning the situation you hoped for. The whole experience also reiterated the importance of being aware of the group as a whole but also the tenuous role that each individual student plays in contributing to the dynamic of the classroom.

As satisfying as it was to watch those boys scramble to cover their own asses, it was infinitely more satisfying to see the diligent effort that the other groups that were called on had put into the activity. Group-work, though discouraging at times, shouldn't be avoided due to fear of the uncontrollable.

### **Professorial Personality**

When I first started teaching, my biggest concern was that my students would assume that my friendly and mellow demeanor meant that they would not have to take the subject of the class, or me, seriously. However, the exact opposite seems to have happened. My approach has made many of the students more comfortable with a subject they had found daunting in the past (English) and its even more daunting tasks— reading and writing. However, I have had to assert my authority at times, particularly during class discussion. Usually, this means speaking more firmly and louder than to which they are accustomed. I recommend never to underestimate the power of a stern voice reserved for only the most necessary occasions. Still, don't try to force a persona that doesn't feel right.

### **Tackling Prewriting**

The prewriting lesson is meant to demonstrate the various methods they can apply to their own writing process, to aid the students in developing a better appreciation for the fruitfulness of prewriting, to convince the students to engage in prewriting of their own accord, and to demonstrate how prewriting eliminates some of the mystery and anxiety involved in the production of writing.

I started the lesson off with a mini-lecture about what prewriting is, what its function is in the writing process, as well as some of the basic techniques of prewriting. I introduced them to the prewriting techniques of free writing, clustering, probative questioning, and outlining. I defined each of these terms for them as well as explained how they functioned as a form of prewriting.

For each technique I picked a topic that would lend to an example of prewriting on the board; I recommend choosing topics that you are comfortable with—heavy if you’re up for the challenge<sup>1</sup> and light if you’re not. As a class we executed each technique and discussed which ones they felt were most successful and why.

After discussing and practicing the techniques as a class, I instructed the students to form groups of three in order to practice each prewriting technique further. I felt that the repetition of practicing each technique in smaller groups would encourage those students who had refrained from participating with a larger group to interact since they were now in a more intimate and a less public setting. I also wanted the students to rely on their own instincts regarding a fresh topic.

I had three groups share their prewriting work on the board. In order to maximize group participation I had one person write the technique on the board and then had another group member explain the reasoning for executing the technique the way they did. Next time I have to figure out how to incorporate all members of the group. Not only does this technique hold students accountable to the activity, but it also allows me to field any potential misinformation that may have occurred during the lecture portion. I was able to clarify to the group that demonstrated the clustering technique the importance of grouping similar aspects together in order to prevent repetition as well as to prevent forcing connections where there are none.

### **Teaching, Teaching, and More Teaching**

My first semester in the TA program has been overwhelmingly positive. I enjoy teaching more than I thought I ever would. That being said, I am so sick of being a teacher! Let me explain. I miss being just a “student.” The title of “instructor” is beginning to weigh heavy on me. There is so much responsibility in teaching, so much work, and so little time to breath. I just miss the caprice of being a student. I miss the days of not worrying about the role the instructor plays in the learning process (which I consider to be a great credit to my professors; they did their jobs so well that I paid little attention to their role in fostering my understanding of their subject).

I find myself pining for the freedom of the student role. As a student, I do not have to worry about others. Now, not only must I be on-time, but *early* to school so that I can have the option to prepare my class discussions/print and make copies/set up any visual component for the day. I miss being able to blow off the day, play hooky at the beach and know that I am the only one being hurt by my decision. I think what I really miss is not necessarily being irresponsible, but leisure time. I’ve come to realize that I need to figure out a way to schedule this increasingly elusive free-time into my daily routine.

I can’t express enough how important it is to have your own time as an instructor. Understanding that you will inevitably fall behind is part of academia. However, what they don’t tell you when you begin teaching is that when you lose your free time, you lose quality from your teaching. You become jaded, resentful, and rushed in your didactic endeavors. Don’t lose yourself in teaching. Burn out is very difficult to come back from.

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<sup>1</sup> One small disclaimer for heavy topics, since you are teaching them the method of academic writing you have to take that responsibility to heart when dealing with sensitive subjects. If you can’t remain unbiased and objective, or if you’re not comfortable playing devil’s advocate, then it’s probably best to steer clear of these topics—at least at first.



