

Top Ten Strategies
for
Teachers of Writing

Compiled by

Vincent Miholic, Ph.D.

vmiholic@slcc.cc.la.us

337-560-9596

mailing address:

506 Allen Street

New Iberia, LA 70563

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	4
Introduction.....	5
Stephen A. Bernhardt, University of Delaware.....	12
John C. Briggs, University of California, Riverside.....	14
C. Beth Burch, Binghamton University, SUNY.....	18
Gina Claywell, Murray State University.....	20
Peter Elbow, University of Massachusetts.....	23
Helen Ewald, Iowa State University.....	32
Nancy Frey and Douglas Fisher, San Diego State University.....	38
Megan Fulwiler, The College of Saint Rose.....	51
Toby Fulwiler, University of Vermont.....	53
Diane Goode, University of Louisville.....	55
Suzanne Greenberg, California State University, Long Beach.....	61
Muriel Harris, Professor Emerita, Purdue University.....	63
Marguerite Helmers, University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh.....	67
Christian Knoeller, Purdue University.....	74
Greg Larkin, Northern Arizona University.....	84
Susan Miller, University of Utah.....	90
Stephen Minot, Professor Emeritus, California State University, Riverside.....	99
Janice Neuleib, Illinois State University.....	105
Mark Reynolds, Jefferson Davis Community College.....	107
Gregory Shafer, Mott Community College.....	108
Howard Tinberg, Bristol Community College.....	121

Marilyn J. Valentino, Lorain County Community College.....122
James D. Williams, Soka University.....126
Index.....131

Acknowledgements

A hearty thank you to the twenty-four contributors. Your thought and effort, kind and generous phone calls, emails, and letters brought this monograph to life. To Grace Sinclair, a daughter who always surprises me with brilliance, and to Michelle, my wife, consummate teacher, colleague, and reader, my love and appreciation. Thanks also to my writing students whose work, laughter, and perseverance fulfill the promise of exemplary performance. And to Ms. June Norris, who volunteered personal time to help format clerical stuff, the best.

Introduction

This volume presents a compilation of approaches, theory, processes, and experiences for teachers of writing and, by extension, student writers at all levels. The bibliographies of the twenty-four practitioners included here are too extensive to detail. They represent a cross sampling of emeriti and current practitioners, many of whom have served as editors within the National Council of Teachers of English and are well represented in English education literature. Their collected ideas reflect the best notions of current practice and solid pedagogical footholds for the the craft of teaching English.

Inspired by Edward Fry's *Ten Best Ideas for Reading Teachers* (1991), an invitation was sent to well over one hundred university and community college English teachers, educational theorists, professors, writing center directors, and editors during the 2003-04 academic year. The list was culled by searching bibliographies of current English and pedagogical journals. Each contributor was asked to generate a personal, ten-item list of ideas on theory and strategic approaches. Basic guiding questions for the exercise were these: "What do good writers do?" "How does one become a better writer?" "From what we have learned in the past twenty years, how do we best teach writing." The only format constraint for contributors was to attach the numerals 1 through 10 to their ideas.

Fry's definition of "best" was retained as a guidepost: "seminal ideas which have generated change and/or altered the way we think about what we do.... These are ideas that are important to us—they make us better teachers and thinkers, and enrich us intellectually and practically...

and [while they show every sign of standing the test of time, they] give us pause to review and examine what we know—or what we think we know—to see if it all makes sense” (vi).

A greater than twenty percent response rate was obtained from the solicitation. The commitments to the invitation resulted in diverse perspectives, with contributions ranging from a half-page to short narratives. Respondents range from community college faculty to university emeriti, from those who teach developmental courses to those who teach writing pedagogy and creative writing, established guard and new. While all of the authors hail from post-secondary institutions, the utility of the ideas are germane to every level of learning.

Compiling the index provided a sense of the robustness of the ideas assembled. The classifications reflect the frequency of the most common ideas discussed, some predictable with multiple voices, e.g., “Collaboration,” “Grading,” or “Process,” and some much less stereotypic, e.g., “Addition” (Briggs) or “Stride” (Minot). Others emerged as an unexpected consensus, such as “problem solving” or encouragement that seemed to best answer “Writer’s Block.” Singularly prudent points, such as “Exercise” (Harris, Reynolds) and “Latitude” (Knoeller), and “Learner Outcomes” (Williams) also punctuate the text. While compiling the lists, thoughts related to “Revision” or “Evaluation” was not so easily defined and other ideas, “Workshop” (concretely attributed to Miller), for instance, were clearly implied elsewhere and not easily pigeonholed. In many cases, the breadth of elaborations transcends a single designated identifier.

Anecdotes and metaphors interlace the suggestions with some frequency, for example, Greg Larkin’s analogy to Green Bay Packer’s fullback Jim Taylor or Nancy Frey and Douglas Fisher’s

“Crystal Ball,” akin to Angelo and Crosses informal classroom techniques, or Steven Minot comparing a writer who does not submit [his or her work] to a swimmer who fears water. While the multiple voices and ideas tend to converge toward consensus, notable balance remains. Williams’s honest appraisal of the need to use technology wisely is an adroit counterpoint to the need for students to master new forms and formats. And while tips for teachers and writers of non-fiction are included, the call to entertain multiple genres tends to echo Francine Du Plessix Gray, who in “The Seduction of Text” cautioned, “The phrase ‘Creative Writing’ and the very institution of ‘Creative Writing’ department uphold a myth...that there are certain genres of writing that are more ‘creative’ than others and that fiction is the most ‘creative’ of prose genres” (5).

As I compiled the various thoughts and tips, I began to generate a hybrid list from the hundreds of ideas. Mine may be different from yours: 1. Don’t teach or write alone. 2. Read more and more carefully. 3. Think, tweak and talk. 4. Make teaching and writing compelling and meaningful. 5. Just do it means exacting resolve tempered by discipline and perseverance. 6. Problem-solve. 7. Model 8. Beware of gimmicks. 9. Be clear and purposeful. 10. Publish. Of course, each day in the classroom, teachers incorporate such prescriptions. However, given reluctant or deficient learners, curricular compromises and edict, and a myriad of instructional complications or dysfunctions, how does one elicit best efforts and meaningful product? Some answers are found in the “Methodology” suggestions.

One criticism of the project stated “it would be more to the point... to gather carefully formulated statements of what various writing teachers consider a centrally important idea,

whether philosophical, psychological, pedagogical or rhetorical and ask, then, for responses suggesting how to put such ideas into practice in the classroom. Theory without practice is sterile; practice without theory is fatuous.” The following mixture of theory and consistent applications amply answer this criticism and provide a generous blend of cognitive, metacognitive and affective realms of creativity as well as the basic bones teaching advice on matters concrete and organic.

One of the desired outcomes in the production of this monograph was to provide a bridge across the thinking that often separates “teacher” and “learner,” so as the project unfolded, ideas appealing to teachers directly (theory and pedagogy) or specific approaches addressing the task of writing generally were neither discouraged nor viewed as mutually exclusive. The common denominator remained: readers are invited to explore and carve out those aspects they find the most useful, provocative, or stimulating.

A quote from Richard Russo reprinted in *The Chronicle Review* mirrors the intent of this compilation, “When I say we’ve taught people how to write, ...we’ve helped them to learn, we’ve supervised a part of their apprenticeship, we’ve read what they wrote and offered advice.... All artists need mentors, just as they need the company of other apprentices with whom to share their triumphs and travails.... Far better to concentrate on what can be taught and shared: craft and experience” (B9). Teachers of writing hone interdependence, but aiding novice writers to practice what writers do often tends to regress toward the mean. Russo’s observation suggests this collection’s foundation. The desired end is to stimulate learning and conversations

about what writers do, and, moreover to question, test, and discuss issues related to the teaching of writing.

Works Cited

Angelo, Thomas A. and K. Patricia Cross. 1993. *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers*, 2nd Ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Du Plessix Gray, Francine. 2003. "The Seduction of Text." *The Writing Life: Writers on How They Think and Work, A Collection from the Washington Post Book World*. Ed. Marie Arana. New York: BBS Public Affairs.

Russo, Richard. 2004. "The Story Behind the Story: 26 Writers and How They Work." Reprinted in "Melange." *The Chronicle Review/Chronicle of Higher Education* [Washington, D.C.] 5 Mar.: B9.

Fry, Edward. 1991. *Ten Best Ideas for Reading Teachers*. Melno Park: California: Addison-Wesley.

Stephen A. Bernhardt, University of Delaware

1. Treat students as writers—people who are ready and anxious to learn. Help them understand why writing is important and how they can take control. Good writers are comfortable thinking of themselves as good writers.
2. Provide a context for writing: a real or realistic situation, with an occasion, a purpose, an audience, and constraints. Writers always need a secure sense of situation in order to gauge what is an appropriate and effective response in writing. Writers need to know what they are trying to do. Encourage writers to think less about what they intend to say and more about what they intend to do.
3. View writing as a form of social action, a way of helping people and organizations advance or reconcile their purposes. Encourage writing as a collaborative team process—an action played out within social and organizational settings, where groups have interests and sometimes competing agendas. Integrate speaking and writing within group social structures.
4. Assign a variety of genres, always varying the situational context and medium. A good writer is flexible across various genres.
5. Help writers develop efficient and productive processes: planning, prototyping, researching, drafting, reviewing, revising, publishing. Writers should be reflective and articulate about how they approach a task.

6. Require reading, research, and analysis for every piece of writing. Writing is intertextual, always linked to other texts, part of an on-going conversation.
7. Teach the elements of page design and encourage writers to develop their design sensitivities as part of composition. Good writing takes shape on page or screen through choices of font, indentation, headings, headers and footers, and other page design elements. Good writers integrate visual and verbal design.
8. Integrate quantitative elements with qualitative or verbal. Encourage the use of displayed data, consideration of costs and budgets, allocation of resources, and quantitative reasoning in making arguments, justifying actions, and planning or managing activities through writing.
9. Teach the tools: advanced word processing, revision mark-up, style sheets and style tags, attachments, graphing and equation editing, table editing, web publishing, pdf creation, object embedding and linking, manipulation of images. Good writers use sharp tools.
10. Loosen up. Encourage writers to experiment, have fun, show a sense of playfulness. Deadly dull instruction leads to deadly dull writing.

John C. Briggs, University of California, Riverside

1. In order to learn how to write and to improve as a writer, one must read, read, and read. It is sometimes a good idea simply read aloud, to others and to oneself. One needs to read the sort of writing that bears rereading, that calls to us to read it again, until it becomes not only a model or goal of excellence, but part of the medium through which the mind swims. That means that writers should be reading literature (poetry, fiction, and drama) and literary non-fiction (good biography, autobiography, dialogues, speeches, history, and so on). Writers need to make their own way toward writing that is better than what they can do. Reading gives them the means of doing so, not merely by supplying tools of expression but by offering the means and ends of excellence.
2. Reading and remembering reading, reading and discussing reading, can not be isolated or temporary activities if they are to have true purchase on one's writing. The writer's environment needs to be lexical. It needs to smell of old paper and echo with the voices of readers reading, thinking aloud, disagreeing, reaching common ground. The mind needs to become a library within which the writer browses, searches, remembers, puzzles, thinks.
3. The classroom that is not a library is not much of a place to learn to write. The teacher needs to be a librarian of the best type: a reader who assigns, recommends, and responds to other readers, expecting them to write something. Books at the fingertips, books on the window sills, books in the students' backpacks – these are most of the stuff of

writing, a universe of discourse for the contemplation of young astronomers, a source of fuel that triggers less volatile matters in the writer's memory and in the furnace of his reason and imagination. In this sense the library/classroom is the middle of things – middle earth -- not a byway.

4. Young students learning to write have much to say about themselves. They are observant, and their imaginations are active. As they get older, they tend to fence off these resources. Writing about personal experience becomes an arduous, superficial exercise. For many, it seems to be the only way, in desperation, to prove a point. Then the problem becomes how to have the correct experiences to respond to questions posed by teachers. Writing therefore often becomes a useless, illiberal exercise in comparing or inventing experiences that luck, ill fortune, or desperate fabrication have created, not the writer. Reason, memory, and imagination are what make personal experience the stuff of the writer's invention. Writers who are not children need to discover the shareable riches of observant experience.

5. Writing cannot be taught without a sense of audience; but what is an audience? In the writing classroom, it should *not* be a demographic profile, a “niche” group, a particular personality, a single person. Most writing that goes out into the world is for multiple, often obscure audiences that are frequently more interested in our writing, or more indifferent to it, than we might think. In this sense, writing is meeting the adult world and learning how to enter conversations, arguments, and silences already there. The student who has never been encouraged to speak with adults, who has never been

expected or invited to imagine himself as having something to learn from them or having something to say to them, will not be a writer unless he realizes, often with a teacher's help, that he is already in a roomful of adults. Against his expectations he is on the verge of becoming an adult if he can become a writer. (Not to be forgotten: Adults value, among many other things, correctness.)

6. Writing is a verbal performance akin to formal discussion and oratory. Writers need to engage in formal public speaking: reading aloud from their writings, reading other writers aloud, reciting, extemporizing, debating, recreating in speech that responds to verbal cues and questions. Instruction in writing that denies students these resources of training and recreation is missing the point.
7. Most students need to learn about revision in terms of *addition*. Correction, reordering, and reconfiguring their writing is important. But addition is the sort of improvement most student writing needs: elaboration, substantiation, self-paraphrase, self-critique, anticipation of reasonable arguments pro and con, and so on. In asking for revision, instructors should mainly ask for more – lots more. They should frequently hand back papers with comments that ask for 50% more.
8. Behavioristic pedagogies privilege free-writing, automatic writing, compelled writing. Activity seems to matter more than thought, memory, imagination. Why not stress the importance of composing what we wish to write *in our minds* before we write?

As a pedagogy, this too becomes superficial or coercive unless we gain inspiration from common sense. Why not tell students to go for a walk, without the usual physical writing tools? Why not tell them to go think things over? Why not ask them to write about what they ruminated over (or should have been ruminating over) on the way to class?

9. Why not, amidst the blur of hurry-up education and popular culture, encourage students just to look? What ideas might come from silent, intent, comprehensive observation of a scene or a tapestry? Do we pay any attention to the discipline that we help to develop from such invitations? All these things strengthen and gain strength from reading. Writers need to learn how to read the world, not as hot-house semioticians, but as wakeful, patient observers.

10. Teachers of writing need to be writers themselves. In the spirit of these suggestions, it is good for teachers to risk being seen as observers, thinkers, writers, and speakers in the presence of their students. The teaching of writing is not in the final analysis the issuing of orders or an off-the-record, confidential conversation about tips for composing essays. It is the performance of the thing itself, in a fashion that helps students. Teachers of writing are coaches who, whether they were great players or not, know in their bones – and show it -- what they want their players to be.

C. Beth Burch, Binghamton University, SUNY

Ten Ways to Be a Better Writer

1. *Write every day.* Write something every day. Write a note, a list, a comment, a notebook or journal entry, a poem, a page of a short story. Write for yourself or for others. Just write.
2. *Read a poem every day.* Find poetry that delights, intrigues, or enrages you. Read every poem aloud. Read it more than once. Soak it up.
3. *Read non-fiction.* Read *Road and Track*, *The New Yorker*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Horticulture*, directions for setting up a VCR, anything by John McPhee or Tracy Kidder. Know how to find beauty, order, and form in language that isn't fiction. Believe in its importance.
4. *Talk about your reading and your writing with other readers and writers.* Conversation about writing and language is good for the writing soul; it leads to more thinking about writing and to more writing.
5. *Find a new word every day*—and then use it. Subscribe to a listserv that sends you a new word every day. Listen for a good word in conversation, NPR's "Fresh Air," or ESPN's "Pardon the Interruption." Open the dictionary and choose a word randomly, then make it your own.

6. *Look at the world, really look at it—and write what you see.* Your dog, the plate from which you ate your breakfast, a strawberry, a dewy spider web. Observe, write. Take another look. Look really hard and see the details. Write about them.
7. *Study grammar and master punctuation.* Understanding how language works makes you a more thoughtful writer. Once you know what a nominative absolute or participial phrase is, you can write one when you need it. Punctuation tells the reader how to understand your text. Know the rules of punctuation and the rhetorical effects of bending those rules.
8. *Learn the classical figures of speech and how to create them.* Understand figures of balance, repetition, and emphasis and practice writing them.
9. *Become tech-savvy and learn something about formatting and design.* Technology can make the presentation of your writing sophisticated and effective—and it can give you access to lots of information besides. Know how to use your computer, a few good pieces of software, the Internet, a PDA, and a digital camera.
10. *Think like a writer.* See the world as rife with stories and subjects. Listen for stories in peoples' lives, on the news, in daily events. Use your imagination. Cultivate the counterfactual. Then write!

Gina Claywell, Murray State University, Murray, KY

10 Steps for Making Grading Easier, Students Happier, and Your Ego Smaller

Working with Student Texts

1. You don't have to grade—or even read—everything students write! The process of writing in response to class discussion/readings can be profitable for the students (by encouraging their critical thinking and/or by encouraging them to write at all!) as long as we acknowledge their work...that doesn't mean we have to write lengthy responses though!
2. Think as you make the assignment about what your purpose will be when grading it. Consider listing what will be evaluated on a hierarchical scale (and then follow it!). What is our goal as writing evaluators? To vent? To engage in debate or dialogue? To coach or nurture? To harangue? To intimidate? To foster better writing? The more you know about what YOU expect, the more you can prepare students to be successful.
3. When your pile is HUGE, try this: focus as you read on the top three problems (or the top three content problems and the top three style problems). Then list them. Then stop. Students often will not profit from more than three big comments. This works really well in a conference situation when you are frantically trying to get grading done before the students arrive. Better yet...tell them verbally and make them take notes! They'll absorb

the information better; it will be in their own words; and it will engage them interactively in the conference.

4. Consider preparing some quick grading sheets or rubrics for times when students won't be revising (such as in-class writes). Then, you can simply list the abbreviations for items that need attention with a grade underneath them to better prepare students for their next in-class write situation. NOTE: be sure your abbreviations aren't the same letters as letter grades; that confuses students!
5. As much as possible, respond to the specific paper with the types of comments that can be transferred to future papers as well.
6. Keep in mind that rules for usage and mechanics change...and will increasingly change with electronic media. For instance, the distinctions between "who/whom" and using singular references with "their" will be gone from the handbooks in our lifetime. Focus instead on appropriate communication for the audience, and keep in mind that different disciplines have different rules for style! So...it seems inefficient to spend a lot of time dwelling on a student's breaking of the minor rules.
7. Remember what it's like to get negative feedback! Try to be helpful, not harmful! Also, it is THE STUDENT'S paper—not OURS!

Students Working with Students

8. Usually, you must give specific instructions regarding time constraints and your expectations for group projects to be successful. Keep in mind, too, that there is a fine line between establishing group coherence and boredom, and even group activities can get monotonous if done every day and/or in the same way each time.

