

**WRI 102: ACADEMIC WRITING FOR
THE WRITING PROGRAM @ THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY 2008-09**

Table of Contents

I	Introduction: What is Academic Writing?	2
II	Best Practices	4
	a. Academic Writing as a Conversation	4
	b. Writing as a Thinking Process/Feedback at the Early Stages	6
	c. Our Job as Coach	7
	d. Commenting on Global issues, Not Error Finding	9
	e. Using Assignment-Specific Grading Rubrics	11
III	The Writing Process	13
IV	Assignments and Papers	14
	1) Three Basic Guidelines	14
	2) Recommended Schedule of Assignments	15
	3) Designing an Effective Paper Assignment	17
	3) Traditional Modes	18
	4) Topics	20
V	Peer Review	22
VI	Library Information Literacy Session	23
VII	Textbooks	24
VIII	Syllabus Template¹	25

¹ At the end of this document I've included a standard structure for the syllabus, including required components such as the academic integrity and differing abilities statements. I have not included a week-by-week schedule as each of you may be dealing with very different themes, and we all need freedom and flexibility in designing weekly activities. The consistency across all sections for which we are striving, however, will derive from our common adherence to the best practices as well as the required assignments.

I INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS ACADEMIC WRITING?

One of the primary goals of WRI 102 is to help **empower students to become more confident and capable writers in an academic context so that they can write proficiently in their other classes, where faculty will expect them to be able to construct an argument, support an interpretation, synthesize multiple scholarly perspectives, or analyze data—all in writing.** Students must feel confident about stepping into a public forum where they will be joining an academic conversation.

Helping to “grow” this kind of writer, of course, cannot be done in one semester. But we have an obligation to help students develop these skills. All the best practices and guidelines in this guide are designed to help you do that.

The students who take WRI 102 are those **who did not score at or above 580** on both their Math and Reading SAT’s, or who otherwise did not place out of the course through AP exam scores or the TCNJ Writing Exemption and Placement Exam. Some students taking WRI 102 know they need this additional training; others feel self-conscious and resistant to being in the course. It’s our job to assure them that it will be a challenging and supportive environment, and that the skills they’ll develop here are essential to their success in the rest of their career here at the college and beyond.

It’s therefore helpful to step back and see WRI 102 in a broader context. In *Professional Writing in the Humanities and Social Sciences* (Southern Illinois UP, 1994) Susan Peck MacDonald offers a model of writing development which identifies four stages:

Stage 1: What students bring from high school—“Nonacademic or pseudo-academic writing.”

Stage 2: Goals of first-year writing—“Generalized academic writing concerned with stating claims, offering evidence, respecting others’ opinions, and learning how to write with authority.”

Stage 3: Early courses in the major—“Novice approximations of particular disciplinary ways of making knowledge.”

Stage 4: Goals for advanced courses in the major—“Expert, insider prose within a discipline.”

--cited in John Bean “Helping Students Achieve Disciplinary Expertise: the Role of Writing in University Outcomes Assessment” presented at the University of Delaware, 10/5/06.

WRI 102 correlates to stage 2 above. The purpose of WRI 102, then, is to coach students in the following skills and proficiencies:

- a comfort level, interest in, and familiarity with writing tasks typical in college
- ownership of their own writing process and a strong sense of voice

- reading comprehension strategies, including the ability to analyze texts thematically and rhetorically
- the ability to reason logically and to critique the logic of the texts they read
- the ability to use the language and conventions expected in academic prose
- the ability to employ—and the understanding of when to employ—different types of claims when making an argument, including definitions, evaluations, and proposals.
- an understanding of how to cite other “voices” in the conversation, use evidence effectively, and write with integrity.

TCNJ’s writing intensive curriculum then tackles stages 3 & 4:

The intellectual and scholarly growth of all College of New Jersey students involves the development of confident identities as good writers who can communicate clearly and effectively to an array of audiences for a range of purposes. All students, therefore, are required to take three writing intensive courses during their tenure at the college. The first of these is First Seminar, taken in the fall semester of the first year; in the sophomore or junior year, students take another writing intensive course of their choice, usually inside their major, and then in the senior year, a writing intensive capstone course in the major. In addition, some entering students may also be required to take WRI 102, Academic Writing, to help better prepare them for the demands of their writing intensive requirements. -- <http://www.tcnj.edu/~writing/wicurriculum.html>

All of the mid-level and the senior-level writing intensive courses have had to meet specific criteria and have gone through a rigorous evaluation process before being designated as officially writing intensive (www.tcnj.edu/~writing/faculty/intensiveguide.html).

