Teaching the C Requirement:
A Collection of Resources for Core Course Instructors

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I. Preface: Buy Bean

When the Committee on Teaching awarded the Writing Program and the Council of Provosts a grant to develop a guide to help instructors realize the goals of the Composition General Education Requirement in the context of college core courses, the College Writing Coordinators and I met to develop an outline of what such a booklet needed to have in it if it were to be truly useful to core faculty members, veterans and novices alike. I left that meeting daunted by the scope of the project we in our energetic enthusiasm had described until I realized that most of what we wanted could be found in a book that already exists: Engaging Ideas, The Professor’s Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom, by John C. Bean (a professor of English at Seattle University), published by Jossey-Bass (2001), and (when I last checked) available used from Amazon for about $12.

In short, the booklet you have in front of you does not try to duplicate the comprehensive manual Bean has composed. Based on careful research and written with intelligence and insight, Bean provides theoretical perspectives and detailed practical suggestions on everything from engaging students’ interest and participation, designing assignments, planning class sessions, helping students read difficult texts, using small groups, responding to students’ writing, teaching revision, dealing with grammar, working with students who are not native speakers of English, and handling the paper load to enhancing students’ learning from traditional academic activities such as lectures, essay exams, and research projects. Bean summarizes theory and research, options, and controversy; he is direct, concise, and well-organized without being simplistic or dogmatic; and he provides a first-rate bibliography. I learned from and respect his book.

Consider, for example, Bean’s Chapter 8: “Helping Students Read Difficult Texts.” After a thought-provoking introduction which concludes, “We have to do more than take our students out to sea. We have to teach them to fish in the deep,” Bean lists and analyzes a wide variety of reasons why many students have trouble understanding complex texts, and then he makes a corresponding list of strategies for addressing each difficulty. For example, his Reason #4, “Difficulty in Assimilating the Unfamiliar,” describes various manifestations of a phenomenon I have encountered and struggled with but had not named for myself so as to be able to look at it and concentrate on what to do about it. Bean points out that developmental psychologists have explained that the “cognitive ethnocentrism” of inexperienced readers causes them to have trouble walking in the shoes of persons with unfamiliar [or threatening or disorienting] views and values . . . No matter what the author really means, students translate those meanings into ideas that they are comfortable with. Thus, to many of our students, a philosophic Idealist is someone with impractical ideas, whereas a Realist is praiseworthy for being levelheaded. (135)

“The insight of cognitive psychology here is that these problems are related neither to stupidity nor to intellectual laziness,” Bean continues, but rather to a natural inexperience that we teachers need to acknowledge and deal with.
Bean’s strategies for “dealing” include explaining the phenomenon to students so it can be recognized and explicitly discussed. Another strategy he recommends (especially with threatening or disorienting material) is to introduce students to Peter Elbow’s “believing and doubting game” which helps students understand the value of self-consciously giving in to a text before they begin to criticize it. (147) For me, though, the best thing about Bean’s discussion is that I have acquired another generative metaphor to explore with my students—the idea that reading a strange and difficult text can be like visiting a strange and foreign culture, a culture we will never begin to understand. learn anything from, or be able to evaluate until we can get beyond trying to making sense of it by applying only our native codes and norms.

Just one more of many possible examples. In a thorough section entitled “Coaching Thinking Through the Use of Small Groups,” Bean’s suggestions help me face my perennial dissatisfaction with the quality of the reports I ask groups to bring back to the class as a whole. First, Bean insists on “formal reports from groups: the recorder has to stand and present the group’s consensus in an impromptu speech,” that is not a summary of what the group talked about but a persuasive presentation of what the group learned or decided. “By putting pressure on recorders to make effective public speeches, I know the recorders will put pressure on groups to stay on task.” (153) And then he points out that, as representatives of “the expert views (or one of the expert views)” of a discipline (or, in our case, of academic discourse) and as role models for academic argument, instructors “must help the class synthesize group reports by pointing out strengths and weaknesses” and be willing to explain their own solution “to the collaborative task” to students who, after “working independently,” are more confident, less passive, and “more challenging as audiences.” (154) Reading Bean, I realize I have been too reluctant to evaluate groups’ reports (or, for that matter, presentations by individual students), to use these reports as a way to help students become more effective speakers, and to find a way to add my views without shutting down the conversation.

So, instead of recapitulating Engaging Ideas, this booklet is a collection of material that shows how several of us who have taught writing in UCSC’s core courses for years apply a Bean-like perspective to the challenges that confront us every fall. An annotated bibliography describes and comments on some of the books and articles that have been important to many of us and me in particular. Next, I describe my approach to using readings, discussions, and assignments to teach a course that helps students “learn how to become effective participants in university discourse.” Then Don Rothman revisits an article he published in College English almost 30 years ago to talk about what our current students do and don’t realize about writing. Mark Baker and Amy Weaver, in consultation with Cissy Freeman, give us insights drawn from their experience teaching core sections for students who have not satisfied the Entry Level Writing Requirement (formerly Subject A), including the array of students who are learning the conventions of standard English. I end with some thoughts on assessment that have grown out of the Writing Program’s effort to discover whether a direct engagement with formal assessment could lead not to stultifying, simplistic quantification but rather to complex, useful insights into our common endeavor.
I want to thank the Committee on Teaching for its financial support, the College Provosts for their patience, hospitality, and intellectual engagement, and all the College Writing Coordinators (especially Mark Baker, Farnaz Fatemi, Nancy Krusoe, and Amy Weaver) for their help in shaping this project. The material the College Writing Coordinators gathered formed the basis for what is here even if much of it does not appear directly. And a special thank you to Ginny Draper (who introduced me to Bean as well as much else) and Don Rothman, Roz Spafford, Cissy Freeman, and Elizabeth Abrams — all colleagues finer than anything I could have imagined had I set out to invent them.

Finally, much of what is included here will not be new to many of you. But I am motivated to think creatively about my teaching when I hear others' thoughts and ideas, even when they are similar to my own. I hope this booklet serves that purpose for its readers and is just the beginning of an on-going, cross-college conversation about teaching core courses at UCSC.

Carol Freeman
August, 2005
II. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES OF THE C REQUIREMENT AND THE SPECIFIC GOALS OF C1 AND C2

In completing UCSC's two-quarter General Education Requirement in Composition, students learn how to become effective participants in university discourse, spoken as well as written.

To this end:

1. Students learn -- when reading, writing, listening, or speaking -- to analyze rhetorical situations so as to understand that different purposes and contexts call for different strategies, different conventions, and different techniques.

2. Students learn to recognize and discuss propositions (their own as well as others') that cannot be merely demonstrated -- that is, to analyze, evaluate, and argue matters of opinion and interpretation as well as to describe matters of fact.

3. Students learn to develop effective processes for writing in different contexts and to use a variety of strategies for discovering, developing, and analyzing data and ideas, for making sense, for revising, and for editing.

4. Students learn to produce writing that:
   - Establishes and maintains an appropriate purpose or coherent set of purposes in relation to the assignment and the audience.
   - Employs appropriate strategies of development that accomplish their purpose in relation to the assignment, its context, and its audience.
   - Uses sources' information and ideas accurately and effectively and cites sources appropriately.
   - Communicates in accurate, appropriate, effective prose.

5. Students learn strategies for becoming accurate readers and critical analysts of all texts including their own.

6. Students learn how to collaborate appropriately with others (including their peers) in doing research, generating and evaluating ideas, and revising texts.
Composition 1, Introduction to University Discourse

As they make the transition from writing in the schools to writing in a variety of academic and professional contexts, students learn to apply rhetorical principles rather than rely on rule-driven formulas. They also experience and come to understand the connections among composing, thinking, and learning.

Students will:

1. Write at least five relatively short essays (up to 1250 words) and read a variety of texts, including a significant amount of nonfiction that employs argument and analysis.

2. Learn strategies for reading challenging texts -- that is, to understand a text's purpose or purposes and to follow its train of thought, to begin to be aware of nuance and emphasis, and to be able to relate specific examples and statements to larger topics or claims.

3. Learn strategies for analyzing and criteria for evaluating opinions, interpretations, and arguments (propositions about things that cannot be proved) and learn the academic uses of words such as argument, hypothesis, theory, assumption, claim, etc.

4. Learn to analyze their processes as writers, develop strategies for enhancing those processes, and evaluate the results, all in relation to the particular demands of particular assignments. Students' attention to process includes:
   - Learning specific strategies for invention and revision in relation to the quality of content as well as its clarity and accuracy.
   - Learning the importance of a writer's purpose and audience and relevant conventions in relation to focus, coherence, and effectiveness.
   - Learning to take charge of their proofreading and editing in standard professional English by analyzing their weaknesses and developing a plan for eliminating error.

5. Learn oral communication skills for effective participation in discussions as well as for formal presentations.
Composition 2, Rhetoric and Inquiry

Students in Composition 2 build on their progress in Composition 1 by learning strategies for becoming more effective readers, writers, and speakers in the context of assignments that require independent research. They deepen their comprehension of how their writing and that of others can add to the understanding of vital issues and sustain meaningful inquiry through responsible persuasion.

Students will:

1. Write a series of at least five essays (including one of at least 1500 words) and read a variety of texts that provide occasions for analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating data and arguments.

2. Learn methods of research and approaches to using sources (i.e., the information, theories, arguments, and texts of others) that provide students with the knowledge and confidence to actively participate in the act of inquiry by composing comparative analysis, interpretation, and reasoned argument.

3. Learn specific techniques for critically analyzing sources so as to understand their purpose and context and to evaluate the credibility and relevance of their information and the persuasiveness of their evidence and reasoning.

4. Achieve solid competence and, to the extent possible, virtuosity in all facets of the writing process. These include:
   - Learning modes of inquiry and strategies for revision that strive for complexity, nuance, and depth as well as coherence and clarity.
   - Learning to develop extended, complex arguments by orienting readers, creating clear expectations and a sufficiently explicit train of thought, effectively weaving together multiple strands of inquiry, and bringing the whole to a satisfying conclusion.
   - Learning techniques for developing a prose style that moves beyond accuracy and clarity to precision, power, subtlety, and elegance.
III. A Bibliography for Browsing and Conversation

Carol Freeman


There are many reasons for and pleasures in reading Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* — not the least of which is the fact that his brilliant lecture notes reveal that his project, like ours, is to teach his students to discover and analyze the available means of persuasion (the apparently persuasive as well as the legitimately persuasive) in any given situation or discipline. Kennedy’s translation includes excellent commentary, notes, supplementary material, and bibliography. For people who would prefer a quick introduction to Aristotle in a broader context, there are many good choices, including:


It is impossible to summarize the riches one finds in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, so I will simply say that my teaching depends on his analysis of the ways all persuasive discourse — a category which essentially includes all discourse — appeals to logos (reasoning), pathos (the mindset of one’s audience), and ethos (the authority of the writer); his classification of the kinds of persuasive discourse, depending on purpose and audience; his analysis of the implications of the different roles audiences can play (dupe, judge, persons to be entertained); and, above all, his emphasis on heuristics, or invention — the ways we can learn how to explore a topic by understanding the generic questions that lead to discovery.

Aristotle divides heuristics, the art of invention, into two categories: the “common topics” that create generic questions useful in any situation whatsoever (for example, the questions that arise from the effort to define or compare) and the “special topics” that list the questions peculiar to a particular kind of discourse or discipline. For example, Aristotle points out that in composing or analyzing
political discourse (which he says is essentially about policy, or making decisions about what should be done in the future), we can start by considering whether something is good in itself or whether it is good because it leads to other good things. Once my students see the potential power in asking those questions and their broad applicability and usefulness, they are on the way to understanding how to actively pursue ideas rather than waiting passively for the muse to come sit on their shoulders.


The edition I have of Barzun and Graff’s book, originally written for graduate students in history, is ancient enough to still use he as a supposedly generic pronoun, but if it did not exist, I would have had to invent its discussion of the meanings of subjective, objective, and bias. Barzun and Graff conclude that “an objective judgment is one made by testing in all ways possible one’s subjective impressions, so as to arrive at acknowledgment of objects. . . . judgments are made every time a capable mind attends to the evidence in front of him. Such a mind may reach a wrong conclusion, an error may later be proved upon him, new evidence may modify his hitherto sound report, but the judgment when made was objective.” (146) From this passage, my class can jump right into a discussion of the fundamental question of rhetoric from Aristotle on: if, by definition, opinions are statements that cannot be proven, how can we still argue that one opinion is better or truer or more useful than another?

Similarly useful is Barzun and Graff’s section that distinguishes interest (that is, a researcher/writer’s theme or hypothesis or way of seeing or form that inevitably will help determine what he/she finds and sees) from bias (“the point where interest begins to spoil the product altogether”). (161) This distinction helps address many students’ belief that any strongly-held opinion or theory is an example of bias. And the list of the “virtues” of a researcher provides a starting point for a discussion of what exactly a researcher qua researcher contributes to his/her report and of the criteria we agree should be used to judge the quality of an essay that makes use of research.


Beardsley’s essay on the relationship between style and meaning, originally given as a lecture in 1965, provides a rationale for “close reading” as well as for paying careful attention one’s own style. Beginning with the provocative premise that “a difference of style is always a difference in meaning” (429) – an excellent maxim with which to begin a lively discussion of any text’s style -- Beardsley rejects as untrue and unhelpful such absolute prescriptions as “Use the active voice” or “Use definite, specific, concrete language.” Instead, he insists that we help
students to understand how style creates meanings (explicit and implicit) and to see that their goal as writers must be insure the “congruity of explicit and implicit meaning.” “As far as style is concerned,“ Beardsley writes, “one sentence is no better than the other; they simply say (implicitly) different things, and the question is (or ought to be) which is true.” (432) As with so much else, we can find the same insight in Aristotle’s Rhetoric where, in his section on style, Aristotle points out that one should write clearly unless (like a fortune teller) it does not suit one’s purpose to be clear.