9. Model appropriate peer reviewing BEFORE peer review workshops.

Working with Students

10. Every student knows more about something than you do. So learn from them.

Peter Elbow, University of Massachusetts

1. Freewriting as low stakes writing. For most people writing is slow and often full of anxiety. But freewriting makes it quite easy to find words and thoughts and get them on paper. Freewriting exploits the ability everyone has had since age four simply to open the mouth and *allow words to arrive* out of our thoughts and feelings--without having to plan, choose, or decide. And freewriting helps us not only to be fluent but also to be creative.
2. The distinction between high stakes writing and low stakes writing. Writing is usually learned in school, usually judged, and often used on the job, so people tend to experience it as a high stakes activity. In contrast, speaking in our culture is most common in face to face situations between friends and acquaintances and is characteristically casual and easy going. Thus people tend to assume that writing is best for high stakes language use and speaking for exploratory low stakes language use. But this assumption is misleading. Yes, writing is ideal for high stakes language use because it permits us to ponder, rethink, get feedback from allies, and revise till we get our words just the way we want them. And yes, speech is good for low stakes conversation. But speech is also dangerous than writing because we usually speak in the presence of a listener and if we say something hurtful or stupid--or anything that makes a listener think badly of us--we can never take it back. Writing, on the other hand, is *ideal* for low stakes explorations of what we don't yet understand--or what is dangerous, scary, or taboo. We don't have to show our writing to anyone.

Most people have much more trouble with writing than necessary because they have written only in high stakes ways. If we make sure to structure our teaching so as to have equal amounts of low stakes and high stakes writing, students will have a more satisfying experience and improve faster.

3. Contract Grading. I've used contract grading for more than ten years and it has brought more relief to my teaching than anything else--and more improvement too. I find conventional grading a huge problem. Grading--especially the grading of individual papers--is hard and makes me anxious because I don't feel it's valid. For one thing, good readers don't agree about what good writing is; in addition, the act of grading reduces a multi-dimensional performance to a one-dimensional number. Furthermore, grading undermines the classroom climate for teaching and learning by tempting students to fight me and compete with each other.

The central thing in contract grading is to figure out which *activities* or *processes* you believe will lead most reliably to learning. Then build your contract around them. For my first year writing contract I've worked out a substantial list of specific writerly and process-oriented activities that *all* students can perform if they are moderately diligent and responsible: tasks like attending class, meeting deadlines, doing substantive revising, keeping a journal, giving feedback, showing adequate effort. If they do these tasks, they are guaranteed a B for the course. None of the tasks involves evaluations of the quality of their writing. (I've snuck in one criterion that could be called quality-oriented, but I *treat* it as a yes-or-no task: "Get some perplexity into every draft; don't just hammer home a static position you are already convinced of." I've done this because I believe that inviting perplexity is so central to growth as a writer.

When I guarantee a B in this way, it might look as though I am downplaying evaluation. Not so. I still give just as much evaluative feedback about the strengths and weaknesses in their writing. What I've done is *decouple evaluation from the grade*. I find that my decoupled evaluations are more effective for learning since students have to *think* about them and decide whether or not they agree. For they don't have to do what I suggest. But the contract requires them to do substantive revising in some way. With conventional grading, on the other hand, students don't think so much about my evaluations since they have to go along with them for the grade.

For grades higher than B, however, we are back into the judging game: their portfolios at mid-semester and end-of-semester must represent what I judge to be high honors work.

4. Cover letter/process writing. I ask my students for an informally written cover letter with every serious draft they turn in. I ask them to answer questions like these: What was your main point? What was notable about your process--how you got this piece written? And above all, What questions do you have for me as reader? (When they are turning in a revision, I always require them to tell what changes they made--and why.) Cover letters make it much easier and more productive for me to write my own response, for my response is not the *start* of a conversation but rather the *continuation* of a conversation started by the student.

Process writing helps students with the difficult task of seeing more clearly the structure and content of their own essays--and also helps them understand their own

writing process so as to take better control of it. Early in the semester, I use class time to write process letters on the day that drafts are due. We share examples and I kibitz.

When I *return* papers to students with my comments, I sometimes take five minutes right then to continue the dialogue: “Write me a short note telling me what you hear my comment saying--and how you are reacting to it.”

5. Separate drafts and due dates for revising and copy editing. Substantive revising is hard: making genuine changes in thinking or structure. When we ask first year students to revise, they often settle for mere cleaning up and copy editing of surface or stylistic features. To deal with this problem, I have found it helpful to separate revising from copy editing. Both are important.

Indeed, for the major essays in my syllabus, I emphasize four stages of writing. (1) I lead students in exploratory writing on the topic in class--giving them freewriting prompts that coax them into an intellectually adventuresome mess. (2) Then for homework students write a “midprocess draft” and turn it in for feedback from me and peers. (3) Then they revise to a “final best draft.” In giving this assignment, I take great pleasure in saying, “You must do substantive revising--but don’t worry at all about surface mistakes.” (4) For the “final final draft”--or the publication draft--the *only* assignment is to copy edit. Students don’t get credit for the essay at all unless this final final draft is “virtually free of mistakes (departures from edited standard written English).

In order to set such a high standard for copy editing, I emphasize that it’s fine to get help. I can’t ask that all my students be able to copy edit successfully by themselves; but I *can* ask that every one of them learn to get the help they need in order to turn in

clean copy. *This* is the writerly skill all students need in college and for the rest of their lives.

By the way, sometimes their midprocess draft is terrific. They know it and they don't want to do substantive revising. I tell them they *still* have to make substantive changes to organization or thinking--but they can do it playfully or experimentally in such a way that the revision will probably be much worse. Fine. Then they can do their final final copy editing on the good midprocess. In this way, I'm insisting that all students learn to transform and play with what they've written.

6. Reading through a paper before I write any comments. Students can seldom benefit from criticism of more than two or three problems. If I want to write the most effective comment, I have to figure out *which* problems it's worth focusing on. I can't make a good decision till I read the whole draft through--*and their cover letter*--before writing *anything at all*. By putting off any comments, I can make them much more strategic and focused--*and also save lots of time*. My biggest *mistakes* in commenting come from writing a comment while I'm still in the midst of reading the paper.

There's a *kind* of response I sometimes give as I'm reading. I often use straight and wiggly pencil to indicate words, phrases, or passages that I find notably strong or weak. These minimal marks give remarkably useful feedback, and help me after I've read the paper through: I can glance back for a quick glimpse of my reactions.

7. Reading aloud as feedback. The easiest and most reliable way to help students improve their current draft and to grow as writers is to get them to read their writing out loud.

Their own *mouths* and *ears* tell them when words work and don't work. The process is all learning and no teaching.

Of course many students are shy about reading their work aloud--some hate it. Many have been shamed around their out loud reading. Therefore I have to work hard to make the process safe and give them supportive practice--but I don't let them get by with throw-away mumbling. In my first year classes, I build in frequent ten- or fifteen minute conferences with me during which they read aloud whatever draft they have in hand. I give feedback on the spot so I don't have to take the paper home (where it would take me *longer* than fifteen minutes to read and write my comment).

I also emphasize reading aloud in peer response groups or pairs. For the first two to four meetings in groups, I insist that they simply read their drafts aloud for no feedback. The listeners just say "thank you," and then it's the next person's turn. The process is quick, safe, pleasurable, and social. And it improves peer feedback when we get to that. For writers cannot hear peer feedback well till they learn to be comfortable reading their writing aloud; and listeners cannot give good feedback till they become comfortable listening to others without being distracted by worries about what they're going to say in response.

Even when I ask students to take each others' papers home so they can write out peer feedback at leisure (where they can usually give longer and more thoughtful responses), I always start the process with reading aloud: the writers read their drafts aloud to their responder(s) before handing over the paper copy to take home.

And when we get to final drafts, I sometimes ask everyone do give a celebratory reading of a couple of paragraphs to the whole class. There's a subversive truth here that

we need to acknowledge. Feedback can be useful and we must often give it, but in fact feedback can often misfire. Even when feedback is correct and valid, students often misunderstand it or resist. Think about the rule for doctors: “At least do no harm.”

8. Seeing your Words in Print: Publishing Student Writing for Feedback and Celebration. When I came to UMass, I learned what may be the most powerful and pleasure-giving way to encourage students to revise--and especially to copy edit. Three to five times a semester (using an official lab fee), every first year teacher makes a class magazine out of every student's “final final draft.” Students *see their own words differently* when they see them in a magazine in every fellow student's hand. They have read over their own essay a number of times in the process of revising it, but the magazines help students gain the subtle but crucial ability to see your own words as others see them. Students begin to use writing as an act of reaching out to actual human readers--rather than just trying to figure out "what the teacher wants."

If it's not feasible to require a lab fee, it's perfectly feasible to ask students to bring in (say) twenty copies of their final drafts--single spaced onto a single back-to-back sheet. The expense is small, but it can be reduced even further if students bring in only ten copies--so everyone's magazine contains only half the class's papers. If a student complains about the cost, I say “Why do you take it for granted that you should pay lots of money for books to read--and assume that there's something wrong with a tiny fee for writing?”

Publishing just one celebratory magazine at the end of the semester is helpful, but the main benefit comes when students see their final drafts in class magazines a number

of times--so that the process gives them more audience awareness and spurs them to improve over the course of the semester.

9. Collage. Consider three of the hardest skills in writing an essay: (1) articulating the main point clearly and precisely and making sure everything fits that topic; (2) making the organization clear and coherent; (3) making clear and coherent transitions between ideas or sections. The collage allows the writer to *skip* all three difficulties, yet the result is often a good piece of writing.

To create a collage, you do as much good exploratory writing as you can that's pretty much about your topic; you choose the good bits and clean them up; you put them in some intuitively pleasing sequence; and you simply *omit* any transitions--settling instead for asterisks or dingbats at the joints.

Students' collages are usually more rhetorically effective than their essays. They tend to get readers more involved in the topic than fully explicit essays. Most important, the collage form helps unskilled students turn out excellent work early in their learning so as to help them gain more confidence for learning the harder skills.

The *collaborative collage* is an ideal introduction to co-writing. The writers must cooperate in choosing which bits to use and how to sequence them, but each writer gets full ownership and control of his or her bits. A collaborative collage is likely to contain passages that disagree or even fight with each other—and yet the collage form permits these conflicts to be rhetorically effective and lively. I like the way collaborative collages teach students learn to make their *solo essays* less bland: students see that conflicting ideas can *improve* an essay and don't need to be swept under the rug.

10. The Believing Game. The believing game is a mirror image of the intellectual ability most honored in education: critical thinking. I call it the doubting game because it is the disciplined practice of subjecting all views to skeptical scrutiny. The goal is to discover hidden flaws. In contrast, the believing game is the disciplined practice of not just *listening* to any views that are under consideration, not just refraining from arguing with them, but actually *making an effort to believe them*. The goal is not committed belief but rather the discovery of hidden strengths or virtues. Often we cannot see what's good in a view until we try to enter into it as though we believed it--especially if the view is badly formulated, or if it's held by someone we don't respect, or if it goes against a deep unexamined assumption. Truly smart and productive people tend, in fact, to be skilled at entering into views very different from their own. Yet in schools, we don't usually practice or honor this non-adversarial skill--a skill all the more precious as our world shrinks. (I have an essay in *College English* in 2004 exploring not just the theory but also concrete ways to work on the believing game in our English classrooms.)

(For more about these ideas and others, see my *Everyone Can Write: Essays Toward a Hopeful Theory of Writing and Teaching Writing*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2000.)

Helen Ewald, Iowa State University

Disciplining Dichotomies in the Deca List

The well-known disciplinary conversation between David Bartholomae and Peter Elbow as captured in Victor Villanueva, Jr.'s *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory* embodies familiar dichotomies in composition studies that can be constructed in terms of those approaches that assume the socially constructed writer and those that feature the autonomous self as author. These dichotomies can further be enacted in pedagogies that confront “the power politics of discursive practice” and recognize “the particular representations of power, tradition, and authority reproduced whenever one writes,” (Bartholomae 481) and those that focus on an author’s *ownership* of texts and on the need for writers, even or especially for first-year students, “to trust language and one’s experience” (Elbow 499). These dichotomies may also be expressed in statements acknowledging “there is not writing that is writing without teachers” and in comments asking students to “feel themselves as writers” and to “choose the goal of writer over that of academic” (Bartholomae 481; Elbow 490).

The seeming opposition of academic and, for the want of a better term, personal writing here echoes the darker dichotomy in feminism between patriarchal and feminist approaches to learning. Feminists such as Madeleine Grumet in *Bitter Milk* have, for example, long since called for teachers to “draw knowledge from women’s experience of reproduction and nurturance into epistemological systems and curricular forms” (3) and to assert their rights to self expression (89) in taking a more feminist approach in the classroom. However, as Ellen Messer-Davidow argues in *Disciplining Feminism: From Social Activism to Academic Discourse* that the bold venture “to transform academic and social institutions” can be seen as having

transformed feminism itself. In short, the academy “exercised its power not through repression [of feminism] but through production” by constructing feminism as discipline that “fabricated esoteric knowledge” rather than one that effected transformation of classroom pedagogies and research practice (127).

My “ten best” ideas for writing theory/instruction below, however, refuse dichotomies that see academic writing and personal or experiential writing as necessarily in conflict. My suggestions also test those dichotomies that understand feminist approaches as necessarily dominated and transformed by traditional approaches in the academy. My ideas assume that mutuality is the key. Grumet claims that mutuality fails pedagogy because it [mutuality] 1) is blind to the world, 2) denies asymmetry, and 3) fosters eroticism through the reciprocal teacher/student gaze (115). But, mutuality can, in fact, enable a reconstituted vision of the world by making the classroom a place that “bring[s] together students’ knowledge and experiences with specific disciplinary representations of knowledge” and that seeks connections between the academic and the personal (see *Mutuality in the Rhetoric and Composition Classroom* 70, 97). Mutuality does not deny asymmetry in power relations between teachers and students; in fact, it recognizes interpretive agency—which involves “bringing one’s prior experience to bear in the construction of knowledge as a given in the classroom—and, in so doing, accords power to both teachers and students while accepting that each person’s interpretive agency may or may not always result in agency, or “the ability to influence class tasks and topics as well as the ability to influence the choices that individual writers (including oneself) makes” (*Mutuality* 16). Finally, mutuality refuses eroticism in that the pedagogy it defines does not require a particular transformation to be judged effective; that is, students do not have to mirror or reproduce a teacher’s political agenda to be deemed successful (*Mutuality* 4-5).

The suggestions below apply both to writers and teachers of writing. These suggestions, which are not meant to be definitive, often assume stances by teachers and students that may prove to be at once complementary and contradictory but that are uniformly based on my own writing and teaching experiences. I begin with primarily theoretical points that are briefly explicated before moving to points that are more common place but, I believe, nevertheless worthy of mention.

1. Value the role of interpretive agency. Dewey grounded learning in student experience brought to the classroom while at the same time insisting that education have its goal as disciplinary knowledge (*Later* 13; Russell 186). In Dewey's scheme, and I think it's safe to say, in the minds of many teachers, personal knowledge is somehow subsumed by disciplinary knowledge. In fact, the relative positioning of personal knowledge vis-a-vis public knowledge underpins the Bartholomae-Elbow debate. To value interpretive agency means acknowledging that learning occurs at the intersection of personal and public knowledge (*Mutuality* 17). Both are essential and ever-present. Students who value interpretive agency will, for example, see academic writing as a place where they are not excluded but are constantly making choices based on their own construction of what has been said and what is to be said. Teachers, for their part, will make space for their own self-expression in the classroom (see Grumet 89) in conjunction with the disciplinary knowledge that informs their curricular objectives and plans.
2. Recognize the constructed nature and pervasive power of discourse. Although interpretive agency may not always result in agency, students and teachers alike can participate in alternative speech genres both for classroom discourse and in course

architectures (see *Mutuality*, Chapters 2 and 3) that encourage reciprocity in oral and written interchanges in the classroom and, eventually, enable participation in conversations in the disciplinary and civic communities beyond.

3. Develop your voice(s). The concept of voice when applied to individual writers embodies the inherent difficulty that voicing involves words and every word, to use Bakhtin's language, "smells of the context and contexts in which it has lived its intense social life" (Todorov 56). Yet, writers can come to understand how their unique subjectivities, socially and culturally constructed, affect their constructions of language and help build a recognizable voice.
4. Practice writing within genres. Writers can reproduce as well as flout various generic constraints, but continued practice facilitates both these actions as well as enables writers to join "the ongoing conversation" in any given community.
5. Attend to visual rhetoric in constructing text.
6. Master current writing technology.
7. Establish a network of writing partners, for peer review and for collaboration.
8. Listen. Remember the saying, "all arguments come from the audience" and keep in mind the reader's role in constructing texts.

9. Write. Make writing a habit; set a writing goal of, say, two pages per day.
10. Revise. Revise. Revise.

Works Cited

- Bartholomae, David. 1997. "Writing with Teachers: A Conversation with Peter Elbow." *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory*. Ed. Victor Villanueva, Jr. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 479-488.
- Dewey, John. 1981-1989. *John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925-1953*. Ed. Jo Ann Boydston. 17 vols. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP.
- Elbow, Peter. 1997. "Being a Writer vs. Being an Academic: A Conflict in Goals." *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory*. Ed. Victor Villanueva, Jr. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 489-500.
- Grumet, Madeleine R. 1988. *Bitter Milk: Women and Teaching*. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P.

- Messer-Davidow, Ellen. 2002. *Disciplining Feminism: From Social Activism to Academic Discourse*. Durham: Duke UP.
- Russell, David R. 1993. "Vygotsky, Dewey, and Externalism: Beyond the Student/Discipline Dichotomy." *Journal of Advanced Composition* 13: 173-97.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. 1984. *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogic Principle*. Trans. Wlad Godzich. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P.
- Villanueva, Victor. 2003. *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader*, 2nd Ed. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Wallace, David L. and Helen Rothschild Ewald. 2000. *Mutuality in the Rhetoric and Composition Classroom*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP.

Nancy Frey and Douglas Fisher, San Diego State University

**Prompting Understanding: Ten Things Every Teacher
Should Know About Writing to Learn**

How many times have you seen this scenario play out in a classroom? The teacher designs and implements a well-crafted series of lessons on a particular topic or concept. The state standards have been referenced, learning activities have been designed for collaboration with peers, and engaging lessons have been planned to capture student interest. After delivering this student-centered curriculum, the inevitable end-of-unit test is given. Now comes the blow to the solar plexus every teacher dreads – the majority of the class has failed the exam. How could this happen?

Experienced educators know that what this scenario lacked was ongoing (formative) assessment of instruction. Although the lessons were engaging, standards-based, and student-centered, the teacher failed to gauge the formation of understanding in the minds of the learners. Yet the thought of pop quizzes seems to set an aversive tone. An alternative to traditional testing is writing to learn. Writing to learn, an opportunity to assess student understanding, has been used with students of all ages, through college (Bernhardt, 2004).

What is writing to learn?

The practice of inviting thoughtful responses through engaging questions has long been recognized as an effective instructional strategy (e.g., Bloom, 1956; Brophy & Good, 1986; Mehan, 1979). A well-constructed question provides students with an opportunity to draw on their prior knowledge, clarify understanding, restate knowledge, consider alternative views, and

develop novel solutions. However, as many teachers know, traditional questioning through classroom discourse reduces the number of responses possible because only a few students can answer a given question. A way to expand the number of responses to every member of the class is through writing to learn (Herrington, 1981). Writing to learn consists of a question or prompt designed for written response. Unlike process writing, which necessitates drafts and revisions, the focus of writing to learn is on the content itself. The time allotted to respond to such a prompt is usually three to ten minutes, depending on the complexity of the prompt and the developmental level of the writers. By using writing to learn prompts like the ones listed below, teachers have the opportunity to gauge their students' understanding of the material and reteach when needed. In addition, students are able to reflect on what they know, what they are confused about, and what additional questions they have.