Whereas these writing intensive courses are teaching students how to think and write for a specific discipline (history, biology, art), WRI 102 focuses on more **general conventions of academic writing**, conventions which can be seen at three different levels:

1. “Rules”: what we often refer to as the “micro-level” aspects of writing, or grammar, mechanics, and usage.
2. “Moves”; the sentence-level wording and phrasing that are expected in academic discourse; moves include everything from the effective use of transition phrases and subordinating clauses to the correct way to refer to someone else’s ideas.
3. “Plays”: the larger, macro-level aspects of writing that refer to the logic and development of thought needed in various kinds of argumentation, including the many genres or “modes” that scholars routinely use in an argument.

The text books chosen for WRI 102 address all three levels and are in sync with this approach to the teaching of writing. I also have on file numerous examples of writing assignments from the writing intensive courses which will give you a good idea of the kinds of writing tasks that await your students.

II BEST PRACTICES

A. Academic, argumentative writing is about engaging in a conversation with others, not jumping through hoops “to get the assignment done.” We structure our courses and design our assignments so that students can explore topics of interest to them (or questions of interest to them on the topics we’ve chosen), and we guide them in academic research methods, logic, and the writing process.

“Experienced writing instructors have long recognized that writing well means entering into conversation with others. Academic writing in particular calls upon writers not simply to express their own ideas, but to do so as a response to what others have said.”

--Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, *They Say / I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*

“The skills needed for this kind of thinking [academic argumentation] are best learned in a context, a context in which students have something at stake beyond a grade—in other words, in which they have some desire to solve a problem or interpret some set of information because of its inherent interest for them, or perhaps even some ramification for their personal experience.”

--Gary Dohrer, “Do Teachers’ Comments in Students’ Papers Help?”

In his wonderful *Engaging Ideas: The Professor’s Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking and Active Learning in the Classroom*, Bean describes in more detail the kinds of writing most often done by Stage 1 writers—writers not yet conversant with academic writing:

1. **The “and then” paper** is “a chronological narrative in which the writer tells what happens between time point A and time point B without focus, selection, pacing, or tension. . . . A typical example is writing a summary instead of an argument when asked to review an article or producing a straight chronological narrative instead of a causal analysis when asked to write about an interpretive problem in history” (20).

2. **The “all about” paper** “tries to say a little bit of everything about a topic. When well written, such papers may seem organized hierarchically . . . but the categories do not function as reasons in support of a thesis” (22).

3. **The “dump writing” paper** “has no discernible structure. It reveals a student overwhelmed with information and uncertain what to do with it” (23).

We have all seen papers like these. In fact, these are precisely the kinds of papers written for the exemption and placement exam which did not score high enough to place out of the course. All three kinds of writing, according to Bean, “reveal a retreat, in some manner, from the kind of reasoned analysis and argumentation that we value in academic writing” (24).

Bean narrows in on an important contributing factor: a positivist model of the writing process which assumes that writers first choose a topic, then narrow it, then make an outline, then write a draft, and finally revise and edit. In contrast, Bean reminds us of what we know to be true about

our own academic writing: “For example, few scholars report starting an article by choosing a topic and then narrowing it. Rather, academic writers report being gradually drawn into a conversation about a question that does not yet seem resolved” (30).

The process, then, goes more like this: perception of a problem, doubt about a theory, or puzzlement over unexplained data; further exploration through research of various kinds, informal tentative writing, intense focus, and periods of incubation; then there is the first attempt to “get ideas down on paper in preliminary form” (31). It is at this point that real revision takes place:

Many writers report dismantling their first drafts and starting afresh, often discovering their true thesis at the conclusion of their first draft. At this point, writers often make new outlines; they begin considering audience; they clarify their rhetorical purpose; they try to make the essay work for readers. Several drafts are often necessary as writer-based prose is gradually converted to reader-based prose. (31)

Finally, there is editing, and even here the recursive nature of writing can require re-thinking of substantive parts of the essay.

