Chapter 7

Effective Practices in English: Specialty Supplies

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Introduction

English teachers often struggle over the best way to teach writing to their composition students. Writing, unlike some other disciplines, relies heavily upon the abstract and the subjective to give form and function to thought. It is this abstract and subjective nature that can make writing a difficult subject to teach. The reality of this concept is reflected in the long and arduous history of teaching writing,[1] and in the changes in pedagogy that have occurred in the last ten to fifteen years. Imagine a building that holds all the highly debated methods of teaching writing. You would see something constructed in several architectural styles – sleek modern rooms combined with those decorated with an antique look while still others contain only the shell, awaiting students to complete the design. Though the various pedagogies represented may not combine to make for one cohesive building style, students learn to write well nevertheless. Perhaps that's why some composition teachers throw up their hands and call the teaching of writing an "art."

If English composition instructors find writing difficult to teach and have argued long and hard about how best to do it, what about the rest of the faculty outside of the discipline who demand papers and other important writing assignments from their students? How in the world are they supposed to help their students master this mysterious process? Yet, with approximately 75% of incoming California community college students under-prepared for college-level English, and under 15% of those entering at the under-prepared level ever going on to complete a transfer-level course,[2] the instruction of writing is a matter for everyone. Remember, only approximately 28% of students with basic skills needs are actually enrolling in basic skills courses (see Chapter 1: Who Are Students with Basic Skills Needs for more detailed statistics). Where are the rest? Taking other courses where college-level writing is expected. As one community college professor once remarked, after learning about the difficulties in English faced by the under-prepared students flooding his campus, "So, what you're telling me is that we all have to teach writing." Yes!

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[1] "A Brief History of Rhetoric and Composition." *The Bedford Bibliography for Teachers of Writing.* Accessed: http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/bb/history.html

[2] Legislative Analyst's Office. (2007). *Analysis of the 2007-2008 Budget Bill: Education.* Retrieved from http://www.lao.ca.gov/analysis_2007/education/ed_22_6870_anl07.aspx

If you expect your students to write for you, understanding the strategies used by writing teachers may change how you shape your assignments and enhance the work you receive from students in your own courses. This chapter is written for basic skills writing instructors, eager for new strategies to try, for college-level instructors who demand writing of their students, and for anyone who has a desire to help students be more successful in writing.

Raising the Stakes: New Graduation Requirements

An added complexity to the current teaching of writing is the new graduation requirement in English. In 2006, a faculty-sponsored decision was made to raise the mathematics and composition requirements for students to graduate from community colleges with the Associate in Arts degree. Beginning in fall 2009, students must pass a freshman composition class in order to receive an AA degree. This decision was based upon recommendations and conclusions reached by a faculty task force appointed by the Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates (ICAS), which is comprised of the Academic Senates of the University of California, the California State University, and the California Community Colleges. The faculty task force distributed surveys to faculty who teach introductory or first year courses and gathered the results. Then the task force generated a report that "combines our colleagues' views with research and our collective professional experience to produce specific recommendations that will improve the level of literacy among first-year students in all segments of higher education in our state."[3]

With the advent of the new requirement (access them through the source footnoted above), many administrators and faculty alike are concerned about students' ability to achieve these standards. In order to help meet the new standards, colleges may want to consider revising writing courses that are one-level below freshman composition in order to help students smoothly and seamlessly transition from developmental course requirements to the more rigorous requirements of the freshman composition course.

Anne Fleischmann, English Department Chair at Sierra College, suggests that "developmental English classes focus on the integration of reading and writing, on academic literacy, and on teaching toward the college-level reading and writing skills of summary, analysis, critique, synthesis and research that students will need for freshman composition and for their other college-level classes."

Apart from course revision, colleges may wish to consider implementing additional programs or services that can help support and provide enhanced opportunities for students to succeed in meeting the higher standards of a freshman composition course. Some of these programs or services might include expanding tutoring services; implementing Supplemental Instruction programs; expanding advising, counseling, or mentoring services; and implementing programs that directly serve the needs of underrepresented minority groups or of low socio-economically disadvantaged students.

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[3] Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates (ICAS). (2000). *Academic Literacy: A Statement of Competencies Expected of Students Entering California's Public Colleges and Universities.* Retrieved from http://www.asccc.org/Publications/Papers/AcademicLiteracy/ExecSummary.htm

A Little Quiz

The new graduation requirements have made the teaching of writing even more important for basic skills writing faculty and for everyone else across the disciplines. Before we share some of the effective practices in this chapter, let's explore what you already know about the mysteries of teaching writing. Please take a few minutes to answer the questions below. The correct answers are found below the quiz and are explored in depth in the later sections of this chapter.

1. Research shows that students with basic skills needs have the potential of becoming far better writers if they have the opportunity to
     A. Practice writing often and producing much work
     B. Enjoy writing
     C. Examine professional writing
     D. Write about themselves

2. In addition, research has demonstrated that the successful teaching of writing includes
     A. Understanding of the writing process
     B. Pre-writing
     C. Revision
     D. All of the above

3. It is important for students to understand that the writing process is recursive because
     A. It makes it easier and more fun
     B. It makes students ask a lot of questions
     C. It defines the actual process of back and forth that writers go through
     D. It creates a linear function that writers go through

4. Contextualized learning is important to the teaching of writing because
     A. It makes learning abstract for students
     B. It allows students to learn in an individualized learning program
     C. It has been shown to have the potential for achieving greater student learning and success
     D. All of the above

5. Instructors can help students learn *how* to revise by
     A. Bringing in real student writing and examining it
     B. Bringing in professional writing and examining it
     C. Making up a fake essay and examining it
     D. Looking at all the punctuation, grammar, and usage errors

6. Which of the following techniques have been shown to help students learn to edit their essays?
     A. Using symbols in the margins
     B. Reading sentences out loud
     C. Reading sentences out loud from the bottom up
     D. All of the above

7. One way you can cut down on the amount of time it takes to grade essays is by ?
   A. Marking every error you see
   B. Marking commas errors one day and semicolon errors the next
   C. Marking only a few errors
   D. Marking only content errors

8. Some research-backed practices that have proven to be effective in teaching writing are
   A. Drill and practice
   B. Teaching writing with no context
   C. Active learning, guided discovery learning, group learning, contextualized learning, learning communities, integrated reading and writing, reciprocal teaching, Reading Apprenticeship, and the use of reading and writing centers
   D. All of the above

Answers to Quiz
1. A   2. D   3. C   4. C   5. A   6. D   7. C   8. C.

A Little More Background

As we said earlier, the last decade has seen major changes in how best to teach writing. Where once writing instruction revolved around a student's ability to understand and write various rhetorical forms (for example, comparison-contrast, argumentation, description and process essays), now many writing instructors rely instead upon analysis of reading material and synthesis of ideas from these analyses to formulate effective essays.

Not only has there been change in essay type over the years but also in the number of essays produced by students in any given composition classroom. Previously, many instructors expected composition students to turn in ten essays during a semester or quarter. Now, however, much more emphasis is placed upon revision of essays, so students may write fewer essays in all, say five, for example, yet heavily revise each of those essays. This process of revision is extremely important to the teaching of writing. Contrary to what many students believe, the finished writing product is not the first thing that is produced on the page when writing an essay. Author Fran Lehr reiterates the importance of revision: "Revision…is the heart of the writing process--the means by which ideas emerge and evolve and meanings are clarified."[4]

When instructors place a heightened emphasis on revision, they also become much more interested in the writing process itself because it becomes a concrete representation of what occurs when thought is transferred from head to hand. The diagram on the next page illustrates the writing process. If you are already familiar with the writing process and know its value in teaching students how to write, you can skip this section and move on to the next one in this chapter. However, if you are new to writing instruction or you are an instructor who wishes to teach the basics of writing to your students in

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[4]Lehr, F.(June 1995). "Revision in the Writing Process." *ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication Digest.* #100. Retrieved at http://www.indiana.edu/~reading/ieo/digests/d100.html

disciplines other than English, please continue on to learn how you can use the writing process as an effective learning tool in your classroom.

The Writing Process
Prewriting
The process of writing begins with some form of prewriting in order to generate ideas. This is one of the most important steps in helping students learn to become effective writers. Many students say that the most difficult part of writing is getting started. Prewriting is the "starting block" that allows students to effectively get off to a racing start with their writing. It gives them an appropriate starting place and helps them to generate supporting details for their entire essay.

After a topic is selected, sometimes students begin by making an outline. However, student aversion to outlines has grown so much over the years that often students' eyes glaze over and a loathing murmur escapes as one collective groan anytime the word "outline" is mentioned in a writing classroom. While the outline is still sometimes a necessary evil, for the emerging writer, it might be best to begin with other forms of prewriting instead.

Prewrite

Draft

The Writing Process

Revise

Publish
or
Hand in

Edit

Some effective methods of prewriting are brainstorming, freewriting, mapping or clustering, and using the journalist's questions. When using brainstorming, students begin by taking 10 minutes or so to write down everything that comes to mind about a specific topic. With brainstorming, students make "lists" of items about a particular topic, but they do so without stopping. Even items that may seem far-

fetched or barely relevant to the topic should still be recorded. They may become helpful later on as students begin to think about the supporting details they will use to develop their essays.