Ten Writing to Learn Prompts

1. Bellwork. One of the most basic forms of writing to learn prompts is bellwork. These are posted on the board each day in anticipation of the arrival of students, who are instructed to begin writing as soon as they are settled into their seats. These questions can cover a host of topics, from current events to content knowledge. Sample bellwork prompts might include:
 - Think about a time when you were surprised. What happened?
 - How do lightning bugs light?
 - Last night's storm knocked out the power all around town. How did you pass the time?

Harry Wong identifies another advantage of bellwork – it establishes a routine to begin the class each day (2001). Students learn that entering the classroom signals a time to learn, beginning with the bellwork posted on the board. During these first quiet minutes of class, the teacher can take role and attend to the immediate needs that may arise. Of course, most of these bellwork prompts should be connected to the lesson; however, we recognize that an occasional change of pace can be good for everyone.

2. **Entry and Exit Slips:** An entry slip is a writing to learn prompt that must be completed before the next class. These questions usually focus on bridging material from today’s lesson with content to be covered the next day. For example, after Ms. Allen finished a social studies lesson children who made a difference in the civil rights movement of the 1960’s, she assigned the following entry slip for the following day: “What effect do you believe these children’s efforts had on the nation?” The next day she stood at the classroom door and collected their responses, given her an opportunity to scan some of the replies to incorporate into her lesson on the march on Washington and subsequent legislative changes.

Exit slips are collected at the end of class and serve as a “ticket out the door.” These writing to learn prompts serve as a means to review the content of the day’s lesson, often through summary writing. Students in Mr. Gregory’s seventh grade class completed an exit slip after a lesson on contributions of Islamic societies to civilization. After posting the question, “What does Islam have to do with libraries, hospitals, and paper?” students wrote for the last five minutes of class, then handed their responses to the teacher as he stood at the door to dismiss them for their next class. Later that day, Mr.

Gregory reviewed these and made decisions about what needed to be revisited before moving on to new material.

3. **Crystal Ball.** While entry and exit slips are typically used to review newly taught concepts, the Crystal Ball prompt is used to invite prediction. Once students are familiar with the purpose and process of Crystal Ball, the teacher can interject it at any point during a lesson. For example, students can be asked to predict what might happen next in the story during a shared reading. Crystal Ball is especially effective during science lab experiments. Mr. Thonis, a ninth grade physics teacher, interrupted a demonstration lesson on buoyancy. After placing a diet soda in a tub of water, students observed how the can floated on the surface. He then held a can of regular soda aloft and announced, “Crystal Ball! Write down your prediction about what will happen when I put this soda in the water. Will it sink or float?” When the can sunk, he then asked them to revisit their prediction and write a possible explanation for the difference between the two. After writing, he and the class discussed how the sugar content in the regular soda made it heavier than water and therefore unable to float.

4. **Yesterday’s News:** As stated earlier, summarizing can increase retention of newly learned information because it allows students to explain new concepts and vocabulary. Yesterday’s News is a writing to learn prompt that invites students to explain what was discussed in the previous class. Yesterday’s News is typically posted at the beginning of class as a bellwork and serves as a warm up for the lesson. Another benefit of this prompt is that it offers learners an opportunity to connect learning across class meetings. Third

graders in Ms. Martinez's class began reader's workshop with a writing to learn prompt on the overhead that read, "Yesterday's News About Choosing a Book for Independent Reading." Students wrote about the three strategies they had learned the previous day, including reading the front and back cover, reading the first two pages, and consulting the class reading log for peer reviews of the book. This review provided Ms. Martinez with a starting place for her lesson on when to reject a book they are reading.

5. Name That Math. Writing in mathematics has been shown to improve attitude toward mathematics while increasing skills (McIntosh & Draper, 2001; Miller & England, 1989). The ability to explain a solution is becoming more common on standardized tests of mathematics as assessments move from identifying a correct answer to being able to identify the processes used to find it. Mr. Hayden uses a writing to learn prompt he calls Name That Math in his high school mathematics courses. Students enter the classroom to find a word problem posted on the board. They must answer three questions in their mathematics journals:

1. What is the key word in the problem?
2. What is the mathematical rule to solve this problem?
3. What is the first step to solving this problem? (Fisher & Frey, 2003, p. 145).

Mr. Hayden explains that he has found that students often make an error on the first step, thereby affecting each subsequent step of the algorithm. By focusing their attention on this critical first step, he can assess their understanding of the processes involved.

6. Found Poems. The Found Poem writing prompt is usually assigned after reading a narrative or expository passage. Working in groups or individually, students select key words and phrases from the reading to create a free verse version. These words and phrases can be rearranged to maintain a poetic flow, but only those that appear in the text may be used. This activity is excellent for assessing reading comprehension of students. Miriam and Nalleli, two students in Mr. Lee’s fourth grade class, created a found poem based on chapter 8 of *Riding Freedom* (Ryan, 1998), a fictionalized account of Charlotte Parkhurst, a woman who disguised herself as a man in order to be a stagecoach rider.

Her Dreams Were Slipping Away

Nervous horse

hoof coming toward her face

The doctor said,

“I know a girl when I see one.”

“I need my job,” said Charlotte.

A black eye patch

Charlotte becomes

One-eyed Charley

7. The Believing Game and the Doubting Game. This writing to learn prompt was developed by Peter Elbow as a means to develop what he calls freewriting– a practice of writing for ten uninterrupted minutes (1973). Students first take one side of a controversial and write for five minutes in defense of the position, then switch and write

for the subsequent five minutes arguing against the original position. For example, students may respond to statements, such as stem cell research should not be funded by federal dollars; dropping the H-bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki lessened the number of deaths that would have otherwise resulted; a good friend is someone who always keeps your secrets.

Ms. Kellerman used the Believing Game and Doubting Game as an introduction to *Passage to Freedom: The Sugihara Story* (Mochizuki, 1997), a moving picture book of Chiune Sugihara, a Japanese consul assigned to the Lithuanian embassy during World War II. She first had her twelfth grade Government students defend the statement, “A good citizen obeys the laws of his or her country.” After five minutes, she asked them to argue against the same statement. Using their writing to learn notes, they debriefed both sides of the position while Ms. Kellerman listed their arguments for and against the statement on the board. She then read them the account of Sugihara’s decision to sign thousands of visas for Jewish citizens from Poland who were escaping the Nazis, despite orders from Tokyo to immediately desist. He made a difficult moral decision, influenced by his samurai training, to help people in need even in defiance of the emperor. After discussing the story, the students used the new information and their writing to learn notes as the basis for a persuasive argument on the duties of a citizen.

8. Sentence Springboards. It is not uncommon for students reading informational texts to encounter sentences that are difficult to comprehend. This is especially true of textbooks, which often feature dense prose to explain complex concepts. Sentence Springboards are a writing to learn tool that invites students to identify these difficult statements and

explore their understandings and confusions through writing. After reading a passage, students choose several sentences that confound them. They write these sentences verbatim, then deconstruct them using a series of questions:

- What information do I already know about this topic?
- What vocabulary words are difficult?
- What are the questions I can ask about this sentence?
- How can I find answers to my questions?

As with other writing to learn activities, the purpose is not to create a well-crafted piece of writing, but rather to assist the learner in focusing on what they know and what they need to find out about. The students in Mr. Borrega's fifth grade math class read a section on least common denominators in their mathematics textbook, then chose items for Sentence Springboard. Jorge copied the following sentence on a form Mr. Borrega had prepared for this activity, then wrote his responses to it:

1. Write your Sentence Springboard here: The first step to finding the least common denominator is by deciding the greatest common factor.
2. I know... this is about fractions.
3. I know... that the bottom number is the denominator.
4. I am not sure... what the greatest common factor is.
5. One question I have is... What is a greatest common factor?
6. I can find the answer to my question by... looking in the glossary.
7. I can find the answer to my question by... asking someone else.

After completing their Sentence Springboards, students turned to a partner and shared their questions. In many cases, the partners were able to clarify for one another, while Mr. Borrega assisted some learners with more difficult questions.

9. Progressive Writing: Developing fluency in writing is important for getting ideas down on paper in a smooth fashion. This is true in all types of writing, whether it is informational, persuasive, or creative. Progressive writing is a collaborative process done with a small group of students. After being given a prompt, students write for three minutes, then stop at the sound of the signal. They pass their writing to the student seated to the right of them while receiving the work of the classmate to the left. They spend the next two minutes reading what has been written, then add new ideas for an additional three minutes. This is repeated several times, ending when the paper has been returned to the first writer. Mr. Jackson grouped students in tables of four and posted this schedule on the overhead. He used a timer to signal each step.

1. Write an explanation for how a seed becomes a plant. (3 minutes)
2. Pass your paper to the right and read the new paper you receive.
3. Add new information on the new paper. (3 minutes)
4. Pass your paper to the right and read the new paper you receive.
5. Add new information on the new paper. (3 minutes)
6. Pass your paper to the right and read the new paper you receive.
7. Add new information on the new paper. (3 minutes)
8. Pass your paper to the right and read the new paper you receive.

9. Now you have your original paper in your hands again. Read it and add any missing information.
10. RAFT. Reading comprehension is frequently assessed through questions that appear at the end of the reading. However, these questions may focus more on literal level interpretation at the expense of more complex inferential knowledge. A creative means for assessing both literal and inferential understanding of a reading is through the use of a writing to learn prompt called RAFT (Santa & Havens, 1995). These letters form a mnemonic to shape a student's written response to text:

Role – the role of the writer

Audience – to whom are you writing?

Format – the form of writing (letter, poem, telegram, essay, etc)

Topic – the subject of the piece

After reading a book, chapter, or essay, the students write a response using a RAFT format designed by the teacher. For instance, after students in Ms. Udio's ninth grade English class read a chapter from the book *Parrot in the Oven: Mi Vida* (Martinez, 1998), they wrote a RAFT response about Manuel, the fourteen-year-old protagonist, and his strained relationship with his father.

R – Manny

A – Manny's father

F – a letter

T – I want you to be proud of me

Carlita wrote the following response:

Dear Papi,

I have tried to make you proud of me, and I know it is hard when so many things are going on in our family. My sister Magda is pregnant and you are furious with her. Nardo causes you pain because he is involved with the gangs. But I want you to notice me for the good work I am doing. I take care of my little sister, I help my mother, and I am still in school. I know you said people are like money and some are worth a thousand dollars and some are only worth a dollar. You say we are only pennies to you. I am not a penny. I am worthwhile. Please be proud of me.

Love,

Your son

Ms. Udio could have assessed Carlita's comprehension by having her answer questions. However, she has found that RAFT assignments like the one above give her tremendous insight into her students' understanding of the material.

Conclusion

These writing to learn prompts can be implemented across grade levels and content areas for assessing student knowledge. In addition, they heighten engagement by actively involving learners in their own efforts to monitor their comprehension. When educators use writing to learn activities throughout their instructional day, they prompt understanding.

Works Cited

- Bernhardt, S. A. 2004. Writing to learn; learning to write. *NEA Higher Education Advocate*, 21(3), 5-8.
- Bloom, B. S. 1956. *Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals: handbook I, cognitive domain*. New York: Longman.
- Brophy, J., & Good, T. 1986. Teacher behavior and student achievement. In M. Wittrock (Ed.), *The handbook of research on teaching* (3rd ed., pp. 328-375). New York: Macmillan.
- Elbow, P. 1973. *Writing without teachers*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Fisher, D., & Frey, N. 2003. *Improving adolescent literacy: Strategies that work*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Herrington, A. 1981. Writing to learn: Writing across the disciplines. *College English*, 43, 379-387.
- Martinez, V. 1998. *Parrot in the oven: Mi vida*. New York: Rayo.
- McIntosh, M. E., & Draper, R. J. 2001. Using learning logs in mathematics: Writing to learn. *Mathematics Teacher*, 94, 554-557.

Mehan, H. 1979. *Learning lessons*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Miller, L. D., & England, D. A. 1989. Writing to learn algebra. *School Science and Mathematics*, 89, 299-312.

Mochizuki, K. 1997. *Passage to freedom: The Sugihara story*. New York: Lee and Low.

Ryan, P. M. 1998. *Riding freedom*. New York: Scholastic.

Santa, C., & Havens, L. 1995. *Creating independence through student-owned strategies: Project CRISS*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall-Hunt.

Wong, H. K., & Wong, R. T. 2001. *The first days of school: How to become an effective teacher*. Mountain View, CA: Harry K. Wong.

Megan Fulwiler, The College of Saint Rose

A Top 10 List of Things They Don't Tell You About Teaching Writing

1. Writing undergrads the entire structure of college communities and while it may be the first thing teachers talk about, it is usually the last thing they want to teach.
2. Many faculty members view teaching writing as menial labor. They want you to teach students how to write so they can teach students how to think.
3. There will be days when you wish that you taught a subject like math where there are right answers and clear-cut equations. You know that there aren't any easy answers or foolproof formulas for teaching writing, but many people will think there are and assume that you know them.
4. As a teacher of writing, you will be expected to know everything about anything that has to do with writing—from supervising writing center tutors to writing grants, from creative writing to visual rhetoric, from directing a writing program to explaining enthymemes. You will feel underprepared and overwhelmed.
5. Sometimes you will shut your office door and secretly consult a grammar handbook in order to remind yourself what a dangling modifier is or where the colon goes in MLA

citation. You will kick yourself for not paying more attention in Mrs. Shermer's high school English class.

6. There will be a faculty member who considers workshops, class discussions, and revision work a passing fad. He will recommend that you incorporate more "teacher-centered" pedagogy in the future.
7. You will need to be fluent in the theoretical paradigms and texts of the dominant culture of literary studies and able to translate theories of composition and rhetoric for others. This will only heighten your anxiety about fraudulence.
8. There will be students who are sorely disappointed that you don't rip, gut, strip, kill, or fix their paper. There will be others who read your revision questions and comments as a personal assault.
9. Even though you've read Graves, Murray, and Elbow, there will be times when you have no idea how to help a student writer.
10. There will be faculty members who complain about reading student writing. But more often than not you will be surprised and invigorated by what your students have to say. You will discover that your students continually teach you new things about both teaching and writing. And this will sustain and nourish you.

Toby Fulwiler, University of Vermont

I believe there is a strong consensus about teaching writing among current writing teachers and scholars; this top ten list attempts to articulate that consensus in the briefest possible manner.

1. Write to think.
2. Plan for purpose.
3. Read the audience.
4. Situate yourself.
5. Share and listen.
6. Teach process with product.
7. Revise to strengthen.
8. Edit to finish.
9. Write across the curriculum.

10. Assess portfolios.

Diane Goode, University of Louisville

1. Professors of rhetoric and composition have done it. Businesses and industries have done it. Schools have done it. What is “it”? Collaboration. And, yes, students can do it in all phases of the writing process. My students work in groups helping each other in the invention of prewriting phases of writing, helping each other come up with paper topics or main points. With a list of questions from me about the requirements of the assignment, they help each other revise their papers with great success. Finally, in the last assignment of the semester, I ask them to collaborate in drafting and revising a paper on which both will (usually, a pair of students works together) receive the same grade ultimately.
2. One of my favorite methods of teaching a basic or intermediate writing class is to use a theme. In the past, I have used multiculturalism, popular culture, music, and film. One of the most unique I have heard of was baseball, which a colleague of mine did. In a class on popular culture, for example, I would first select a text on the popular culture theme. Several good ones are already on the market. Then, all the assignments for the semester center on the theme. Students read essays about television, film, advertising, music, and technology with writing assignments relating to some of these areas of popular culture. A popular culture theme course focuses on how these media influence young people even to the point of having formed their behaviors and beliefs.

3. Teaching research to freshman students can be tedious for both the professor and the students. One of the areas in which students need the most help is in blending their source material into their own writing smoothly. Over the years I have experimented with various ways of teaching this important skill. Then several years ago, I came up with what I call Goode's Format for Incorporating Sources. The format is as follows:

Goode's Format

1. Introduce the source
2. Use the source
3. Cite the source
4. Follow up on the source

Students inexperienced at using secondary sources often make the source feel “stuck” into their text without any connection to the material before it or following it. This format, simple though it is, helps students make connections. First, the student introduces the source by saying something like “According to Diane Goode” with Diane Goode being the author of the source. Next, the student either quotes or paraphrases the source material. Third, she uses the proper in-text citation, i.e., (23), indicating page 23 in the source. The fourth is the most complicated; finally, the student writes a follow-up to the source material to show the reader the connection between the point and the source, or she analyzes the source material to help her reader better understand the source. Granted the first and the fourth steps are not always necessary and can sometime be

omitted, but they do help students understand why and how they should use sources and incorporate them smoothly into their texts.

4. Another writing strategy for students learning research skills deals with learning how to paraphrase without plagiarizing. Though not a new idea by any means, this activity does work. I have my students bring one of their sources to class. Using the source for their research paper, I ask them to find a brief passage that they may want to use in their papers. Students then should read the passage several times until the idea is very clear to them. Then, I have them put the source away and have them write a paraphrase on a note card. Next, they have to compare their version to the original material to see how well they have done. Obviously, if they have used words or phrases exactly like the original, they must make changes or use quotation marks to identify exact sections. This activity practiced over and over makes students very good at paraphrasing and summarizing. I always check the students' practice material before it goes in the paper.

5. Informal language often finds its way into academic papers, at least in my classes it does. Some day one might walk into my class and see this written on the board: "Don't write the way you talk!" Being a kind-hearted person I don't want to make the students feel like they don't know how to talk, so I quickly say, "The way we talk to our friends and family is fine, but in an academic paper we need to be careful not to let slang words slip in." Then I give them lots of examples from real student papers. Here's one example: "She is a tall, blond hottie with a headstrong attitude. She is cute, witty, and is always in good favor with her friends." Obviously, the word "hottie" stands out in the first

sentence and should not be used in the kind of paper the student was writing, a semiotic analysis of a song. I could tell the student to use “beautiful woman” or some such phrase, but that is not the only problem with the sentences. So many time I see problems of informal language and informal sentence structure go hand in hand. Why? I don’t have a definitive answer. Perhaps the area in which we live plays a factor, perhaps the students’ high school education is the cause, or perhaps when the mind gets set on the one slang word it automatically stay in that informal mode. In this case, I would first ask the student who his audience is. That question would be followed by a series of other questions until we could work out a better description of the young woman in question. The author later wrote, “she is a tall, blond, witty, beautiful woman with a headstrong attitude who nevertheless manages to have faithful friends.” Better!

6. I am grateful to have the opportunity to teach my classes in a computer classroom. This format offers many kinds of fruitful activities not available in a regular classroom. For example, students can have an online discussion of an essay using a chat room or discussion board. For these activities, I give the students a list of questions to guide their discussion and then just sit back and read. Depending on whether the students use real names or nicknames, the discussion can go in different directions than the professor intended. When students are unidentifiable, they tend to slip into non-serious discussion. If this happens in my class, I handle it this way. After the time for the discussion has elapsed, I then ask the students to write about what just happened. After they analyze what happened in the discussion, they usually see the immaturity of the incident and it squelches any further problems.

7. Writing teachers have been using journaling in their classes for many years. We've all probably read about many different methods of journaling. I doubt that my method is unique, but I have never heard or read of anyone who does this exactly like I do. The first day of class I give my students a list of Journal Topics, which are divided into several broad categories, such as "writing about self," "writing about writing," "writing about favorites (book, play, etc.)," "writing about popular culture," and "writing about controversial issues." The list functions simply as a way to get students thinking about what matters to them because they don't actually have to choose something from the list though most of them do at least a few times during the semester. The rule is that they can write about anything they want to , and this includes creative writing. They are required to do 10 two-page journal writings a semester with prescribed due dates. Many students tell me in their end-of-semester evaluation that this is their favorite part of our writing course. For some students, the journals produce their best writing.