Bean suggests several broad ways to begin transforming the way we teach so that we are “teaching thinking through teaching revision.” Here are 3 of his 15 recommendations (quoted directly from pp. 33-34):

- Profess the “new rhetorical” or problem-driven model of the writing process. **Instead of asking students to choose “topics” and narrow them, encourage students to pose questions or problems and explore them.** Show how inquiry and writing are related.
- Give problem-focused writing assignments. Students are most apt to revise when their essays must be thesis-governed responses to genuine problems.
- Incorporate non-graded exploratory writing into your courses. . . . Exploratory writing gives students the space, incentive, and tools for more elaborated and complex thinking.

In addition, see the section on coaching as well as the recommended assignments for more ideas.

B. Writing is actually a thinking process (not simply transcribing what’s already in our heads), and therefore it’s OK when a first draft (or early writing) is messy. We are clear with students about the exploratory nature of early writing, and we back this up with non-judgmental, but constructive feedback at the early stages.

“Student learning can be greatly enhanced by having room to make mess in writing and someone to read that mess with intense love and attention.”

--Alfred E. Guy, Jr., *R.W.B. Lewis* Director, Yale College Writing Center

If we want our students to think about their ideas, the structure of their claim, its support, and their logic (among many other higher-order or macro-level revisions), we **undercut** our own efforts the minute we start underlining and circling every micro-level error. But it’s hard NOT to do this, isn’t it? Put the pen away (or the keyboard if you respond electronically), and first read for overall structure.

- What is the thesis?
- Has the student actually addressed the assignment?
- What main issue does this student primarily need to re-think?

Alfie Guy suggests keeping macro-level comments limited to 2 or 3 aspects at most, and to identify the categories or types of revision that you’re making note of so that students can “transfer what they learn to other writing projects.”

Guy also recommends not making any marginal comments until you’ve read the whole draft and decided what the main focus of your end comment is going to be; that way, you can make sure that your marginal comments are on the same issue and reinforce the suggestions you’re making for revision.

Here are some additional “minimal marking” techniques that you can try:

1. Provide end comments that both support how students currently think and yet challenge them to think in more complex ways; so, provide one paragraph that praises conceptual strengths and one paragraph that suggests ways to re-think the topic (Slattery 334).
2. A similar method is to comment on three strengths and three weaknesses, and then make recommendations for revision, keeping miscellaneous comments to the end (McAllister 62).
3. Rubrics or checklists—which have been given to students when they get the assignment—are also helpful ways of providing targeted feedback where expectations are clear, and thus comments are clear as well. If electronic, rubrics can include “text boxes” for written comments, so that students don’t feel that the process is too mechanized.

C. We view students as apprentice writers, and we view our job as coach and eventually, as evaluator.

“From a teacher’s standpoint, commenting to prompt revision, as opposed to justifying a grade or pointing out errors, may also change one’s whole orientation toward reading student writing. . . . You begin looking for the promise of a draft rather than its mistakes. You begin seeing yourself responding to rather than correcting a set of papers. You think of limiting your comments to the two or three things that the writer should work on for the next draft rather than commenting copiously on everything. You think of reading for ideas rather than for errors. In short, you think of coaching rather than judging.”

--Bean, *Engaging Ideas*, p. 242

This is where the difference between formative and summative assessment is crucial. Formative assessment provides advice and “coaching” to help someone improve. Any skill—playing a musical instrument or a sport, painting, dancing—requires **practice** and then feedback on that practice in order to get better. And sometimes, those practices are full of mistakes. Only after much practice is the person ready to be evaluated at a concert, in a game, or by a judge.

As writing instructors, we have to wear both hats!

Giving feedback to promote real revision has its challenges. The comments we give—no matter what color the ink we use—are often *felt* as a personal judgment. How do we give an honest assessment of what the student has done so far, while also suggesting ways for the student to develop their thinking, and improve the structure, organization, clarity, and overall quality of their work?

We have the potential to do many things in our comments on student writing: correct/critique, direct, guide, prompt, question, or reflect. As the authors of *Twelve Readers Reading* conclude, faculty who provide evaluative comments with moderate levels of direction tend to be more “product” oriented, and assume that it’s their responsibility to *intervene to assist in student development*. Faculty who are more apt to pose questions or reflective statements with little or only indirect guidance on revision tend to be more “process” oriented and *assume that a student’s development will happen in the right climate*. At the extremes are the authoritarian responder who takes on the role of editor, and the analytical responder who takes on the role of reader (focusing only on his or her understanding of the text); **somewhere in the middle is the advisory responder who blends the best of both approaches.**²

Another term for this advisory responder is “coach.”