Freewriting is often an effective strategy for generating ideas about a topic because it allows students to write down absolutely everything that comes to mind about a topic. Freewriting differs from brainstorming because it is a continual process of writing where students do not lift pen from paper. They just continue to write one long sentence or a series of several sentences. They let their thoughts flow over a topic and write down anything and everything about that topic that comes to mind, no matter how silly or seemingly ridiculous the thought may be. Later students can go back over their freewriting and pick out ideas that seem to go together or that seem to support one general point. These ideas may later become supporting details for specific paragraphs in the essay.

Mapping or clustering is very helpful for students who are visual learners and need to see information in a specific diagram. Generally, mapping occurs when the student draws a circle in the center of the paper, writes the topic in that circle, and then generates other circles off the topic that become sub-points of the topic that appears in the center. If students wish to do their mapping on a computer, they can use Microsoft Word, click on "Insert," "Diagram," and then select the appropriate symbol. This way students can draw their mapping tool and fill in sub-topics via their computers.

Another popular form of prewriting is the journalist's questions. Students simply ask the following questions about their topic: Who, What, When, Where, How, and Why. Answering these questions helps students to gather specific information that they can use to later develop points within their essay.

> 🧠 Brainstorm
> ✏️ Freewrite
> 🗄️ Map or Cluster
> ❓ Journalist's Questions

Using the Writing Process

As illustrated on the previous page, drafting, revising, editing, and handing in or publishing all follow prewriting on the Writing Process diagram. However, it is important to note that the writing process is not linear. It is actually "recursive," which means that it does not start at one point, move to the next, then the next, etc. Instead, when we write, we begin at one point, say prewriting, then move to drafting and perhaps realize we need to brainstorm or research more information, so we move back to prewriting again. This type of recursive process is especially helpful to developmental writers, who may think that most published authors, including their writing instructors, are just "good" at writing and thus move smoothly from one stage of the writing process to the next without ever going back to the previous one. Diagramming the writing process for students, and demonstrating this process with actual pieces of writing, helps students to become more comfortable with their own writing. And it also helps them to realize that none of us, no matter how famous or good at writing, ever completes the writing process in a linear fashion.

Enough cannot be said about the importance of reiterating the recursive nature of the writing process. Equally important, however, is the use of real students' writing examples, mentioned above, in teaching your students how to become effective writers. In fact, research tells us that contextualized learning, learning that occurs by making information directly relevant to students through real-life experiences or examples, has the potential for achieving greater student learning and success. Contextualized learning

actually "makes the knowledge to be mastered visible and presents it in a way that makes immediate sense to the learner."[5]

Drafting

When students reach the drafting process, many of them do not realize there is a simple formula for writing essays. Many instructors may also not realize that using this with students can

Beginning . . . Introduction
Middle . . . . Body
End . . . . Conclusion

help them to understand that all effective essays have three simple parts: an introduction, including a thesis sentence, a body, and a conclusion. To simplify even more, all effective essays must have a beginning, a middle, and an end. While this may seem rather obvious, it is surprising just how many students do not realize that all essay writing must include this simple formula.

When beginning an essay, students must first have a thesis sentence. We like to think of the thesis as the "roadmap" of the essay. It gives the reader direction and tells where the essay will be going and what the essay is about. Thesis sentences can be written in many ways, but the most important point helpful to students is that thesis sentences cannot be mere statements of fact. Instead, they must contain a point(s) that can be proven. For example, if we said that "Many people died in WWI," this is simply a statement of fact. If we used this as a thesis sentence, it would give the reader no direction. It would not tell what the essay was going to be about. It would not point to more explanation to come. The reader would have to guess what the essay might be about. A reader seeing this type of thesis might ask if the essay is about "why" so people died, "how" so many people died, the "number" of people who died, or even the way they died. A statement of fact used as a thesis is a poor roadmap indeed.

On the other hand, a thesis that provides an opinion will be much easier for the reader to follow. It has the potential for making an excellent roadmap for readers. For example, if the thesis stated, "The combination of trench warfare and modern military weapons used in WWI became a catalyst for death more powerful than the atomic bomb," this is an opinion that can be supported with specific details. It lets the reader know exactly what the essay is about. The reader seeing this thesis will begin to look in the essay for specific examples and facts that demonstrate that the combination mentioned is "a catalyst for death."

Revising

Revise. Revise. Revise. Students cannot revise an essay too much. The more time students have for revision, the better their essays will become. In fact, one technique that instructors can share with students is "letting the essay sit." With this method, students write the first draft of their essay and let it sit overnight or for one or two additional days. Then the students come back to the essay again. Incredibly, the essay almost seems as though someone else wrote it! You see, the process of revision can oftentimes be extremely difficult for students. This is because writing is a deeply personal thing. It is often seen by writers as an extension of their own being. So students frequently think that to criticize the writing in any way is to criticize the person. Students often have difficulty criticizing themselves, so they avoid revision for this reason. Asking students to let their essays sit for a few hours or days allows them to return to the essay with new eyes. They have time to separate themselves from their essays. This process of letting the essay sit creates just enough separation so that students are much more

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[5] The Research, Planning and Assessment Group for California Community Colleges. (July 2007). *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges* (second edition) p. 58

objective about the paper and can look at it almost as if it were written by someone else. This allows them to more easily and more readily provide effective revision to the essay.

Another problem that can result during the process of revision is that students often avoid it because they simply do not know *how* to revise their essays. This is where contextualized learning is once again extremely important. Instructors can help students learn to revise by bringing in real student writing and as a whole class or in small groups asking students what makes good writing and what makes bad writing. Asking students to give suggestions for how they would go about making an essay better often leads to excellent ideas that can be written on the board and shared with the entire class. Another excellent way of teaching students how to revise can be done by having the instructor bring in a piece of his or her own writing. Then show students how to cross out sentences, move sentences around, add more details, or even add a whole new paragraph.

One point that must be emphasized is that the process of revision revolves around the global issues of the paper. Revision does not look at grammar, punctuation, or other issues of usage. These concerns are reserved for the editing process. Revision, rather, centers on the larger issues of the paper. When students revise, they should look for development, organization, and overall essay structure. Revision centers on the much larger concerns of the paper and leaves the grammar and conventions for the editing process.

Editing

Editing is the time for looking at errors involving grammar, punctuation, and other usage concerns. During the editing process, it is oftentimes helpful to provide students with a handbook or individual handout sheet that contains the symbols you may use in grading essays. This way, when you read students' rough drafts or student peers read rough drafts of one another and find errors, you can all use your designated symbols in the margins of the essays. This will allow students to recognize that there is an error in grammar or punctuation somewhere in the line of the paper next to where the symbol is placed in the margin. But the students don't know exactly where the error occurs. They know only that it is in that particular line somewhere. This forces students to discover the error themselves. They may have to look up information in their handbook or on handouts you have given them in order to learn more about the error and to correct it effectively. Students will learn so much more about punctuation and grammar usage when they must discover this information themselves through working on their own papers and trying to make these papers better.

Another effective technique for helping students in the editing process is to ask students to read sentences in their essays out loud. Oftentimes when reading silently, students skip over the error or the missed word. However, when they read the sentence out loud, they stumble over the place where the error occurs. Telling students to stop and look carefully anytime they stumble in reading their sentences out loud will often help them to find errors.

If students are still having trouble finding errors in their essays even when reading out loud, try having students begin with the last sentence of the essay and read it out loud. Then move to the next to the last sentence and read aloud. Then the sentence that occurs before that one, and so on. This way, students are reading sentences individually and can more easily spot errors. Sometimes students have difficulty seeing grammar and punctuation error or errors in word omission when they read sentences in the context of the larger essay. So isolating those sentences by starting at the last sentence and working backward often helps with finding errors. Both of these reading aloud techniques also help students to

learn about their own learning. Called "metacognition," the process of learning about one's own learning is extremely important in helping emerging writers develop their own skills so that eventually they will be able to find many errors on their own without the help of their instructor or their peers.

Writing Practice

As mentioned previously, approximately 75% of incoming California Community College students are not prepared for college-level writing. With this large number of students not writing well, fewer and fewer instructors are requiring writing in their courses. This unfortunate occurrence sets up a vicious cycle of ineffective writing and limited practice. Instead, students would have the potential of becoming far better writers if they had the opportunity to practice writing often and much. If you are an instructor who teaches a discipline other than writing, please consider how valuable the practice of writing is to your students. And especially to developmental students, practicing writing is key to improvement of their writing. Please consider adding additional writing assignments to your coursework in order to give students much-needed writing practice, which is invaluable for building writing skill.

Tips and Tricks

Probably one of the most valuable tips that instructors should consider, whether they are writing and non-writing instructors, is to make assignments that are clearly understandable to students, and that include clear parameters, such as specific deadlines, MLA or other documentation format, and specifically who the intended audience is for the essay. Developmental students will often "give up" on a writing assignment and believe themselves to be "bad at writing" when they cannot decipher an assignment or when they do not understand the full parameters of the assignment. Sometimes when we produce writing assignments, they may seem quite clear and easily understandable to us; however, our students may ask, "What the heck am I supposed to do?"