8. I use readers as texts in both English 101 (Introduction to College Writing) and English 102 (Intermediate College Writing). Obviously, we cannot possibly read all the essays in any of these texts. In an attempt to encourage reading and analysis of reading, I have my students complete 5-10 reading responses a semester. I have set up a listserv for my students, so their first action is to sign on to the listserv, which we do in class. Then, they are assigned an essay to read about once every week or two. The next step is for them to write a response to the reading on the listserv using several different methods I teach them. Sometimes I have them give an intellectual response and an emotional response; other

times I give them a short list of questions; while still others I ask them to identify the thesis and the main points of the essay. Students also have the incentive to earn extra points if they respond back to one of their classmate's responses. The development over the semester is often remarkable.

9. One of the most important writing strategies for teachers to implement is providing students with the rationale behind what they are doing in class. This must be done, however, in simple, easy to follow and understandable language. Students do not need to know terms like reader response theory or semiotics or heuristic in the beginning of the semester. The teacher may consider using them later on after the students have mastered the process. But they do always need to know why they are doing whatever they are doing.

10. Another idea that can be used effectively in a computer classroom, but can also be adapted for the regular classroom, is having student write a round robin story. The notion is that every person at a computer starts to write a story about him/herself. Give the students two minutes to write, then have students move over one computer and add to the original student's story. Keep doing this (adding additional reading time as each composition expands), until the original story-teller gets back to his/her spot and let the student who began the story finish it. Read the finished stories. Why? This is a good semester opener; it gets students involved with each other right away. And, it's fun.

Suzanne Greenberg, California State University, Long Beach

1. Write scenes first, stories second. It's less intimidating to think and write in terms of sections than to sit down with the intention of writing an entire book, story or essay.
2. Write stories about children, dogs and disease--in short, everything you've been warned against writing. Let in the messy business of life in its raw variety, and your writing won't be sentimental or maudlin or cliched.
3. Never decide you can only write during a certain time of day, say 9-12 a.m. or after midnight. Children, dogs and illness will ruin your writing schedule, and then what will you be left with? Whenever you find an hour or two, drink a cup of coffee, and decide it's time to write.
4. If your fiction feels flat, have someone you don't expect knock at the door. Let him in. Introduce him to your other characters. See what kind of trouble they all get in together.
5. Do write at cocktail parties, but don't write on the back of napkins. You'll end up blowing your nose into your words or losing them in the bottom of your purse. Carry index cards instead or a small notebook or a laptop computer if you can afford one.

6. Watch trashy television, but don't read trashy books. There's not enough time to read the good ones. Remember how your mother warned you about bad influences. Hang out with the smart kids.
7. Save all your drafts until you're *really* done. Label them each "1," "2," "3," etc. You may want to come back to something later, a passage you now realize was brilliant that you originally thought was dreck.
8. Write dialog that sounds real but couldn't possibly be. Leave out "hello's," "goodbye's," and "thank you's." Create characters who never answer each other's questions directly, who talk around serious issues and change the subject, in other words, people with whom you'd rather not eat lunch.
9. Write with a deadline even if you don't have one. Circle due dates on your calendar, and when someone calls and invites you to the movies, tell her that you're on deadline, maybe next week.
10. Read everything you write aloud. Listen to the rhythm of your sentences, the repetition of words, the pauses. Where do your words stumble, trip, soar, dance, sing?

Muriel Harris, Professor Emeirta, Purdue University

Ten Suggestions for Writing Effectively

As someone who has spent the vast majority of my teaching career sitting on-to-one with writers in our university Writing Lab, I tend to emphasize the importance of how different we all are as writers—and how much guilt some writers carry around because they are asked to follow rules that don't work well for them. Thus, some of my ten suggestions offered here fall into the “do what works best for you” category (a message I've tried to insinuate into a brief grammar handbook I've written because I worry that some students think they have to follow a textbook's advice, even when it constrains their writing). I offer the following from the viewpoint of the writer, hoping that instructors will consider these suggestions both for themselves and for the students who enroll in their writing courses.

1. Ignore any rules you've read or learned from others that don't seem to work for you. Textbooks and well-meaning instructors offer suggestions for writing that help many writers, but not all writers. For example, some writers always need to start with an outline for any writing task longer than making a shopping list; others need an outline for some writing tasks but not others; and some writers feel constrained by any outlines and would never make one except when required to by someone else. Some writers spend time in mental planning before writing, while others need to write for awhile to find their point or argument. Most writers start writing on computers, but there are others who find

writing on paper a better way to start. Some people jot down notes or make diagrams; others don't.

2. Ask yourself who your audience of readers will be. It's hard to write something when you don't know who will be reading it, but if you can define your readers somewhat, that helps. You can start asking yourself what they need to know; what they already know and don't want to waste time reading again; and what their viewpoints are and how well these correspond to what you're writing about. What tone or style would be appropriate for them? Formal? Informal? Are they likely to agree with you? Are they likely to disagree with you? If not, which of their arguments do you need to acknowledge as important and/or counteract? Can you find common ground with readers who will disagree with you if you immediately go on the offensive against their views? If you're writing to readers who are likely to agree with you, what is your purpose in writing?

3. Try to find some reason to be interested in your topic or assignment. If you have to write something that doesn't interest you, it's hard to write well. If the topic or task isn't interesting, can you find a reason to make the document as effective as possible? For example, in the business world, writers have to write reports about less-than-exciting matters, but maybe reporting good news or softening bad news is a challenge that makes the task interesting. Writing about a short story or essay you found boring presents another challenge. Maybe you want to explore why the writing bored you? Maybe you can identify some small element in it that piqued your curiosity.

4. Put away what you've written for awhile so that you can get some distance from it. Most drafts are just that—first drafts, a first attempt to get ideas out and on paper. The writing usually needs refining, revising, reorganizing, or maybe just a few word changes. But when you can view the writing with a bit of distance, you can more easily see what needs to be changed. Journalists have to write quickly and send their writing off to be printed. But that's a skill most of us don't have.
5. If you need to check a grammatical rule or stylistic matter before going forward, do so. But if that act of stopping to check something seems to make you lose track of your thoughts, leave a mark or some sort of reminder in that part of the sentence and move on. Don't let yourself get bogged down by matters that can be taken care of later. Can't think of the exact word you want? Write something and move on. Later it may pop into mind.
6. When you think you're all done with a document, read it aloud. It's amazing how we hear the need for any corrections or clarifications when we hear our writing aloud. Or get a friend, a writing center tutor, or a room-mate to read it aloud to you. The important thing is to be able to hear your words.
7. Don't rely on your computer's spell checker to be completely accurate. Spelling errors when noticed, tend to broadcast the message that the writer is careless or less than competent. But relying on a spell checker won't correct all errors. For example, spell checkers can't distinguish between "their" and "there" or "it's" and "its" or typos, like "ore" and "or."

8. Don't accept as true everything you see on the World Wide Web. There are billions of pages on Web sites out there, and anyone, anywhere can post a Web site. If you find information on the Web, learn how to evaluate the source. Don't accept as true what might be biased, inaccurate, or simply there to sell you something.
9. Pay attention to the way your page looks. Visual literacy is the art of making your page visually understandable. Use white space, subheadings, visuals, such as charts or tables, and bullets or numbers for lists. Our eyes can't make as much sense from a solid wall of text as they can when things are arranged to help us see how parts relate to other parts on the page. Overly busy pages are hard to figure out too.
10. If when you feel stalled when writing something, move around. Try getting up, walking around, or maybe finding something to eat. Just get moving. Sometimes, physical activity can get your brain back into action. Or allow yourself to start in again. When you do go back to write, start from the beginning to get to the place you stopped at. That gives you a "running start" on going forward.

Marguerite Helmers, UW Oshkosh, Oshkosh, WI

1. Teach Writing. This is an old adage and a good one to remember every time I design a course and write a syllabus! There is a difference between assigning written work and teaching students how to write. The former results in products that are graded; the latter engenders *strategies* for approaching a writing task. All aspects of the writing assignment are broken down into elements—even the titles of the essays. Nothing is merely “assumed,” but is worked through in class by example and discussion. I’d like to think that this is a “problem and project” rather than “product” approach to writing instruction because the students must draw on their strengths (whether conducting interviews or finding printed research materials), interact with others (to brainstorm and revise), and assess their own progress (revisiting their strengths and weaknesses as writer, researcher, peer editor) in order to succeed. The reminder to *teach* writing needs to be paired, also, with this advice: Teaching Writing Takes Time!
2. Create Authentic Projects. I use the term “authentic projects” to refer to writing projects that are integrally related to the types of written artifacts that one finds at large in our culture and that are related to the type of written artifacts under study in the classroom. It doesn’t mean that if the students read a novel that they must also write a novel. It does mean that students can benefit from analyzing and composing written products based on the types of writing they are likely to do sometime in the future: posters, invitations, webpages, Blogs. For example, in a course on Modern British Literature, my students were non-English majors. Their acquaintance with literature beyond the class may be

through book groups run through their neighborhood, the children's school (as in mother/daughter groups), or their church. Therefore, the students read, study, and then write a book club Readers' Guide on a classroom text. Although the students are likely to do research in order to compose their Readers' Guides, they are not transmitting it in a standard academic "research essay form." If these guides are printed on attractive paper, they can be given as gifts (with a copy of the course text) to a family member or friend at the end of the semester.

3. **Vary Assignments.** I expect every student who takes one of my classes to succeed. Educational theorist Howard Gardner's theories of multiple intelligences have changed the way that I think about the classroom. I try to develop writing assignments and classroom activities that draw on various intelligences students bring to the classroom: reading, writing, speaking, drawing, physical activity, musical ability, historical fact finding. My writing projects allow for spoken interaction (in small groups where students work as peer editors and in presentation format to the class, thus varying the informal and the formal modes of speaking) and the use of visual information (most essays have to be illustrated and include effective use of page design). As I devise writing projects, I think about the many ways that students can gather information, write, and revise so that my students are not writing in isolation and turning a written product in to me for a grade.
4. **Facilitate Interaction.** Education is acquired in solitude and in groups. Both processes have to be at work in order for us to learn. I don't know what kind of lives my students lead outside the classroom, but I imagine that in their academic experience they read

alone and complete most assignments alone. This means that the classroom should become a space for interaction and collaborative inquiry.

When I assign a writing project, my students and I immediately brainstorm approaches as a group. At times, we use a think-pair-share process in which students have five minutes to write up a list of ideas about the topic, then share with a partner for five minutes, then turn to the whole class to list ideas on the board. This immediate reaction to the assignment fosters ideas, confirms hunches, or provides instant feedback on whether someone is “on the right track.”

Providing students with the opportunity to meet others in the class has a greater reward: it allows the students to make connections to people who may have expertise. The class becomes a supportive community for problem-solving. One excellent idea--suggested by David Jolliffe--is that an “expertise grid” be prepared for larger, research projects. Students who have computer ability, research ability, knowledge of a subject area, ability to proofread are all represented on the grid by their knowledge area. I use this expertise grid to exchange information about research projects. On it, I list names, research tasks by topic, and any special research questions that the students are pursuing. This way, students can share information.

5. **Answer Any Question.** We need to remind our students and ourselves that there are no stupid questions. The reading theorist Wolfgang Iser postulated that all texts have gaps in them. In order to fill those gaps and make a text intelligible, learners return to prior experience or need to acquire new experiences by turning to their colleagues, to reference works, or to teachers. The questioner must freely admit that he or she doesn't know the

answer and must be able to develop a strategy for finding the answer. Our goal is to help students develop their confidence in being question-posers. Constructing good questions, hypotheses that answer them, and then checking the answers builds life-long learning.

6. **Enable Self-Assessment.** Self-assessment is essential to students' writing . I use reflective self-assessment at the close of a writing project. It complements the initial brainstorming, querying sessions that we hold in class. Students can reflect on whether their questions were answered or comment, in writing, about how their ideas changed shape as they write. I believe that this helps counter the notion that all writing products spring, fully-formed from the head of the writer. Aside from being useful because students reflect on their success with the project at hand, the self-assessment opens up another opportunity to strategize about how to complete writing assignments in general. Typical (and by no means original) questions to ask students are: What do you like about this essay (what did you do well)? What challenges did you face when writing the essay (what didn't go as well as you wanted it to)? If you could change one thing about this final piece, what would it be? If you had another week to write this essay, what would you do?

The second important element of self-assessment is that it is recursive. Students are like us: they forget! If they have the opportunity to consult their self-assessments prior the next assignment, they can predict what to work on and be aware of what to avoid.

7. **Visualize.** Much work with writing is text-based. For many reasons, ranging from societal biases against the “elementary” nature of images to the dominance of lock-step

MLA formatting in English classes, our students' essays are conceived in terms of print and are dryly presented as print documents. Visual thinking, however, can open up many creative writing projects. Some writing teachers do use webbing or clustering as a brainstorming technique: that's a start! I have had my students draw a character or, on a more complex scale, the plot of an essay, film, or novel. Visual material is generative because viewers bring their own stories, values, beliefs, and emotions to the interpretation of a picture. Visual material can metaphorically express an idea that is difficult to capture in text. Pairing visual and print-based information is a powerful way to engender creative and analytical ability. The comparison between visual and verbal modes of expression can lead to new understandings about how to create a written project and how to present it as a finished document.

8. Teach Revision. As writers, we know the real work of writing is in the second, third, fifth, or tenth draft. Yet, I believe that we are also aware as writing teachers that without intervention—without *teaching*, that is—students will revise by changing a word here or there or including the teacher's suggested punctuation. Read revision is connected to interpretation because not only does the writer make changes, but the writer must re-see and re-work the piece as a whole for the best effect. Writers come to an understanding that there is not one, single way to revise a piece. Writers have options and must selection the option that is the best under the circumstances. As writing teachers, we must teach the process of revision beyond requiring the revised product.

9. Publish. In the book-length essay *True Notebooks*, author Mark Salzman recounts his experience teaching writing to teenage boys incarcerated in the Los Angeles Juvenile system. During their time in the writing class with Salzman, students who had been in and out of school, who didn't conceive of themselves as writers or even "academic," discovered in themselves the power to express themselves in prose and poetry. Writing teachers at the college level can learn from Salzman's teaching process, which involved a step that is often absent from writing classes: the students made their writing public. To *publish* is to make ones writing public. At the end of every class, Salzman collected the students' handwritten pieces, typed them at home, made photocopies of the typed pieces for the rest of the class, and redistributed them. The writers saw their words in print. They then read their pieces aloud to the group.

We are fortunate to have a wealth of technologies to work with as we publish our students' writing: printing, binding, photocopying, web site creation, PowerPoint, Desire 2 Learn, Blackboard. Students benefit because the dialogue about writing and ideas is extended to an audience beyond the private exchanges between teacher and student. They can visualize themselves as Authors, probably a new conception for most of them!

10. Reward. We are most likely to capitalize on our strengths when we are encouraged. Writing teachers know that most students' writing has been *condemned* by earlier instructors; most writing teachers tend to replicate that pattern by pointing out what is wrong with a written piece. Students enter the classroom with poor attitudes and low self-esteem. They expect the red pen, the bold lines crossing through paragraphs of text, the cryptic swirls of proofreading marks above words, and the admonitions: AWK and

FRAG! What if writing teachers were to read for what was well done? What if we were to mark only those aspects of a written composition that are exemplary? Emergent writers (pre-K to kindergarten) are encouraged and praised at the earliest reaches of their ability to make “sentences” and “words.” At the postsecondary level, students may be “emergent college writers” facing new genres, new academic phrasings, new standards of research and documentation. If we keep this in mind and reward when we see success (and we publicize those successes), we build writers who are confident in their strategies and processes.

Christian Knoeller, Purdue University

Principles for Designing Assignments that Engage Student Writers

Working for the last decade with university students preparing to teach English in middle and secondary schools, the question of how to develop effective writing prompts and sequences of assignments has come to seem paramount—whether designing one's own original assignments or customizing those devised by others. Like many other English educators influenced by the National Writing Project, I believe in honoring teacher expertise, reflecting on classroom experiences, and sharing effective teaching strategies. Writing Project Institutes foster just such reflection and exchange through teaching "demonstrations" (hence the familiar "teachers-teaching-teachers" credo), and participants often report that the experience reinvigorates their teaching. After sharing successful approaches with a group of colleagues comes the process of *adapting* them to new groups of students—an ongoing process, of course, involving reflection and revision, much like writing itself. My aim in this essay, then, rather than describing individual assignments per se in any formulaic way, is to identify "principles" that might guide their design, adding specific examples, when appropriate, to illustrate how such principles might be applied. While there is no way to know in advance, since contributors to this volume worked independently, I suspect that there will be plenty of echoes and parallels. Indeed, it will be interesting to see what ideas about the teaching of writing emerge as most widely held at this point in time—and thereby reveal current conventions and trends in the field.

1. In approaching this essay, I immediately bumped up against one important principle that could be termed *latitude*. The editor conceptualized this volume by establishing a clear

focus (practical dimensions of teaching writing), but to his credit still allowed contributors considerable flexibility in terms of length and form (a more structured or prescriptive call for submissions might well have seemed overly restrictive, or even off-putting). I believe student writers respond in similar ways to the prompts they receive. Assignments that allow latitude in form have real advantages in terms of accessibility and, ultimately, ownership. Moreover, I believe this principle to be consistent with the historical essay tradition generally, as well as theories of "organic form" (i.e., form follows meaning) such as posited by poet Denise Levertov: a healthy alternative to prescriptive structures for school writing such as the ubiquitous "five-paragraph essay." (Granted, in the classroom there are still occasions when a prompt is meant to model genre conventions through prescriptive structure.) So, when designing prompts, some degree of latitude—specifically in terms of *form*—can help engage student writers. This does not preclude, of course, offering examples to illustrate, or explanations that model structural *possibilities*.

2. Similarly, *choice* among subjects is also a great motivator. Assigning a major cited, research paper to university freshman, for example, allowing students to propose several possible topics of personal interest for review and approval helps ensure that the majority address subjects worth the time and effort entailed. I have known colleagues to narrow the focus of such projects to a single academic area such as communication, or to a practical one such as exploring potential careers. Clearly, there is a continuum between student-generated topics, on one hand, and those that are teacher-prescribed on the other. My point here is that even if only two options were to be provided, *any* degree of choice is preferable to none—the second principle. Accordingly, even for informal pieces of in-

class writing such as journal entries in response to assigned readings, I always try to come up with at least a couple prompts.