Just as a music teacher would never make a student perform at a concert without lots of lessons and practice, and a baseball coach would never ask a player to play in a game without lots of batting and fielding practice, so too, we writing teachers need to remember that we cannot assign and grade papers until we’ve given students some “practice.”

² I have copies of the chart and explanatory comments from *Twelve Readers Reading* for anyone who would like to see it, and I highly recommend this book!

This means practice in all three areas (rules, moves, and plays) in various formats—some isolated, some integrated together. But these must be “low stakes” situations where the main purpose is learning.

During practice, the coach DOES evaluate how well the student can perform these functions, but ONLY with the purpose of helping the student to improve and master the skill. The evaluation is formative, not summative.

- The batting coach will watch a batter in the cage, and comment on each swing (“open your hips,” “pull your swing all the way through”).
- At times, the coach may even stand behind the hitter with his arms around his or her shoulders, and physically guide the hitter in the proper form.
- For initial learners, the coach will demonstrate the proper form to show what it looks like, and then break down a swing into each part of the physical movements involved, describing the positioning necessary.

In the writing classroom, we need to adopt similar coaching methods. Practice may take any of the following forms:

- Examining a text to see what a particular type of argument looks like, what it involves, and how its writer has “performed” it.
- Reviewing written guidelines and examples of various arguments, with each part broken down into step-by-step directions for the particular components (*The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing* provides a lot of this, as do the templates in *They Say / I Say*).
- Informal opportunities to try out a particular type of argument, with discussion and live feedback.

As coach, you then provide “feedback” for the writer who is practicing in the “batting cage.” Here’s is where you offer advisory comments which provide directions (not commands which take away the student’s ownership of their own writing). Often we make observations or pose questions (“Your paragraphs do not flow as well as they might,” “Is this the most effective location for this paragraph?”), and that works effectively. But at other times, our students are not able to translate our comments into a revision.

The trick is knowing how to turn a comment, question, or instruction into **a suggestion for action**. “*Why are you going in this direction*” or “*How does this relate to the previous paragraph?*” might become: “Readers often expect explanations of how the last point you made relates to a new point that you’re developing. Given the complexity of the ideas here, **make those connections explicit in a transitional sentence here.**” Or, even more specifically, we sometimes may need to review the structure of a certain type of mode such as evaluation: “Make sure you explain your criteria and then examine your X to see if it matches.”

D. Our comments on student writing are structure- and content- focused, not error-focused. In other words, we relinquish the somewhat natural (or at least deeply ingrained) tendency to search for and correct errors, and pay more attention to what students are trying to say and then help them say it more effectively.

“If schooling leads students to expect only the hostile reader, or only the reader who serves a proofreader, or only the reader who serves as gate-keeper, then writing will come to seem less a pursuit of meaning than a survival exercise.”

--Gary Dohrer, “Do Teachers’ Comments on Students’ Papers Help?”

In a study done at the University of Texas at Austin, Gary Dohrer examined what students view as the purpose behind faculty comments on drafts and the relationship between the comments and the students’ responses. First, he found that despite overt claims about wanting to promote revision, 52-80% of the comments on the drafts were on surface-level features. Not surprisingly, this corresponds to the types of changes most often made by students (59-90%): “students . . . had consciously decided that revision was predominantly an exercise in correcting errors to get a higher grade” (4). In doing their “revision,” most students did not re-read their paper, but only skimmed through the comments to correct the errors that were noted. They were not re-considering their text in a global way; they were not re-thinking the purpose or effectiveness of their writing. They were not, in other words, engaged in true revision. Rather, faculty “took on the role of evaluators, and students became correctors” (7).

Pointing to the work of Nancy Sommers from the 1980’s, Dohrer affirms that feedback that is primarily about error finding results in students relinquishing “ownership and authorship” since they attend to the faculty member’s concerns not their own purposes in writing (5). This, too, further eliminates the possibility for real revision.

In a forthcoming article reviewing the scholarship on responding to student writing, Rich Haswell comes to the same conclusion: students “assiduously follow the teacher’s surface emendations and disregard the deeper suggestions regarding content and argumentation” (11).

Extensively marking grammar mistakes—even with a concise system in which mistakes are numbered and refer to a master list—ultimately sends the wrong message and is counter-productive.

First, it sends the message that **we’re all about searching for errors as opposed to listening to what students have to say** and helping them communicate more effectively. Of course good usage DOES help writers communicate more effectively, so patterns of improper usage should be brought to students’ attention, but in a way that is manageable. The way we bring it to their attention should allow them to understand the pattern and then learn to correct it on their own. Second, it can simply result in students tuning out. Studies have found that “students attend to nothing at all when paper corrections are overwhelming” (McAllister 61).