Ann Berthoff defines critical thinking as “the capacity to see relationships methodically” and then explains how we must take advantage of “the reflexive [dialectical] nature” of language in speaking, hearing, reading, and writing to help students make meaning by perceiving relationships. Relationships, Berthoff says, “are spatial, temporal, and causal; they can be classified, defined, rehearsed, rediscovered continually – whatever the field. We teachers are considering relationships – see them – when we discuss parts and wholes, beginnings and ends, means and means, now and then, if and then, how X is like Y with respect to Z. And we can teach students to do this methodically once we deliberately consider how it is that we, as scholars in one field or another, make sense of the data, how we organize the knowledge of a field, how we make sense of the world or a universe of discourse.” (114) Berthoff’s three main points all imply strategies for teaching:

1. “Observation is central to all disciplines: learning to look and look again is learning to question.” (116)

2. “Learning the special language of a field is a principal way of learning the concepts of that field.”(116)

3. “The rhetorical concepts of invention and disposition” are cross-disciplinary. (117)

Students should be introduced to ways of taking notes on lectures, on class discussions, and on readings that emphasize observing relationships and include their reflections on the relationships they have observed.


Booth justifies and illustrates teaching “methods of genuine listening that do not naively surrender” in order to further “the basic goal . . . to get students to promise, as it were, never to assent to or reject any new position they have not fully understood.” (366) Elbow sums up his and Booth’s common goal: “to help people understand that even though the skeptical, adversarial, doubting mode of critical thinking is necessary and good, nevertheless, we shouldn’t let it take over our minds and the culture by equating it with good thinking itself. It’s one kind or one dimension of good thinking. We can get better thinking and discourse if we give equal importance to another dimension – the rhetoric of assent . . .“ (398)

The most comprehensive, thoughtful, useful discussion of discussion as a way of teaching that I have ever encountered. Brookfield and Preskill define *discussion* as “an alternately serious and playful effort by a group of two or more to share views and engage in mutual and reciprocal critique.” (6) They identify the purposes of discussion as:

1. to help participants reach a more critically informed understanding about the topic or topics under consideration,
2. to enhance participants’ self-awareness and their capacity for self-critique,
3. to foster an appreciation among participants for the diversity of opinion that invariably emerges when viewpoints are exchanged openly and honestly, and
4. to act as a catalyst to helping people take informed action in the world.” (7)

The book examines each of these purposes and provides strategies for achieving them. I found the sections on having students develop criteria and ground rules for good discussions and on helping participants move beyond “uncritical personal disclosure” especially useful. Chapter 9, “Keeping Students’ Voices in Balance,” addresses the perennial problem of students who seem to us to talk too much or too little.


Burke’s brief discussion of form does not use the words *organization* or *structure*, but it is the most practical, useful (and generative) discussion of form I know. His definition of form — “an arousing and fulfillment of desires. A work as form in so far as one part of it leads a reader to anticipate another part, to be gratified by the sequence” — is as applicable to a cell phone manual as to James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. Burke lists five interrelated kinds of form: progressive form (divided into syllogistic and qualitative progression), repetitive form (a great rebuttal to the dictum some of our students follow which instructs them not to repeat), conventional form, and minor or incidental forms (for example, the sentence or a metaphor). “A form is a way of experiencing,” Burke continues, an idea which he has explored elsewhere by saying, “A way of seeing is always also a way of not seeing.”


In brief, Francis Christensen’s theory of the cumulative nature of sentences and paragraphs follows from the insight that we write by adding one word, phrase, or sentence to another and read the same way. Basically, additions can be either subordinate to or coordinate with what has gone before. In considering the effectiveness of a paragraph, I believe that a crucial point — maybe the crucial point — is whether readers can easily perceive the relationship of one sentence to
the next, thereby following the writer’s train of thought. I have been convinced for a long time that the folklore many students believe about paragraphs is one of the biggest obstacles to their writing more effectively. Huge progress is possible both in their writing and in their reading comprehension once they see that a paragraph is not a bushel basket with a “topic sentence” label, into which a writer dumps all the sentences they have that relate to that topic, but rather a chain of sentences that grow from the first sentence and that lasts until the writer has reason to begin a new chain. (The reasons for starting a new paragraph are legion, of course, and often have nothing to do with “starting a new topic.”) I introduce the principles of subordination and coordination early in a quarter so we can perceive the structure (i.e., emphasis, relationships, meaning, form, plot) in what we read and create coherence in what we write.


A provocative discussion of an essay published by Kenneth Burke in 1955, “Linguistic Approaches to the Problems of Education,” in which Burke, always fascinated by the relationship between rhetoric and war, suggests a pedagogy that teaches students to become “symbol-wise” rather than “symbol-foolish” by asking them “to investigate methodically the part language – and symbol use – plays in competitions, large and small.” (287) For example, a formal debate of an issue, in Burke’s view, should always include at least three perspectives: two (or more) opposing positions and a third part in which students “investigate the linguistic choices and decisions that make what is good in one argument bad and what is bad in another argument good.” (286)


Nothing has been more useful to me in figuring out how to talk about revision and how to invent useful strategies for revision than this essay by Linda Flower in which she shows how the processes by which we gather information and first record our ideas are often different from the process by which we come to fully understand and clearly communicate that information and those ideas. She describes drafts not as flawed essays but rather as necessary precursors to a “finished” essay. Drafts, she writes, are often inexplicit and unclear because they are written as egocentric, internal monologues that reflect the characteristics of self-referential thought. Also, drafts often are composed as a “narrative of [the writer’s] own discovery process” (27), a chronological record that must be written first before writers can transform that narrative into an effective explanation or argument. My two most effective pieces of advice for revising are derived from Flower: (1) Your draft is a list of what you were thinking as you read X; transform it so that your structure reflects your purpose rather than X’s. Use X to accomplish your purpose rather than adding your ideas as footnotes to X’s structure. (2) Express your ideas fully and connect them explicitly so that
readers do not need to know what is in your head to understand what you have written and to follow your train of thought.


A complex, immensely useful discussion of the issues of whether, when, and how formal instruction in grammar improves students’ writing. Hartwell distinguishes five separate meanings of the word grammar, often confused and conflated, which move in concentric circles from the subconscious structures in our heads that only linguists can describe to the conventions of usage determined largely by social context and convention. The point of Hartwell’s analysis is to help us think clearly about when and how instruction in “grammar” is actually useful; he concludes, “one learns to control the language of print by manipulating language in meaningful contexts, not by learning about language in isolation.” One’s facility with language (including the ability to achieve “correctness”) is “primarily developed by any kind of language activity that enhances the awareness of language as language.” (125)

I find it useful to explain to students the different uses of the word grammar so they can see that (to their surprise) they all “know” much more grammar than they don’t know and to give them the means to characterize and analyze the sources of their own difficulties so they can take charge of addressing these difficulties. Bean does an excellent job of summarizing Hartwell’s article and explicating its pedagogical implications. (Bean 55-57)


Huot points out that to become better writers, students must not only respond to their instructors’ assessment of their writing but also become better at assessing the quality of their own writing by themselves. Therefore, we need to teach assessment, not just do it.


When I first began teaching writing, William Irmscher’s brief, modest book made me think meaningfully about what I was doing. In Chapter 4, he observes that “Becoming a more mature writer means essentially transcending skills by developing intuitions. Amateur writers depend upon prescriptions and rules for guidelines that mature writers sense intuitively.” Carefully distinguishing intuition from instinct, Irmscher points out that, to write effectively in a particular situation, a writer needs an intuitive sense of the normative; an intuitive sense of simplicity (“the most economical way to get the highest return”); an intuitive sense of rhythm (timing, pace, movement, proportion); an intuitive sense of
order; and an intuitive sense of closure. By implication, he challenges us to figure out how we know what to do when we write and how to teach so as to develop intuition rather than prescribe rules as ends in themselves.


Murray describes the inter-play of reading and writing, drafting and revising, as an on-going, dynamic tension between collecting and connecting in which the force of collecting ideas and information and the force of making sense of what one has collected come in and out of balance, destabilizing each other until a writer decides to stop. “When in good working order, these forces of collecting and connecting battle each other in a productive tension . . . Introduce a new piece of information and the organism immediately tries to connect it. When the organism has a connection, it seeks new information to reinforce it,” Murray writes. (9) He also notes, “In teaching the process we have to look, not at what students need to know, but what they need to experience.” (15)


Park makes us careful not to over-simplify how we talk to our students about audience and provides a wealth of ideas applicable both to composing and to analyzing the compositions of others. Are we invoking or inventing an audience when we write -- or both? And when we read, are we being addressed as the person we are or a person we could become if we are willing to do so? And by “audience,” do we mean “primarily something in the text or something outside it”? This article is a practical introduction to ideas explored further by Walter Ong, Wayne Booth, Stanley Fish, and others.


For many of us, Shaughnessy’s ground-breaking study (based on her work with basic writers in the early days of CUNY’s open admissions experiment in the 1970’s) transformed the way we think about error in the writing of all our students (and probably in our own as well). Essentially, she taught us to see errors and ineffectuality not as hopelessly chaotic, random acts of carelessness or incapacity, but rather as logical, consistent, crucial clues to what a particular writer does not know. Therefore, reading students’ papers is an act of research and analysis: we analyze the data (the writing a student has produced) and figure out what information we can provide or strategies we can suggest that will make the most difference. This work, she notes, “must be informed by an understanding not only of what is missing or awry but of why this is so.” (6) Reading papers as an intelligent analytical researcher is at first harder than reading them as a hard-wired editor but in the end it’s infinitely more interesting.

This is the essay that first made many of us think critically about our comments on students’ papers. I still find it a challenge to do justice to the spirit of Sommers’s critique. If a writer were to respond literally to all my comments, would he/she completely lose track of his/her own purpose and end up with a worse rather than a better paper? Are the meaning and purpose of my comments clear? Am I making stylistic and editorial comments on sentences that, in following my advice, a student may well decide to remove entirely? Do my comments come across as blind prescriptions rather than useful strategies? Do I have a theory of how comments on first drafts should differ from comments on final drafts? What is the tone of my comments? And so on. After I read Sommers, I began to be as critical of the rhetoric of my comments as I was of the writing I was commenting on. I now explain that I make different kinds of comments that call for different kinds of responses. I’ve developed strategies (with eye-opening results) for discovering whether students understand and can apply what I’ve written (and can read my handwriting). I turn almost all my comments into questions and literally require answers. I frame most of my comments as advice for future drafts, even if no more revising is assigned. I concentrate on the advice that will do the most good and let other things go. I quickly read over my comments on previous papers as well as previous drafts and refer to advice I’ve already given rather than writing the same thing over and over again. See Bean and Section V of this booklet for more.


Now in its 8th edition, Joseph Williams’s book on style demands too much time and patience for most first-year writing classes, but it is an excellent way for instructors to learn how to help students do more than be grammatically accurate. Williams develops principles that are effective, are based on a sophisticated understanding of usage, style, and grammatical correctness, and are meant for use by — and therefore are interesting to — intelligent adults. Moreover, he provides useful advice for helping excellent writers (including me); for example, his discussions of how to manage long sentences by paying attention to shape and emphasis are excellent. The appendix on punctuation is worth the price of the book. (Some of us do use a condensed version of the book – *Style, The Basics of Clarity and Grace* — in C2 courses.)
IV. Thoughts on Designing Core Courses So As To Address the Educational Goals of the Composition General Education Requirement

Carol Freeman

“There is so much to do in Core that one has to make a conscious effort to set aside the time to teach writing.”

“The hardest thing about teaching Core is that we must balance the demands of a writing course with the demands and readings of a specific topic and discipline.”

“I’m asking students to write four essays but struggling to find time to teach writing. Help!”

I. Introduction

It seems to me that one of the very best things about the recent formal articulation of the fall college core courses with UCSC’s Composition Requirement is that now we all have license to resolve or, more accurately, to dissolve the debilitating “teaching writing vs. teaching content” dichotomy by acknowledging that the principal objective of core courses is not to cover or master a body of content. Rather, it is to teach students “to become effective participants in university discourse, spoken as well as written.” The courses that we design need to accomplish that unbifurcated goal.

Of course the only way to learn how to become an effective participant in university discourse is to read, talk, and write about topics, ideas, objects, and phenomena which are part of that discourse. So immediately upon solving the dilemma by tossing content out of the equation, we must reintroduce it. The content of any course is composed of a body of objects we have decided are worth knowing and thinking about. A core course that satisfies the C Requirement is different from many other courses in that it not only asks students to think about its content but also – and primarily – it teaches them how to think about their thinking as it is manifested in their reading, discussing, and writing. To paraphrase two of my patron saints, Kenneth Burke and Ann Berthoff, in a core course we are not so much thinking about as we are consciously, explicitly thinking about our thinking about. Thus, in some ways a C course plays the same role in relation to university discourse as, for example, a historiography course plays in relation to the history curriculum.

In essence, the principal activity of the core course is the study of rhetoric, a discipline which includes studying both the way we create ideas and make (or discover) meaning and the way we communicate our thoughts to others so as to have influence. Ironically, paradoxically, many of us have discovered that, once we have let our gaze turn from content to focus instead on how we are thinking about the content, students learn more about the content than they ever did before.
II. Talking about Thinking (as Manifested in Reading, Discussing, and Writing)

From my 30 years of experience teaching writing to first-year students, observing classes taught by others, and reading thousands of students’ evaluations of composition courses and core courses, I’ve learned that, for the course I’ve described above to have a chance of succeeding, everyone involved (instructors and students alike) needs to be persuaded that thinking about thinking as it is manifested in reading, discussing, and writing is an intellectually compelling endeavor, genuinely university-level work, and not simply a rudimentary skill that should and could have been mastered once and for all back in high school.

Like some instructors, a number of students begin core courses jaded about “the writing process,” cynical about what they perceive as the gamesmanship of writing essays that teachers “want,” and fatalistic about their ability to edit. These students believe that they have already heard everything that can be said on the subject of writing and that further talk about it is condescending and “like high school.” When one core instructor asked his students to write about whether or not they found Keith Hjortshøj’s book, The Transition to College Writing, worthwhile, many pointed to insights they found helpful, but many more echoed the sentiments of the student who wrote, “I was miserable reading this book. I came to college very ready to learn... Then, I unfortunately had to take a ‘how to’ course and read this ‘how to’ book.”