 One of the of the primary ways we can ensure understanding of our assignments is to give the assignment to students, go over the assignment, and then assess students' understanding of it. In a "One Minute Paper," ask students to briefly summarize the assignment, including the parameters of that assignment. Or ask students to give the "Muddiest Point" by writing down questions about something they did not understand with the assignment. You can collect the muddiest points and clarify this information when your class meets next time. There are many other types of assessment you can use to clarify if your students are understanding their assignments or not. If you would like additional information about classroom assessment, look at Chapter 15: Assessment Basics. Another source, a book that is packed full of practical assessment techniques, is Angelo and Cross's *Classroom Assessment Techniques* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 1993.

Providing a rubric that clearly delineates what you expect in a writing assignment also helps students to understand what is expected of them. Writing rubrics come in a variety of forms and include a variety of different information, ranging from content of an essay to forms of sentence usage.

 For your convenience, a sample rubric is included at the end of this chapter. Use the rubric as it is, or feel free to change the rubric to clearly reflect your specific assignments. Regardless of how you choose to use the rubric, the most important point to remember is that rubrics serve as roadmaps for students. They tell students what is expected in a writing assignment and what their paper must contain in order to receive an A, B, C, etc. Or in the

case of draft and revision, rubrics can tell students what areas they need to improve in order to make their essay as effective as possible. **Grading Tips**

One of the things that can be inordinately time-consuming when we give writing assignments is the task of grading all of those assignments! Instructors constantly search for techniques that will help them to manage the huge grading load that occurs with writing assignments. Following are a few practical tips and techniques that may help to give you a little extra time away from the grading pen.

Much information has been written about not marking every error in student papers. However, many English instructors feel a compelling sense of duty to mark those errors for their students in the hopes that students will appreciate their vast efforts and learn much from this marking. While we all wish this were true, it is probably not the reality for most students. Developmental students often see the proverbial "bleeding" paper as a sign that they "just can't write." With dread and embarrassment, they may try to hide their ink-soaked papers from their peers by quickly stuffing the graded paper into the bottom of their backpacks.

This sets up a situation of extreme frustration on the part of the instructor who can't understand why all his or her grading efforts are not being appreciated by students. So a great deal of tension can result on both the part of the student and the instructor where grading is concerned. Rather than struggle with this tension, perhaps we might consider a different technique.

Think about the mechanical errors that really frustrate you—the ones that are considered to be your greatest "pet-peeves." Some of these errors may include fragments, run-on sentences, using a comma between two complete sentences, etc. You get the idea. Make a list of all these errors that you consider to be vitally important to provide clarity to writing. Once you have made the list, look at it again. Are there any errors that you believe are more important than others? If so, try prioritizing the errors. Mark a 1, 2, 3 etc. by the errors you believe to be most important. When you are finished with this prioritized list, strike off the bottom 5 or 6 errors. What you have left is a list of errors that you believe to be vitally important to create clear prose.

Try an experiment with this list. For one writing assignment, give out this list of errors to your students. Tell them you believe this list is vitally important to providing the clearest essay writing possible. Then perhaps you might consider doing some learning activities with your students that revolve around this list. Help them to understand how to avoid these errors and why correcting these errors is essential to effective writing. Then perhaps you can give some in-class writing assignments where students focus on avoiding these errors. Students might even get into groups and go on "safari," hunting for the ferocious errors that lurk around each corner, just waiting to pounce on and destroy a good essay.

After working with students on your error list, try having them write an assignment and hand it in. It is your task to grade these essays, marking only those usage errors that are on your list. At first it may be difficult to avoid marking every error, but force yourself to make this change for this assignment. When you hand back the essays, you can give students an assignment to try to find any errors you marked that are not on the list. After they try to find these errors on their own papers, then perhaps you can have them work in groups and try to find errors on each other's papers. In the process of this teacher-error-hunting, encourage students to talk about the errors they see that are on the list, too. In this way, you have turned a grading activity into a real-life learning experience, and you have cut down on the amount

of time it takes you to grade your essays as well. You can even draw out this activity throughout the entire semester by referring again and again to your error list.

This exercise focuses primarily on usage errors because these are often the most time-consuming errors that instructors mark in papers. However, please do not forget the larger, more important issues of the paper: the content and organization. For papers that lack development and specific examples or facts, you can develop activities such as the one above that address these concerns as well and help you to cut down on the time you spend in grading.

Another way to cut down on the amount of time you spend in grading essays includes having students share first drafts with one another and find significant errors in both usage and global concerns of the paper. This way, when you receive the draft yourself, you will not have to spend so much time in marking all the errors that could easily be found by peers.

Finally, remember the advice given in the editing section of this chapter. You do not need to correct every error. Correct it the first time it appears and, if you must, perhaps the second. After that use a symbol of the error and place it in the general vicinity of where the error occurs. Give students the responsibility to find and correct the error.

There is no one easy answer to shave off significant amounts of time in the time-consuming task of grading. However, apart from these ideas, many texts that discuss methods for teaching writing also include sections on how to lighten the grading load. Try doing a Google search to find some of these texts or check with your textbook publishing company or your local bookstore to see what books on this subject may be available.

Research Backed-Practices

So, while knowing the writing process and using the tips and tricks listed above, may help you when assigning writing to your students, let's look at what research has shown us about how best to teach writing. Writing teachers, constantly on the lookout for effective pedagogy to help their students learn, are now moving toward a greater awareness of research-backed strategies for classroom instruction.

Research tells us that there are several effective methods for helping to increase the success of developmental writing students. Not comprehensive by any means, this list includes such practices as integrated reading and writing, reciprocal teaching, Reading Apprenticeship, and the use of reading and writing centers.[6] The research data reveals that these practices can help to increase the success, retention, and persistence of our developmental writing students.

While in the past, drill and practice were frequent companions of the developmental writing classroom, today, however, instructors now know that these practices are not very helpful in raising the skill level or success rate of our developmental writing students.[7] Instead, the practices listed above as well as active learning, guided discovery learning, group learning, contextualized learning, learning communities, and other innovative practices have, through research data, proven to be much more effective.[8] Following

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[6] The Research, Planning and Assessment Group for California Community Colleges. (July 2007). *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges* (second edition) p. 41.

[7] **Ibid** p. 38.

[8] Ibid pp 41, 54, 57, 58 .

are a number of helpful strategies that are provided for your use in the classroom, the department, or the institution. They are provided in hopes that you will use them as is or borrow from them in order to build on or enhance the effective practices you may already include in your classroom, department, or institution. In some cases, helpful faculty comments or stories have been provided to serve as starting points for processes that you may wish to implement on your own campus.

Writing Strategies

Guided Discovery Learning
The following exercise provides an example of one effective method, guided discovery learning. In this exercise, designed for students in a writing course one-level below transfer, Andrea Neptune, Sierra College, helps students learn to develop a specific, detailed body paragraph. Students verbally respond to each of the following questions during an in-class writing exercise. They are guided into "discovering" how to make a well-developed paragraph through their own responses to the questions. Rather than tell students how to develop a paragraph, the instructor guides the students to discover the process of paragraph development on their own. In order to reinforce the learning that has occurred during this lesson, students take home a handout to use as a reference tool for their learning.

Questions for Development

Topic Sentence:

1. CLARIFICATION: What do I mean?
2. EXPLANATION: Why do I say this? Why is this true?
3. CAUSES: Why or how did this start?
4. EFFECTS: What are the results?
5. EXAMPLE: Can I show the reader?
6. COMPARISON: What is he/she like?
7. QUOTE: Who says so?
8. STATISTICS: How much?
9. CONCLUSION: How can I end?

Writing a Paragraph Using Questions for Development

Student Handout
Example: Below are examples of how you might answer the Questions for Development so that you can then use your answers to write a well-developed paragraph.

TOPIC SENTENCE: My son Trevin is a mischievous child.

1. CLARIFICATION: What do I mean?
By mischievous, I mean that he is very curious and is always getting into things that he shouldn't.

2. EXPLANATION: Why do I say this? Why is this true?
At the age of two, he is continuously climbing up furniture, spilling something over, or playing with something he shouldn't.

3. CAUSES: Why or how did this start?

Since the day he was born, Trevin has been described as being "100% boy." He is very energetic, he loves play balls of any kind, and he never cries when he falls down.

4. EFFECTS: What are the results?

On a daily basis, I have to clean up some mess that he made or scold him for something he did.

5. EXAMPLE: Can I show the reader?

For example, once Trevin took an entire saltshaker and dumped it out on the kitchen counter. He has also smeared blue toothpaste all over our beige carpet. He even figured out how to open the "child proof" locks on our cabinets and spilled over the garbage!

6. COMPARISON: What is he like?

He is just like an adorable puppy chewing on a new leather shoe and like Dennis from the cartoon "Dennis the Menace"--cute and adorable, devilish and exasperating.

7. QUOTE: Who says so?

Whenever his father says, "Trevin, stop!" Trevin will pause, look at his father in the eye, and begin running in the opposite direction. His grandmother says that he is just like his mother; as a child, I once poured her perfume down the bathroom sink and dumped chocolate cake on the kitchen floor. Grandma eagerly calls to hear the "Trevin report" on a daily basis.

8. STATISTICS: How much?

If Trevin is left alone for more than 5 minutes, he finds some kind of trouble to get into, and he probably gets told "No!" at least a dozen times a day.