Third, it sends the concrete message that revision means correcting grammar mistakes. Thus, as MacAllister concludes: “Beyond fostering deafness and defensiveness in students, grammar-centered responses can also promote unproductive revision behaviors. Current research in this

area indicates that one important distinction between poor and proficient writers is that poor writers restrict revision to changes in words and sentences, while proficient writers rewrite whole sections to clarify meaning for the reader” (60).

As Alfie Guy, director of Yale’s Writing Center and frequent Bard Institute writing workshop facilitator here at TCNJ, puts it:

“It is entirely appropriate to give comments on sentence-level issues, but proofreading or copyediting every error is worse than a waste of time—it is generally detrimental to learning. If a student needs help with diction, syntax, or correctness, you should select a pattern to focus on and mark only instances of that particular problem. . . . Students will not internalize more than 1 or 2 new rules during a given revision. Calling attention to more than this just generates noise.”

Keep in mind as well that when students truly revise and re-write whole passages, some of those errors you see in an early draft will be rectified. In fact, some of these errors are a product of simple lack of clarity on the part of the student. We have to remember that they’re struggling to formulate an idea and it’s not going to come out perfectly.

To address common problems in usage, style, grammar and other mechanics, it’s best to hold class workshops, using sentences and passages from your students’ papers. You can assign readings and exercises in the St. Martin’s handbook, then review that in class together, and then jump into putting these ideas into practice by having students assess and then correct the paper you’ve projected on the screen.

I’ll end with the following quotation: “To effect improvement in students’ writing, comments must confront students with issues situational to the text. . . . They must raise questions in students’ minds that cause them to reevaluate their own purpose, and not merely to guess at the teacher’s purposes. Russell Hunt (1989) contends that ‘we don’t learn language by having our errors pointed out and corrected; we learn as a by-product of **using language in order to do things we care about doing**’” (Dohrer 7 *emphasis added*).

E. We make grading transparent; we provide assignment-specific rubrics for each assignment and use these to help students as they go through the writing process.

Although the general first-year writing rubric is helpful³, and should be introduced to students as a touchstone for any paper in any class, **assignment-specific rubrics should be used in WRI 102.**

These should be handed out when the assignment is distributed so that expectations are clear for students. Students will be much more successful if they understand the goals of the assignment! You can then use an un-scored version of the rubric for giving feedback on drafts.

By the time you're grading a paper there is simply no need to comment extensively or mark-up every error. Writing an overall assessment is essential; becoming their copy-editor is not! This is where student performance is being evaluated, and most students are interested in only one thing: the grade. When you've made expectations clear, this is a straightforward process with the use of rubrics.

They are well worth the initial effort it takes to design them: you have an assignment-specific rubric that you can use again and again, or modify easily for future use; grading truly is faster and easier; and, by sharing the rubric with students when you distribute the assignment, you will notice a marked improvement in their papers—rarely will you receive papers that are so off the mark that you wonder what assignment they were reading, and more often you'll have successful (or at least authentic) efforts to achieve the objectives.

Here are the steps for designing one:

1. Review the intended outcomes of the assignment. What do you want students to gain from doing this assignment? What skills should they be able to demonstrate? Another way to think about this is: what do you expect in these papers? It's important to be specific and to prioritize your expectations. It's very difficult to grade a paper if you've left out a major component that you expect to see and view as essential!
2. Translate these outcomes into the criteria by which the paper will be evaluated. Keep the total number of criteria to between 5-10, fewer if applicable, but not more than 10.
3. Decide how many levels of proficiency you want to include. For example, three (weak, satisfactory, or strong), five (based on grades A-F) or some other set-up based on points.
4. Determine the relative weight of each criterion. Some rubrics list the points for each level of quality, and these can vary from criterion to criterion.
5. Now write out the descriptions for each level. For example, what specific features will an A paper's thesis have? What will an A paper contain in terms of the evidence used to support the thesis? **Describe the characteristics of a student's paper as specifically as possible at**

³ Available at <http://www.tcnj.edu/~writing/faculty/rubrics.html>

each level in each criterion. Sometimes it's best to describe the best possible paper in all its facets first, next describe the worst possible paper, and then fill in the intermediate levels. Other people start at the bottom and work their way up, including phrases such as "includes the previous box plus has xyz," but here the lowest level must meet minimum expectations.