3. A third principle might be termed making a place for *creativity*. I have long held that such creativity is not restricted to imaginative or "literary" genres such as fiction, poetry, and drama. Rather, *all* writing—including exposition—is fundamentally a creative activity. Indeed, recent calls for hybrid genres, such as embedding narrative in exposition (e.g. Wendy Bishop, Tom Romano), suggest that pigeonholing texts is a fool's errand. Let me give an example of creativity in writing to support analytic thinking. I routinely assign pre-service teachers an essay in which they explore writing processes through *metaphor*. While the structure of the piece might be analogous to traditional comparison/contrast forms (and ordered point-by-point or by the "block" method), creativity comes through the selection and development of metaphors. I encourage students to consider a variety of possibilities—each grounded in activities that they know well. The range of metaphors explored is remarkable, as students strive to find a unique angle—one that ultimately involves some degree of self expression, as they describe a personal passion, whether taking photos or rowing crew, which in turn yields voice. Arguably, this assignment is just another expository essay—yet one greatly enhanced by creativity (see "Driving Home at Midnight: Using Metaphor to Explore Writing Processes").
4. Another pair of principles—that I first became sold on when conducting dissertation research—would be the synergy of connecting student writing to both classroom talk and assigned readings. While such an approach may seem commonplace, let me elaborate. My observational, classroom study was set in a 12th-grade, Advanced Placement

composition class (see *Voicing Ourselves*). Students volunteered to co-lead discussions of reading. Texts were often provocative (e.g. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Balwin's *Go Tell it on the Mountain*, Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*), discussion animated. Clearly, students had ownership of interpretation in this classroom. The real genius, however, was coupling talk with writing both before and after discussion. By deliberately sequencing such assignments (e.g. journal response, essays, letters), student writing capitalized on the dialogue during discussions. Students effectively developed richer interpretations over time—in large measure by responding to the ideas of classmates (see "Narratives of Rethinking"). For those who embrace social constructivist models of classroom learning, the trick is to juxtapose talk and writing in ways conducive to such synergy.

5. In years since, I have adapted parallel strategies for introductory college writing courses. The structure? Students read several thematically related texts. They compose brief, informal response papers that, importantly, are to include two or more open-ended questions worthy of discussion in class. At the beginning of the session, all students write their single "best" question on the blackboard. Student discussion leaders (those who had selected each particular reading from the course anthology) review the response papers and sequence questions to be raised. Following discussions, students write a formal essay developing any topic that has arisen—with reference to corresponding reading(s). Needless to say, the questions recorded on the board and then talked about inevitably provide a wide array of potential thesis statements. The aim is to harness student-selected reading with student-led discussion by linking informal and formal

writing to classroom talk. In this way, our classroom conversations can provide an intellectual "scaffold" (Vygotsky) for developing writers.

6. Another principle could be termed "toying with intertextuality." Let me illustrate with a multi-genre response to literature project (see "Imaginative Response"). I ask pre-service, secondary English teachers to develop a "family" of writing prompts in response to a literary work of their own choosing. They complete one of these prompts themselves, and then reflect on its efficacy for interpreting text, as well as its suitability for high school use. The parameters of the project specify exploring a wide range of genres other than exposition, which include both "literary" and "non-literary" forms (e.g. drama vs. memos), as well as public and private discourse (e.g. news article vs. diary). Moreover, students are encouraged to consider assuming voices and addressing audiences within the world of the work (i.e., characters, narrators, authors, etc.). Such "dependent authorship" (Corcoran, et al) engages students imaginatively—"co-authoring" (à la Barthes) a companion piece or extension (e.g. prologue, epilogue, inter-chapter, etc). The approach clearly incorporates choice and creativity. What distinguishes this sort of assignment, however, is the variety of genres and voices—as well as the element of intertextuality.
7. Another principle that I subscribe to is *honoring writing processes*. As I tell students, if it matters, then it should count toward their grade (as a teacher, putting my money where my mouth is, so to speak). Accordingly, scoring rubrics, which I routinely distribute in advance, typically when first introducing an assignment, award significant credit for process-related tasks such as successive revisions, peer response, and outlines. In the case of freshman research papers, for example, students can assemble project binders that

house successive drafts and all supporting materials. This approach is also an excellent hedge against plagiarism, since students are loathe to "back-engineer" the requisite drafts of outlines, works cited pages, and the paper itself.

8. Finally, harkening back to the National Writing Project, I believe deeply in the power of reflection to support learning. This happens, for instance, when student writers author portfolio introductions or brief narratives describing their composing processes for a particular piece. (Wendy Bishop and Muriel Harris, among others, have advocated student letters and memos to the teacher to accompany assignments being submitted). I have likewise, in college writing courses, asked students to keep journals, with entries made in class, targeting specific stages of the process—whether invention and prewriting or response and revision. Completed in class, such informal reflective writing can highlight a variety of strategies (demonstrating that there is no one "right" way), and become fodder for discussions and peer-teaching.

Reflection, of course, is central to our work as teachers as well. Once, years ago, a senior faculty colleague at the University of Wisconsin, a professor whom I admired, was selected to observe and evaluate my teaching. Needless to say, such visits were pretty stressful—especially for newcomers to the department. As part of the process, she requested to see materials in advance, interested of course in general overviews such as the course description and syllabus might provide. She also wanted to see the text for any readings assigned for the day she would observe, as well as any handouts and instructional materials I had prepared. As it happened, this was my very first year of full-time college teaching, and so I had never offered this particular course before—nor any quite like it. After the observation, we met so that I could receive initial comments

informally. One thing she said has stuck with me ever since: The first time you teach a class, you write a draft, to be revised in subsequent semesters. And here I find my own metaphor for teaching: *teaching is like writing*. How does teaching resemble writing? To be successful, it must be well focused and organized. Whereas a unified essay, for example, would have a clear thesis (explicit or implicit), so too the scope of a course should be reasonable, and the sequence of assignments connect in meaningful ways. Other parallels? Drafting an essay involves identifying a variety of reliable sources. For a research paper for scholarly article, one consults library catalogs and examines the bibliographies of works cited by other scholars to locate further material worth consulting. In teaching, this is similar to selecting course readings. One might, for example, identify one or two core textbooks that seem timely and comprehensive, while additionally developing a reader, drawing articles and chapters from any number of journals and books. Both the teacher and the writer select texts that serve their purposes best.

9. Yet at the heart of my former colleague's insight is this: to teach well, one must *revise*. How is it, exactly, that we revise our teaching—and why does it matter? In the years since that teaching evaluation, I have had the chance to offer several courses repeatedly, particularly advanced "methods" courses for pre-service English teachers, addressing both literature and writing. From semester to semester, I have continually revised such courses in a variety of ways hoping to improve the level of student performance. Briefly, representative revisions have included such things as (1) changing textbooks (to remain current), (2) developing more fully elaborated materials such as handouts regarding specific assignments—refining parameters and directions as assignments evolve, (3)

distributing student work from previous semesters to illustrate expectations, (4) fine-tuning course descriptions to be clearer and more concise, (5) adding and deleting specific assignments, (6) changing the order and duration of major projects on a syllabus, and (7) altering an overall grading formula. Any one of these "revisions" to teaching could be correlated with steps of the conventional writing process model, corresponding variously to prewriting, drafting, revision, editing, and publication.

10. Publication might be viewed in terms of classroom presentation of lessons—a sort of performance. While teaching writing, in particular, inevitably involves preparing many instructional *documents*—from prompts to rubrics—as well as informal writing such as a teacher's comments in the margins of student papers, much of teaching is oral in form: the classroom discourse that blends student talk and teacher talk, oral and written language. So, if I have made the case that teaching resembles writing, what is revealed by such a comparison? My former mentor deserves to be credited again here: "Teaching a new class," she had said, "is a lot like writing. You prepare a draft, and then you try it. Then it's time to revise." After all, this is often the way our finest writing comes into being. Maybe the same could be said of teaching.

Works Cited

- Bishop, W. 1998. "Responding to Creative Writing: Student-as-Teachers and the Executive Summary." In D. Starkey, (ed.). *Teaching writing creatively*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann-Boynton/Cook Publishers.

Corcoran, B. & E. Evans (eds). 1987. *Readers, Texts, Teachers*. Upper Montclair, N.J.:
Boynton/Cook Publishers.

Harris, M. 1998. "When Writers Write about Writing." In D. Starkey, (ed.). *Teaching writing creatively*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann-Boynton/Cook Publishers.

Knoeller, C. (in press). "Narratives of rethinking: The inner dialogue of classroom discourse and student writing." In *Bakhtinian Perspectives on Language, Literacy, and Learning*. Freedman, S. and A. Ball (eds). Cambridge University Press.

Knoeller, C. 2004. "'Driving home at midnight in a dense fog': Using metaphor to explore writing processes." Berkeley, CA: *The Quarterly of the National Writing Project* 26: 2.

Knoeller, C. 2003. "Imaginative response: Teaching literature through creative writing." *English Journal* 92:5, 42-48. National Council of Teachers of English, 2003.

Knoeller, C. 1998. *Voicing Ourselves: Whose Words We Use to Talk About Books*. SUNY series, Literacy, Culture, and Learning: Theory and Practice. Series Ed. Alan C. Purves. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Romano, T. 2000. *Blending genre, altering style: Writing multigenre papers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann-Boynton/Cook Publishers.

Romano, T. 1995. *Writing with passion: Life stories, multiple genres*. Portsmouth, NH:
Heinemann-Boynton/Cook Publishers.

Vygotsky, L. 1962. *Thought and Language*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Greg Larkin, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ.

I teach technical and professional writing, so most of what I have to say comes from that perspective. I have spent over 20 years visiting a wide variety of companies, government agencies, and businesses, working with engineers, scientists, accountants, and managers, on improving writing in the workplace. Technical writing focuses on clarity and conciseness, using words sparingly and simply. I am not saying this is the “best” style or the only style. It’s just the style that usually works in the worlds of business, industry, and government. If you are writing in those worlds, or teaching students who plan to become engineers, scientists, or accountants, then read on. My 10 best ideas will probably work for you and your students.

1. **Know your audiences.** The focus here is on the fact that most writing (outside of school) has more than one audience. In school, often (maybe usually) the assumption is that there is one audience, and that this audience is going to start at word one of the “essay” and read straight through to the final word with nary a break. In my experience in business, industry, and government, this is virtually never the case. The same report is read by management, technicians, and experts, to name just a few. Each of these readers is looking for something quite different. How then does the writer prepare one document for all these differing audiences?

The answer is twofold: a. The writer heavily segments the document—breaks it into many small discrete pieces. b. The writer clearly uses devices such as headings and subheadings to let each separate reader see at a glance if this particular section applies or does not apply to what he or she is reading for in the first place. If a given section does

not apply, the reader skips that section. In the working world at least, very often no single reader reads the whole document.

2. Jim Taylor your writing. In the 60s, the Green Bay Packers were the best team in professional football. One of the reasons they were the best was because of their fullback, Jim Taylor. While most running backs strive to avoid tacklers, Jim had a different idea, which applies to writers as well: he ran down the field looking for tacklers, with an eye to running them over.

Many reluctant writers use various avoidance techniques to keep from actually writing. I tell my students about Jim Taylor and advise them to chase after topics and knock them down, not try to avoid them.

3. “I am sorry my essay is so long; I didn’t have time to write a shorter one.” As any writing teacher can verify, when given a writing assignment, the first question students always ask is “How long does it have to be?” Their presumption is that the longer the paper, the longer the writing time. What the students are forgetting is that the quality of the paper is affected by the time and care taken to write it, and that as time and care increase, the length of the paper will **decrease**. Effective writing is clear and concise. These qualities don’t happen quickly or easily, but they can happen, if students can be taught to stop focusing on length, and to focus instead on quality.

4. Design the graphics first; then write the rest of the document around the graphics. Most students are used to writing essays, which are basically collections of words and

paragraphs. Students should be taught that the second step in prewriting, after the audience, voice, and purpose analysis, is to draft any possible graphics. With the basic scope of the paper clear and the graphics laid out, then the words and sentences of the paper can be written around the graphics. The result will be a paper that is easy to read, and much more concise, than the text-only version of the same paper would be. I tell my students, “If you can come up with an effective graphic, or non-prose way to get a given idea across, then do it. Give me as many graphics and as few words as you can.”

5. Focus on voice first. Of course audience and purpose are important. Of course, audience, purpose, and voice must all be considered as one whole. But for most of my students, the one they have the most problem with, and the one that is most capable of driving the other two along with it, is Voice. If I can get my students simply to experiment with different voices, I find that often times the voices they pick for my writing assignments become stronger. I get my students to experiment with voice by giving them a single purpose, and two different audiences, and then asking them to pick the right voice for each audience: “You just came in late from your big date—and maybe you had a bit too much fun. How would you tell the story of your big date to: a. your parents; b. to your best friend.”
6. Make every paragraph move between abstract and concrete. One hallmark of effective writing in both school and on the job is that it moves gracefully and often between the abstract assertion and the concrete supporting detail. Writing that is too abstract is not believable—and is usually boring: “You should love me because I am cool.” Writing

that is too concrete lacks any purpose—and is usually boring: “Then I got up and took my hat and left.”

Effective writing works for many reasons, one of which is the graceful and frequent movement between abstract and concrete. Consider this sentence from Garrison Keillor: “I grew among slow talkers, men in particular, who dropped words a few at a time like beans in a hill.”

7. Simplify. When my students write poorly, it is often because they try to do too much. Somewhere they have gotten the idea that to write means to write a lot—as much as possible. In fact, in my experience (again, outside of school), what is wanted is to write as little as possible. Of course the writing needs to be clear, effectively aimed at the audience, with appropriate supporting details, etc., etc., but even more important is the idea that it must be written concisely. This is usually a matter of focus. Thus, I am constantly asking my students to cut it down. Instead of writing a proposal to become a general contractor, I try to get them to write a specific plan for building the Jones’ 2550 square foot home on a cul-de-sac in Flagstaff.

8. $Y = mX + b$. This is a mathematical formula. It allows one to figure out the slope and y-intercept of a line. This can be useful. Writers can find formulas useful too. Writers should use formulas all the time. Some of the most useful can even be codified into a rubric, which is simply a formula (or a set of specifications) for a writing assignment. Rubrics work best when the students have had a hand in formulating them (pun intended). Rubrics can be very complex, such as the 6-trait rubric for scoring student

work, which takes a whole series of workshops to figure out (and is very worthwhile figuring out). Or they can be very simple, such as:

Beginning, middle, and end

Subject, verb, and object

Prewriting, writing, rewriting, editing, publishing

9. Use a team approach to write. In my experience, every important (and most unimportant) document(s) is/are written by a team. Furthermore, this team's product is reviewed and reviewed and reviewed again, both in-house and externally. The more important the document, the more team members will help write it and help review it. School settings often focus strictly on individual effort, thus putting the student writer in a situation he or she may never face again as soon as school is over. Let students work at least sometimes in teams, both for writing and for reviewing writing.

10. Use a One-on-One approach to read. Most reading and researching is done individually. Increasingly, this individual reading is also done on the computer, especially on the web. Let students read, study, gather data, etc. on their own. Let each student bring the fruits of all this reading to the team for amalgamation into the piece of writing. Finally, when you as teacher/grader review the student's work, let that be a one-on-one experience. While in the real world many of our most humiliating moments are public, or at least not private, for young students just starting out on a writing career (and to a greater or lesser extent, every career is a writing career), privacy to lick one's wounds is essential. Later

on, once they know how to deal with it, criticism can be public. But for now, for students, take them under your wing, alone, as you critique their precious essays, reports, letters, memos, etc.

These are 10 ideas that work for me and my students. They also work for the businesses, government agencies, and other professional settings in which I've worked since 1981. I've been teaching Technical Writing at the university since 1969, and I am finding myself enjoying it more each year. My teaching evaluations are going up too. Something must be going right. These 10 ideas are 10 of the somethings.

Susan Miller, University of Utah

Strategies for Teaching Writing as Writing

I tell myself each time I begin planning a writing class, and constantly throughout it, that I do have a basic strategy for teaching writing. It is to make each course reenact my own version of process theory—that composing takes us to a number of settings and performances, some sequential and some recursive, and that learning to write involves becoming comfortable in them. These mental, psychological and material spaces include the traditionally named elements of composing processes as mental acts such as planning, recalling materials and models, and listening to our own language as surrogate readers. But writing courses obviously provide a stage for the interactions with others that comprise much of what is involved in actually creating a text. That is, courses that teach writing can create ad hoc enactments of the stimuli, support and responses—curious and evaluative—that readers provide us, if usually at a greater distance. This particular strategy thus includes tactics, if that distinction makes sense, as specific activities that students and I undertake to support this strategy. I confess I find it easy to forget each of these ways of teaching, probably because they differ in motive and approach so much from my earliest pedagogic lessons.

That is, when I began teaching writing, I had never been in courses that presented themselves as mutually supportive communities of readers and writers who had gathered to help each other actively learn how to craft successful prose. At any level, the classes I took were not especially cooperative projects beyond the expectation that I would cooperate with a teacher. Nor were they meant to persuade students of a responsibility for not only their own, but everyone's, learning.

Now, most of my colleagues who are not self-identified writing teachers find these goals unsuitable for instruction in interpretation of whatever sort, which is usually their tacit aim. And many of the graduate students for whom I have held teaching colloquia have been at least initially appalled at this approach. It impinges on the comfort zone that they bring with them, a space in which they will discuss texts in conversation and debate that focus on a text's content. They assume that the job of a teacher is to promote versatile thinking that will, they expect, naturally improve writing. But no matter with what experience, most teachers of texts are also accustomed to thinking in terms of authorship, which is usually imagined as isolated or collaborative, but rarely as itself a way of learning to write more and better. At least I need to remind myself often of what I expect many others forget, that the experience of reading results from a writer's making choices that might have been made differently without violating its writer's hopes for forceful expression and approving responses.

In this framework, the list below and the notes that expand on it result from my evolving attention to interactions that are oblique to traditions around writing. But they have encouraged and improved my writing processes and their results, and my classes. Conversation with many colleagues has made me aware of the implications of those changes, but I especially thank Janet Giltrow, Pat Sullivan and Joe Williams. They first suggested some of the specific actions I replicate here and have over time encouraged me to rethink what can be learned in a writing class that might be recalled and adapted to future writing situations.

The philosophy that unifies this list is, however, my own. It is best expressed as a fervent desire to pull myself—as a teacher, not a conversant—to the edges of the real action in classes. Insofar as I can encourage students to see each other as interesting, engaging textual actors and present myself as a participating audience with a lot of information about the play, I do so. For

instance, in all my courses, student volunteers take roll, keep attendance, collect and distribute materials, compile the class e-mail list and take partial responsibility for keeping track of a class calendar. I have come to see these seemingly inconsequential habits as signs of control that I once took for granted, but now want students to take over as participants who share responsibility for the results of an ad hoc group project—a class. Minor as giving up these duties may seem, it has significantly shifted the feeling and tone of all my courses. But what follows here specifically applies the strategy of performance to a writing course's activities.

Finally, I am aware that this introduction and a first-person account of my teaching attract reservations. Others inevitably will question motives, look for invidious comparisons, and notice the inevitable self-promotion around this genre itself. Nonetheless, the good-enough teacher I continue to learn to be, with the students whose attitudes toward writing and its performances are lightened by these tactics do have more fun now, when I remember that detached but not at all remote interactions in writing classes fit what writers do, as both precept and practice.

Ten Useful Tactics

1. I remember that I am teaching writing, in every class, in every syllabus plan and in every response to assignments. When I talk to others about my teaching, I talk about what the students write; when I interact with students, I talk about what I write and how I do it. I ask what students are writing in my class and elsewhere and if I assigned what they are writing, I ask what they plan to say, why they want to say it, where they are in the process, what sort of help they are getting and need, what their difficulties may be, how they plan to address them. ¹

2. I respond to student writing as quickly as possible: I remember to demonstrate my actual eagerness to read the results of practice and the students' attention to the instruction that framed it. I talk about these results with students in specific terms so they begin to realize that instruction does change their range of choices as they write, a principle we all register with difficulty in an educational culture that often portrays writing as something we "have," or not, not as something we make. I return papers in no more time than I allowed for responding to an assignment, if not at the class immediately following the one at which I received them.