Freshmen, of course, arrive at our first core class sessions scattered along a very broad swath of the infinite (and therefore infinitely interesting) continuum between novice and sage (a continuum which, in any case, resembles more closely a braided Alaskan river than the Kings River flowing purposefully out of its narrow canyon). If the purpose of a C course is to think about thinking, however, then all these individuals, no matter where on that continuum they fall, have something challenging to do. Also, fortunately for us instructors, there are many roads to the same end (that is, many intellectually compelling, generative, pedagogically fruitful ways to approach thinking about thinking), so we can choose among the ideas offered by rhetoric, cognitive development, epistemology, aesthetics, etc. to find ways to talk about writing that enable us to engage our students because they excite us.

Theory, I’ve discovered, motivates and informs attention to practice. From the first day, we need to weave into our classes an explicit discussion that transforms the notion of writing as process from a simplistic, mechanistic recipe of “prewriting/writing/rewriting” into an occasion to think in sophisticated ways about how we discover and communicate information and how we create and argue ideas. I teach (that is, I work to get students to think about and practice) the idea that when we talk about writing as process, we are exploring the essential qualities of knowing and thinking that characterize university discourse, and we are both analyzing and employing the methods and strategies that create that discourse. We are confronting the hugely complex issues, fascinating in and of themselves, of how we make, communicate, and argue about meaning.
Therefore, the skeleton which holds my core courses together (no matter their content) includes at least these four intricately inter-related and infinitely suggestive concepts:

1. A theory of how we make meaning by selecting and arranging or, to put it differently, by exploiting the tension between particulars and generalizations, and how we move from data to hypothesis, from opinion to judgment;

2. A theory of form rooted in the marriage between a writer’s intention (or purpose) and the audience’s expectations that, among other things, illuminates the importance of context and convention;

3. A theory of argument (or persuasion) which enlarges the notion of “spin” or verbal combat so that persuasion becomes a complex art, indispensable for creating civilizations and advancing knowledge—according to Demosthenes as valuable a gift to humankind as the gift of fire; and

4. A theory of language that provides reasons to care about style and words.

Other people have theories different from mine. All that matters is that one’s theories feed one’s imagination and intellect, motivate students to pay attention and ponder, and generate strategies that students see the point in trying out.

III. Designing Core Assignments: Examples Drawn from My Experience and Practice

In designing a typical course in any discipline, we arrange the syllabus so as to cover the content and to teach the things about that content that we think are important. Once we have organized the material to be covered, we then add writing assignments that will show us to what extent students have learned that material and are able to use and think about it. Take for example Lawrence Weschler’s essay, “Vermeer in Bosnia,” which will be the first text assigned in this fall’s Cowell Core Course on “Justice.” If I were simply teaching a course on the subject of justice, I might well prepare for discussion of Weschler’s piece by giving students a list of discussion questions such as the following, some of which might well turn into topics for writing assignments:

- How, according to Weschler, can the cycle of revenge be broken? To what extent do you agree?

- How does Weschler relate Vermeer’s paintings to the Yugoslav War Crimes Trials? Are the connections useful?

- Do you think art can be an antidote to violence and injustice?

I have no doubt that these questions could lead to lively discussion. But since I am teaching a C course and since Weschler’s essay coincides with the beginning of the quarter, I need to use his essay to introduce the concepts and terminology that I want to use throughout the quarter that will transform our study of justice into a study of how we can think about any challenging text on any topic.

To that end, I’ll ask students to follow a generic protocol for critical reading that we will apply all quarter to all texts, including those they write: to summarize Weschler’s
purpose, to underline things they don’t understand as they read, to note passages that they find especially provocative or interesting, and to think about whether he accomplishes his purpose. Beyond that, I will tell students to come to the first several classes with notes that will enable them to give their own answers (however tentative) to the following questions:

1. Do you feel as if you are part of Weschler’s intended audience? Is he speaking to you? Why or why not? If you don’t feel as if he is talking to you, can you do anything to make yourself become part of that audience? Do you want to? Do you like him? Do you trust him?

This set of questions accomplishes two goals: to teach strategies for reading difficult texts and to make students conscious of the relationship they establish with their audiences when they speak or write. I suspect that the first thing that will happen as we begin to discuss these questions is that some students, referring to their notes about what they don’t understand, will explain that they don’t feel they are included in Weschler’s intended audience because of his vocabulary and obscure references to history and art. At that point, I probably will divide the class into groups, see how many of the questions of fact (and vocabulary) can be answered if several students work together, and then reassemble the class to address their remaining questions. Along the way, we’ll discover that some questions are not matters of fact at all and need to be recorded for discussion later. And we’ll consider (in passing) whether some of the things students don’t know can safely be ignored or sufficiently deduced from the context. By then, the larger questions of Weschler’s persona (his ethos) and the options we as readers have in choosing a stance towards any text, as well as strategies for understanding and engaging difficult readings, will have been explicitly addressed while, with any luck at all, we will also have learned a great deal about Weschler’s content and our own knowledge of and attitudes toward that content.

2. How does Weschler decide what to include in this essay and what to leave out and in what order to put things? In other words, how does he select and arrange his material?

From the very beginning, I want to be sure that we are asking the same questions about the assigned texts as we will ask about students’ texts. Every time we discuss a student draft in class or small groups, I’ll ask readers this same question. A slightly modified version of it (“How did you decide what to include and where to start and where to stop and what order to put things in?”) will appear on almost every self-comment sheet that students turn in with their essays. (Another version of the same question, suitable for analyzing texts where it may be inappropriate to invoke authorial intent, asks, “What is the effect of what is included, what is omitted, and how things are ordered?”) All the variations of this question immediately lead us to consider the relationships between purpose (or effect) and meaning, meaning and form, and meaning and style. Furthermore, the question leads us to consider options and choice and how choosing a different option might change the meaning or effect. It helps us all understand what Weschler is saying and what he wants to do to his readers; it helps us understand how a
piece of writing that in a few pages mentions a huge range of enormous topics nonetheless achieves focus and unity (or, I might say, constructs "a plot"); and it gives us a way to discuss how Weschler chooses to tackle the very same challenges that we all face when we set out to say something meaningful about a vast topic. By the time we are done, I hope we will have established a rich vocabulary for talking about intention, form, and style and also will have explicitly rehearsed techniques for observing a text accurately and analytically—David Bartholomae’s “reading with the grain” which provides the foundation for moving on to interpretation and judgment (“reading against the grain”).

3. Weschler never explicitly tells us his definition of “justice.” What definition of justice do you think he assumes? Give specific evidence from his essay for your answer. Are you willing to accept his implied definition?

This question lets me introduce another set of terms and concepts crucial to our discussion of analytical reading and persuasive writing. First, we need explicit language that will generate analysis not only of Weschler’s argument but also of our arguments about his text and about the essays that we write about his text. The generic questions that result in such an analysis begin with questions about claims, assumptions, and evidence: what is being assumed? what is being argued? what reasoning and examples are used to make readers seriously consider the persuasiveness of the claims?

Second, we consider the nature of the act of definition itself, one of the principal tools we use to know and shape the world around us. What questions do we always need to ask when we are attempting to define something? And how is defining “justice,” say, different from defining “velocity”? Or is it?

By the end of this discussion, we have generated two lists of generic questions that can be used in many situations and contexts—the first, a heuristic for analyzing a text’s appeal to reason (its logos), and the second, a heuristic for constructing or analyzing a definition. My pedagogical goal is to try not to supply specific questions about a topic but rather give students access to the template (intuitive for me until I consciously work it out) which allows me to generate discussion questions in the first place.

Designing my entire core course syllabus is a process of using the approach illustrated above to devise a sequence of assignments that work together in relation to the C Requirement’s Educational Goals. I haven’t completely worked out my assignment sequence for this fall yet, but I probably will begin with three relatively short essays (with no required revisions) to help establish concepts and vocabulary (as described above) and to give students a chance to begin to locate themselves in relation to the topics of justice and of thinking about writing about justice. These short papers also allow students to become familiar with my way of responding to their writing, to get a sense of what I (as the local incarnation of university discourse) want, and to adopt certain conventions that can be learned quickly (for example, essays need titles; quotations need page numbers; if it makes sense to use “I,” use it; etc.). These short essays give me a
sense of where everyone is starting from and commence a conversation with each individual about their ideas and their expression of those ideas in writing.

Probably the first of these papers, to be written right away, if possible before our discussion of Weschler’s essay begins, will ask students to describe an instance in which they experienced or observed justice or injustice at work. I’ll explain that their purpose in this essay will be to make readers (the rest of us) understand why they feel the way they do, even if readers might themselves feel differently. In the second paper, due at the end of our discussion of Weschler, I’ll ask students to explicitly state the definition of justice implied in their first paper and to explain how that definition is similar to or different from what they believe to be Weschler’s definition of justice. Readings, written preparation for discussion, discussions themselves, and the lecture on Weschler’s essay will provide a rich context for this second essay as well as opportunities to gather and try out ideas and approaches.

After the initial short papers, I’ll assign two longer papers with required drafts and revisions designed to allow us to discuss and rehearse some of the fundamental moves of university discourse in the context of assignments that resemble types of assignments often given in courses across the disciplines. The first engages students in considering and grappling with the challenges of assignments that ask them to read a text or observe data and come to a conclusion. The second asks students to respond to a specific question. In each case, I first present the assignment in the form that students might encounter it in a disciplinary course; then in class we analyze the assignment and discuss ways of approaching it.

IV. An Assignment that Asks Students to Come to a Conclusion about a Text or Texts They Have Read or Other Data They Have Been Asked To Observe

I designed Paper Four for the third and fourth weeks of my section of the Cowell Core Course on Justice. The text, *Twilight: Los Angeles 1991*, by Anna Deavere Smith, is a collection of dramatic monologues Smith created from hundreds of interviews with a wide variety of people connected directly or indirectly to the disturbances in Los Angeles after a jury found police officers involved in the Rodney King beating to be innocent.

**PAPER 4**: in 4-5 pages (at least 1000 words) write a paper which reflects on issues related to justice by comparing some of the speeches in *Twilight*.

That is the bare-bones assignment, the way it might sometimes appear in another course, probably with a list of suggested topics appended, for example: “consider how speakers connect justice and power” or “consider how and why different speakers describe the police in different ways.” In class, we begin by analyzing what this assignment is asking us to do, figure out strategies for generating ideas, and formulate together a list of the qualities that a “good” (i.e., effective) essay responding to this assignment would have.
to have. Here is my first amplification of the original assignment, followed by my assignments for class discussions.

PAPER 4 is a 4-5 page essay (at least 1000 words) which explains to the rest of us the most interesting idea, insight, argument, or hypothesis that you discover by doing an analytic comparison of the speeches in Twilight. Your essay needs to explain your conclusion (or conclusions) carefully and also show how the evidence in the speeches contained in the text of Twilight makes your conclusion a reasonable, arguable conclusion worth serious consideration even if everyone else might not fully agree. (Specific examples and quotations from Twilight will be necessary both for making a clear explanation and for supporting your interpretation of the speeches.) Remember that conclusions can be tentative and complex and contain paradoxes and ambivalence so long as you make those complexities clear.

Note: Comparison, contrast, and close reading are processes by which you arrive at, illustrate, and support the conclusions that you want us to understand and think about. They are usually not ends in themselves.

Here are the day-by-day class assignments that will ensure our discussion of the text is also a discussion of strategies for thinking and writing about any text.

Oct 13 (Weds)
Read the Introduction, Timeline (p.257), Prologue, and first two sections of Twilight ("The Territory" and "Here's a Nobody"), which will take you through p. 80.

Come to class prepared to present three different ways to put the speakers in these two sections into groups and to explain which way of grouping the speakers seems most interesting to you and why. One of your schemes for grouping the speakers needs to include all the speakers in these sections. The other two schemes can leave speakers out. For example, one obvious scheme that would include everyone would be to divide the speakers into males or females. Another, which would not include everyone, would be to take the speakers who have personally experienced violence and put them into groups — as many as you need — according to their different responses to their experience. There is no limit to the number of groups you can use in each scheme. At least one scheme should be directly related to our discussions of justice and how it is defined, and perhaps even to a question you raised in Papers 1, 2, or 3.

Question: Can you put yourself into any of the categories or groups you create? What about any author or character we've discussed so far?
At a workshop, a core instructor asked a question that comes up often: “My students complain that my journal and discussion assignments are busywork. What can I do to make them take these assignments, which are supposed to help them write better papers, more seriously?” First, be sure the assignments indeed are not busywork, that you can justify them, and that they represent a kind of activity that you yourself would find valuable were you to address the assignment. Second, consider my response when a student comes to class with three completely boring, unproductive schemes for grouping *Twilight*’s characters and then complains about the assignment. I say, sweetly, “Did you really think I would assign busywork? How can I help it if you turn what I assign into busywork?” And then you hope that the discussion will prove your point.

Oct 15 (Fri)
Finish reading *Twilight* -- the final three sections, "War Zone," "Twilight," and "Justice." Add speakers to your existing categories if possible, but also consider whether these new speakers suggest new schemes or groups. Come to class prepared to talk about what ideas, insights, hypotheses, or questions you’ve discovered by comparing groups or by comparing speakers within a group or by the process of grouping itself. In other words, what might be the purpose of your Paper 4? In class, everyone will sign up to give a 3-minute talk on one of the monologues that seem important to you as you’ve thought about your groups and Paper 4.

Oct 18 (Mon) -- Talks on *Twilight*. Look closely at your monologue. Help the rest of us to understand what seems important, interesting, or puzzling to you when you carefully observe its details.

Oct. 20 (Weds)
9:30 am sharp – We’ll meet in the Stevenson Event Center to hear a lecture on *Twilight* by Paul Ortiz, Professor of Community Studies. Take notes so you remember information or observations that add to or challenge the conclusion/s you came to in your draft or stimulate your thinking about justice and *Twilight*.
A draft of Paper 4 is due at the lecture. You’ll need two copies of this draft – one to turn in to me (just the draft – no folder this time) and one to take to your writing assistant and/or to work on yourself.

By the way, I define “draft” for students this way: what you would turn in if a final version of the essay were due.

7 PM – Required showing of a filmed performance of *Twilight* with commentary and clips from the actual events. Stevenson Event Center. As you watch, jot down words or phrases that will let you remember specific characters, scenes, information, or insights (yours or others’) that
confirm, add to, complicate, make you question, or change your mind about the conclusions you've come to.