In designing a rubric for my current FSP class, for example, I knew that I wanted students to develop their skills in applying the findings of a sociological study by David Karp to two memoirs we had read. This element was going to be worth a substantial part of the grade. I soon realized, however, that listing the levels of proficiency for this skill did not fully address the closely related skills that make such an application possible. Here's what I wrote first:

- Applies Karp's concepts to the texts carefully and insightfully
- Applies Karp's concepts to the texts with insight but is occasionally vague
- Applies some of Karp's concepts to the texts, or applies all of them but without a nuanced understanding of the complexity of the texts
- Applies only a few of Karp's concepts, often vaguely with no insight or attention to detail
- Applies few, if any, of Karp's concepts, with little insight
- Does not apply Karp to the memoirs; summarizes the memoirs only

In the end, I included the building block skills as well: **students needed to demonstrate an accurate understanding of Karp's ideas** (Full and accurate understanding of every concept . . . Accurate understanding of most concepts, but some concepts may be missing . . . Minimal or faulty understanding of several concepts . . . Minimal or faulty understanding of most concepts, and/or many concepts missing . . . Completely inaccurate understanding of concepts); furthermore, they needed to **support their claims about whether Karp's ideas are born out in the memoirs by providing concrete examples** (Convincingly supports claims with concrete examples from the texts . . . Supports most claims with concrete examples from the texts . . . Only sometimes supports claims with concrete examples, or does so unconvincingly . . . Frequently fails to support claims convincingly with concrete examples from the texts . . . Does not support claims with concrete examples from the texts). Finally, I included two other important components for this paper: **organization**, and **usage/grammar/spelling/documentation** (with gradations for each level of quality).

I have several rubrics for WRI 102 papers that I can share with you in SOCS. Simply email me with a request. ☺

If you're designing a new rubric for an assignment specific to your course, and want a basic format to get you started, Rubistar provides an online tool with standardized criteria and descriptions that you can revise to meet your needs:

<http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php>

III THE WRITING PROCESS

WRI 102 is grounded in the philosophy that writing is a recursive process: that is, that writing requires numerous invention, drafting, revising, and editing techniques, and that this process is rarely linear. In fact, writers often jot down initial ideas, then expand to a partial draft, and in the process of revising (or even editing), decide to go back and brainstorm or research more, return to the drafting stage, and so on.

In promoting writing as a way of learning, WRI 102 **particularly emphasizes the importance of revision**, where revision means truly re-thinking one's ideas, their presentation, and their effect on the reader. Therefore, WRI 102 includes **one or two drafts for each formal paper**.

However, as Richard Larson warns, while the “procedures students are taught to follow are by no means unimportant. . . . the teacher and the student both need to remember, of course, that using the scaffolding of composing processes to facilitate writing does not produce, or assure the success of, any kind of writing. The success of any writing is determined by the quality of the information included, the clarity of the organizational plan and its development, the lucidity of style, the ‘ethos’ of the writer, the appropriateness of the writing for its reader(s), and the suitability of the writing to its occasion and purpose. Engaging adroitly in composing processes does not relieve the writer of the responsibility for producing ‘effective’ discourse, although on occasion (I have perceived) some teachers seem to suggest that the skillful traversal of processes—skillful execution of this ‘continuing assignment’—is all one needs for successful writing” (378).

So, please be careful to not to over-emphasize the elements of the writing process in lieu of more fundamental aspects of writing, namely, student engagement. The tools of the writing process are just that—tools. Don't inadvertently convey to students that as long as they do each step in the process it will result in an “A” paper. Ultimately, students must produce effective writing that meets the identified outcomes of the assignment.

IV ASSIGNMENTS & PAPERS

“Our goal in making assignments for writing, in my view, should finally be to help students ask questions, inquire, discover, and thus learn through writing **in such a way that they will want to come before readers and invite those readers to share, participate in, and be moved by, their learning.**”

--Richard Larson, “Writing Assignments: How Might They Encourage Learning?”

WRI 102 need not be “final paper” heavy; it should, however, be writing and coaching heavy!