3. I hold guided workshops to preview every assignment-in-progress, often both to discuss their plans and later to check in on its progress. For each workshop, I prepare a list of questions for those responding to the assignment in progress. I ask readers to write answers to these questions about the work they are reading for the writer and take time for a class discussion about trends and common responses. I ask the writer to respond to the questions as part of the planning document they attach to the final version of most assignments. Thus the workshops are better integrated into writing and give me a reference to refer to in questions I have in my later reading.²

4. I assign writing in imitation of models. I determine a genre for each assignment across a range of writing for oneself and for others in assignments that include essays, reviews, reports, annotated bibliographies, letters for publication, reading responses, research logs, class lecture notes, and outlines. I explain that everything we write is, among other

things, a genre whose place among similar texts will demonstrate a simultaneous match to that genre and expansion of its typical goals.³

5. I assure that my course does have a purpose. At the beginning of a course, I explain that some aspects of writing that students do not already feel confident about should be familiar at its end. I bring up these purposes periodically as guidelines for them as they direct their learning toward specific actions and new information.
6. I provide readings related to writing itself. I assign work that explains how to craft prose—for instance, models of sentences that are written in more and less verbal styles, explanations of the arrangement of arguments like those modeled in classical rhetoric and informal persuasion, abstracts of articles about how expert writers revise, interviews with writers, old-fashioned discussions of root words prefixes and suffixes, and strategies for improving the syntax and rhetorical power of samples from both published and student writing.⁴
7. I attach an over-all purpose to the content of each writing assignment. Insofar as possible, I discuss issues to be raised and points to be made in relation to a specific intended readership, appropriate vocabulary and a format. That is, I attempt to integrate students' choices about content into the meta-discourse on writing as a craft that the course displays.⁵
8. I form readerships apart from my necessarily evaluative responses. I provide ways for every student to read more than one of every other student's finished assignments, to see

how their peers' addressed them. We trade sets of papers with other teachers and their classes as appropriate, so that each student has the greatest possible number of interlocutors in the largest possible range of reading situations.⁶

9. I involve students in evaluating their own writing. More than once in a course, students and I together develop criteria for a range of grades or holistic scores that I will apply to one assignment. I also require a final self-assessment that comments on and statistically measures changes in average sentence length, other matters of style like active vs. passive verbs, types of modification, and writing processes like beginning, drafting, rereading and editing. I also ask students to propose their own course grade and to write a reasoned explanation of it. Before I turn in final grades, I consult with anyone whose proposal differs from my assessment by more than one letter grade.⁷

10. I base course grades on the quality of writing at the end of a writing course. I attempt to allow for any one writer's changes over time by requiring that names be on the back of a text. This requirement takes seriously the typical distance between writing and reading situations as well as the ways in which bias attaches to readerly expectations. I also read portfolios to determine a final grade for written assignments. Typically, students select three papers to revise during a two to three week unit on revision and editing at the end of a course. They do not revise the last graded paper since it is a control that indicates how each class member writes when working semi-independently after instruction is completed but without guided revision. Although I will read new versions of former assignments, I do not grade revisions before revision has been taught. I weight them with

the final paper and the other graded components of a course: participation assessed in terms of contributions to learning and various short assignments that usually include an in-class composition.

I hope that this list may benefit other teachers. It presupposes an attitude of cooperation and mutual interest as well as active motives to write more confidently. Many think this presupposition is unrealistic to expect in the required courses that these strategies fit. But at least in my experience, this outlook is no more likely among members of other undergraduate and graduate courses, who are often more competitive and set in traditional expectations that teachers will govern classes alone. But I remind myself that we will all probably have a better experience if students are enacting responsibility for their learning. Cooperation, helpful interactions and confidence that writing is malleable usually do follow these strategies, and enrich us all.

Footnotes

¹ I know that many teachers of writing are not writing for others themselves if their teaching loads are greater than mine. My emphasis here is a focus on what the students are writing, not on their responses to readings and not on missteps in their composing.

² Many people find it important to circulate among workshop groups. My experience is that when I do so, I interrupt the ease of peer conversations, so I stay available to answer questions but do not circulate as a matter of course.

³ This list of potential assignments highlights the cross-disciplinary nature of Utah's writing curriculum, which focuses on introductions to academic reading and writing and later specialized analyses of discourse communities among disciplines. But as this list also implies, these emphases need not exclude more personal forms of writing.

⁴ Of course it is here that my writing classes most clearly differ from others, so I would add that I often assign other readings for analysis as genres with purposes, audiences, composing strategies and stylistic markers. But it is rhetorical criticism, not taking positions on issues alone, that I hope for in discussions. Of course the two are inseparable in a course that focuses on writing, but I am often tempted to forget that connection in favor of less directed conversations. I wish that the traditional two-term sequence of required first-year courses were divided by emphases on reading and on writing, but absent resources that would achieve that possibility, I focus on analyzing and practicing composing, not on the content of readings.

⁵ In making assignments, I may set a genre and ask students to invent their own ways to practice its writing, after teaching invention as an open-ended strategy that includes both classical applications of the topics and stimuli like free-writing, conversation and many forms of brainstorming. But the amazing variety in student responses to assigned topics often leads me to set a topic relevant to all students' lives as student readers and writers and to provide ways for a class to share often radically dissimilar responses.

⁶ I have asked other classes and students, administrators across campus and local business people to respond to clusters of student papers with comments, grades or holistic scores accompanied by explanations of their choices. Student discussions of these responses have more at stake than those that occur if the closed classroom community and I are the only readers of assignments. But this I undertake these tactics infrequently because it is difficult to find readers of this sort with the time to devote to assignments.

⁷ I teach the impressionistic evaluation methods of holistic reading because they join evaluation to the ways in which most readers form quick judgments. But despite the time it requires to teach this method and form a scoring rubric with a class, my time for evaluation is no greater since I read these assignments after others have scored them, also applying the rubric, and then combining my score with the others. Thus the entire process is not shortened, but is time is distributed differently. The greatest benefit beyond providing a way for students to participate in evaluation is that their discussion of the specific features of any one assignment that should be scored and their ranking of them creates a setting in which we can as a group ask and answer questions about the intention of

an assignment, its clarity and students' hesitations about its requirements without the traditionally "what do you want?" being the primary focus.

Stephen Minot, Professor Emeritus, California State University, Riverside

Developing as a Writer: Seven Strategies that Differentiate

Committed Writers from Amateurs

1. Read compulsively as a writer. Every teacher of writing—both fiction and nonfiction—and every writer who is asked reiterates the dictum, “read and keep reading.” But this is often misunderstood. “Reading” is frequently a form of entertainment. As such, it is a passive act.

The type of reading that develops writers is an active and analytical act. Students often resist this fact, and teachers, anxious to pass on their enthusiasm, are apt to downplay the hard work that goes into reading as a writer.

Active reading involves identifying the tone of the piece, spotting both conscious and possibly unconscious biases, ways in which character is revealed, ways in which plot is developed with shifts in pacing, the technique of withholding information, the use of point of view. All that and more.

Students can be helped to read this way not by lecturing but by being encouraged to discover techniques on their own. One way to do this is to ask in advance one student to examine how a fictional character is revealed, and another student how pacing varies. In nonfiction, students can be asked to speak briefly on shifts in tone, strategies of organization. Students should be encouraged to become critical readers.

This is more than a pedagogical device. Those of us who write fiction or nonfiction read analytically most of the time. True, we may miss some of the

spontaneous wonder of a noncritical reader, but there are rewards in focusing on technique. Some of us cannot read without a pencil n hand. If in spite of our critical stance we find ourselves swept up in a work, too enthralled to be analytical, we can read the work a second time as a writer.

2. Maintain a literary journal. None of us who read regularly can maintain all the data without some kind of aid. A literary journal is not a diary and not even a sketch book for possible writing ideas. It is a recod of what one has read and what one has drawn from it.

A few sentences about plot will serve to reawaken one's memory the way photos in an album stimulate memory. The core of each entry, however, should be a listing of what is memorable about the technique. Judgment will slip in uninvited, but phrases like "A wonderful story" or "Hardly worth reading" are far less valuable than "Uses two different points of view" or "this essay blends private rage with literary restraint."

When maintaining a literary journal it is important to record titles, authors, and where you found the work in case you want to review it. Maintaining a journal will in itself encourage critical reading. It is also important to read your entries over at least once a month. Reviewing what one has read is for the memory what regular exercise is for the body.

3. Seek a community of readers who write. There is a myth about the solitary writer. Thsoe who believe it long for utter solitude. Such longing can be an excuse to avoid writing at all. "If only I had the time and the money to write without interruption." We've all felt

that, but if such longing becomes habitual, it may be a sign that you should turn to the law or dentistry.

A creative writing class at any level—high school to graduate school—provides such a community. Sometimes the critical comments of fellow students are even more valuable than that of the instructor.

Once one leaves the academic world, finding a community of like-minded writers is not as easy. But for many the search is well worth it. For one thing, it provides deadlines. More important, it helps to see one's own work through the eyes of others. This is particularly valuable during the first 20 years of writing. After that, most writers hit their stride like a long-distance runner.

In selecting or forming a writing group, make sure that the others are serious writers. Some groups turn out to be social gatherings. If no group is available, try to find a single reader who will criticize your work objectively. Ask yourself, first, however, whether this individual normally reads and appreciates the kind of work that you are doing. Poor Kafka was distraught at the fact that his father would never read his son's novel manuscript, but it is entirely possible that the elder Kafka had no taste for experimental fiction and would never have the words to explain his reaction. All of us have parents, best friends, or even spouses who should never be asked to give a critical comment. "Well, it's different" is more disheartening than no comment at all.

4. Start with self, but work outward. Beginning writers are well advised to write about themselves and their own experiences. The first step for those who teach is to convince our students that their lives are really interesting if they look closely enough. This means

avoiding clichés about the bitchy mother, the insensitive father, or the utterly lovable grandmother. It means being truthful. It means finding contradictions and ambivalences.

There comes a time, however, when self-examination begins to run dry. The work may become redundant for the writer and wearisome for readers. There are writers who destroyed themselves with repetition. James T. Farrell was as well-known as Fitzgerald after writing the Studs Lonigan trilogy in the 1930s, but few are aware that he went on writing about similar characters and the same neighborhood for more than 40 years, his career sinking deeper into obscurity.

For most writers, it is important to move slowly out of self-oriented fiction or nonfiction to fresh characters in increasingly fresh settings. This is particularly true for those who have early success in nonfiction memoirs. No gold mine produces forever.

5. Wean yourself from textbooks on writing. I urge this as the author of two such books. A text can save a great deal of time in a writer's development at the outset. It's important to know what to look for in fiction or nonfiction. Writers shouldn't have to discover on their own what point of view is in fiction or how to draw universal implications out of a memoir.

But after two years of writing, the benefit from still more books on how to write decrease exponentially. There exists a book club devoted entirely to volumes explaining how to write, but would-be writers who take that route have given up valuable time that they could have spend working on their own. They may even be using these texts as excuses to avoid what should be the central activity for every writer.

The same is true for spending too much time going to conferences and writing workshops. A few will help to locate a community of critics, but those individuals who become addicted to them are essentially camp followers, not writers.

6. Write regularly. How regularly? A half hour minimum at least five days a week is necessary for most writers to maintain continuity. This is particularly true of anyone working on a longer work like a novel. If there are longer gaps, the memory fades and the feel of a work fades as well. One has to read over what one has already completed to recapture the original conception.

How is this possible when taking classes or, worse still, when teaching? For some it means early morning; for others late night. Some may have to give up reading the New York Times, while others may have to quit jogging.

Writing is like physical training. A week of concentrated work will never replace regular effort.

7. Submit work regularly. After the first two years of regular writing, you are either ready to submit work for publication or choose another vocation. Never let fear of rejection hold you back. Rejection is something all writers have to risk and endure—even into their senior years.

It is essential to read any magazine before you submit to it. Failing to do this wastes your valuable time, postage, and the equally valuable time of the editor.

Magazines vary far more than their description on Web pages would imply. All magazines seek “the best there is,” but much depends on how you define “best.” For

some “quality” means traditional structure and development of characters, for others the work has to be post-modern. Some value high-risk style; others avoid it. As for nonfiction, every magazine has its subtle biases. Only by reading several issues can one see the pattern.

It is important to keep records. Record responses. Not all rejection slips are the same. Take a brief note seriously and refer to it with your next submission. And never double submit unless the publication’s Web page specifically allows it. Editors know each other and they stay in touch. Writers can be blackballed, and unlike your credit rating, your record as a writer is uncorrectable.

A writer who doesn’t submit is like a swimmer who won’t go near the water. As with all art forms, writing requires that you jump fearlessly. Only through steady, dedicated effort can one become a writer of quality work.

Janice Neuleib, Illinois State University

1. Discovery writing differs from audience or forum-centered writing. Many time writers must write to find out what they think or even what they want to ask questions about before they think.
2. Most of us have a set of interests and necessities that drive our composing. We find our readers within the contexts of what we do and read. We cannot or will not write for an audience that we do not read (e.g., I could never write for a motorcycle magazine because I would never read one.)
3. We need reader/responders in writing groups to develop our texts. No one writes alone, at least not after the discovery draft and even then the topic is usually evoked by a discussion or a call.
4. Writing must be compelling. It is not the topic, the context, or the assignment that drives a writer, but rather the need to speak on a given subject or to investigate an inner drive that will tell a story.
5. Writing changes with the medium. We do not write the same way on a computer that we write in our journals.

6. Writer's block comes from abuse as do many other kinds of blocks. Criticism hurts. Readers and responders must learn to read with an eye to reframing, expanding, and/or supporting a text, not to make the text "better," whatever that means.
7. Children develop in tune with what they see and experience. Teachers of writing, even at the preschool level, must be writers themselves.
8. Writing is always a target of upper administration. WPA's have to watch their backs because every new administrator will use writing programs to enhance some new initiative. Carpetbaggers abound.
9. There are many writing processes among writers as shown by looking at those who write and publish. Dickens wrote a chapter every week with little revision, unless his publisher demanded it (he killed off Tiny Tim in an early version). Dostoevsky only write when he had drunk up his profits from the last work, but he revised like a fiend when necessary (an early draft of Crime and Punishment was in the first person).
10. Every writer has many writing processes, depending on the situation and the demands. Understanding this need for many methodologies is the trick to being an experienced writer.

Mark Reynolds, Jefferson Davis Community College

1. Write to write better: Writing is a skill that improves with practice.
2. Freewrite to discover and generate ideas.
3. Get physical to get mental: Physical exercise is a great idea generator and thinking about a writing project while exercising will produce significant insight.
4. Go backward to go forward: Whenever stymied with a draft, reread what has already been written, over and over if necessary.
5. Persevere: Most writing organizes itself and evolves into an effective genre for delivering its ideas during drafting.
6. Read to write: Reading gives one a feel for language, its style and possibilities; it also stimulates thinking and generates ideas.
7. Write to think: Writing forces one to think more clearly and precisely.
8. Write to solve problems: Framing a problem in words can help one discover a solution.
9. Reread a draft by assuming the role of different audiences as an aid to revision.
10. Prefer, above all, conciseness in writing.

Gregory Shafer, Mott Community College

Ten Essential Ideas of Writing

Thirty years ago, the composition class was a very different and less friendly place for students. With few exceptions, there was no student engagement, no writing process, and little attention to the cultural and linguistic concerns that galvanize our profession in 2004. In place of conferences and workshops was the din of a teacher directed class, replete with sentence diagrams, five paragraph themes, and the pretense of objective grading. To best appreciate the trends of the day, one needs simply to peruse some of the modest suggestions made by progressive authors of the time. In his *Explorations in the Teaching of English*, which was published in 1974, Stephen Judy exhorts his readers to consider alternatives to the time honored grammar lesson and linear writing assignment, offering an entire chapter on “Twenty-one Alternative to the Study of Grammar.” Judy, we must remember, was writing in the tumult of the Back to Basics era and was combating a string of essays that wondered “Why Johnny Can’t Write.” In such an atmosphere, notions of self-actualization and empowerment seemed ancillary to preparing writers for a cold and competitive world.

Today, as we reflect upon where we are and where we have been, it is both useful and interesting to identify the theories and ideas that have propelled us beyond the pedagogical equivalent of leeches and bleedings. And while there is still a push—often emanating from political circles—to return us to a back to basics agenda, there is much to celebrate about composition pedagogy theory in our new millennium. Here, then, is my list of the ten most

important and enduring ideas in the teaching of writing and the concomitant caveats for composition theory in the future.

1. Noam Chomsky's Transformational Grammar. Prior to the publication of Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures*, teachers approached language in a decidedly Behavioristic and impersonal manner. Before Chomsky, there was very little discussion about the inherent linguistic ability of the child and most writing classes perceived composition as something that needed to be taught rather than an organic and natural act that required nurturing. Thus, it was ordinary for writing to be supplanted with dry, unpleasant exercises in grammar and sentence diagramming. Because language was an arcane endeavor, it was necessary to teach it in discreet, fragmented parts.

Central to Chomsky's theory was the notion that language is a creative and generative activity, something that flows in meaningful wholes and from a deep structure inside of the writer. In describing the fertile context in which writers produced language, Chomsky suggested that language was a developmental response to the universal need to be social, to define oneself, and feel empowered. He noted that children utter phrases they have never heard before, indicating originality and inventiveness. Further, he suggested that people have both an observable external language, and an internal language, that which accounts for our ability to acquire, speak, and understand language.

According to author Frank Smith, "Chomsky demolished all of B. F. Skinner's arguments, insistently asserting that the Behavioristic approach trivialized both language and learning (23). "Chomsky's theory literally turned conventional views of language upside down. Instead of regarding production and understanding of sentences as

something that proceeds linearly, from left to right so to speak, with words being organized through grammar into phrases and sentences which convey meaning, the new view began with meaning” (23).

In short, Transformational grammar created the foundation for a progressive language arts class because it replaced notions of Behaviorism—where language was learned mechanically and only when it was taught—with the theory that language was a natural part of one’s development. No longer did instructors need to teach protracted lessons in grammar, since Chomsky had shown that grammars were endemic to human existence, that they were generated by humans quite independently of formal instruction. In many ways, Chomsky set the stage for student-centered writing, by supplanting formal learning with natural acquisition and practice.

Author and teacher Stephen Tchudi best captures this accomplishment when he suggests, “Until about thirty years ago, English classes in U.S. schools relied heavily on the teaching of grammar, parts of speech, and sentence diagramming. Linguistic research has been invaluable in discrediting this approach and offering alternative methods of teaching based on actual language use rather than the study of rules” (48).

2. Whole Language. Inspired by the pioneering work of Chomsky, several researchers came forward to suggest progressive ways to teach writing. Of these, none was more dynamic or controversial than the whole language movement. In its essence, whole language suggested that language in general and writing specifically was an event that flowed from a desire to make meaning of the writer’s world. Language was social, active,

ideological, and the whole language teacher acknowledged the natural desire we all have to make meaning and applied it to social endeavors in our lives.

Frank Smith best captures the essence of whole language in his depiction of writing as being analogous to joining a “club.” In his book *Joining the Literacy Club*, Smith argues that we learn to write because we seek admittance into the world of language and because we have an inextricable need to communicate with others. Such a social drive, argues Smith, is natural, unremitting, and reflective of a natural quest to define ourselves as social beings. In learning to write, then, we are not completing some foreign or arcane activity but simply fulfilling a social aspiration that began when we uttered our first words and eventually acquired speech. The role of the instructor in this scenario is simply to make joining the literacy club easy, uncomplicated, and fluid. “Teachers should facilitate and promote the admission of children into the literacy club, wrote Smith” (11). Those who never embrace language, he suggested, are those who have been singed by too many formal rules and skills instruction. When the language of the student becomes an object of correction—rather than celebration—students begin to realize that the language class is too provincial to accept their dialect. In this context, joining the literacy club means sacrificing one’s heritage and home dialect—it becomes too costly an endeavor.