Most of us have a certain resistance to changing our minds. Moreover, students are often so concerned about finding a thesis and being clear that they are reluctant to modify a position they have taken even when they have new information or insights. I try to counteract the understandable urge to hang on to what one has by explicitly talking about revision as a way of thinking more deeply that is employed by even the most brilliant among us. Looking and then looking again is not only part of the so-called "writing process" but more fundamentally a crucial part of how we learn, come to understand, and create.

Oct. 24 (Fri)
In class we'll discuss your ideas about *Twilight* as a work of art (the book, the film) as opposed to "reality" and talk about whether and how the film and lecture changed, expanded, confirmed, or shook up any of your images or conclusions. Also, we'll finish the presentations on the monologues. (Be sure to include any revisions to your presentation made necessary by the lecture or film.)

Oct 25 (Mon)
Your revision of Paper 4 is due in my office by 4 PM. Turn in your draft with my comments and your final version in your folder containing Papers 1, 2, and 3. Include a note to me in which you:

1. state the purpose of your essay – that is, what do you want your readers to understand, learn, think, feel, believe, or at least seriously consider after reading it?
2. explain in detail how your revision is different from the draft;
3. and list at least three questions about your essay that you would like me to try to address in my comments.

As you revise, look over comments on Papers 1, 2, and 3 as well as on the draft of Paper 4 so you can make use of advice I've already given you. And be sure to reread not only the speeches you refer to in your draft (to see if you have represented them accurately and if you still believe what you've said about them) but also others that you haven't referred to that might challenge or complicate or deepen your conclusions. Also be sure to look carefully at the General Comments.

I invented General Comments (an example follows) not only to save time but also to give students the experience of reading and applying suggestions rather than simply "correcting" by rote according to marginal instructions. Instead of writing the same thing over and over on individual drafts, I keep track of things that come up in many drafts for a specific assignment, write General Comment to address them, attach a copy to each student's draft when I give them back, and refer to them in discussions.
Relatively able writers often need as much help learning to do meaningful revision as do less effective writers. The trick to getting students to take revision seriously is to have them experience the way even the very best first drafts can be used as stepping stones to another draft that is more insightful or more lucid or more ambitious than the first draft.

**General Comments on Drafts of Paper Four**

1. Begin by considering how you can make your essay more insightful, more true, more persuasive, and more effective. Think back on the conference you and I had about how you might approach revising Paper.

3. Ask yourself the same kinds of questions I asked you.

2. **Reread the assignment** to be sure you are doing what it asks for.

3. **Reread all the speeches you refer to** (and the introductory comments) with careful attention to detail. Have you represented the speakers accurately in your essay? Have you made their context and subject clear? Would they agree that you have understood what they are saying? (Note: speakers in the "Prologue" and "The Territory" are not referring directly to the King beating or the 1992 disturbances.)

4. Examine your claims and conclusions. Do you have enough evidence from *Twilight* to make them persuasive? Are they complex enough to account for your data or are they too simple and general to explain that data? Would you be able to examine your ideas in greater depth if you limited the scope of your discussion?

5. Think of objections or questions your readers might raise and address them. Also reread as much of *Twilight* as possible and imagine objections or challenges that other speakers might bring up with regard to your conclusions. How would you deal with them? **Consider including a new speaker or two who complicate and challenge your conclusions.**

6. Think about the order of your points. Would another order make more sense? Might it be useful to arrange your discussion point by point rather than speaker by speaker? Are there places where you need to divide and develop your paragraphs? Remember that you may well need to talk about one speaker — or one category of speakers — for more than one paragraph.

7. **Hint:** it often helps to outline your draft as a way to check whether its plot (its order, its transitions, the arrangement of your supporting evidence) makes sense.
II. Editing
1. Check for clarity and coherence. Are things still in your head that readers need to have on the page? Do your sentences make literal sense? Can readers follow your train of thought as you move from paragraph to paragraph and sentence to sentence?

2. Check Hacker or another grammar/style handbook for the correct way to punctuate titles (when do you italicize and when do you use quotation marks?) and quotations.

3. When you quote the speeches, you must preserve Smith's line-endings since she presents the speeches as free verse. In long quotations, reproduce them just as she writes them. In shorter quotations when you are running the lines together, indicate line-endings with a /.

4. All quotations must be introduced (and it's very important here to indicate who is speaking) and need to be followed with the page number.

5. In formal prose, refer to adults by their full or last names – Rudy Salas or Salas (not Rudy), Rodney King or King (not Rodney).

6. Be sure your pronouns refer clearly to a noun that comes directly before them. Can readers understand exactly what you mean every time you use "this" by itself?

7. Remember that spell-check will not fix there/their or then/than, parent's/parents', etc.

8. If you know you have trouble with sentence punctuation, read the relevant sections in Hacker and then read your paper once slowly out loud paying attention only to the sentence punctuation. If you're not sure about your punctuation in a particular sentence, let me know that in the margin.

V. Professor Todd Newberry's Second Fieldwork Assignment from Biology 1A (1992) (From Writing and Learning by Virginia Draper)

In Appendix A at the end of this section, I have included one of Professor Todd Newberry's Biology 1A assignments from 1992. Like my Twilight assignment above, Professor Newberry's Second Fieldwork Assignment gives students strategies for moving from particulars (in this case field observations) to a conclusion (a" prediction" or hypothesis) to a revision (or test of the hypothesis). We core course instructors can learn things about our assignments from looking at this writing assignment from a science course, and we can also see more clearly how, if we talk explicitly about the ways we are thinking about a body of content, there is a better chance that students will be able to apply their core course experience in other contexts.
VI. An Assignment that Asks Students To Respond to a Question

As before, I first give the assignment for Paper 5, designed to follow Paper 4 above, as it might appear in any course:

Paper 5 — A 4-5 page essay of at least 1200 words in which you answer this question: In the PBS film of *Twilight*, Cornel West talks about the difference between optimism and hope. West defines optimism as an assessment of the present or a prediction for the future that rests on evidence and reasons that rationally support the conclusion that things have gotten better or that they will get better. Hope, according to West, is grounded on faith that exists in spite of the evidence. To what extent do you think Silko’s *Ceremony* is an optimistic novel in West’s sense of the word?

In addition to building on our discussion of the role of definition in discourse, this assignment complicates the analytical moves we have been making so far by asking students to do something very common in university discourse: examine something by applying to it an idea articulated by someone else.

As with all the essays I assign, we begin by developing strategies in class for approaching Paper 5 and a list of criteria that effective essays would meet. The last time I used this assignment, I asked students to write down strategies as we talked about them. Knowing what I know about the quality of the notes most students take during class discussions, in this instance I decided to distribute my own notes to demonstrate how discussions can be useful if one takes advantage of them to records ideas. We spent almost one entire class session generating questions and talking about why they would or would not be interesting to pursue. Some students raised the possibility that they could not answer the question “yes” or “no,” so then we talked about developing complex responses and about how a complex answer is not the same as saying that all answers are equally persuasive. We also spent some time discussing the arguments of a student who challenged the usefulness of West’s distinction in relation to *Ceremony*.

In the process of exploring and assessing approaches to this assignment, class discussion illuminated the content of Silko’s novel. It also revealed the advantages of sometimes asking everyone to write about the same thing.

My Notes from Our Discussion of Strategies for Paper 5, With My Suggestions Interspersed

1. To deal with an assignment like this one, we start by examining the question. What sub-questions or issues do we need to explore before we can begin to formulate an answer? (1) We decided that the question about whether the ending is optimistic or merely hopeful (or neither) requires us to ask questions about change: what and who has changed? What is the nature of these changes? Are they permanent or temporary,
fundamental or superficial, real or imaginary, some of each? (2) Would it be useful to consider different aspects of the novel separately when weighing whether, at the end, it is optimistic (as defined by West)? For example, does the end justify believing that the future will be more just than the past for some or all of the characters? Happier? More under control? (3) How would different characters answer the question of whether the ending is optimistic? Would the answer depend on different definitions of "better"? What sort of an answer does the narrative as a whole seem to want to leave us readers with?

[More questions relevant to Paper 5 will come up as we discuss and think about the novel. Write them all down! As you read and reread Ceremony, keep your questions in mind and a pen in hand. List incidents, passages, images, etc., that you notice that will help you come up with answers or theories. In other words, gather evidence, data, illustrations, examples, reasons. Write down the ideas (possible answers) that occur to you as you read.]

2. In your essay, explain your answer to the assignment's question and provide evidence and reasons to persuade your readers (us) that your position is reasonable, probable, and significant. Also, try to anticipate and answer objections that your readers might have as they read your theory. Remember that you need to account for evidence which would seem to point to a different answer from the one you are giving.

3. In class, some of us wanted to explore the possibility that the evidence for optimism is mixed or that on balance reasons for optimism outweigh reasons for pessimism (or vice versa) or that one feels optimism for some individuals but not for the world in general or something completely different from any of these.

[As you formulate an answer to the assignment's question, remember that your answer can be tentative and may need to be complex. Also, remember that you don't have to cover all the possible reasons for your answer in equal depth; instead, you can choose to focus on a particularly interesting or important one. In this case, explain in your introduction that this is what you are doing. Make your focus (another term for purpose) explicit.]

4. Also remember that there is no one "right" answer to this question but some answers will be more persuasive than others and some answers might be wrong. Your challenge is to try to make your answer as persuasive as possible so that your readers will think about it seriously and learn from it, even if in the end they can't agree. Some claims about the novel may turn out to be simply wrong — for example, claims that are contradicted by clear evidence in the text. And also,
some arguments are going to be more persuasive than others. (Why more persuasive and how? That's the subject for yet another class discussion!)

VII. A Sequence of Assignments from Harvard that Incorporates Research

My intention in including examples of assignments is to provide a stimulus for ideas. Seeing how others do things inspires me to look again at how I conceive of and design my own assignments, how I integrate thinking about writing and learning about content, and how I try to make the processes of thinking and writing sufficiently explicit and general for students to see how to use them in different contexts. The most evocative, instructive example I have seen lately of a sequence of writing assignments that accomplishes these goals and incorporates research comes from a lower division Harvard course called "The Atmosphere," taught by Professor Steven C. Wofsy. I have included the assignment sequence below in Appendix B.

Anyone who is teaching a C2 section of a core course can learn a great deal not only from the way this assignment sequence is designed but also from the way the assignments are explained. They explicitly teach thinking about thinking and concepts of purpose, perspective, convention, and persuasion. They show how strategies of accurate and critical reading are also heuristics, that is, ways to discover ideas for one's own writing. They illustrate the intellectual moves of participants in university discourse so as to make it possible for students to practice these moves in other situations (including, I would maintain, courses in, say, history, politics, sociology, or literature). And I'm interested in how closely this sequence from a science course resembles my Writing 1 assignments that require research.

Looking at this assignment sequence from Harvard University reminds me of the ways my core course assignments can be relevant to participating in the discourse of a variety of disciplines (including the sciences) — and demonstrates that even Harvard undergraduates benefit from the explicit instruction these assignments provide.

VIII. In Conclusion: My Ten "Rules" for Writers

In the process of trying to assess the effectiveness of my teaching, I came up with this list of things I want my students to learn in all my courses about writing, theirs and others'. One could become discouraged by the inevitable realization that no item on this list is ever mastered once and for all; each must be revisited again and again. Progress takes the form of an upward spiral (evoking Burke's repetitive form) — a continual return to the same things only on a different level -- rather than a neat arrow of straightforward forward motion. For my part, I enjoy the lack of closure.

1. In writing, everything depends on purpose and context. To write without intention is to have no way of deciding what to put in and what to leave out and how to arrange things. To write without an understanding of the context -- the conventions, the audience, the shared assumptions, expectations, and language of the discourse community -- is to risk irrelevancy. Good writing arises from both the
generative force and the challenging constraints of wanting to do something to or for someone.

2. Good writers know the rules and exploit them. There are plenty of good reasons for breaking rules and violating conventions, but power over the rules derives from knowledge, not ignorance. Being unintentionally funny, for example, is very rarely an empowering experience.

3. It’s hard to write when you don’t care. Most writing, in school and out, is assigned writing. Good writers make it their responsibility to figure out how to take ownership of an assignment, how not to be bored, how to become intrigued with excellence of craft even in those instances when they cannot find inspiration in substance.

4. Readers can see only what’s on your page, not what’s in your head. Use this knowledge in deciding what to do about everything from unexpressed assumptions to vague pronouns.

5. When you run out of ideas, ask questions. Good writers learn how to sustain a dialogue in their heads. To do that, they have to be able to generate questions as well as answer the questions of others. There is nothing easy about becoming a virtuosic creator of the questions that allow one to generate the abundance that, in turn, allows one to write by pruning rather than by stretching.

6. It is important to watch how authors write while you read. Learn from the writing you admire.

7. In the great majority of cases, good papers writing isn’t just written; it has been revised. To take advantage of the peculiarly generative nature of the written word, that is, the way, for most of us, writing stimulates a kind of perception and thought that we cannot achieve when we think or speak without writing, writers need to learn to use drafts as necessary spring boards toward greater clarity, deeper insight, more effective expression.

8. Writing is exciting and satisfying when you work hard enough to surprise yourself by writing things you didn’t know when you started, things that you would not have observed or understood or discovered had you never written.

9. A piece of writing is rarely ever finished. You just run out of time. There are two sides to this particular coin. On the one hand, if you start an assignment late, you leave yourself little time to even begin to see what is possible. On the other hand, if, after working long and hard, you still see the great distance to go, celebrate your accomplishment and be glad that deadlines give you permission to rest.
10. Not too much, not too little, but just right . . .
This may be the most important principle of all, its locus classicus not Goldilocks but Aristotle himself. Good writers must come to understand that the ability to write well rests on developing an inner sense of proportion and sufficiency in relation to purpose and context. Aristotle writes in the Rhetoric, "Nowadays it is said that the narration should be rapid. Remember what the man said to the baker who asked whether he was to make the cake hard or soft: 'What, can't you make it right?' Just so here."