Here are three overall guidelines to keep in mind:

- A) In line with the “coaching” model, provide opportunities for your students to “practice” certain **rules, moves** and **plays** in non-graded, small group, or other low-stakes situations. Assignments can be done in-class, or prepared for class and then analyzed together as a group with proportionally weighted grading.
- B) Scaffold or sequence your assignments so that a formal paper assignment does not ask students to do something that you have not yet allowed them to learn through practice. For example, assign and then examine together in class an informal assignment that asks students to build a criteria-match definition of a contested term, and then later have them use that material within a larger argument; or, have them practice the three different ways of responding to what “They Say” by fleshing out various templates from *They Say / I Say* and only later have them select an appropriate one for use in a more complex argument.
- C) Assign formal papers that frame argumentation as a conversation that students are entering (see chapters 1, 2 and 17 in *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing*; Preface and Introduction to *They Say / I Say*), and in which they can use multiple **moves** and **plays**, as appropriate, for the situation at hand. If you have a theme course, you can identify some of the problems/questions to which students will be responding, and/or have them investigate questions of their own choosing based on problems they identify as significant or intriguing to them.

Recommended schedule of assignments (this sequence has lots of flexibility and I encourage you to design your course to best meet the needs of your theme!)

In order to allow for the greatest amount of creativity among instructors and the needs of theme-based sections, there are no standardized assignments. But building on the general guidelines presented in the 2006 Handbook, this handbook offers more specific guidelines which are catered to the now required textbooks that all sections will use and which best embody the program's approach to academic writing.

1. Early on in the semester, it might be helpful to assign an informal piece (no drafts or feedback) that draws on skills and knowledge with which students are already familiar. In other words, allow them to engage in a writing activity that will present only a moderate challenge. Although this will not carry much weight at all in the final grade, **it can help build confidence**. It can also help you identify areas of weakness. It should not, however, be a throw-away assignment. In order for it to be a confidence builder, it must engage students.

Usually, this kind of writing is grounded in personal experience, not analysis of a text. If you have a theme, link the assignment to an issue or aspect of the theme that you're exploring; if not, consider using one of the assignments in *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing*, particularly from the chapter on personal narrative, or consider using the template by Jane Tompkins presented in the preface to *They Say / I Say*.

2. Also early on in the semester, you will be introducing students to the notion of academic argumentation as entering a conversation. Here you will be using the Preface and Introduction to *They Say / I Say*, and Part I (chapters 1-2) as well as chapter 17 in *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing*. (Note: chapter 17 also includes sections on generating ideas and the writing process: drafting to proofreading; chapter 18 goes into great detail about revision).
3. Beginning now, and then interspersed throughout the rest of the course, you will be introducing students to the rhetorical aspects of writing: attention to audience, etc. This is covered in *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing*, Part I (chapters 3-4).
4. The next assignment(s) should begin preparing students for the first formal paper assignment. These are the sequenced or "scaffolded" assignments that allow students to "practice" and where you will serve as the "coach." These will be a variety of informal writing assignments that allow students to master the kinds of moves and plays that they will need for their first paper. Here you will be using chapters 14-16 in *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing*, as well as Part II (chapters 4-7) of *They Say / I Say*.
5. At this same time, you can also begin to teach research skills—options include the actual library session introducing the licensed databases; evaluating sources and using "evidence"; and responding to, analyzing, and summarizing a text. Here, you will be using Part I (chapters 1-3) of *They Say / I Say*, and Part IV (chapters 20-22) in *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing*.

6. **The course should not include more than three major, formal paper assignments.** This is to allow time for practicing moves and plays (whether individually outside of class or as a group on screen during class), and to allow time for you to give quality feedback on student drafts.

These formal paper assignments will ask students to make an argument. It will ask them to enter conversation about the topic of your course (or a topic of the student's choice), and it might do one of several things:

- answer a question that perplexes or intrigues them,
- answer a question that is embedded in an on-going or current debate (either in society or in a particular field of inquiry),
- or propose a solution to a problem (any kind of problem—policy, ethical, theoretical, etc.)

Academic arguments are answers to what are called “ill-structured” problems. A well-structured problem has a right answer; an ill-structured problem is an “open-ended question that does not have a clear right answer and therefore must be responded to with a proposition justified by reasons and evidence.” (Bean, “Writing Assignments as Ill-Defined Problems” 4).

You can make these papers increasingly complex as the semester progresses. Moreover, because students will be “entering a conversation” they should also employ templates from *They Say / I Say*, where they either disagree with reasons, agree with a difference, or both agree and disagree simultaneously with what they've been reading and studying.