9. CONCLUSION: How can I end?

Although my hair may be completely gray by the time Trevin turns 18, at least I know that our lives will always be interesting!

Example of a Paragraph that Has Been Put Together Using Answers to the Questions for Development

My son Trevin is a mischievous child. By mischievous, I mean that he is very curious and is always getting into things that he shouldn't. At the age of two, he is continuously climbing up furniture, spilling something over, or playing with something he shouldn't. Since the day he was born, Trevin has been described as being "100% boy." He is very energetic, he loves play balls of any kind, and he never cries when he falls down. On a daily basis, I have to clean up some mess that he made or scold him for something he did. For example, once Trevin took an entire saltshaker and dumped it out on the kitchen counter. He has also smeared blue toothpaste all over our beige carpet. He even figured out how to open the "child proof" locks on our cabinets and spilled the garbage over the floor! He is just like an adorable puppy chewing on a new leather shoe and like Dennis from the cartoon "Dennis the Menace" --cute and adorable, devilish and exasperating. His grandmother says that he is just like his mother; as a child, I once poured her perfume down the bathroom sink and dumped chocolate cake on the kitchen floor. Grandma eagerly calls to hear the "Trevin report" on a daily basis. Whenever his father says, "Trevin, stop!," Trevin will pause, look at his father in the eye, and begin running in the opposite direction. If Trevin is left alone for more than 5 minutes, he finds some kind of trouble to get into, and he probably gets told "No!" at least a dozen times a day. Although my hair may be completely gray by the time Trevin turns 18, at least I know that our lives will always be interesting!

One way to assess this method is to give students a pre and post test, asking them to write a paragraph in the beginning of the semester and then, after teaching them to use this method, giving the same assignment at the end of the semester. Use a carefully constructed rubric to score the paragraphs each time. After comparing the results, you would be able to see if students have grown in their abilities.

Learning Communities

Learning communities have become increasingly popular because they can often provide students with a sense of community that may be lacking in regular writing classrooms. This connection and sense of community can often be the catalyst for providing increased student success and persistence for developmental students participating in learning communities. [9]

Geneffa Jonker, Cabrillo College, shares with us one model for a learning community that connects both writing and reading. In this learning community, two teachers work together, a reading instructor and a writing instructor, to teach a four-unit writing course and a three-unit reading course, both courses two levels below transfer. The writing course incorporates what used to be a separate one-unit writing lab component concentrating on grammar and usage conventions. Realizing the importance of writing in context, Cabrillo writing instructors subsumed the lab within the larger framework of the class where grammar and usage conventions are now taught in the context of essay writing itself.

The reading component of this learning community, the three-unit reading course, provides the majority of reading assignments within specific texts; however, the writing component provides supplemental reading assignments, such as more extensive reading and research projects. Both courses are taken as co-requisites so that the same student cohorts work closely together throughout the semester.

The learning community centers upon a theme; the theme at the time of this writing revolves around community building, both globally and locally. It is this sense of community building that becomes vitally important within the learning community itself. Students have the opportunity to get to know one another and to rely upon one another for help, support, and encouragement.

An example of the importance that community building plays on student success becomes quite evident when Geneffa Jonker spends time working in the Writing Center. She notices that developmental students who are involved in the learning community come more often to the Writing Center to receive help. She also notices that these students do not come alone. They come with a buddy from their learning community. It would seem that the connection students receive from their learning community helps them to feel comfortable in receiving additional help from support services. This is a fantastic and invaluable component of the learning community that enhances and broadens the potential for even greater student success.

Community building occurs even more in the learning community when students attend two or three "community gatherings" which are held during the semester. These gatherings include joint student presentations including such activities as poetry reading, short plays, or skits. Students sometimes even

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[9] The Research, Planning and Assessment Group for California Community Colleges. (July 2007). *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges* (second edition) p. 58 - 59

use a specific novel as text and then project what they believe will happen with characters or with the entire story line during the next ten years or so.

Another fantastic assignment that occurs in the learning community revolves around CNN News anchor Anderson Cooper, who has reported on such life-changing events as Hurricane Katrina and the horrific human suffering that occurred in New Orleans as a result of this catastrophe. During class, students are given the opportunity to watch YouTube clips of Cooper's newscasts, and then one of their writing assignments revolves around writing letters to Cooper regarding some of his news broadcasting. Assignments in this class are real-life, down-to-earth activities that allow students the opportunity to see how the content of this class relates to their own personal lives. And the assignments center on the all-important theme of community building.

Please see the Appendix for a specific community building handout that Jonker uses with her class.

Integrated Reading and Writing

Another effective method for helping to raise the success rate of students in developmental writing classes is integrated reading and writing. So promising is this concept that information about various types of integrated reading and writing is included in *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges (41-44)*.

Linda Hein, adjunct English Instructor at Skyline College, uses *Generation Me* in her one-level below transfer integrated reading and writing class. *Generation Me* is a book written by Jean Twenge, in which she presents research data and draws conclusions about "Generation Me," individuals born between 1971 and the early 1990's.

Generation Me

Hein begins by asking her students to read the book's introduction as well as chapters 1, 2, 3, and 5 during the course of the semester. Each of the chapters are thoroughly discussed in class. However, what makes this book unique is its direct applicability to the students' own lives. In *Generation Me*, Twenge looks at how perceptions of morality, behavior, social values, religion, etc. have shifted. Twenge also examines the role of media, television, and self-esteem education (Hein defines this education by using Woody Allen's statement, "90% of success is just showing up.")

Hein takes Twenge's information and discusses it with her students. At first the students are defensive and don't appear to take criticism of their own generation very well (criticism hasn't played much of a role in their self-esteem education). They are also quick to judge the Baby Boomer generation. However, as Hein helps her students dig deeper into aspects of their own generation, they soon become more interested than defensive, and they begin to exhibit clear signs of critical thinking.

To help foster even more critical thinking, Hein asks students to consider such concepts as the increase of profanity among their generation. Because students are reluctant to accept this concept, Hein asks them to go to a shopping mall and observe young people from "Generation Me" to see how much they use profanity. Hein's students are often shocked at the prolific profanity they find. Not only does this exercise help students to critically examine concepts, but it also helps them to become more socially aware. When students come back to class and agree that Twenge's findings were right, Hein takes her students a step further by asking them to think about *why* this is happening. Through this questioning, Hein teaches her students that they can argue with the conclusions of the author but not with the actual

research data itself. Thus they realize that they themselves are stake holders in the information they learn. This is yet another positive ramification of Hein's teaching: helping students to think about research, accept some ownership in their own learning of it, and ultimately turn this information learned into a solid research question of their own.

During the course of the semester, Hein teaches 4 different units that all revolve around *Generation Me*. (1) Hein uses information found in the introduction, and she asks her students to find something in their generation that embodies or represents themselves. She asks them to write an essay about how they define themselves. (2) Next she uses chapters 1 and 2 and asks students to argue Twenge's conclusions. Do they agree with her conclusions or disagree with them? Students must select one and build a solid argument. (3) Hein asks students to look closely at the media. For example, she asks them what kind of inferences they can draw about the passive/aggressive behaviors of girls and boys by examining the qualities and characteristics of contemporary dolls and/or action figures (4) Students are asked to complete a research project by selecting information from chapter 4, 6, 7, or possibly 8, though she generally discourages the use of this chapter. These are chapters that have not been directly discussed in class; however, students are to read one of these chapters and come up with a research question, such as "What is the link between self-esteem and teen pregnancy?" In order to help with this oftentimes difficult task, Hein spends approximately two class periods in helping students come up with a suitable research question. In doing their research, Hein encourages her students to use primarily journals, and journals that have been written within the last 20 years. Hein also asks her students to use the appropriate MLA citations. The goal of this project is to familiarize students with the research process so that when they move into English 1A, they will have learned foundational concepts necessary to effective researching and writing.

While Hein has only used *Generation Me* and its corresponding units for one year, she believes that her students have produced much stronger writing as a result. Since the content is directly applicable to students' own lives, they become much more interested in it and generally engage more readily and with more excitement and motivation. The assignment also helps them to build critical thinking skills, to become more socially aware, and to recognize and accept ownership for their own actions.

Integrating Reading and Writing with Student-Athletes
Diane Oren, San Joaquin Delta College, after becoming motivated by a dissertation proposal concerning multiple intelligences and transference of skills to the academic environment, developed the following specific strategies for integrating reading and writing in the classroom with student-athletes.

In working with student-athletes, Diane Oren became fascinated by specific details that might enhance the learning process for these students. So she did research and reading regarding ergonomic issues and how the physical environment impacts students. Since many student-athletes have larger body frames or muscle mass than average students (tall, large build, large hands, etc.), Diane discovered that the desks used in most college classrooms actually cause student-athletes to sit in ways that hamper lung capacity, thus decreasing oxygen flow to the body. When student-athletes get sleepy in class or do not seem to learn information readily, perhaps it is because they are simply not receiving enough oxygen! Diane compensates by building into her classes lots of two-minute active learning activities. Students stand, work in small groups, go outside, come back inside, etc.

Diane also noticed a similar ergonomic issue with standard-size pencils and pens. It is often difficult for student-athletes to grasp these writing tools, so Diane solves this problem by providing large-size pencils and pens that make the physical process of writing much easier for students.