In the end, I am trying to get students to see how complicated it is to develop the sense of "just right" that, for good writers, must take the place of, or go deeper than, rules. I am asking them to search for insight and depth even when doing so means that they risk (temporarily, I hope) losing hold of hard-won yet possibly stultifying clarity. I am acknowledging that there are many different forms and standards and purposes; that students' perception that their teachers "want different things" is both accurate and liberating, not an invitation to cynicism but rather a challenge that good writers see as simply the way things are and must be.
Appendix A

An Assignment that Asks Students to Come to a Conclusion about Data
(From Writing and Learning: A Handbook for UCSC Faculty by Virginia Draper, 1993)

Biology 1A–1992
Second Fieldwork Assignment
by Todd Newberry, Professor of Biology, UCSC

Report due to tutor/coach, week of October 12
Revised report due in section, week of October 19

Your first fieldwork sent you looking for twenty species of birds. Your report told us the date, time, and weather, and the habitats ("kinds of places") you visited, and then provided merely a map of the places and habitats where you looked, a list of species that you saw (or as close to species as your identifications could get), and some clear way (preferably graphic) of linking your bird list with your map.

This second fieldwork assignment carries the first one a big step farther. We want you to pose one prediction that compares birds and their habitats, and to go back into the field to test your prediction. And we want you to report your findings in a brief paper that, unlike your first report, has a strictly standard scientific research-report format.

Doing Science:
Making Predictions and Testing Them

You already have heard a lot in class about organisms and environments—about what organisms are and what they need and what they do and how they "cope with their predicaments," about what the environment is and how organisms live in "webs of circumstances," and so on. In your fieldwork, you will apply some of these theoretical classroom lessons to specific, practical, natural situations.

You have visited some habitats and found some birds. Now you must make some interpretive statements (hypotheses) about how birds "fit" into their habitats. That is, you must try to relate (correlate) some birds' traits with the kinds of places where they live. Specifically, we want you to compare two habitats with respect to some trait of some of the birds that live in them.

Rather than just speculating, you must turn your hypotheses into predictions. Predictions are statements that can be confirmed or contradicted by "critical observations." Observations that test predictions are called "critical," because they are "crises" for hypotheses and their predictions. In other words, critical observations that contradict predictions are not "wrong." Rather, the prediction that these observations contradict is wrong. Observations that contradict predictions force us to make up alternative hypotheses/predictions about the matter at hand, and these alternatives must be tested in turn by more critical observations. So our hypotheses and their predictions really direct our observations, and vice versa. Think about this. It is this back-and-forth between hypotheses, their predictions, and the questions and observations that test them that carries a scientific investigation along.

We set up a critical observation by turning a prediction into a question that this observation can answer with a "yes" or "no." Questions that begin with
"Why" or "How" may be scientific, but they can’t be answered "yes" or "no," and so they can’t test predictions—they can’t tell us whether a prediction is true or false. In this fieldwork assignment, you first must make a hypothesis that generates a prediction that takes the general form of "Such-and-such a habitat is correlated with such-and-such a bird or site." Then, you must make a careful observation that answers your hypothesis, posed as a question, with a prompt "yes" or no.

All this rigmarole may seem awfully forced and stylized. It is. But it gives you the big advantage of an orderly method in what otherwise could turn into a lot of floundering:

first observations >>> hypothesis >>> prediction >>> "test" (critical observation) >>> "yes" or "no."

Orderly, but getting from each step to the next is very hard work! If you are like the rest of us, in science you need all the help (like an orderly method) you can get! That is why learning this method as a key skill matters.

Predictions for this week

You have looked at some birds and at their habitats. What hypotheses/predictions can you make about what bird-traits differ between two habitats? You are bound to flounder getting started, as in any unfamiliar routine, so here are three (well, mediocre) examples. You cannot use these examples as your own hypotheses/predictions; these are just to get your brain started.

— More kinds of field birds than forest birds have white outer tail feathers: yes or no?
— Arboretum birds generally are of smaller species than Farm birds: yes or no?
— Along the edge of the woods, birds that tend to stay on the ground are drabber than birds that stay up in the thickets and trees: yes or no?

Notice that none of these questions asks "why" or even "how." Instead, they all ask, "is it true that?" Each one is a statement that invites a prompt, observational "yes" or "no": fast investigative feedback, fast tests of predictions.

Now, from the bird-list you compiled in your first fieldwork, make up several hypotheses/predictions that compare two different habitats with respect to the traits of birds that live in them. To get started, you may want to return to one or more first-trip locations and generate your hypotheses/predictions there. Sometimes just quietly observing ("watching and wondering") will help you think more subtly. As you try them out, narrow your predictions to two and finally to just one. This one prediction is the one your second fieldwork’s critical observations should test: "yes" or "no."

Observations

Now you must test your prediction by making observations that will test ("yes" or "no") your prediction. As you can see from our examples of predictions/questions, observations are likely to involve comparing two habitats, not concentrating on a single one. (Why?) So you must go back out into the field, compare two habitats, and observe birds there. You must investigate. Hmm—problem: how can you choose your species without biasing your observations either for or against your prediction? For now, we will leave this as one of your challenges. Hmm—another problem: how to deal with mixed results? For now we will leave that, too, for you to wrestle with. (Using statistics begins to make sense; statistics tries to handle exactly this problem.) You may not have much confidence in your observational data, especially if this is your first try at research. Don’t fret about this timidity, but do keep scrutinizing your prediction. After all, your prediction decides your choice of observations. Is your prediction as precise, keen, sharp, and clear as you can make it? When you phrase it as a question, does it ask exactly what you intend it to ask? Well... okay. As you gather your data (notes), you are already on your way to the second half of any bout of investigative reporting—a report.
Your Report

This assignment has two purposes: to get you to pose and test a scientific prediction (while taking good notes), and to get you to report your work in standard scientific research-report format.

Essays about science—general articles, research "reviews," textbook chapters—vary widely in their format. But most actual scientific research reports obey strict rules about format. We will hand out a published research report, to help you get a feel by example for those rules. We have marked it up to show you its structure. Use that report as a model of how to set up your own report, even though yours is about a very different sort of investigation.

Why these rules? A scientific research report's predictable format lets readers find their way through difficult and unfamiliar information. If the format follows the rules, you always know at least what the author is trying to tell you about—methods, data, speculation, etc. No matter how bright your ideas are or how keen your observations or how sharp your prediction or how shrewd your critical observation or how clear your conclusions ... as an investigative reporter you face this fact: if your reader can't follow your report, you have failed to do your whole job. So, despite your desire to tell it your own way and despite all your successful essays in the past in other situations, you must use "standard research-report format" in Bio. 1A.

Let's briefly outline the purpose of each section of a standard research report. And, in bold letters, we explain what we expect from you in this particular report.

• Title. Too often neglected! Craft a non-cute, informative title that uses "key words" to tell your reader what the paper is about. A good title lets a browser decide quickly whether to take the time to read part or all of your paper. "Exercise #2" would drive away a saint. So would "Tales of Wee Traits"!

Make your title direct, informative, and unpretentious. It's your report's headline.

• Introduction. This tells your reader what your report intends to do and why. The introduction usually includes background information and presents your project's objectives in that context. To ease your work in this report, you needn't include the usual "background" in your introduction. (In fact, our specific instructions, just below, won't let you!) The introduction begins the report, but it usually is written last (yes, last), once you are sure what results you will report and discuss (that is, once you are sure of what, in fact, your introduction is going to introduce).

For this report, your entire introduction must be only one sentence long! This one sentence should present your report's purpose—for example: "This report tests the prediction that..." or "This report answers the following question about correlations between birds and their habitats..." Tell your reader exactly what this report is going to do. One well-written sentence will do just that.

• Materials and Methods. What did you do, and how did you do it? What was the date(s)? the weather? What habitats did you study? what birds? what traits? How did you study them—what methods, equipment, teamwork, etc., did you use? Here is where you tell your reader the conditions and mechanics of your project. Remember to be both complete and concise. And remember that maps, charts, and other graphics often can inform your reader more clearly than words can.

In this report, your entire section on materials and methods must be no longer than 1/2 page of text, so you must be concise! (Graphics and their captions can go beyond that half-page.) Include dates, times, locations, weather, names of coworkers, equipment, how you went about your observations, special statistical or analytic methods... in other words, what you did.
Results. Here is where you present your data and observations. What happened? What did you actually observe? The heart of the results section may not be its text at all but rather its tables, graphs, figures, box-scores, and other "graphics." Refer to that "model" research paper we handed out, to see what we mean. Your text may just direct your readers to the graphics—telling them which ones say what. By stressing graphics, not text, your results will be sure to report strictly news—not opinions, not conclusions. But even though you try to keep results strictly to "the news," you probably will include material that belongs, instead, in your discussion. But try to avoid it, anyway. Ask yourself about every item in your results: Am I reporting my data or am I comparing/analyzing/interpreting them? If you are doing more than just reporting your data, you are discussing them, and what you are saying should go into your discussion. Sometimes results vs. discussion can be a hard call—okay, try that much harder.

In this report, results presents the observations that test ["yes/no"] your prediction about correlations between habitats and some trait of some of their birds. Just that. Any further comments about your data go in your report's discussion. Limit results to 1/2 page of text, plus captioned graphics as needed beyond that. Each use of graphics—data arranged "visually" into graphs, maps, tables, charts, comparisons, etc.—needs its own caption that declares briefly, simply, clearly, and exactly what that particular visual presentation of data is about.

One other thing about "graphics": It is not "artwork." Graphs, box-scores, maps, parallel-column comparisons, "ethograms"—these are simply ways of presenting confusing or repetitive data clearly. Making good graphics takes ingenuity—so that the result doesn't take that much ingenuity to read! But good graphics can pay off for you as much as for your reader; a clear table or graph won't let you get away with vague thinking or hide behind fuzzy writing.

Discussion. Your results report what you found out. Your discussion examines those results. Put another way, your results report about nature, your discussion reports about your results. Your data don't just "speak for themselves." They need your interpretive help in your discussion section. Size them up. What patterns in nature do they reveal? Could your methods have affected your results? Your discussion is where you try to make sense of your results. Try hard to keep your discussion about your results, not about you; don't let your "discussion" turn your report into a diary! You are a reporter, and the story you are reporting is strictly about some habitats and their birds, not about you. (You don't read the newspaper to read about reporters.)

In most research papers, the discussion eventually connects the results to wider matters than the particular research project itself. For example, in the professional research-report that we have handed out, notice how Dr. Potts' discussion of his Porites study talks about the relevance of his results. We don't expect you to make connections like these in your discussion this time, doing so involves knowing the relevant research and much more—evolutionary theory, ecological theory—that still lie well down the pike for you. But you should know that discussions are where these links are suggested between one's data and the wider world of fact and theory. In effect, the discussion is where you try to answer that awful question "So what?" about your results, and sometimes this answer can spread very widely indeed!

Limit your discussion to less than one page. Confin your discussion strictly, absolutely, to your results. That is, while your results describe Nature, your discussion describes only your own results. What trait-habitat correlations do your data seem to suggest? How strongly? What have
your results done to your hypothesis/prediction? 
Try to connect your data (results) with what you 
have learned in lecture about “the ecological 
niche,” “webs of circumstances,” or other such 
theoretical or conceptual generalizations. 

There! Your report should total no more than two 
pages of text, plus as many pages of captioned graph- 
ics as needed.
— an informative title,
— a tiny (one-sentence) introduction,
— a short section on materials and methods (less 
than 1/2 page of text, plus as many captioned 
graphics as needed),
— a short report of results (also less than 1/2 page 
of text, plus as many captioned graphics as 
needed),
— and a succinct discussion of your results, 
where you ask “So what?” about your data. 
Your discussion, too, should be less than one 
page of text, plus as many captioned graphics 
as needed.

Brevity pays (despite our long assignments!) if it 
forces you to reckon the usefulness and clarity of 
every written word, if it makes you condense results 
into tables and other “visual” graphic devices, and if it 
makes you take an editorial knife to your work.

Your report will feel “too short”: just two pages of 
text—just four or five pages all told, even with all the 
graphics. But it isn’t too short. The research-report 
format permits brevity and clarity. So will graphics, 
ingenuity, and ... an early start.
Appendix B
An Assignment Sequence that Incorporates Research

Science A-30: The Atmosphere: Writing about the Atmosphere
Professor Steven C Wofsy, Harvard University

Writing for Science A-30 Assignments
Cassandra Volpe Horii, Head TF
(Thanks to Elizabeth Abrams, for providing this material)

Science A-30 introduces you to the physical, chemical, and biological processes that regulate the earth's climate and atmospheric composition. The course also addresses global atmospheric changes produced by humans, now major contributors to the earth system. Many of the atmospheric phenomena that we will study—global climate change, the deterioration of the ozone layer, air pollution, and acid rain—are caused to varying degrees by human activity, sometimes well-understood, sometimes not. These phenomena have far-reaching economic, social, and political implications. A crucial purpose of Science A-30 is for you to gain a background in the science of the atmosphere in order to assess possible consequences of human activity on our environment and ourselves.

The course has two major components: applications of fundamental laws of physics to atmospheric phenomena, and writing assignments using your knowledge of basic science to dissect scientific articles and to analyze environmental issues.

• Lectures and homework emphasize physical and chemical principles and analysis of the quantitative observations on which science rests. Quantitation is the essence of science and the foundation for Science A-30.

• Writing represents a key component in every area of scientific inquiry, but is especially important for a course in which science, social issues, and policy intersect. Scientists write for a variety of reasons: to record and interpret data and explain methods (the lab report), to share information with other scientists (the scientific article), to communicate with the public (the Op-Ed essay or article in the popular science press), to explain concepts to students (the textbook), and to raise funds for research (the grant proposal).

The writing you do in Science A-30 will help you distinguish between scientific fact and unproven hypotheses, and see economic, social, and political arguments as distinct from scientific evidence, and evidence as distinct from scientific claims. It is my hope that you will develop critical skills that will be life-long assets for scientific and policy literacy, useful to anyone intent on living as a responsible world citizen in today's changing global environment.
Writing for Science A-30 Assignments

by Cassandra Volpe Horii, Head TF

Overview

A carefully designed sequence of writing assignments gives you a chance to delve into a specific scientific issue related to a major atmospheric environmental problem. In a series of assignments leading up to a term paper, you will uncover the underlying science of your issue, follow the debate over the interpretation of scientific uncertainties, and determine the social and political implications. These assignments take you through the process of writing the term paper step-by-step, following the same path as any scientist or policy analyst reviewing the current state of knowledge on an environmental issue. The results of every assignment will be applied directly to completion of the term paper.