Whole language developed from linguistic work with young children and the incredible ability they displayed in acquiring language. One could not program a computer to learn language as efficiently or as quickly as young children and the idea that it needed to be taught in a top-down, fragmented scenario has been gradually being supplanted with a student-centered paradigm because of whole language. “By the age of

three,” write Miller and Gildea, “they will have mastered the basic structure of their native language and will be well on their way to communicative competence. Acquiring their first language is the most impressive intellectual feat most people will ever perform” (140). In their quest to acquire speech, they proceed from one and two word stages to producing phrases and eventually sentences. Researchers who observed this process realized that children create language by making it meaningful and continually testing their theories of language on the world of speech. Language users, then are actively engaged in making language meaningful. Never is there a time when they proceed from part to whole.

3. Writing as an Ideological Endeavor. Since students come to class with sophisticated language ability—and since language develops naturally—the whole language instructor becomes more of a mentor or facilitator than teacher or leader. The goal is not to prescribe language rules but to acknowledge the diversity that pervades our communities and to describe and discuss various ways of communicating with others. An extension of a whole language theory comes in Brian Street’s notion that all language is either *ideological* or *autonomous*. In the formal composition class, Street suggests that writing is too often treated as autonomous or impervious to the tapestry of language diversity that flows around it. The autonomous approach assumes that language can be standardized and removed from the currents of politics and people. It erroneously argues that all writing is the same, which has given rise to the five-paragraph theme and the notion of the monolithic academic essay which is described by David Bartholomae in “Inventing the University.” In the autonomous model, writing is devoid of the personal and social

aspects that make it vital--that result in the use of non-standard dialects and a more ebullient, less muted language.

In reality, of course, language is never “autonomous” and is forever animated by the people who use it and reinvent it. The ideological class sees language as “political” and respects the way reading and writing evolve and change with the rhythms of society. It teaches writing as a living endeavor, something that exists in a context and with an audience that has certain demands. Thus, it is more likely to see ideological writing to be democratic, since it considers the political impact of what is penned and the need to write to solve problems and reach a sense of self-actualization. Thus, literacy is never fixed or monolithic. It is part of an organic language endeavor.

4. Ethnographic Studies. Writing as Cultural Endeavor.

So if you really want to hurt me, talk badly about my language.”

--Gloria Anzaldua

With the publications of Denny Taylor’s *Family Literacy* and Shirley Brice Heath’s *Ways with Words*, composition instructors began to think of writing pedagogy in different and more progressive ways. Both works were based on ethnographies, where language users were studied in their natural communities and without the expectations and prescriptions that often accompany typical research. What is unique about the ethnography is its democratic, descriptive approach to language learning. Instead of imposing standards upon people—and then measuring their ability to meet those standards— ethnographers moved into the shadows to see what they could learn from people who use language in their every day lives.

For both Taylor and Heath, the goal was to slide stealthily into the families' world of language and document the creative and diverse ways they use literacy to make their lives fuller and more satisfying. Taylor studied six white, middle class families for three years, living in their homes and chronicling their uses of reading and writing. Heath observed the communities of Trackton and Roadville in the Carolina Piedmont and enumerated the myriad ways that each family used language to get things done and become part of their social communities. Trackton, an African American community, used oral language in dynamic ways, often celebrating literacy in poetic terms, while the White community of Roadville used literacy to write letters and read popular magazines. For both researchers, the most revealing finding was that all people use language in a complex manner and that literacy instruction can never be divorced from the people who produce it. While both researchers found a trove of literacy in the people they observed, they found that it only flourished when there was consonance between the families and the professionals who assess language in schools. In particular, Heath found that people from both Trackton and Roadville—while both being literate-- were disaffected and alienated because their ways with words were neither respected nor valued in the schools they attended. While many of the kids were raised with the mantra that education mattered, few saw any relevance to a formal education or getting ahead. Taylor concluded her study by suggesting, “the undue emphasis on specific didactic encounters might unwittingly undermine the opportunity for reading and writing to become socially significant in the lives of both adults and children, and therefore an integral facet of family life” (88).

Two decades later, it is hard to estimate the value of ethnographies to the teaching of writing. Basic to this research paradigm is the notion that all groups maintain a rich, colorful repository of language customs and skills and that professionals learn more from watching literacy in authentic circles than forcing it into academic models. If writing teachers are to reach these people and transcend the simplistic idea that effective writing only is done through the discourse of the academy, they must learn about other ways with words and the fact that all people have a font of language abilities that deserve to be respected and nurtured.

5. Writing as Liberation. How, then does one teach writing, so that it fosters empowerment and participation—so that it acknowledges the plethora of cultures coursing through it? Few writers have more eloquently discussed the political aspects of composition—and the potential for social change—than Paulo Freire. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire articulates the essential difference between an education that fosters growth and personal development and that which fosters fealty and impotence. Composition classroom, according to Freire, should be places where writers have the opportunity to be part of a democracy, where power is shared and other dialects are respected. Education is always political, so it is up to educators to invite students into the process and make their voices relevant.

From Freire's scholarship we have adopted words that are now an indispensable part of our pedagogical lexicon. Today, most informed writing teachers strive to help students reach a writing experience that is devoid of the banking system that Freire castigated. Banking, according to Freire, was a system that was top-down and despotic.

Instead of facilitating real expression, it “banked” prescribed knowledge inside of students who were more analogous to robots than living people. The goal, then, was to transform banking into a liberatory education that encouraged participation and *praxis*--the political act of changing and ruminating upon one’s world through the action of the written word. “To achieve this praxis,” writes Freire, “it is necessary to trust in the oppressed and their ability to reason” (53). All learning” he adds, must involve more than action, “but must include serious reflection: only then will it be a praxis” (52).

6. Writing without Teachers. When students write for themselves, they become dynamic language users, moving beyond the perfunctory and using language to transform their world. In his book *Writing without Teachers*, Peter Elbow articulated the notion of writing as an evolutionary process—something that becomes real as students learn about themselves. For Elbow, it was essential that composing be perceived as an act that happens episodically and with the empowerment of the author. Because of Elbow, we now talk of writing as “cooking” and “growing” and it is because of Elbow that we eschew many of the prescriptions of composition have been relegated to the academic trash bin. Of the many metaphors *Writing without Teachers* gave us, none is more edifying than the notion that “writing is like trying to ride a horse which is constantly changing beneath you, Proteus changing while you hang on to him. You have to hang on for dear life, but not hang on so hard that he can’t change and finally tell the truth” (25 Elbow).

7. Writing as Expression. James Britton's study of writing assignments in Great Britain schools unearthed a rather disquieting finding: Most classes were not fostering the kind of self expression that is part of a relevant writing experience. When Britton examined writing classes, he found that most writing was done for the teacher and with little of the aesthetic that is part of writing for expression. In collecting over 2000 writing samples from students, Britton categorized writing into *expressive*, *poetic*, and *transactional*. *Expressive writing*, Britton argued, was informal work to express and discover. It was the journal, the experiment, the personal flight into unusual spheres of learning. *Poetic writing*, on the other hand, was artistic. It radiated from the student with investment and was devoid of the rules and prescriptions that are too often a part of prose. *Transactional writing* was formal and structured. It included business letters and academic writing. As he categorized these papers, it was unsettling to see how many were done for teachers and with no acknowledgment of the poetry that pervades writers. Britton argued that composition would be more effective if more of it was done with the student in mind, if more of it respected the fundamental need that we have to write for ourselves.

8. Writing as Social. Lev Vygotsky's work is often cited for the major influence it has had on composition classrooms all over the world. Basic to Vygotsky's theory was the assertion that writing is a constructive process that is embedded in social interaction and natural growth. In many ways, Vygotsky was responding to the many people who thought that writers were limited or egocentric, a term developed by Jean Piaget. For Vygotsky, writers were always active and their growth was predicated on their ability to play with language and see it as a social phenomenon. Vygotsky wrote about a zone of

proximal development, where students made the transition to more sophisticated endeavors and used other learners—often adults-- to develop and grow. In Vygotsky's world, students were builders and the role of the teacher was as mentor, so students could use linguistic play to become more competent language users. "Play itself is major source of development," wrote Vygotsky in *Mind and Society*.

9. Transaction rather Transmission. In the progressive language arts class, students are not responding to what is prescribed to them by teachers but are transacting with a text and crafting changes that reflect an active, politically conscious artist. Indeed, when teachers approach writing as an organic, lively transaction between writers and the world in which they write, it assumes a democratic and creative persona. Key to establishing this is the notion that language should be part of a context-specific transaction, done for a certain audience and completed to satisfy certain social and political goals. In her book *Understanding Whole Language* Connie Weaver enumerates the importance of the transactional model in contrast with the more static transmission model. "The most productive and enduring learning is typically transactional, involving the learner in actively seeking and constructing meaning" (77).
10. Writing as Process. When taught well, then, writing is a process, an activity that is done by a competent, social person who has the desire and license to compose a work of artistic and political significance. None of these lofty goals can be realized if the student is not given the permission to write, revise, experiment, and innovate. Fundamental to process is the idea that writing is done in evolving stages and that testing and artificial

time constraints are both unrealistic and ineffective. With the testing craze sweeping our nation, one would be wise to remember the words of Donald Murray who celebrated the act of discovery and change that transpired when writing was freely constructed in a process paradigm. “The writing teacher should create a lesson plan which is flexible, disciplined, free, and demanding, all at the same time. Each student must be able to fail and try and fail and try again as he practices what he has come to understand is the normal process of the writer” (103).

Works Cited

Anzaldua, Gloria. 1987. *Boarderlands/LaFrontera. The New Mestiza*. San Francisco:

Aunt Lute.

Britton, James, Tony Burgess, and Nancy Martin, Alex McLeod, and Harold Rosen. 1975.

The Development of Writing Abilities 11-18. Urbana, Illinois: NCTE.

Elbow, Peter. 1973. *Writing without Teachers*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Heath, Shirley Brice. 1989. *Ways with Words*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Miller, George A and Patricia M. Gildea. 1994. “How Children Learn Words. *Language*.

Fifth Edition. Eds. Virginia P. Clark, Paul A. Escholtz, and Alfred Rosa.

New York: St. Martin’s Press.

Murray, Donald. 1968. *A Writer Teaches Writing*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Smith, Frank. 1988. *Joining the Literacy Club*. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann.

Street, Brian. 1995. *Literacy in Theory and Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tchudi, Stephen. 1998. *The English Language: An Owner's Manual*. Boston: Longman.

Taylor, Denny. 1988. *Family Literacy*. Portsmouth New Hampshire: Heinemann.

Vygotsky, Lev. 1978. *Mind and Society*. Eds. Michael Cole, Vera John-Steiner, Silvia Scribner,
And Ellen Souberman. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Weaver, Constance. 1990. *Understanding Whole Language*. Portsmouth, New Hampshire:
Heinemann.

Howard Tinberg, Bristol Community College

1. Reflect on the parameters of the assignment or the context generating the writing.
2. Consider your reader's expectations.
3. Consider the genre or kind of writing expected, taking special note of conventions or rules associated with the genre.
4. Articulate your purpose.
5. Draft what you know about the subject already.
6. Inquire as to what you do not yet know but would like to find out.
7. Search for sources related to your question.
8. Select possible sources.
9. Evaluate and summarize key sources.
10. Integrate, purposefully, your source material with your previous writing.

Marilyn J. Valentino, Lorain County Community College, Elyria, Ohio

1. Writing is messy. Writing is rethinking, rehearsing, rephrasing, reacting objectively to what was written—all so that the finished work is clear and clean. Sometimes we don't know what we want to say until we finish, or we change our focus midway. We need to tell writers to expect and to allow the creative mess. Writing involves sweat and exasperation at times, and exhilaration at others. Much of what is written will be scratched out or tossed, which is a good thing. It leaves only the best, most precise and eloquent work.
2. Writing is critical thinking at its deepest. It can't be boxed into a set structure. Most writing is a response to a request or a problem. Even writers of fiction and poetry approach writing as a way of exploring an image or conflict. Writing makes us grapple with ideas and forces us to make ideas make sense. Ideas will begin to shape the structure. No employer I know has ever said, "Sit down and write a comparison/contrast paper." Rather, that mode is used in parts of papers when needed to make a point. To teach prescriptively from structure seems hollow. Students must make their own decisions on how to present the information.
3. All of us are writers. Many people derisively remark, "They can't write." That's not true. Even basic writers are writers. They bring with them knowledge and experiences of the world, which is our job to tap. As they write and feel free enough to write, they are

able to shape their thoughts and learn or relearn, really, the mechanics of writing. They should come to see that writing is more than an obstacle; it's a learnable skill, and in its finest form, it's an art.

4. We don't write our best in a vacuum. Writing should be shaped by the reactions of others in a trusting community. Yes, we can go into a cave and come out with a story or poem, but if we are doing expository writing, we need to have it aired, questioned, checked. Our inclusion or exclusion of ideas, our order of points must be shaped by our sense of the audience's needs. It has to be comprehensible. We write to someone to express something for their consideration. So, put papers up on the wall, like paintings, for peers to view, compare, and respond to the work. Ask invisible peers from another class to respond cold so that they aren't influenced by friendships or personalities. Ask peers to change places at computer screens and continue the writing or comment on it. Then writers will want to know what is being said. And demand genuine, thoughtful interaction—not insipid phrases.
5. The best way to learn to write is by writing often and by analyzing many samples of writing—good and poor samples, professional and peer samples. It's easier for writers to see an example of a good analogy in context than to talk about it. It's even better to show how an essay doesn't work. The key is to present many examples, so writers just don't copy the one style or form or see it as the only way.

6. To everything there is a season. Teachers need to respond first to global concerns of ideas and logic in initial drafts, and in later drafts to local concerns of grammatical, syntactic errors, punctuation. If we mark spelling errors first, writers will not feel confident to write anything more than simple sentences without delving into issues. They will see response as correction and not as part of a dialog. Yes, the total package is important, but in due time. The best way to alert writers to this global focus is to make them write two key areas at the bottom of their essay, so they know the reader will respond only to that on that draft. Sometimes, responding in person works better, so writers can explain at the moment and readers don't misinterpret.
7. Writers need to be convinced that examples and reasons for assertions are necessary. Young writers often assume that the reader will automatically know examples or reasons; examples are just silly overkill. Or they play it safe by sticking to general statements. They often just tell "what" and not "why." Of course, they have to think of the "why" themselves. Ah, there's the rub, but there's the spark.
8. We need to know when not to respond, not to do harm. Two points here. First, writers own the work. Teachers need to be careful not to assume ownership and rewrite the paper. Second, due to the intimate nature of writing, teachers may find that writers self-disclose private matters of abuse or suicidal tendencies. In those cases, teachers must be prepared. Sometimes, nothing should be written, but in a follow-up conference the teacher could ask the writer if the writer needs help or would like to talk to a counselor. Also, it needs to be determined if the material is, in fact, true.

9. Writers understand the underlying grammar of our language best if asked to examine it. The worst way to learn mechanics and punctuation is to do drills. That's been proven. A better way is to offer 3 sentences and ask writers which are correct and why? Do they see patterns? Are all correct? None? If we offer only one sentence, yes, they'll guess there is something wrong. However, if we ask them to analyze the differences, then their as yet inarticulated knowledge of the language should kick in inductively. There is, as Shaughnessy has said, an intelligence behind that error.

10. Writers are as different as their personalities. Some writers do best talking out their ideas; others do best writing in private first. Teachers should offer a wide variety of invention, organizing, and revising strategies. Writers should be able to choose among options of topics and styles.

Ten Perspectives on Writing

1. **Writing Is Primarily a Social Action.** Year after year, those of use who teach composition at colleges and universities face entering students who have never written anything other than self-expressive essays. They have little or no experience with analysis, argument, or interpretation; little or no experience writing for anyone other than themselves. As a result, most are shocked when they encounter their first post-secondary writing assignments. The time is long overdue for public school teachers to abandon the 1960s romanticism that is the foundation for writing in many language arts classes and to recognize that they are not doing their students any favors when they fail to teach the skills necessary to produce competent writing in college and beyond. Writing is primarily a social action and should be taught as such.
2. **Teach Usage, Not Grammar.** The research on grammar instruction and writing is unequivocal: Teaching grammar does not lead to better writing. Native speakers of English have an implicit knowledge of grammar; if they did not, they would not be able to speak the language. Grammar instruction in our schools is grounded on the idea that students don't know the grammar—which may help to explain why students graduate from high school having almost no explicit knowledge of grammar even after studying it for years. Moreover, most of the errors in the structure of student writing involve problems with usage, not grammar. Nevertheless, grammar instruction continues

unabated. If teachers would begin helping students master the usage conventions of formal Standard English instead of continuing the endless round of drills and exercises, writing would improve.

3. **Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC).** One of the more important shifts in composition studies over the last 30 years was recognition that students need more in their repertoire of skills than knowledge of the typical English essay. Writing across the curriculum is predicated on two important understandings: (1) writing can serve as a vehicle for learning in all disciplines and should not be limited to dubious assumptions about the value of writing as a self-reflexive activity; (2) real writing tasks require an ability to use the conventions that govern discourse in the broad areas of humanities, social science, science, and business.
4. **Writing Centers.** Writing centers are common among the nation's universities because they provide significant writing support to students. They allow students to receive more intensive, one-on-one instruction than is possible in a writing class. Very few writing centers exist at the public-school level owing to rigid class schedules and lack of funding. Finding creative ways to make writing centers more feasible in our public schools would no doubt lead to significant improvement in student performance.
5. **Technology.** Most schools today have spent large sums on technology. Unfortunately, far less money has been spent on developing effective ways of implementing that technology into teaching. Advocating technology to replace something that teachers are

already using effectively isn't sufficient. For example, does the \$25,000 smartboard improve teaching significantly more than the \$500 chalkboard? Currently, one of the more beneficial uses of technology is one of the simplest: the email attachment. Students send drafts of papers to their teachers for review and comment. The process greatly increases the amount of individual attention a teacher can provide; it allows for ongoing discussions of writing; and, in my experience, it is almost as effective pedagogically as the student conference.

6. **Learning Outcomes.** The shift toward mandatory testing in our public schools has had one benefit: It has focused more attention on learning outcomes. The history of writing instruction is characterized by a pervasive, and in many cases deliberate, avoidance of learning outcomes. As a result, when planning their courses few teachers consider what they want students to be able to do with regard to writing after a course is concluded. Too often, the focus has been on the experience of writing—a problem that postmodern approaches have exacerbated through an emphasis on writing as performance. Greater attention to outcomes, especially at the college level, would lead to tangible, concrete scaffolding for improving writing that is commonly lacking in many writing classes.
7. **Making Good Writing Assignments.** One of the more important factors in teaching writing effectively is the ability to produce clear, coherent, and meaningful writing assignments. Quite a bit of thought has gone into the characteristics of good writing assignments—they need to specify the rhetorical task (analysis, argument, interpretation, etc.), specify the rhetorical stance (insider to outsider; insider to insider, etc.); list success

criteria, and so on—but many teachers do not use these factors to develop their assignments. As a result, students often end up having to make guesses about what their teachers actually want. An axiom of writing instruction is that better writing assignments lead to better writing.