Another technique that Diane uses to enhance student learning is working with students in small groups. She found this method to be highly effective, so Diane now provides two additional hours of office time so that student-athletes can work together. These small learning communities, like the more structured ones at Cabrillo, also promote success by allowing students the opportunity to create a sense of community. They get to know each other better and thus form a support network. Diane assesses the types of strategies that would be best to use with each student, and then she puts students into groups based upon individual learning needs and what will work best for them and help them to be most successful.

Another strategy that is addressed is the oral-aural connection. Students often try to write in the same way they talk, so to help students learn what is appropriate in writing and what is not, Diane has students come to her office where she asks them to tell her out loud what they want to put into their papers. Then she asks them to type their statements on the keyboard and read what they have written on the computer screen. When students do this, they see that what they have written is not correct, or that it does not read smoothly. It is this process of **saying, writing**, and **seeing** that helps to reinforce the learning process. In fact, Diane reiterates that it takes ten exposures to material in order for it to be converted into long-term memory. The activity described here provides at least three of those exposures.

In the appendix of this chapter, we have provided a lotus that Diane uses with students for planning purposes. The lotus actually functions in a dual role. Students use it as a mapping exercise where they write the topic in the center and then branch off the center square with sub-topics in the circles. Diane also uses the lotus as a reading study skills tool. Students write the title of the chapter in the middle and then write chapter subtitles in other areas branching off the center. The lotus actually functions as a mind-map that helps students to visually map out what is happening in a textbook chapter. This way, students can more easily comprehend what the chapter is about and understand how details plug into that chapter. This, too, provides the exposure that was mentioned previously so that it helps students convert information to long-term memory.

Other techniques Diane uses come from Reading Apprenticeship and Shared Inquiry. Reading Apprenticeship provides a system of questioning that Diane teaches students to use. She also teaches them how to make annotations in the text. Students often fear writing in their textbooks because it was taboo early on in their school years, and students also want to sell back their texts at the end of the semester. However, Diane reiterates the importance of gaining meaning from the text through annotation.

The second method of questioning that Diane uses is a technique she learned from "Great Books," which deals with the concept of Shared Inquiry. With Shared Inquiry, students are taught to wonder about the text without being criticized. They question what they have read and bring out insights to one another in a completely safe environment. This "safe" sharing builds confidence in students and allows them to feel comfortable exploring the text through questioning. It also builds their critical thinking skills and gives them the confidence to share their ideas with one another, which in turn allows ideas to be built upon through the comments of other students in the classroom. Shared Inquiry is a fantastic

opportunity for building a variety of important academic skills in students and definitely helps to promote student achievement and success.

Shared Inquiry also leads to student metacognition—students learning about their own learning. Diane builds in lots of writing activities where students learn to write for different audiences and in different settings. They begin to question how they are better writers after completing these activities. This, too, builds their confidence and allows them to expand as learners and to effectively connect their own personal learning with their classmates and with the world around them.

These methods can be assessed through looking closely at student writing and scoring it with a well-developed rubric. Since self-reflection is so crucial, a rubric that specifically addresses this would be a useful way to assess how well students are able to self-reflect. It may be very intriguing to compare self-reflective writing from the beginning of the semester to that produced at the end in order to see what has changed.

A Twist on Integrated Reading and Writing

Katie Hern, Chabot College, realized that her students were not always writing essays at the level she desired, so in order to help her students become better writers, Katie decided to try a new approach in her classroom. She moved from teaching a traditional developmental writing class to the innovative practice of teaching students very little about writing itself and instead centering upon reading. Through this practice, Katie discovered that her students produce much better essays, and they are much more successful in their writing than they were when she taught them specific writing principles. Following is Katie's narrative as well as handouts she uses to help her students learn about writing through reading.

Engaging the Reading, Eliciting Stronger Writing

In 2006, Chabot College Instructor Sean McFarland worked with several of his students to create a documentary video called *Reading Between the Lives*. Comprised of entirely student interviews, the video details the intense emotions and insecurity tangled in their experience of reading, how students often don't complete assigned readings at all, how the fear of looking stupid keeps them from asking questions, and how they get little reading help from teachers beyond the instruction to "read chapter 2." (Video available at http://www.archive.org/details/ReadingBetweenTheLivesPart1.mp4)

After watching the video, I recognized that I had spent the first decade of my career calling myself a "writing teacher" and making two assumptions about my students: 1) that they were doing the reading, and 2) that they understood what they read. The video makes clear just how flawed those assumptions had been.

In spring 2007, I conducted an experiment in my developmental composition course two levels below transfer. I decided to make reading the primary focus, with reasoning the next most important, and writing a distant third. I didn't spend class time teaching brainstorming techniques or the general principles of paragraph writing, using transitions or writing topic sentences. I had a hunch that if students were reading more effectively, they would produce stronger papers.

Instead of working on the form and techniques of essay writing, we spent almost every class period discussing the books *Fast Food Nation* and *The Wal-Mart Effect*. I wasn't teaching reading in the traditional sense. Instead, I broke students into groups to answer questions about each chapter or

generate their own questions. I organized debates where they had to assume a particular role (e.g. small business owner, McDonald's executive) and then use the readings to make an argument from that perspective. Sometimes our goal was simply comprehension – could they explain a key point from the reading in their own words? Inevitably, though, comprehension evolved into higher order discussions as students made inferences about the causes of a problem they'd read about, or evaluated the merits of an author's solution, applied the reading to their own lives, or made connections between the two books. Overall, class time was about getting students to actively *work the reading.*

I also had students writing the whole time. They completed informal exercises in class, posts on online discussion boards, short-answer tests every few chapters to assess their comprehension of the readings, and several essays over the semester. I provided guidance and feedback on their writing by discussing sample student work as a whole class, giving them detailed rubrics of assessment criteria, and meeting with them one-on-one to discuss their drafts. But writing was an extension of our in-class discussions – a way to process and critically engage the reading -- rather than an end unto itself. Writing was another way to work the reading.

Despite much less instruction in academic writing, by the end of the term, students were writing *stronger* essays than they had in previous semesters. Most interestingly, I realized that a lot of what I had considered writing problems were in fact *reading* problems. Their essays had strong transitions, not because I had given them handouts and class activities about transitions, but because our discussions of the books gave them a strong internal sense of how one idea related to the next. They had clear thesis statements because they had a main point they wanted to make about the issues we'd read about.

The biggest effect I saw was in how students used the readings in their writing. They weren't as likely to offer empty and unsupported generalities or stick disconnected quotes into paragraphs where they didn't fit. Instead, their comments were informed by, and layered with, relevant ideas and information from the readings. Perhaps most telling, students were more likely to express these ideas and information in their own clear language, rather than over-relying on long, undigested quotes, something I now understand is a red flag for poor reading comprehension.

Using class time for sustained, deep engagement with the assigned reading helped students to break down and process what they had read. I found that this is a critical step in understanding the material, and an antidote to the experience students often have with reading, which they describe as "going in one ear and out the other." It also greatly improves the content of student essays because it gives students something to *say.*

(Katie Hern is in the process of creating a website which will include video footage, assignments, classroom activities, assessment instruments and rubrics, and samples of student writing from her developmental English classes at http://online.chabotcollege.edu/khern/)

Departmental Integrated Reading and Writing
Examples such as Katie Hern's tell us that integrated reading and writing certainly can be highly effective at the classroom level; however, integrating reading and writing on a departmental level has the potential to provide an even greater impact on student success. In fact, the Effective Practices Report tells us that "the literature strongly supports an 'embedded curriculum' model, where students are immersed in a learning environment which strongly promotes simultaneous reading and writing

development, using reading to help students write and using writing to help students read."[10]

While research strongly supports a reading and writing connection,[11] the process of implementing such a structure on the departmental level may not always be easy. Integrating reading and writing on a large scale takes time, patience, and faculty who believe in and are thoroughly committed to the process. Such a change also requires strong and dedicated departmental leaders who are willing to seek proactive solutions to challenges which may arise when trying to integrate all reading and writing courses in a department. Fortunately, for those wishing to make such a change, good examples exist of other community college departments who have previously blazed the trail of integrated reading and writing.

Nancy Ybarra, Co-coordinator of Developmental Education at Los Medanos College, describes the process of implementing integrated reading and writing in her department.

Integrated Reading and Writing at Los Medanos College

In 1998, the English department of Los Medanos College began offering integrated reading and writing courses in our developmental English sequence instead of stand-alone courses in reading and composition. The department made this change based on low enrollments in the stand alone reading courses despite an institutional research study that indicated that poor reading comprehension was students' number one academic concern. In addition, integrated reading and writing approaches were receiving increased professional support as a more effective approach to academic literacy. This research was extensively documented by two faculty members who attended the Kellogg Institute for Developmental Educators at the National Center for Developmental Education at Appalachian State University in the summer of 1997. The newly developed courses, each 5 units, were written as their culminating project for that Institute, and were approved by the English department in the fall of 1997; they completely replaced the stand alone reading and composition courses the following fall semester. Student enrollment, success, and persistence in the developmental course sequence are higher in the integrated courses than they were in the stand alone courses.