SUGGESTED TOPICS

- Anthropogenic Climate Change Detection: Has the earth’s climate changed due to human activities? How has it changed, and how can we tell? Investigate how we can distinguish climate changes due to anthropogenic activity from natural climate variability.

- Climate Change Forcing and Prediction: Why might the earth’s climate change? What are the physical phenomena that control climate and how do they interact with one another? Research these complex interactions with a focus on how we can use our understanding to predict future climate change.

- Paleoclimate: How has the earth’s climate changed over history? Why? Looking at the historical record presents many scientific challenges and rewards of better understanding what may happen in the future.

- El Niño: The El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is a climatic oscillation of global proportion. Investigate the issues involved in enhancing our ability to predict ENSO events and the current limitations to our forecasting ability.

ASSIGNMENT 1:1

Introduction to the Critical Summary

This assignment introduces a method for reading and questioning a scientific paper. After learning this approach, you will be able to read a new article and determine the important scientific findings, evidence, methods, and uncertainties. Questioning a scientific paper in this way allows you to go beyond taking the results simply on the authority of the scientist or reporter and understand the differences between scientific fact, hypothesis, prediction, and uncertainty.

ASSIGNMENT 1:2

Critical Summaries in Your Topic

Using the same method learned in Assignment 1.1, you will write critical summaries of two primary scientific papers in your chosen topic area. After this assignment, you will be well on your way to completing the necessary reading for your mid-course paper.

MID-COURSE PAPER

Reviewing the Science

You will assess the state of scientific knowledge of your chosen topic using 4 to 5 primary sources from the sourcebook. The result of this assignment will be an in-depth review of the current scientific debate, as determined from your own critical reading of the important articles.

ASSIGNMENT 2.1

The Public Debate

Using some of your own secondary sources, you will summarize the public debate surrounding your topic by looking into the political, social, and economic issues.

TERM PAPER

Putting It All Together

The result of integrating all of the previous writing assignments will be a 7- to 10-page paper discussing the scientific and public debates in context with one another, as well as your own conclusions and ideas.

Sourcebooks containing some of the most important and accessible scientific texts on these topics are available on reserve in Cabot Science Library and for purchase.
How to Write a Critical Summary: Questioning the Science

Assignments: (1.1) Introduction to the critical summary (one 1-page paper) (1.2) Critical summaries in your topic (two 1-page papers)

The one-page critical summary is a powerful tool for understanding scientific texts. By taking a close look at the research on an issue, you will build a solid foundation for discussion of the scientific and social debate in your mid-course and term papers. This is a critical summary because you are not only reading the text; you are questioning it in the same skeptical way that scientists evaluate their own and others’ work. You will turn in three critical summaries of scientific texts during the first half of the semester. Your task in the critical summary is to identify and summarize the main scientific findings and supportive evidence in the text. These fall into four categories:

1. Hypothesis: What specific ideas are being tested in the scientific study? What questions are the authors seeking to answer?

2. Observation: What was measured? What physical data are presented? What methods were used?

3. Prediction: Do the authors make a prediction or extrapolation into the future? How? Based on what physical principles or observations?

4. Uncertainty: How confident are the authors in the resulting observations or predictions? What are the main sources of uncertainty? How general are the findings?

The hypothesis is the main topic of the text. The scientific findings may show the hypothesis as valid or invalid, subject to uncertainties, or may answer the question posed in the hypothesis. Every scientific finding has some associated uncertainty or range of conditions where it is true. The observations and predictions may each be part of the main findings, depending on the nature of the hypothesis. They may also be part of the evidence. For example, if the question I sought to answer in my study were “How big is the earth?” then my observations of the earth’s average circumference would be my main findings. The evidence for the validity of my measurements would consist of how, when, and where I made them (i.e. with a ball of twine as I flew around the world once, or with a satellite taking thousands of extremely accurate measurements over the whole globe every day for a year). If my hypothesis were “The earth will shrink to half its size in the next 50,000 years,” then a prediction of how the size will change would be my main finding, supported perhaps by my computer model and the data used to validate it.

In order to write a critical summary, you should first read the abstract or introduction of the text. An abstract is a concise summary of the main findings and supporting evidence to be presented and usually follows the title of the article or chapter. Begin to question the text by asking about hypothesis, observation, prediction, and uncertainty. See how much you can learn through a careful reading of the abstract or introduction. You may also want to read the conclusion of the text at this time, where the findings, supporting evidence, and uncertainties are often restated. Make a note of anything that is unclear to you, any aspects of the scientific study that you were unable to identify, or any areas that need more detailed information in order to be understood.

As you read the main portion of the article, keep your notes in mind. Reading an entire scientific paper can be challenging, even for scientists with different backgrounds! Remember that you are reading a record not only of the main findings and support as encapsulated in the hypotheses, observations, predictions, and uncertainties; primary scientific texts are also records of the detailed experimental methods required for other scientists to reproduce and expand the findings. Some of the details are not relevant to our goals in this course, so you may skim over them. Read in enough detail to clarify those areas you noted when reading the abstract or introduction and conclusion.

A one-page paper is not very long, so you should be concise and specific in your writing. The critical summary should be your own paraphrase and interpretation of the main scientific findings and evidence in a single text. State the hypothesis of the text right away in order to give your reader the topic of the text and a clue about the main results. In your writing, identify the aspects of the results and evidence as observation and/or prediction. Explain how the evidence addresses the hypothesis and supports the main findings. Carefully state the uncertainties or limitations on the results. If you can think of sources of uncertainty not stated in the text, include those as well. The uncertainties often become questions for further scientific research, and are at the heart of any scientific debate.

Some of the texts that you read may be “review articles.” Here the authors seek to bring together the individual findings of many researchers in order to make some broader conclusions about the state of scientific knowledge. These sources will be very useful as you progress toward the mid-course and term papers.
A critical summary of a review article also addresses the main findings and supporting evidence in the form of hypothesis, observation, prediction, and uncertainty. The only difference is that the results and evidence are an amalgam of the work of many different scientists as interpreted by the author(s). You should treat these texts in the same way as a research article written by one or more scientists presenting their own research.

**Reviewing the Science:**

**The Mid-Course Paper**

Assignment: Write a 5- to 6-page paper reviewing the state of scientific knowledge of your chosen topic using 4 to 5 primary sources from the sourcebook.

This assignment is intended to produce an in-depth assessment of the science of your topic. The goal is to integrate and interpret scientific information from multiple sources in order to provide a thorough review of:

a) what is known about the issue based on observations and physical principles;

b) what is predicted or extrapolated in the form of theories, models, and forecasts;

c) the scientific debate surrounding the issue.

Writing the mid-course paper will give you a chance to go beyond taking the opinion of experts at face value and understand the scientific debate from the inside out. Note that this kind of debate is based on (a) and (b), not on politics, economics, or speculation.

Your strategy should be to use the critical summaries that you have already written as a base. In addition, you will need to read one or two more primary sources using the same critical method as in Assignments 1.1 and 1.2. Once you have the scientific hypotheses, observations, predictions, and uncertainties outlined for each text individually, begin to compare them in order to piece together a comprehensive review. It is often helpful to look at the review articles and non-primary sources in the source book for further clues as to the key points of scientific debate. Scientific controversy usually revolves around uncertainties, limitations, and observations that seem inconsistent; examine your sources with an eye for these pointers.

Structure your mid-course paper as an essay, with a well-planned introduction, body, and conclusion. The thesis of your paper should focus on the nature of the scientific debate, touching on the observations, theories, and predictions as evidence. A mid-course paper written in this way can then be used almost directly in the final paper. You may include display items such as graphs, pictures, and tables with proper references to their sources. Display items are not part of the page count, but can go a long way towards clarifying a written description of scientific data in many forms. You should annotate your paper in a consistent way and include a list of references.

Appropriate citation methods can be found in the Harvard writing manual, *Writing with Sources*, available on-line at: [www.fas.harvard.edu/~expos/sources](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~expos/sources), or any other current style manual.

**Summarizing the Public Debate**

Assignment: (2.1) Policy summary in your topic (one 1- to 2-page paper)

In order to summarize the public debate surrounding the scientific issue, you will need to find your own secondary sources from the library. These may consist of newspaper and news magazine articles, policy documents, speeches, and other published texts. Use the same format for citations and a list of references as you did for the mid-course paper. The Harvard On-Line Library Information System (HOLLIS) provides access to a number of electronic indexes from its web site [hplus.harvard.edu/subject/indexes.html](http://hplus.harvard.edu/subject/indexes.html).

The most useful resources for this assignment (in alphabetical order) are:

- **Congressional Universe**
- **Environmental and Periodicals Bibliography**
- **Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe**
- **Periodicals Contents Index**
- **PolicyFile**
- **UnCover**

You will have already done three critical summaries and a mid-course paper on your scientific issue when you begin this assignment, so you will already have a good understanding of the scientific debate. As you summarize the public debate, make the connection between the science and the policy by exploring some of the following questions. Are the public discussions based on the scientific knowledge, or is the science poorly understood? What are the political, social, and/or economic consequences of the scientific uncertainties? How are policy decisions being made based on (or not based on) the state of scientific knowledge?
Putting It All Together: The Term Paper

Assignment: Write a 7- to 10-page paper integrating your assessment of the scientific issues (the mid-course paper), your summary of the public debate (assignment 2.1), and a discussion of your conclusions on your topic into a finished research paper.

The objective of the term paper is to produce a critical, in-depth assessment of both the science and the policy aspects of the earth's climate within your topic. Understanding the interplay between the scientific and public debates will give you the skills required for asking critical questions of the complex and vital climate change issues that we will continue to face during our lifetimes.

Use what you have written in the previous assignments and add your own conclusions about the issue. When making use of earlier assignments, you should incorporate them into the term paper in a seamless and organized manner to form a single, complete paper on the subject. You may, however, form sections to address different aspects of the topic. Your conclusions may address:

- How the state of scientific knowledge should be improved. Consider what specific observations or scientific studies are needed.
- The communication between scientists and the public. Are there difficulties in getting accurate, clear scientific information to those making political decisions? How can this be changed?
- What policy changes are needed, based on your evaluation of this issue?

This list is by no means exhaustive! Take your interest in the issue, think critically and broadly, and try to come up with new ideas as well.

The term paper should have the following components:

a) Title page
b) Abstract (200-300 words) summarizing the issue being addressed, the approach, and the conclusions
c) Table of contents
d) Term paper text (7-10 pp.)
e) Annotation (use any consistent format)
f) Display items (graphs, pictures, tables) — optional.
g) References, including sourcebook articles, secondary sources, etc. Use any consistent format.

You may refer to Writing with Sources on-line at
(—www.fas.harvard.edu/~expos/sources—).
V. After 30 Years, Revising "What Students Don't Realize"

Don Rothman, Oakes College

Note: In the May, 1978, issue of College Composition and Communication, Don Rothman listed and briefly discussed the things he had discovered that his students did not realize about writing:

1. that writers rewrite—many times.
2. that often published articles are proven wrong, unconvincing, badly written, etc. Not everything that's published is a model of good prose.
3. that not all writing has to be the conclusion of a process. Writing often represents the writer's present position on a problem.
4. that not writing represents a creative, new position on a problem.
5. that university and college faculty often consult colleagues about first, second, and third drafts of essays. Students almost always work in isolation from one another.
6. that each field has some idiosyncratic stylistic demands with which writers should be familiar.
7. that most writers write for a specific audience.
8. that what they have to say is of value.
9. that writing is a revealing expression of what they learned during the quarter.
10. that criticism of their papers is not always criticism of them as people.

This effort at revision has renewed a challenge to answer the often posed question: “Isn’t it true that student writing has declined in the past ___ years?” Of course, I was asked that question 30 years ago, and those who asked it were sure of the answer, as they are now. I suppose that if I ever get around to pulling out three decades worth of student papers from my office filing cabinet, I’ll have an empirical response. In the meantime, my revision of What Students Don’t Realize, an early published attempt to boil down some insights derived from less than half a dozen years of teaching, has led me to wonder if there are other important aspects of academic writing that students in 2005 don’t realize. I have found myself asking whether what current students don’t realize about writing illuminates cultural and institutional changes that have occurred since I began to teach.

The first thing that comes to mind is that students today express surprise that being persuasive in a piece of writing often requires one to represent respectfully the intelligent opposition. In fact, students seem astounded to learn that presenting clearly what others have written on a subject is the price of the ticket into an on-going conversation in the academic world. Another way to put this: many students assume that expressing their opinion is, in itself, sufficient to win other people’s attention and respect. Some even tell me that having to represent what others’ have written will really weaken their argument. I don’t know if this is a sort of adolescent solipsism or the consequence of how infrequently students hear adults, especially political leaders on television, discuss the influence of others’ thinking. So, put simply, students don’t realize that writing persuasively requires awareness of one’s reader and of the context in which one is writing. In the university writers signal their seriousness by acknowledging and interacting with others’ views. It may be that in 2005 acknowledging others’ views is more likely to be seen as evidence of uncertainty and weakness than it was 30 years ago. Surely President Bush exemplifies this defensive rhetorical posture.
The second thing that comes to mind is that students today believe that they must prove something in an essay. "I'm going to prove that art therapy is effective," one student tells me, even after I have spent considerable class time talking about the value of illuminating a subject. In my earlier version of *What Students Don't Realize*, I talked about how academic writing often speculates about complex subjects. It occurs to me that in 2005 students attach the academic essay to proof more often than they did 30 years ago, and such a limited conception of academic writing requires a good deal of unlearning. Put simply, students don't realize how much more interesting it can be to explore the origins of a problem, compare and contrast opposing solutions, and distinguish between diverse analyses than to try to prove something that usually isn't amendable to proof anyway.

The third thing that occurs to me is not so much what students don't realize, but what they do realize but can do nothing to change. They realize that faculty across the disciplines expect them to write well but almost never provide instruction in writing in their field. They realize that overworked graduate student teaching assistants praise their barely adequate prose without offering guidance for improvement. So, in 2005 students perceive the contradictions between the widespread lament over poor student writing and the paltry institutional response. Students who are or could be doing honors theses in the sciences, for instance, find themselves quite bewildered about what constitutes honors level writing in their major. Students realize that writing really matters, but they don't know how to prompt the institution to provide instruction responsive to their evolving needs.