8. **Assessment and Evaluation.** Along with making good writing assignments, assessment and evaluation are among the more important things we do as teachers. Both must be linked to learning outcomes: That is, we have to ensure that we are measuring what we actually teach. Unfortunately, in many classes, writing is evaluated even though writing is not what is actually taught. Valid and reliable assessment requires training, and it also requires collaboration with colleagues to agree on a standard for performance. When teachers grade papers using their individual and often invalid standards, they do students and the profession a significant disservice.

9. **ESL/ELL Students.** Over the last 20 years, immigration has changed the face of American education at every level. In many cities, particularly in the West and Southwest, 60% or more of the students in our public schools speak English as a second language. Demographic projections indicate that 85% of the country's population growth over the next 20 years will be the result of immigration (mostly illegal) from Mexico, China, and Africa. The demands that ESL/ELL students put on the writing teacher are extraordinary, and already they represent the most salient issue in education.

10. The Writing Workshop. In many college and university writing classes, the classroom workshop is the standard methodology. Public schools have been less inclined to adopt the workshop approach owing to large class size and concerns about control issues. Nevertheless, workshop methodology is one of the more important shifts in composition studies to have occurred since the 1970s, largely because it is predicated on the understanding that students must write every day and receive feedback on their writing if they are to improve. The workshop facilitates both.

Index

The index provides descriptors cross-referenced by the item number in each author's list. In other words, if one seeks ideas related to "Revision," for instance, one of many possible comments can be found in item number three in Larkin's ideas, "Larkin (3)."

For this text, assessment is seen as being synonymous with those facets intrinsic to evaluation of student product, such as grading, rather than the overarching appraisal of the educational processes and policies related to effectiveness of practice, programs, or courses. Williams (6, 8) begin to address the need for assessment of methodology, effectiveness of learning and teaching distinct from evaluation of student work or student self-assessment.

Please note, also, the heading "Methodology" is not all-inclusive. Some entries tended to more simply migrate to these "Principles" and "Strategy" subcategories, but additional ideas permeate the text.

Author Listing by Page

Bernhardt, Stephen A.: 12
Briggs, John C.: 14
Burch, C. Beth: 18
Claywell, Gina: 20
Elbow, Peter: 23
Ewald, Helen: 32
Fisher, Douglas: 38
Frey, Nancy: 38
Fulwiler, Megan: 51
Fulwiler, Toby: 53
Goode, Diane: 55
Greenberg, Suzanne: 61
Harris, Muriel: 63
Helmets, Marguerite: 67
Knoller, Christian: 74
Larkin, Greg: 84
Miller, Susan: 90
Minot, Stephen: 99
Neuleib, Janice: 105
Reynolds, Mark: 107
Shafer, Gregory: 108
Tinberg, Howard: 121
Valentino, Marilyn J.: 122
Williams, James D.: 126

Topic Listing by Author Item Number

Addition: Briggs (7)
"Ad Hoc group": Miller (intro)
Agency: see "Interpretive Agency"

Analyze: Knoeller (3); see also “Read”

Anzaldua, G.: Shafer (4)

Architecture: Ewald (2)

Assignments: Claywell (1); Helmers (3)

Assessment: see “Grading,” “Comments,” and “Evaluation”; Willims (6,8)

Automatic Writing: Briggs (8)

“Authentic Projects”: Helmers (2)

Audience: Briggs (5); Ewald (8); Fulwiler, T. (3); Harris (2); Neuleib (2); Reynolds (9);
Shafer (9); Tinberg (2)

Bartholomae, D.: Ewald (intro-1); Shafer (3)

Barth, J. Knoeller (6)

Bakhin, M.: Ewald (3)

Behaviorist: Briggs (8); Shafer (1)

“Believing/Doubting Games”: Elbow (10); Frey/Fisher (7)

“Bellwork”: Frey/Fisher (1)

Bernhardt, S. A.: Frey/Fisher (intro)

Bishop, W.: Knoller (3, 8)

Bloom, B. S.: Frey/Fisher (intro)

Brainstorm: Helmers (4, 6)

Britton, J.: Shafer (7)

Brophy, J.: Frey/Fisher (intro)

Celebrate (see also “Reward”): Elbow (8)

Character: Greenberg (4, 8)

Choice: Knoeller (2); Miller (7)

Chomsky, N.: Shafer (1)

Clarity: Larkin (6, 7)

“Club”: Shafer (2)

Coaching: Briggs (10); Claywell (2)

Co-authoring: Knoelles (6)

Collaboration (see also “Reading”): Bernhardt (1, 3); Briggs (5); Claywell (8); Elbow (7);
Ewald (2, 4, 7); Frey/Fisher (9); Fulwiler, T. (5); Goode (1); Greenberg (6); Harris (6);
Helmers (4); Knoeller (4); Larkin (9); Minot (3); Neuleib (3); Shafer (1); Valentino (4);
Williams (10)

Cooperation: Miller (intro)

Collage: Elbow (9)

Comments (on papers): Claywell (3, 5, 7); Elbow (6, 7); Fulwiler, M. (9); Knoeller (10);
Larkin (10); Miller (2); Minot (7); Valentino (8);

Community of Writers/Readers: see “Collaboration”

Computers: Bernhardt (9); Goode (6, 8, 10); Greenberg (7); Harris (7); Helmers (9); Neuleib (5);
Valentino (4); Williams (5)

Conciseness: see “Simplify”

Conference (see also “Dialogue”): Claywell (3)

Contexts: Bernhart (2, 4); Ewald (3); Neuleib (2); Tinberg (1)

Conversation: Briggs (10)

Corcoran, B.: Knoeller (6)

Creativity: Knoeller (1, 3); Miholic (intro); see also Minot and Greenberg

“Crystal Ball”: Frey/Fisher (3)
 Cultural (see also “Social”): Goode (2); Helmers (2); Shafer (4)
 Deadline: Greenberg (9); Minot (3)
 Design (see also “Format”): Bernhardt (7-9); Burch (9); Ewald (5)
 Details: Larkin (7); Valentino (7)
 Dewey, J.: Ewald (1)
 Dialect: see “Language”
 Dialogue/discussion: Elbow (4); Goode (6); Greenberg (8); Knoeller (4); Valentino (6)
 Dichotomies: Ewald (intro)
 Dictionary: Burch (5)
 Discourse: Briggs (3); Shafer (4); Williams (3)
 Discovery: Neuleib (1, 3)
 Distance: see “Revision”
 Doubting: see “Believing”
 Drafting: Elbow (5); Greenberg (7); Tinberg (5, 6)
 Draper, R.J.: Frey/Fisher (5)
 Du Plessix Gray, F.: Miholic (afterword)
 Editing: Elbow (5); Fulwiler, T. (8)
 Elbow, P.: Ewald (intro-1); Frey/Fisher (7); Miholic (intro); Shafer (6)
 England, D.A.: Frey/Fisher (5)
 Empowerment: Elbow (10); Frey/Fisher (7); Shafer (7)
 “Entry/Exit Slips”: Frey/Fisher (2)
 Environment: Briggs (2)
 ESL/ELL: Williams (9)
 Ethnographic: Shafer (4)
 Evaluation: Tinberg (9); Williams (8)
 Evaluation: see “Comments” and “Grading”
 Exercise: Harris (10); Reynolds (3)
 Exchange: Knoeller (intro)
 Farrell, James T.: Minot (4)
 Five Paragraph Essay: Knoeller (1)
 Formal Language: see “Language”
 Format (see also “Editing”): Bernhardt (7-9); Harris (9); Helmers (7); Larkin (4); Tinberg (3)
 Formula: Larkin (8)
 “Found Poems”: Frey/Fisher (6)
 Feedback: see “Comments”
 Feminism: Ewald (intro)
 Freewriting: Briggs (8); Elbow (1); Reynolds (2)
 Freire, P.: Shafer (5)
 Fry, E.: Miholic (intro)
 Gardner, H.: Helmers (3)
 Genre: Bernhardt (4); Ewald (2, 4); Knoeller (6); Miller (4); Tinberg (3)
 Gildea, P. M.: Shafer (2)
 Giltrow, J.: Miller (intro)
 Good, T.: Frey/Fisher (intro)
 Grading (see also workload):

Contracts: Elbow (3);
 Evaluation: Claywell (1, 2, 4); Elbow (3); Frey/Fisher (intro); Fulwiler, M. (8, 10);
 Miller (8-10); Valentino (6)
 Peer: Claywell (9); Miller (8)
 Self (see also "Self" below): Elbow (3, 7); Helmers (6); Miller (9)
 Grammar/Usage/Mechanics: Burch (7); Claywell (6); Helmers (8); Miller (9); Shafer (intro, 1);
 Tinberg (3); Valentino (3, 6, 9); Williams (1, 2)
 Handbook: Fulwiler, M. (5); Harris (5)
 Graphics: Larkin (4)
 Gourmet, M.: Ewald (intro)
 Harris, M.: Knoeller (8)
 Havens, L.: Frey/Fisher (10)
 Heath, S.B.: Shafer (4)
 Herrington, A.: Frey/Fisher (intro)
 Heuristic: Goode (9)
 Holoistic: Miller (9)
 Ideology: Shafer (3)
 Illich, I.: Miholic (intro)
 Imagination: Burch (10); Briggs (4, 8)
 Individual Feedback (see also "Comments" and "Grading"): Larkin (10); Valentino (6);
 Williams (4)
 Informal Language: see "Language"
 Integrate: Tinberg (10)
 Interpretive Agency: Ewald (1-2)
 Intertextuality: Bernhardt (6); Knoeller (6)
 Interaction (see also "Collaboration"): Helmers (4); Miller (1)
 Iser, W.: Helmers (5)
 Judy, S.: Shafer (intro)
 Kafka, F.: Minot (3)
 Journals: Goode (7); Knoeller (8); Minot (2); Neuleib (5)
 Language: Briggs (5, 6); Elbow (2, 10); Goode (5); Harris (2); Reynolds (6); Shafer (1, 2, 4)
 Latitude: Knoeller (1)
 Learning Outcomes: see "Outcomes"
 Letter, Cover: Elbow (4, 6)
 Lexicon: Briggs (2, 6)
 Liberation: Shafer (5)
 Listen: Ewald (8)
 Math: "Name That Math," Frey/Fisher (5); Larkin (8)
 Martinez, V: Frey/Fisher (10)
 Maturity: Briggs (5); Shafer (8)
 Meaning: Shafer (2, 9)
 McIntosh, M.E.: Frey/Fisher (5)
 Mechanics: see "Grammar"
 Medium: Larkin (intro); Neuleib (5); et al.
 Memory: Briggs (2, 3, 4, 8)
 Metaphor: Knoeller (3)

Methodology:

- Strategies: Elbow (4, 8, 9, 10); Frey/Fisher (intro, 1-10); Goode (2, 3, 7, 8, 10); Greenberg (1-10); Helmers (2); Knoeller (3-7); Miller (6, 10); Valentino (4, 9); Williams (5)
- Principles: Briggs (8); Elbow (2); Ewald (intro-1); Fulwiler, M. (1, 6, 7); Goode (9); Helmers (1, 3, 5); Knoeller (1, 8-10); Miller (intro-1, 5); Neuleib (7, 8, 10); Shafer (1-10); Williams (7, 9, 10)
- Messr-Davidow, E.: Ewald (intro)
- Miller, L.D.: Frey/Fisher (5)
- Miller, G. A.: Shafer (2)
- MLA citations: see “Research Papers” and “Formatting”
- Model(s): Briggs (1); Claywell (9); Fulwiler, T. (6); Knoeller (9); Miller (4); Valentino (7)
- Mind: Briggs (2, 8); Harris (5); Shafer (8)
- Multiple Intelligences: Helmers (3)
- Murray, D.: Shafer (10)
- Mocchizuki, K: Frey/Fisher (7)
- National Writing Project: Knoeller (intro, 8)
- Observation: Burch (6); Briggs (4, 9, 10)
- Obstacle: see “Writer’s Block”
- Oral: Knoeller (10)
- Organic: Shafer (1, 3, 9); Knoeller (1)
- Organization: Reynolds (5)
- Outcomes: Williams (6, 8)
- Ownership: Ewald (intro); Valentino (8); Knoeller (1, 4)
- Paragraph: Larkin (6)
- Paraphrasing: Goode (4)
- Pedagogy: see “Methodology”
- Peddiwell, J. A.: Miholic (intro)
- Peer: See “Reading” and “Collaboration”
- Persevere: Reynolds (5); Shafer (10)
- Plagiarism: Knoeller (7); see “Research Papers”
- Planning: Fulwiler, T. (2); Shafer (10); Williams (6, 7)
- Portfolios: Fulwiler, T. (10); Knoeller (8); Miller (10)
- Praxis: Shafer (5)
- Prewriting: Elbow (4); Goode (1); Harris (1); Larkin (4); Neuleib (1)
- Prior Knowledge: Tinberg (6)
- Problem Solving: Helmers (1, 4); Frey/Fisher (5); Reynolds (8); Tinberg (6); Valentino (2)
- “Process Writing:” Elbow (4, 7);
- Process (see also “Process Writing”): Bernhardt (5, 10); Burch (1-2); Fulwiler, T. (4, 6, 10); Helmers (1); Larkin (8); Knoeller (3, 7); Miller (intro); Neuleib (9, 10); Shafer (10); Tinberg (1-10); Valentino (1, 10)
- “Progressive Writing”: Frey/Fisher (9)
- Publish: Elbow (8); Helmers (9); Knoeller (10); Minot (7)
- Punctuation: see “Grammar”
- Purpose: Fulwiler, T. (2); Goode (9); Harris (2); Miller (5, 7); Tinberg (4, 10)
- “RAFT”: Frey/Fisher (10)

Questioning: Knoeller (5); Miller (3)
 Rationale: see "Purpose"
 Read/Reread: Burch (3); Briggs (1, 2); Frey/Fisher (8); Minot (1); Reynolds (4, 6); Valentino (5)
 Read(ing), see also "Grading/Peer"
 Aloud: Elbow (7); Greenberg (10); Harris (6)
 Comprehension: Briggs (1); Frey/Fisher (10); Miller (6); Knoeller (4)
 Reader Response: Claywell (1); Goode (8); Larkin (10); Miller (intro); Neuleib (3, 6)
 Shared: Burch (3); Ewald (7); Frey/Fisher (3); Larkin (10); Miller (9); Valentino (4)
 Reasoning: see "Thinking"
 Reciprocal Writing: Goode (10)
 Reflect: Bernhardt (5); Tinberg (1); Knoeller (intro, 5, 8)
 Relax: Bernhard (10)
 Rejection: see "Comments"
 Research/Research Papers: Bernhardt (6); Fulwiler, M. (5); Goode (3, 4); Harris (8); Larkin (10);
 Tinberg (1-10)
 Revision: Briggs (7); Ewald (10); Fulwiler, M. (8); Fulwiler, T. (7); Goode (5); Harris (4);
 Helmers (8); Knoeller (9, 10); Larkin (3); Miller (10); Neuleib (6, 9); Reynolds (9)
 Reward (see also "Celebrate"); Helmerts (10)
 Romano, T: Knoeller (3)
 "Round Robin": see "Reciprocal Writing"
 Rubric: Claywell (4); Knoeller (7, 10); Larkin (8); Miller (9); Williams (8)
 Russel, D.: Ewald (1)
 Russo, R.: Miholic (intro)
 Ryan, P. M.: Frey/fisher (6)
 Salzman, M.: Helmerts (9)
 Santa, C.: Frey/Fisher (10)
 Scenes: Greenberg (1)
 Search and Select: Tinberg (7 & 8)
 Self
 Exploration: Briggs (4); Goode (7); Minot (4); Neuleib (2); Shafer (3);
 Tinberg (5); Valentino (8); Williams (1, 3)
 Critique: Briggs (7); Elbow (3); Shafer (6); Valentino (2)
 "Sentence Springboards": Frey/Fisher (8)
 Semiotics: Briggs (9); Goode (9)
 Sharing: see "Collaboration"
 Shaughnessey, M.: Valentino (9)
 Simplify: Larkin (7); Reynolds (10); Valentino (1)
 Skills: Williams (1)
 Skinner, B. F.: Shafer (1)
 Smith, F.: Shafer (1, 2)
 Social (see also "Cultural"): Bernhardt (3); Shafer (8); Williams (1)
 Social Constructivist: Ewald (intro, 3); Knoeller (4)
 Solitude: Minot (3); Neuleib (3)
 Speaking: Briggs (6); Elbow (2); Fulwiler, T. (5); Neuleib (4)
 Spell-checker: Harris (7)
 Standards (see also "Rubric"): Williams (8)

Street, B.: Shafer (3)
 Stride: Minot (3)
 Structure: Knoeller (5)
 Submit: see "Publish"
 Sullivan, P.: Miller (intro)
 Summarize: Tinberg (9)
 Syllabus: Miller (1)
 Syntactic Structures: Burch (8); Shafer (1)
 Synergy: Knoeller (4)
 Students: Claywell (10); Elbow (7); Shafer (intro)
 Talk: see "Dialogue"
 Taylor, D: Shafer (4)
 Team: see "Collaboration"
 Technology (see also "Computers"): Burch (9); Ewald (6); Williams (5)
 Testing/Tests: Frey/Fisher (intro, 5); Knoeller (9); Shafer (10); Williams (6)
 Textbooks: Goode (8); Harris (1); Helmers (5); Minot (5)
 Theme: Goode (2)
 Thinking: Bernhardt (2, 8); Briggs (4, 8); Burch (10); Elbow (10); Fulwiler, M. (2);
 Fulwiler, T. (1); Helmers (7); Knoeller (3, 5); Miller (intro); Neuleib (1); Reynolds (3, 7);
 Tinberg (6); Valentino (2);
 Tchudi, S.: Shafer (1)
 Todorov, T.: Ewald (3)
 Tools: Bernhardt (9)
 Topic: Harris (3); Neuleib (4)
 Transactional Writing: Shafer (7, 9)
 Transformational Grammar: Shafer (1)
 Usage: Williams (2)
 Verbal (see also "Speaking"): Briggs (6); Claywell (3); Goode (5)
 Villanueva, V.: Ewald (intro)
 Visualization (see also "Observation" or "Design"): Ewald (5); Helmers (7)
 Vocabulary: Burch (5)
 Voice (see also "Informal Language)": Ewald (3); Larkin (5)
 Volunteer: Miller (intro)
 Vygotsky, L.: Knoeller (5); Shafer (8)
 Wallace, D.: Ewald (intro)
 Weaver, C.: Shafer (9)
 Whole Language: Shafer (2, 9)
 Williams, J.: Miller (intro)
 Wong, H. K. & R. T.: Frey/Fisher (1)
 Workload (teacher): Claywell (3); Fulwiler, M (2, 3, 4, 10)
 Workshop: Miller (3)
 World Wide Web: Harris (8)
 Write Regularly: Brurch (1-2); Briggs (7, 10); Ewald (9); Greenberg (5); Minot (6); Reynolds (1)
 Writer's Block: Greenberg (1, 3); Harris (5); Knoeller (2); Larkin (2); Neuleib (6); Reynolds (4,
 5);
 Valentino (3)

Writing Across the Curriculum: Fulwiler, T. (9); Neuleib (8); Williams (3)
Writing Center/Lab: Harris (intro); Larkin (10); Williams (4, 10)
“Yesterday’s News”: Frey/Fisher (4)