The LMC English Department consisted of 12 full-time faculty in 1997; all were supportive of this change. In submitting the course outlines of record to the college curriculum committee, we agreed to list English and Reading as the disciplines which would qualify a faculty member to teach these courses; in other words, faculty could be qualified in one or the other of these disciplines. We did have 6 full-time faculty who were qualified, or became qualified under the discipline of Reading through formal course work.

Others, including adjuncts, took advantage of staff development opportunities such as the Reading Apprenticeship training offered by the Strategic Literacy Initiative, or participated in teaching communities that used the Reading Apprenticeship model.

Over time, a body of work including lesson plans, curricular materials, and assessments became available and were systematically given to all new faculty, full and part-time, during their orientation to teaching in our department. This work was facilitated by a Title III grant at the college from 1999 – 2004 which

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[10] The Research, Planning and Assessment Group for California Community Colleges. (July 2007). *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges* (second edition) p 41.
[11] ibid

initiated reassigned time for lead faculty in the department to do this work; this structure has been institutionalized and is now on-going.

We also developed student learning outcomes for these courses and plans for assessing them at the same time. The following are the outcomes as listed in the course outlines of record:

English 70 (two levels below English 1 A) Student Learning Outcomes:

Students successfully completing this course will:

1. Demonstrate the behaviors of an engaged and organized college student.
2. Read actively and demonstrate comprehension of assigned readings through the ability to summarize, question, and respond to text.
3. Make connections to and among texts, considering issues of personal, cultural and societal importance
4. Write, revise and edit paragraphs and essays that are clearly focused and comprehensible.

English 90 (one level below English 1A) Student Learning Outcomes:

Students successfully completing this course will:

1. Read actively and demonstrate critical thinking skills, through the ability to summarize, analyze, evaluate and synthesize pre-college readings. Analyze how the social-cultural-historical context of both the reader and the text influence the meaning-making process.

2. Write, edit and revise expository essays which integrate and synthesize course readings and are clearly focused, fully developed, and logically organized. Compose essays with sentences which display a developing syntactical maturity and whose meaning is not impaired by excessive grammar, usage and proofreading errors.

Demonstrate awareness of their own reading, thinking and writing processes and monitor their learning.

Institutional Integrated Reading and Writing

While the process of implementing reading and writing at the departmental level can be highly effective in increasing student success, as was the case at Los Medanos College, this same process may have the ability to create even greater success when implemented at the institutional level. In fact, research suggests that integrating reading and writing has a positive affect on the development of students' metacognitive abilities.[9] Perhaps increasing students' metacognitive abilities may help them to understand and adjust their own learning on a cross-disciplinary level.[12]

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[12] Ibid

Even though the process of integrating reading and writing on an institutional level holds great promise, it is also time consuming and requires campus-wide faculty commitment on a sustained basis. Fortunately, we have a good example of institutional integration of reading and writing. Jennifer McBride, Merced College, explains the time commitment and process of change that occurred on her college campus while implementing concepts of Reading Apprenticeship on an institutional level.

Reading Apprenticeship at Merced College: Progression of Implementation

2005
Currently, the two teachers trained in the Reading Apprenticeship program have offered informational and training workshops through the Teaching and Learning Academy (TLA). Attendance at TLA workshops is required of all new first-year teachers. They have also presented Reading Apprenticeship strategies to our Supplemental Instruction leaders for integration in their SI sessions. A presentation was made to our administrators and during our fall flex day for the general faculty campus-wide. These presentations were designed to affect class-room practice by encouraging teachers (and SI leaders) to incorporate Reading Apprenticeship strategies into the classroom.

2006
In October 2006, we held a faculty retreat to discuss academic literacy and Reading Apprenticeship theories. Thirty-three teachers from the majority of our disciplines attended; we had representatives from English, math, sociology, philosophy, chemistry, music, vocational education, nursing, biology, and history. During this retreat, we heard from a consultant from the Strategic Literacy Initiative and discussed our current reading program, reading pedagogies, and ideas for change. This retreat led to the development of a new cross-disciplined faculty inquiry group that meets monthly to discuss all ideas concerning reading.

2007
Our involvement with the Strategic Literacy Initiative has deepened. In addition to training all first-year full-time faculty members in Reading Apprenticeship techniques, we have moved into training our SI leaders in these techniques. This seemed like a natural move on our part in that SI and RA share common goals: collaborative learning, making learning visible, and creating independent learners. In addition, SI relies heavily on the cognitive apprenticeship theory. Since SI leaders have mastered a specific course's curriculum, they, in turn, share their techniques for success in that class with the novice students. Part of the leaders' successful course completion was due to their effective reading strategies. Training SI leaders in making reading visible has helped combat our student population's difficulties with literacy and critical thinking.

In spring 2007, a team of researchers from the Strategic Literacy Initiative spent several weeks at Merced College, interviewing teachers and students, observing classes and SI sessions, providing professional development to both teachers and SI leaders, and filming all of these activities. Our time spent with these researchers forced teachers, SI leaders and students to reflect upon Merced College's reading program and curriculum. The resulting footage is currently being used to analyze the connections between SI and RA on our campus and in a broader context as well. Merced College and the Strategic Literacy Initiative have presented this information at two conferences: The Tillery Institute for Community College Leadership and Innovation at UC Berkeley and Strengthening Student Success. Not only has SLI influenced curriculum design and SI training at Merced College, our campus has

provided SLI with valuable insight regarding adult literacy and reading programs in the community colleges, an avenue which SLI wishes to explore.

For more information on various methods of integrated reading and writing, please refer to Chapter 10, Effective Practices in Reading.

Professional Organizations

No matter what methods or programs we choose for helping students learn to become effective writers, we all want to maintain currency in those chosen methods, and we want to continue to peruse the latest research in other effective methods for helping our students become successful writers.   The following professional organizations have excellent websites, publish journals, and sponsor yearly national conferences where writing instructors and administrators can learn a wealth of valuable information or strategies for the classroom and the department or institution.

- NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English)   http://www.ncte.org
- 4 C's (Conference on College Comp.& Communication)   http://www.ncte.org/cccc
- TYCA (The Two-Year College English Association)   http://www.ncte.org/groups/tyca
- CRLA (College Reading and Learning Association)   http://www.crla.net
- NADE (National Association for Developmental Ed)   http://www.nade.net
- Strengthening Student Success Conference   http://www.cal-pass.org/news.aspx
- TIDE(Technology Institute for Dev. Educators) http://www.ci.txstate.edu/tide/tidehome.htm

Assessment

Not only do developmental writing instructors want to know and implement as many research-backed strategies as possible for helping developmental students, we also want to assess the strategies we have implemented in order to be sure that our students are actually learning those writing principles we believe to be most important for college, career, and daily life.

Following are writing rubrics that writing instructors can use to assess student paragraphs and essays. The rubrics can easily be edited, changed, or adapted to your own course level or to your department or institutional needs. The first rubric is for your use in assessing your students' writing. The other is a student-friendly rubric that you can use directly with students to help them understand the specific standards for writing in your classroom.

In an effort to make the process of assessment as practical and applicable as possible, we have also included some types of examples of writing assignments that could be used as assessments to measure student writing growth with the first rubric:

- Portfolios (a collection of student writing, usually gathered over the course of the class)
- Pre-essay / post-essay (this could be used at the beginning of the semester and at the end, or it could be used very time an essay is assigned, with the "pre-essay" being a rough draft the instructor or peers comment on, and the "post-essay" being the final copy.)
- Diagnostic essay at the beginning of the semester, and a final exam essay at the end where all students are required to write an essay under the same time constraints and criteria.

Completing the Assessment Loop

Don't forget that the assessment loop is not complete until you have assessed your Student learning outcomes and then made adjustments to your classroom material based upon the findings of your assessments. For example, if your assessments indicate that your students are not meeting the SLOs that your department has established for your course, you will likely want to meet with your colleagues to discuss changes you may want to make to help your students be more successful writers. For a more detailed discussion about this, see Chapter 15.