In re-reading my earlier inventory of what students don't realize, I find some cause for celebration. Unlike my students in 1978, my students in 2005 know that revision is not a form of punishment imposed by teachers. In fact, they know a great deal about the process of writing, at least the theory of writing as a process. This is good news, since instead of having to persuade them to revise, I only have to help them make it meaningful.
VI. Advice for Working with ESL/Bilingual Students in Core Courses

A. Guidelines for Working on Language in ESL/ELL/Bilingual Students’ Writing
Cissy Freeman, Crown College

Who are these students?
Recent immigrant bilingual (or multilingual) ESL / “English language learners”
Long-term immigrant bilingual speakers of (non)standard English
“Generation 1.5”:
— children of families who migrate between their home country and the U.S.
— U.S.-born children of immigrants in linguistic enclave communities
— speakers of “other Englishes” (e.g. “Spanglish,” “Taglish,” Chinese English, urban nonstandard varieties influenced by other languages)

Work on language in ESL/ELL/bilingual students’ writing within the larger context of rhetorical purpose, awareness of audience, thesis, coherence, etc.

Dual goals:
1. Helping students gain strategies for editing and correcting errors
2. Helping students increase their awareness of language structure, vocabulary and conventional collocations—i.e., increase their grammatical competence and stylistic repertoire.

A basic premise: Language proficiency evolves in the context of saying something meaningful. Control of language grows with control of content and purpose.

What doesn’t help much:
-- dealing with language before content and organization
-- trying to deal with all the errors at once
-- doing the correcting yourself
-- exercises and worksheets

Some recommendations:
• Emphasize communication first; help in the composing process. Try to build confidence. Start with ideas, and save the “grammar” work for revised drafts.
• Acknowledge what has been done well. Notice good sentences, effective uses of language—as well as problems.
• Resist the impulse to mark every error. When there are a lot of problems, focus on one or two main things: errors that seem to interfere most with your understanding as a reader, errors that seem most patterned or prevalent in the writing. (See “Hierarchy” handout)
• Keep in mind that some errors are more important than others. Concentrate your efforts on errors that are more global, systematic, patterned and prevalent (those that interfere most with meaning), rather than those that are local, idiosyncratic and few.
• Have the student do most of the work. Don’t do all the correcting yourself and don’t substitute your own language for the student’s. Instead, as much as possible, try to provide guidance for the writer to do his/her own editing. For example:
  --Point out the type of errors you see and where you see them (in marginal notes).
  --Show choices in expressions or ways of structuring a sentence.
  --Model, in one or two paragraphs only, the type of editing that needs to be done.

One method for one-on-one sessions in conference—Honing in on the target:
(a) Sit quietly while the writer reads aloud sentence by sentence, stopping to make her own corrections. The pencil stays in the student’s hand.
(b) If she passes over an error of the type you’re focusing on, stop her (“Look at that sentence again”).
(c) If he/she doesn’t see the error, locate it (“Look at this word”).
(d) If he/she still doesn’t know what to do, talk about it and provide the correction, or show some choices.
Doing a couple of paragraphs this way models the editing process you can ask the student to practice in the rest of the paper.

Some advice to pass on to ESL/bilingual writers
Do freewriting, drafting, revising, without worrying about grammar and correctness.

Do revising at first only for content and organization.
  Let time lapse—a day or two if possible. Get away from your draft.
  Edit for language on hard copy only. Read aloud—to someone else or yourself.
  Concentrate on one thing at a time and go over it multiple times if you need to.

Short simple sentences can be OK; long sentences can be OK; variety is good.

Go ahead and take risks. Experiment with sentence structures and ways of saying things that you might not be sure about, then point these out to your tutor or mark them in the margins of your draft for me (the instructor) to comment on.

What “sounds right” is usually a good guideline, if you listen to exactly what you’re written. Slowly and carefully reading aloud sometimes helps.

Read A LOT. Copy down important sentences and new vocabulary. Write about what you read, during and after your reading.
Get a good dictionary and use it to check on word meanings and spelling. If you prepare your paper on a computer, use a spelling checker, but don’t rely on it to catch all errors (It won’t). Do not use or pay any attention to the grammar checker. Get a handbook of grammar and usage, and use it as a reference.

A good dictionary for students and teachers of ELL students: 
*Longman Advanced American Dictionary* (Longman/Pearson Education Limited, 2000). Besides the usual dictionary information, entries include conventional expressions in which a word participates, with a lot of example sentences showing how the word is used.
B. A Hierarchy of Some Common Areas of Difficulty for ESL/Bilingual Writers
(moving from most global and systematic to most local and idiosyncratic)
Cissy Freeman, Crown College

• Errors in overall sentence structure (including fragments, run-on sentences, errors in subordination or coordination, and sentences that don’t make sense)
  Examples:
  This conclusion is unquestionable to me since unnecessary difficulties or problems, such as becoming disabled and losing a job or missing school.
  Although I know how to read and write very well in Vietnamese, but I’m still having trouble in English writing style.
  Which arouses the question that how can this society continue if everyone in the society is selfish?

• Mixing up verb tense and time reference
  Examples:
  I remembered when I write an essay in high school I took a few drafts to get all my ideas organized.
  I live in Taiwan for the first fifteen years of my life. When we arrived here in the United States, we do not know any English.

• Missing word endings (-s, -ed, etc.): subject-verb agreement, verb participles, noun plurals and possessives, count/noncount nouns
  Examples:
  He regret the sad thing that happen to his friend.
  Then I am satisfy. I have work on this paper for four drafts.
  one of her main reason. ...many specific evidences

• Other Errors in verb forms
  Examples:
  Never before did we ever had a society advance so quickly.
  He didn’t concern about that problem. He thought he can survived from it.
  Anxiety cannot be existed in a peasant culture.
  It is the emotion which is only belong to the human.

• Count/noncount nouns and misused articles (a/an, the)
  Examples:
  We have to write paper in certain way.
  It is important to have a base of writing such as grammars and spellings.

• Word form (part of speech) errors
  Examples:
  What is the different between fear and anxiety?
  China was in a danger situation then.
  Anxiousness people worry about their future.
• Inappropriate prepositions
  Examples:
  I agree to his idea that Alien was a good movie.
  My birthday comes on September.

• Unconventional expressions or words used inappropriately
  Examples:
  As a conclusion, I find myself thinking...
  Fear is where one can expect death any moment. He can feel it coming in his brain.
  Fear of being a ruled-out has occupied one's mind.
C. Strategies for Responding to Student Writing
Mark Baker, Oakes College

When responding to student writing, avoid overwhelming students, especially those who had difficult writing experiences in high school or are at a point in their academic careers when they are beginning to learn develop essays while still working on any number of sentence level concerns.

Some thoughts and suggestions:

1. An effective response will ask a probing question connected to the overall theme/argument/point of the essay. For example, where do you want to know more about a certain idea? Is there an example that the student can expand on? Does the paper's controlling idea need to be clearer or more precise? With this in mind, many instructors—whether they are responding to papers written by experienced or less able writers—first read generously for ideas, for overall purpose or plan, development, coherence. Students like (and need) to feel as if they are being heard; comments along the way that take their content seriously encourage them.

2. An effective response will compliment the writer and or express a genuine reaction of some sort (surprise, empathy, pleasure). Often instructors will restate (in their own words) what they see as a writer’s purpose or premise, how they have defined the task, what they have attempted. Commenting on what is successful in the paper (primarily in terms of ideas, development, and organization) is useful prior to noting areas of concern.

3. Questions and comments written along the way and in the margins should point to and be consistent with the paper’s endnote.

4. Comments and endnotes should offer a recommendation/strategy for addressing points raised in the endnote. In addition, an endnote can contain praise for evidence of applied learning—that is, evidence that students have built on what they learned from writing a prior essay.

5. Points in an endnote should be related to and build on each other—for example, what worked, what gave you trouble, what the writer should do next, etc.

6. Avoid asking questions or giving directions without offering the “why” behind your statement. For example, if you ask a student to say something differently, make sure to show/explain (briefly) why such a change is necessary or would enhance a piece of writing.

“Responding to Student Writing,” Chapter 14 in the third edition of Erika Lindemann’s A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers, contains particularly useful advice about generating margin comments, constructing an endnote, complimenting students on their writing, and recommending revision or changes. The chapter also contains some strategies to help
students with self-evaluating their work, something many instructors ask their students to do prior to submitting a piece of writing. (237-238)

As with other issues we choose to note on a student paper, it is best not to just mark an error but rather to show students a strategy (either on the draft itself or in conference or both) for finding and fixing the error. Avoid correcting sentence level and editing errors on student papers! We want to work with our students so they learn strategies for locating and understanding the nature of various errors themselves. Some instructors will mark recurring errors in two or three paragraphs, and then either place a check mark (√) next to subsequent sentences that contain errors (or a certain error), or ask the student to find and fix all other errors (for instance with subject-verb agreement and verb tense) throughout the rest of the paper. These tactics vary from instructor to instructor, and will certainly depend on how instructors use conference time.

If you are recommending a major revision of a paper (primarily in terms of content and structure), you may wish to not mark any sentence level or editing errors since students may remove them on their own as they rewrite. Oftentimes, errors involving diction, punctuation, sentence structure/clarity/focus (especially by native speakers of English) arise when students have not fully thought through or are not entirely comfortable with their ideas. Once the idea is clear in the student’s mind, errors may disappear.

Finally, the goal should be to provide useful and honest feedback that boosts a student’s willingness to carry on, desire to revise and knowledge of how to do it, and sense of current (or future!) accomplishment.
D. Editing and Proofreading Strategies  
Mark Baker, Oakes College

Below are some strategies for assisting non-native and bilingual speakers of English with editing and proofreading skills. It is important not to overwhelm students with the responsibility of having to find and correct all errors in each paper they write; rather, one or two issues or skills per paper, especially for those students struggling the most, would be appropriate and manageable.

• **In assisting students with subject-verb agreement:**
  This requires recognizing relationships between subjects and verbs. Have students review several paragraphs, underlining each verb and circling its corresponding subject.

  Example: He regret the sad thing that happened to his friend.

• **In assisting students with verb tense and time reference:**
  One effective tool in assisting students with tense is to have them begin by looking for and identifying obvious time expressions in their sentences (terms like yesterday, today, in the future, next year, in the past), and then consider if the corresponding verb carries the correct tense. From there, students can look for the less obvious (and sometimes more difficult to find) time expressions, matching them up with and checking the tense of their corresponding verb.

  This activity can begin during a conference; then students often can confidently continue on their own. Some students even create a chart of all the verb tenses (present, future, past, etc.) and fill in commonly and less commonly used time expressions next to the corresponding tense.

• **In assisting students with count and non-count nouns:**
  A helpful, useful, and easy line to remember is: count nouns can never go out alone—they must always be accompanied by something else (a number, -s/plural ending, an article, a qualifier (many, some, few), etc.). Non-count nouns can—and often do—go out alone. A short review of various and obvious (and then not so obvious) count and non-count nouns often gets students who are struggling with articles and count nouns on the right track. Students may also wish to start and keep a list of the words they find most troubling, and to verbalize why the word (and the idea or meaning behind it) can or cannot be counted.

• **For students who are struggling with sentence fragments and/or run-together sentences (comma splices):**
  Often times, students who are working on building longer, more complex sentences—and working on sentence variety—have run-together sentence errors in their writing. In addition to helping these students review the nature of independent and dependent clauses, it is important to acknowledge that these errors may well be a result of their attempt to write more complex sentences or different types of sentence.
Developing Ideas for College Level Essays

Amy Weaver, Stevenson College

While I believe the advice here works for all students, I am particularly interested in the challenges faced by non-native or bilingual speakers of English as they approach college writing assignments. One of the on-going quirks of assignments in many classes is that they ask students to pose as authorities on a topic of typically new acquaintance, to faculty who often are, in fact, authorities. This pattern puts even many of the most confident students in a bind. For the less secure, the task can be overwhelming. To help students recognize that they do have an authorial leg to stand on:

• Make them write all the time.
This can obviously take a number of forms, from in-class freewrites to structured semi-formal short assignments. The more students have written about a topic, author, book, etc. before they actually begin the essay, the more ideas they’ll have to draw from as they develop their essay.

• Make the complex simple.
If our goal is to have students delve -- in essay form -- into a sophisticated concept in the course material, ask them first what it means in their own lives. For example, to begin a conversation of Platonic notions of justice, I often ask students to write an informal assignment on the meaning of the word to them. How do they measure the justness of a particular act/law/punishment/ etc.?

• Make the simple complex.
Continuing the example from above... We’ll then look, in class, at the definitions posed by three or four different characters in a dialogue. How do they differ; to what extent? and for whom are these differences important; etc.? Ideally, at this point students are less scared of writing the essay, realize they have a fair bit to say about justice, and are willing to weigh in with Plato on the matter.

• Make long projects short.
If the goal is a 15-page research paper, break the project into small pieces -- not just as recommended strategy, but as required segments. For example, students might write an annotated bibliography, then a literature review, then a position paper, etc. before they construct the final work. By the time the final paper is due, students might find themselves more than half way done.

• Make short projects long.
Linking previous essays together, presuming a general theme has threaded through the class, can be a rewarding assignment for students. Revising and editing multiple essays and writing a preface that gives context for what follows can make the homework-assignment-ness of writing essays less obvious and give students the sense that they’re writing for more than to prove they did the reading.
• Make everyone revise.
This one probably goes without saying, but revising and crafting an essay are valuable tasks for all students to engage in. Singling out ESL students as the only ones who "need" to revise feels more like punishment. Similarly, if possible, require that all students meet with a Writing Assistant.

• Make everyone revise their strongest work.
It's what we do... And it helps break the revision-is-punishment perception (which was likely a reality for students in high school classes).

A few related thoughts:

I’m constantly amazed that, by-and-large, our students do what we ask of them. From this exchange — we ask, they do — it seems to me we have a great deal of responsibility to think through what we’re asking. That said, I try to remember a few things as I’m creating assignments:

• Students often perceive writing essays as a task, undertaken only when compelled, and as proof of the completion of another compelled task. Relatedly, once the essay emerges from the printer, they think they’re done. At best they might revise their weakest piece, rarely their strongest.

• Students often think of a “thesis” as a location in their paper — the last sentence of first paragraph, for example — without understanding its role in structuring their argument. Relatedly, many students have written extensive literary analyses and narrative book reviews, but rarely have constructed arguments rooted in their own ideas about a text.

• Students do have rich, wonderful, horrible, interesting experiences to bring to the writing table. But I want them to be able to make the turn from personal narrative to analysis. Starting with their own experiences — as in the “justice” examples above — allows students to link a seemingly obscure and distant work to their lives and begin a textual analysis.
F. Resources for Writing Assistance in the Core Courses at UCSC
Mark Baker

Writing Assistance for ELWR Students
Students who need to satisfy the Entry Level Writing Requirement (formerly Subject A) by retaking the Analytical Writing Placement Examination in November have access to writing tutors during the core course for a fee of $69.00 (EOP students and some low-income students are exempt from the fee). Because of budgetary constraints, non-EOP students are limited to five hours of tutoring for the quarter; EOP students can work with a writing assistant for up to two hours per week, for a total of 20 hours for the quarter.

Core course instructors should encourage their students to take advantage of this opportunity by taking the time to explain that writing assistance is an important component of the core course and that it contributes significantly to a student’s progress in satisfying the ELWR. Writing Coordinators at each college provide instructions at the beginning of fall quarter explaining how students sign up for a writing assistant (tutor). (Students enroll in the program via a web-site administered by Learning Support/EOP. Writing Coordinators will provide instructors with the current site address; students can also find a link from the EOP web-site.) Writing Coordinators assign tutors to each ELWAR instructor and will go over helpful procedures for assigning and scheduling tutors.

Writing 22A
Writing 22A is a 3-unit workshop offered each fall to students who exhibit significant traits in their writing characteristic of non-native speakers of English. The course is open both to students who have not satisfied the ELWAR and to students who have, as well as to appropriate C2 students. Writing 22A instructors review grammatical patterns of written English that commonly challenge basic writers and work with students to improve their editing skills. Several sections are offered each fall. Students who received the “E” designation on their AWPE exam should be strongly encouraged to enroll in Writing 22A, as should other students who are struggling with sentence structure, verb use, and proofreading skills. Writing 22A instructors will help students develop strategies for editing the papers they are writing for their core courses.

Writing Coordinators will update faculty on the number of Writing 22A sections as well as time, location, etc. Core instructors can also consult the schedule of classes. Enrollment in Writing 22A is on a first-come, first-served basis. Please encourage your students to enroll at the beginning of the quarter and, if one section is full, to go to a different one.

Additional Support
Some colleges offer drop-in writing tutoring, which is usually available to any student from any college. As College Writing Coordinators information about tutoring in the colleges, they will share it with core instructors.
VI. On Assessment
Carol Freeman

It is tempting to dismiss "assessment" as an invasive educational fad that calls for quantitative measures of over-simplified "outcomes" in the name of financial accountability. My research on assessment, however, as well the opportunity to design and implement various assessment projects within the Writing Program have given me a different perspective. I have come to think that:

(1) a program needs to take responsibility for creating a definition of assessment that is useful for its purposes and for designing methods of assessment that are complex enough to provide valuable information and insights. To those ends, assessment can be defined as a sophisticated process of intelligent research, analysis, and evaluation that provides useful information to a variety of people.

(2) assessment needs to be explicitly incorporated in all aspects of our teaching and learning and practiced by administrators, instructors, and students alike.

(3) assessment strategies themselves need to be assessed to be sure that they give us the direction and evidence we need to make decisions and to be sure that they provide opportunities for us to think in specific, informed ways about how our courses can be richer, how our teaching can be more effective, and how our students can become more self-sufficient and sophisticated learners.

In its best, most useful sense, assessment means being explicit and critically analytical about what we are trying to accomplish (the worthiness of our goals), about how we do it (the effectiveness of our methods), and about the results of our effort (the quality of what we accomplish or produce).

It seems to me that the Composition General Education Requirement creates the following occasions for assessment:

I. Assessing "The Educational Objectives of the C Requirement and the Specific Goals of C1 and C2"

This document, the result of considerable thought and consultation, should continue to be studied, defined, debated, discussed, and revised by College Provosts and core faculties and the Writing Program, with input from other interested UCSC faculty members. Its general language needs to be continually clarified by discussions of actual practice and by the development of specific, shared standards.

The Writing Program has developed an assessment protocol for Writing 1 (now Writing 2) that could be adapted by individual college core courses or used for assessing the effectiveness of the C Requirement as a whole. First, the Writing Program faculty worked together to develop a rubric for assessing essays written at the end of the course. (See Appendix C) For the last two years, we have gathered a random sample of essays
(one from each Writing 1 section), scored them together according to the rubric, and then analyzed and discussed the results. This process not only has provided valuable data (for example, the information that 90% of the essays received passing scores and that, overall, Writing Program faculty members employ reasonably consistent standards) but also has identified things that need to be discussed and perhaps changed (a significant difference in how individuals evaluated a particular aspect of students’ writing; the need for more effective pedagogy to address a specific problem). In other words, the process of assessment has turned out to be valuable in itself, apart from the data it provides.

II. Assessing College Core Courses

Each core course faculty needs to consider how to determine whether its course readings, lectures and other activities, and shared assignments effectively address the C Requirement’s goals, both in theory and in actual practice. In addition to the critical planning each college has always undertaken, it might be useful if the colleges and Writing Program were to develop and adopt common course evaluation forms for C1 and C2 courses, keyed to the C1 and C2 goals. Colleges might also consider taking advantage of the role faculty members from other colleges could play in serving as “outside” observers, evaluators, and consultants.

III. Assessing Individual Sections

Quite apart from official personnel reviews, core course instructors should take advantage of assessment opportunities provided by the Center for Teaching and, perhaps even more useful, increase the number of structured opportunities for learning from each other by visiting each other’s classes, not only sharing but also commenting on assignments, comparing comments on students’ papers, and so on.

The most important and fruitful assessment, however, is self-assessment. We all need to become researchers in our own classrooms who critically observe the effectiveness of our assignments and pedagogy and then change things when there is no evidence that they work. We all know the old joke about the definition of insanity—doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. (When was the last time that editing a student’s paper significantly improved his/her ability to proofread? Over the years, how many students have reported that they learned a great deal from a lecture?)

Given the hectic pace of the quarter, the temptation to reprint rather than revise syllabuses and assignments, and the time between one fall quarter and the next, I find that effectively implementing a regimen of assessment and revision requires a self-conscious effort and specific strategies. For example, I have learned to keep notes throughout a quarter on a copy of my syllabus to remind me of what needs to be changed before I teach the course again: “Remember that your instructions for the Reading Journal entries resulted in a lot of bullshit. Change them! Remember that talking in class about the manifestations of plagiarism, even with a handout, had virtually no effect on those students who didn’t already understand the concept. Try devising an activity in which students decide whether examples are or are not plagiarism and justify their decision.”
This doesn’t mean that I should abandon reading journals (or lectures or proofreading or whatever); it means I need to experiment and observe and revise.

Similarly, I’ve learned to do research on the value of my advice. “Don’t summarize” is unhelpful and untrue. So is almost everything I used to say about paragraphs, for example, “Change paragraphs when you change topics” or “Each paragraph needs a topic sentence.” Part of my role as researcher, I’ve discovered, is to figure out what rules students are following when they persist in doing things that make no sense to me.

In essence, the crucial questions confronting the teacher of a course about thinking, reading, and writing are questions for a careful, thoughtful, creative researcher. First, what does this class as a whole — or this particular student — need to know in order to become better readers/writers/thinkers? Second, what can I do that will make it more likely that they — or he or she — will learn these things?

IV. Assessing Students’ Work

There is already more than enough written in these pages (and in Bean) about responding to and assessing students’ work so here I’ll just mention three points that I keep repeating to myself. First, try to use the same concepts and terminology in assessing students’ work that we use in class to assess assigned texts. (It is no coincidence that these terms also appear in the Educational Objectives for the C Requirement.) Second, make criteria and their rationales explicit. I have had to train myself to set aside my annoyance at students’ perennial question, “What do you want?” Instead, by means of rhetorical judo, I need to turn it into an occasion to teach by treating the inquiry as the perfectly reasonable question it could be. The challenge, of course, is to know what I do want and why. What is the purpose of the assigning this essay? And what are the criteria appropriate for assessing it?

That leads to the third point. In his fine essay, “Toward a New Discourse of Assessment for the College Writing Classroom” (College English, 65 (2), November, 2002), Brian Huot reminds us that teaching students to accurately assess their own work must be one of our most important goals:

Being able to assess writing quality and to know what works in a particular rhetorical situation are important tools for all writers. A classroom pedagogy that encourages and highlights the evaluative decisions of writers, teachers, and peer-groups can help foster a new, shared discourse for assessment . . . The ability and responsibility for assessment is something that good writers understand, and it is something all successful writers need to learn. (171)

Lately, I have spent more time asking students to assess their own writing and that of their peers — to talk formally, in the context of revision, about what they are trying to do and whether or not they think they have succeeded. Appendix D is an example of an assessment form students use to comment on their peers’ drafts. Appendix E is an example of self-comment form that I ask students to turn in with their final draft; my assessment of their essay includes comments on the accuracy and usefulness of their self-assessment.
To underscore the point that we need to employ means of assessing students' work that is consistent with and furthers our educational objectives, I end this discussion of assessment with two quotations from David Bartholomae's syllabus for his first-year writing course at the University of Pittsburgh, included in *Writing on the Margins: Essays on Composition and Teaching* (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005):

> You will be evaluated in this course on the quality of your work as a writer. The evidence that you have learned to read closely and critically will be present in your writing—and particularly in revisions... A writer learns most by returning to his or her work to see what it does and doesn't do, by taking time with a project and seeing where it might lead... When I assess your writing I will be looking primarily at the progress from draft to draft. (292)

I will not put grades on individual essays. I will grade your performance over 14 weeks, but I see no reason to grade each and every piece you write. In many cases, I will be asking you to extend yourself and to do what you cannot do easily or with grace. It would make no sense for me to grade everything you do. (294)

The Writing Program (and a number of college core courses) have adopted a similar policy of not grading students' individual essays (except to indicate when work is not passing) on the grounds that doing so does not make sense in terms of our educational objectives. It is nice to know we are not alone.
Appendix C

ASSESSING STUDENTS AS WRITERS AT THE END OF WRITING 1

I. Does the writer produce the sort of essay called for in the assignment?
Yes ___ No ___

II. Using the following ratings, evaluate the overall quality of this essay in relation to Writing 1’s goals.
Rating of 1 – does not meet Writing 1’s minimum goals.
Rating of 2 – demonstrates satisfactory if at times marginal proficiency.
Rating of 3 – demonstrates clear competency.
Rating of 4 – demonstrates sophisticated understanding and execution.

III. Using the above ratings, indicate the extent to which this writer demonstrates his/her ability in the areas described in A through G below.

A. Ability to establish and maintain an appropriate purpose or coherent set of purposes in relation to the assignment and the audience. (Evaluate the essay’s form: its focus and coherence.)

B. Ability to employ appropriate and effective strategies of development to accomplish the writer’s purpose. (Evaluate the essay’s effectiveness: its success in describing/explaining/exploring/supporting/analyzing/arguing as necessary, using appropriate critical tools.)

C. Ability to anticipate and meet readers’ needs for context and clarity, given the demands of the assignment.

D. Ability to edit accurately.

E. Ability to employ an effective prose style.

F. Ability to cite others’ information, words, and ideas appropriately.

G. Ability to use others’ information, words, and ideas effectively.

H. As demonstrated in the self-comment form, ability to articulate appropriate criteria and apply them in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of her/his own writing.

IV. Using the above 1-4 ratings, evaluate the overall quality of this essay in relation to Writing 1’s goals.

Note: This draft is inspired and informed by “Criteria for Effective Writing,” Alverno College, Communication Department, 1998, and “The Critical Thinking Rubric,” Washington State University, 2000.
Appendix D: Response Form for Peer Assessment

Carol Freeman

PAPER 3 DRAFTS. Your name: ___________________ Writer’s name: ___________________

GROUP DATE AND TIME: ______________ Groups meet in my office in 210 Cowell. Before the
group meeting, read each draft and do the following, being as precise and detailed as possible.
(Use back side if necessary.) Group meetings are mandatory. Come prepared and on time.

I. As you read the draft, briefly describe your experience in the margins by indicating places where
you are convinced, enlightened, delighted, or made thoughtful, etc. or places where you are
skeptical, puzzled, or in disagreement, etc. Ask questions where you are confused or curious, etc.
DO NOT PROOF READ OR EDIT but do tell the writer if errors detract from the essay’s
effectiveness.

II. What do you understand from this draft to be the purpose or purposes or point of the article that
this draft is discussing?

III. What is the purpose (or purposes) or point of the draft you are reading? That is, what does the
writer of this paper want you as a reader to understand, learn, believe, think, and/or feel as a result
of reading his/her essay? Be specific!

IV. To what extent do you think this draft succeeds in accomplishing its purpose/s? Explain your
answer and give reasons for why you think the way you do, referring to specific strategies or
qualities or characteristics of the draft: its focus, form, support, style, ethos, pathos, logos, editing,
etc.

V. What do you think is the best thing about this draft?

VI. What aspect of the draft most needs revising to make the essay more effective?
Appendix E: Self-Comment Form To Accompany Final Draft
Carol Freeman

Your Name: __________________________ Your essay's title: __________________________

Please fill out this form as completely as possible and turn it in with your final draft. Use the back side if necessary.

1. What is the purpose of your essay? That is, what do you want your readers to understand, think, believe, and/or feel after they have read it? Be specific.

2. What were the strengths and weaknesses of your first draft? How did you go about revising it? Explain in detail how your final essay is different from your first draft.

3. How (if at all) has your experience in this class so far helped you to write and revise this essay? Refer specifically to ideas, strategies, and issues discussed in class, comments on your previous essays, responses to the first draft of this essay, or anything else.

4. Have you learned or thought about or practiced or done anything in the process of writing and revising this paper that you can apply (or think you will be able to apply) to your work in other classes? Be as specific as possible.

5. Is there anything in particular in your final draft that you are wondering or concerned about and would like me to comment on?