Writing Rubric for Instructors

	Masterful	Skilled	Able	Developing	Novice
Thesis (Controlling Idea)	Thesis is clear, well stated and pointed; demonstrates a superior understanding of the assignment.	Thesis represents sound and adequate understanding of the assigned topic.	Thesis is weak, but demonstrates some understanding of the assignment.	Thesis contains unfocused ideas with little or no sense of purpose or direction for the paper.	Thesis is essentially missing.
Support & Development (Evidence)	Main points are well supported with specific evidence that show a depth of ideas; the ideas work together.	Ideas are supported with logical facts and examples; most are specific and many of the ideas work together.	Support is mostly sufficient, but some are not specific and are only loosely relevant to main points.	Primarily insufficient support that is often non-specific, and/or irrelevant.	Lack of support for main points; frequent and illogical generalizations without support.
Organization & Paragraph Structure	Organization is appropriate to assignment; paragraphs are well developed and appropriately divided; ideas are linked with smooth and logical transitions.	Organization is competent with good paragraph development and structure with few limited or illogical transitions.	Paper is partially organized around a thesis; some paragraphs relate to it while others are stand-alones with weak or illogical transitions.	Paragraphs are simple and, formulaic. There are few evident transitions; some are illogical.	Organization is confusing; paragraph structure is weak; transitions are missing, inappropriate and/or illogical.
Audience & Tone	Appropriately written to the specific audience; tone appropriate to the assignment.	Effective and awareness of general audience; tone satisfactory.	Some sense of audience related to assignment purpose but not consistent; tone varies.	Very inconsistent sense of audience; wildly varying tone for given assignment.	No sense of particular audience for assignment; tone inappropriate or inconsistent.
Sentence Structure & Mechanics	Well-chosen variety of sentence styles and length. Very few punctuation, spelling, capitalization errors.	Varied sentences; Contains only occasional punctuation, spelling, and/or capitalization errors.	Some repetition of sentence patterns; shows some errors in sentence construction. Contains several (mostly common) punctuation, spelling and/or capitalization errors.	Sentences show errors of structure; little or no variety. Contains many errors of punctuation, spelling, and/or capitalization that often interfere with meaning.	Simple or incomplete sentences used frequently; frequent errors of sentence structure. Contains many and serious errors of punctuation, spelling, and/or capitalization; errors that severely interfere with meaning.
	Masterful	**Skilled**	**Able**	**Developing**	**Novice**

Writing Rubric for Students

	Masterful	Skilled	Able	Developing	Novice
Thesis (Controlling Idea)	Is my thesis clear, well stated, and to the point?	Does my thesis represent sound and adequate understanding of the assigned topic?	Is my thesis weak, but still demonstrates some understanding of the assignment?	Does my thesis contain unfocused ideas with little or no sense of purpose or direction for the paper?	Is my thesis essentially missing?
Support & Development (Evidence)	Are my main points well supported with specific evidence? Does my evidence show a depth of ideas? Do the ideas work well together?	Are my ideas supported with logical facts and examples? Are most of my ideas specific and many of the ideas work well together?	Is my support mostly sufficient, but some is not specific and is only loosely relevant to the main points?	Do I primarily have insufficient support that is often non-specific, and/or irrelevant?	Do I lack support for main points? Do I have frequent and illogical generalizations without support?
Organization & Paragraph Structure	Is my organization appropriate to the assignment? Are my paragraphs well developed and appropriately divided? Are my ideas linked with smooth and logical transitions?	Is my organization competent with good paragraph development and structure with few limited or illogical transitions?	Is my paper partially organized around a thesis? Do some paragraphs relate to the thesis while others are stand-alones with weak or illogical transitions?	Are my paragraphs simple and, formulaic? Are there few transitions? Are some transitions illogical?	Is my organization confusing? Is my paragraph structure weak? Are my transitions missing? Are my transitions inappropriate and/or illogical?
Audience & Tone	Is my paper appropriately written to the specific audience? Is the tone appropriate to the assignment?	Is my tone effective, with awareness of my general audience? Is my tone satisfactory?	Does some sense of my audience relate to the assignment purpose but doesn't stay consistent? Does my tone vary?	Do I have an inconsistent sense of audience? Do I wildly vary my tone for a given assignment?	Do I have no sense of particular audience for the assignment? Is my tone inappropriate or inconsistent?
Sentence Structure & Mechanics	Do I use well-chosen variety of sentence styles and length? Do I have very few punctuation, spelling, and capitalization errors?	Are my sentences varied? Do my sentences contain only occasional punctuation, spelling, and/or capitalization errors?	Do I have some repetition of sentence patterns? Do I show some errors in sentence construction? Does my paper contain several (mostly common) punctuation, spelling and/or capitalization errors?	Do my sentences show errors of structure? Little or no variety? Does my paper contain many errors of punctuation, spelling, and/or capitalization that often interfere with meaning?	Do I use simple or incomplete sentences frequently? Do I have frequent errors of sentence structure? Does my paper contain many and serious errors of punctuation, spelling, and/or capitalization? Do my errors severely interfere with meaning?
	Masterful	**Skilled**	**Able**	**Developing**	**Novice**

Adapted from St. Mary's College—School of Extended Education   (Melanie Booth, Learning Resource Program)

Appendix
Chapter 7
Effective Practices in English: Specialty Supplies

Appendix 1: Lotus used by Diane Orem, San Joaquin Delta College
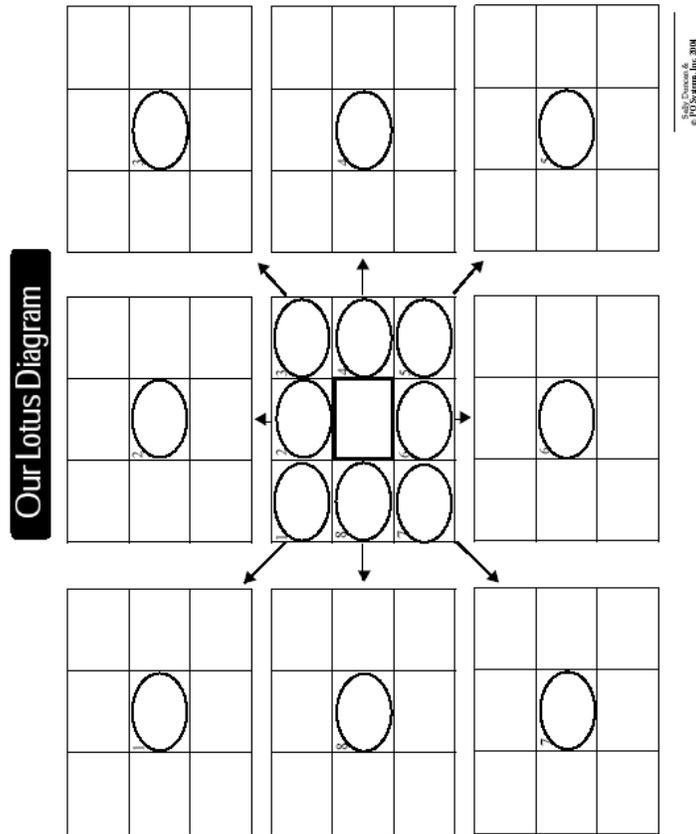**Appendix 2**: Instructional materials used by Katie Hearn, Chabot College
Appendix 3: Community Building Activities, Geneffa Jonker, Cabrillo College
Appendix 4: Resources for Chapter 7

Appendix 1
Lotus Planner Used by Diane Oren, San Joaquin Delta College

Read the chapter for a description of how to use this tool for brainstorming writing ideas

Our Lotus Diagram

Appendix 2

Katie Hern's Instructional Materials

The following materials are from the spring 2007 developmental English class described by Katie Hern. They reflect the process I used to guide students in engaging the first three chapters of the book Fast Food Nation:

1) Discussion Questions

   Students posted responses to select questions on discussion boards on Blackboard (required but un-graded). They also responded to these questions in small-group and whole-class discussions during class.

2) Reading Comprehension Test

   The tests encouraged students, first, to be accountable for doing the reading. Preparing for and taking the test encouraged them to read more carefully and become more agile at explaining and discussing its key ideas/issues. The test also gave students and me clear feedback about parts of the reading they didn't understand, so that these issues could be clarified before students wrote their essays.

3) Synthesis Essay Assignment

   While the earlier discussion questions covered smaller sections of the assigned text, essay questions were broader in scope to engage students in the higher-order synthesis thinking of essay writing. Students' essays made clear the benefits of the kinds of discussions and activities described above. Even in weaker essays, students made connections to earlier discussions and test questions and integrated key ideas and information from the reading.

4) Assessment Rubric for Essay

   Students used this rubric to give each other feedback during in-class peer reviews, and I used it when evaluating their final drafts.

This process was repeated in four different units that semester, covering almost every chapter of Fast Food Nation and several chapters of the book The Wal-Mart Effect.

Discussion Questions -- Fast Food Nation, Chapter 3 (Beginning to page 75)

1.) We've talked in class about how Schlosser uses his introductions to each chapter to paint a picture that is relevant to the topic of the chapter. Sometimes, at the end of these sections, he also gives a sort of thesis statement summing up the main point of the chapter.

However, in chapter 3, the relevance of the opening section is less direct that in chapter 2, and Schlosser doesn't really give a thesis for the chapter. The photo and title for chapter 3 let you know what the chapter will be about -- how the fast food industry treats its employees. Given that his focus

in this chapter is on the treatment of *employees*, why does Schlosser begin with an extended description of the city of Colorado Springs?

2.) Schlosser discusses several factors that led to the growth of Colorado Springs. What are they? What role does he say that the fast food industry has played in the growth of this city?

3.) Why does Schlosser say that teenagers are "the perfect candidates" for fast food jobs (68)?

4.) Explain what Schlosser means by the term "throughput" (68-70).

5.) In your own words, explain what Schlosser means when he says, "the stance of the fast food industry on issues involving employee training, the minimum wage, labor unions, and overtime pay strongly suggests that its motives for hiring the young, the poor, and the handicapped are hardly altruistic" (71).

6.) Why is Schlosser critical of the fast food industry's goal of designing the work so that it would require "zero training" of employees (72)?

7.) Why does Schlosser include the information about the fast food industry accepting "hundreds of millions of dollars in government subsidies for 'training' their workers" (72)?

8.) Schlosser writes that "Roughly 90 percent of the nation's fast food workers are paid an hourly wage, provided no benefits, and scheduled to work only as needed" (74). He also writes, "The fast food industry pays the minimum wage to a higher proportion of its workers than any other American industry" (73). If more and more jobs like this are being created, what consequences do you see for our society?

9.) What is "stroking"? Schlosser is critical of this practice -- why?

Discussion Questions -- Fast Food Nation, Chapter 3 (Page 75 to end of chapter)

7.) Schlosser describes a number of tactics the fast food industry uses to make sure that their workers don't form unions. Summarize these tactics so that someone not in our class could understand you.

8.) Write a one-paragraph summary of Schlosser's main point in the section "Protecting Youth."

9.) Joseph Kinney, the president of the National Safe Workplace Institute, tells Schlosser that, "No other American industry is robbed so frequently by its own employees" as the fast food industry (86). Look over the rest of this section to see how Schlosser explains why there are so many "inside job" robberies.

10.) What is Schlosser's attitude/tone toward the conference he describes in the section "making it fun"?

Name: _____

Open Book, Open Notes, Closed Neighbor

If you need more room, continue your answers on the back

1) Author Eric Schlosser uses Carl Karcher's story as a metaphor for the story of the fast food industry – how it started and how it changed over time. Explain how Carl's story is a metaphor for this.

2) Explain how the McDonalds brothers revolutionized the restaurant industry. Be sure to include specific details from Chapter 1 and don't use exact quotes – I want to see you explain it *in your own words*.

3) How were Ray Kroc and Walt Disney similar *politically*? In your answer, be sure to discuss how Disney treated workers who wanted to join a union, and Ray Kroc's effort to lower the minimum wage for young workers (36-37).

4) Schlosser writes that Disney was one of the first business people to use a marketing strategy called "synergy" (40). Imagine you are explaining synergy to someone not in our class – in your own words, explain how McDonalds uses synergy and then, come up with your own examples of synergy from the entertainment industry today.

5) Use details from chapter 2 to make <u>one strong point supporting</u> fast food and soda marketing in public schools. Then, use details from chapter 2 to make <u>one strong point against</u> allowing fast food and soda companies to market in public schools.

Paper #1: Fast Food Nation, Chapters 1-3

Dr. Katie Hern   Chabot College   English 101A   Spring 2007

The Big Picture: What I'm Looking For:
The main thing I want you to do in this essay is use important ideas and information from <u>Fast Food Nation</u> to develop your own answer to a question below. The essay should be a balance of material from the book and your own critical voice/commentary. It shouldn't be only your opinion, and it shouldn't be only a bunch of facts and quotes from the book.

Questions:
Choose one, or combine more than one

1. Eric Schlosser says, "I've written this book out of a belief that people should know what lies beneath the shiny, happy surface of every fast food transaction. They should know what really lurks beneath those sesame-seed buns" (10).

    Use specific ideas and information from the first three chapters to explore this idea. What does "lurk" beneath the surface of the fast food industry? And do you agree with Schlosser that people should know about these things? Why/Why not?

2. Schlosser writes that fast food is both something we buy and a "metaphor" for America today. Use specific ideas and information from the first three chapters to explore this idea. What does the growth of fast food symbolize/reveal about American culture?

3. Schlosser is critical of the kinds of marketing being directed at kids by fast food and other companies. Do you agree that this marketing unfairly exploits children? Do you think the U.S. should pass laws limiting it? Why/why not? (Make sure you include specific ideas and information from chapter 2 in your discussion.)

4. Schlosser is critical of the ways the fast food industry treats its workers. Do you agree with his criticism? Why/why not? (Make sure you include specific ideas and information from chapter 3 in your discussion.)

5. In <u>Fast Food Nation,</u> Ray Kroc describes the fast food business like this: "rat eat rat, dog eat dog. I'll kill 'em, and I'm going to kill 'em before they kill me. It's survival of the fittest" (37). Use specific ideas and information from the first three chapters to explore this idea. How do you see this "dog eat dog" attitude in what you've learned so far about the fast food industry?

The Details: What I'm Looking For

- <u>Deep and accurate understanding of the book</u>
  The paper should show me that you have carefully read and understood the book. I'm not looking for an opinion you could have come up with before even taking this class, or for you to plug in a couple quotes that make it look like you read the book. I want to see that Schlosser's ideas and information have made their way into your brain and informed your own thoughts on the topic.

- <u>A clear and specific main idea</u>
  In your own voice, I want you to answer the question you chose. This should be the main idea, or thesis, that ties together your whole essay, and you should give it somewhere in the first one or two paragraphs.

- <u>A paper that someone NOT in our class could pick up and understand</u>
  When discussing something from the book, be sure to explain it fully and clearly enough that someone who hasn't read the book could follow you. Including specific details and well-chosen quotes helps a lot.

- <u>A well-organized essay</u>
  (I'll give you more details on what I mean by this…)

- <u>Proper use of quotes</u>
  If you include Schlosser's exact words in your paper, you need to be careful to let your readers know by placing those words inside "quotation marks."

- <u>Sentences that are as clear and error-free as possible</u>
  Take the time to proofread your paper and polish it up. Readers take your ideas more seriously when you do.

- <u>At least 3 complete pages, typed, 12 point font, double-spaced, with regular-sized margins</u>
  (1.25 inch on each side).

Writer's Name: _____   Reviewer's Name: _____

Check the box that you think is appropriate

Assignment Requirement	Not Done	Needs Work	Fair	Well Done

Critical Thinking

The writer should…

Show a good understanding of key ideas/information from book.
Use her/his own critical voice to comment on material from book.
Offer her/his own answer to the assignment question(s).

Sum up the paper with a clear thesis statement in the first couple paragraphs.
Provide specific examples, details, information, quotes.

Explain ideas/information fully enough for readers not in our class to follow.

Organization

The writer should…

Present ideas in an order that makes sense to readers.
Open with an intro that engages readers and conveys overall focus of paper
Make sure each paragraph has a clear central focus.
Make sure each paragraph is a reasonable length (usually 1/3 to 2/3 of a page).
Use clear transitions to connect ideas and make the paper "flow."
End with a conclusion that completes the discussion

Mechanics

The writer should…
Proofread carefully so that sentences are clear, concise, and free of errors.
Use "quotation marks" when including an author's exact words.
Produce at least 3 full pages -- double-spaced, 12-point font, 1.25" margins, no extra spaces between paragraphs.

Comments:
Now write a note to the writer about your overall sense of the draft. Make sure you discuss what you think is strong, as well as specific issues you think might be improved during revision.

Appendix 3: Community Building Activities
Geneffa Jonker

Sharing Our Gifts

Our next activity as a Learning Community will give us an opportunity to learn more about "things that matter" to ourselves and each other. You have just read "The Gift" by Michelle Serros from *Chicana Falsa* in your reading class. Now you will go on to write about a significant gift of your own that you will bring in to share at our community gathering (see syllabus for date).

Think about the material things that you treasure. We often hear that it is foolish to covet material things because they are just objects; nonetheless, some objects (like Serros' desk) may be highly significant because of the special meaning they have for us. Gifts, more than any other objects, whether they are gifts from people we love or gifts that we give ourselves, can have deep sentimental value.

Think about a gift that holds a lot of meaning in your life. Try not to think about human gifts (like your children), or abstract gifts (like education). Focus on an object that has symbolic meaning because it represents more than just an object. It might remind you of the person who gave it to you or a loved one who has since passed on. It might symbolize a particular triumph in your life—an obstacle you overcame, or it could simply evoke pleasant memories. You will be asked to bring your gift (or a picture of it) to our community gathering where we will each display and talk about our gift.

Write an essay about a gift that you received, or that you gave yourself, which holds special meaning. You may use Michele Serros' personal essay as a model for your own. You may want to address the following questions in your essay.

1.   What is the story behind how you acquired this gift? Who gave it to you?

2.   Has your relationship to this gift changed over time? Does it mean more or less to you now than when you first received it?

3.   Is this gift a legacy? Do you plan to pass it down to your children or keep it in your family in some way?

Your essay is due at our next community gathering. At that time, you will share your gift with the class by displaying it (or a picture of it) and telling us about its significance to you. Do not plan to read from your paper. Think of this presentation as a conversation among friends.

We look forward to seeing your gifts and learning your stories!

Appendix 4
Resources for Chapter 7

"A Brief History of Rhetoric and Composition." *The Bedford Bibliography for Teachers of Writing.* Accessed: http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/bb/history.html

Angelo, T. and Cross, P. (1993) *Classroom Assessment Techniques* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates (ICAS). (2000). *Academic Literacy: A Statement of Competencies Expected of Students Entering California's Public Colleges and Universities.* Retrieved from http://www.asccc.org/Publications/Papers/AcademicLiteracy/ExecSummary.htm

Legislative Analyst's Office. (2007). *Analysis of the 2007-2008 Budget Bill: Education.* Retrieved from http://www.lao.ca.gov/analysis_2007/education/ed_22_6870_anl07.aspx

Lehr, F.(June 1995). "Revision in the Writing Process." *ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication Digest.* #100. Retrieved at http://www.indiana.edu/~reading/ieo/digests/d100.html

The Research, Planning and Assessment Group for California Community Colleges. (July 2007). *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges* (second edition) p. 58

Other links:

Reading Between the Lives
Video available at http://www.archive.org/details/ReadingBetweenTheLivesPart1.mp4

Chabot College
http://online.chabotcollege.edu/khern