7. **Each formal paper must have an assignment-specific rubric.** If you are asking students to demonstrate how well they've mastered a certain type of claim, plus certain rhetorical strategies, plus certain grammatical constructions, then these must be stated in the rubric. It's most helpful to hand out the rubric when you hand out the paper assignment, and it's most helpful to use a criteria-based rubric which describes the various levels of achievement in some detail.

In designing your formal paper assignments, please use this model from Kerry Walk, Director of Princeton's Writing Program. The importance of the model cannot be over-emphasized!

Elements of an Effective Writing Assignment by Kerry Walk, Director of the Princeton Writing Program

The assignment. Surprisingly, many teachers forget to include the crucial ingredient: the assignment itself. At least one sentence on your assignment sheet should explicitly state what you want students to do. The assignment is usually signaled by a verb, such as “analyze,” “assess,” “explain,” or “discuss.” For example, in a history course, after reading a model biography, students were directed as follows:

Your assignment is to write your own biographical essay on Mao, using Mao's reminiscences (as told to a Western journalist), speeches, encyclopedia articles, a medical account from Mao's physician, and two contradictory obituaries.

A good strategy for coming up with an effective assignment is to imagine the kind of essay you want students to write, then to work backwards to the specific instruction that's likely to produce it. Having drafted the assignment, you should read it from a student's point of view for clarity and comprehensibility. *Note that the best assignments nudge students toward making an argument.*

The purpose of the assignment. Explaining to students why they're doing a particular assignment can help them grasp the big picture—what you're trying to teach them and why learning it is worthwhile. For example,

This assignment has three goals: for you to (1) see how the concepts we've learned thus far can be used in a different field from economics, (2) learn how to write about a model, and (3) learn to critique a model or how to defend one.

Approaches to the assignment. Some instructors give students assignment sheets that are filled with big blocks of questions and lengthy ruminations on the topic. Students often can't tell which part is the assignment itself and which is advice for approaching it. To avoid confusing students, it's best to separate the assignment from methods for approaching it, questions to consider, and pitfalls to avoid. For example,

The most successful papers will have a tight focus. Don't attempt to include all of the suggested topics or comparison passages in your essay. Make an argument based on a close reading of a few carefully selected passages and be sure to make both your argument and the texts that will support that argument clear in the opening paragraph of your paper.

Logistics. When and where is the paper due? How long will it probably be? What are the formatting specifications (margin width, font size, etc.)? What citation style should be used? By answering these questions on the assignment sheet, you can avoid a host of problems later. For example,

Due date: Monday, February 28, at the beginning of class (don't be late!)

Length: 4-6pp. (1500 words)

Format: Times 12, one-inch margins, no cover page

Citations: MLA in-text citation style; include a properly formatted Works Cited

Sources: Limit yourself to the source book for this assignment; do not do outside research.

It's also important to tell students your policies regarding extensions, late papers, and rewrites. Many instructors communicate their policies in the syllabus, where they may also list criteria for grading papers and give information about how final grades are calculated.

Modes

Traditional “modes” based assignments (a definition paper, a cause and effect paper, etc.) will be used as informal assignments which are “scaffolded” as students work toward their formal papers. This excerpt below (from Kiniry pp. 192-95) provides an excellent overview of why modes are so important, but also how they actually appear in the context of what will be expected of students in other academic courses. Please use these examples as models for some sequenced assignments in your class:

(1) **Listing.** An examination form which at its simplest calls for the rote display of memorized items (sample questions: "List the functions of the liver," "What are the characteristics of igneous rocks?"). But listing can also serve as the backbone of more complex essays (the list would provide distinct paragraph topics for requests like "List and explain five differences in the attitudes toward Indians held by New England settlers and Russian traders" or "Delineate the areas in which Glazer and Moynihan have changed their views in the most recent edition of *Beyond the Melting Pot*").

(2) **Definition.** Also both a short answer form and the basis of more extensive essays. Many examinations call for a formulaic definition which places the term to be defined in a class and then lists enough differentiating features to distinguish it from other members of its class ("Define mitosis," "What is synecdoche?"). But often definition is expected to furnish the structure for some extended inquiry ("Define the idea of the American Adam and apply it to *Hack Finn*"). At its most demanding a definition assignment calls for recognition of how problematic defining can be ("What is a romance? Explain why the stories in Winerburg, Ohio are, or are not, romances," or "Define and evaluate 'the discouraged worker' hypothesis as an influence on labor participation").

(3) **Seriation.** The chronological, step-by-step format of the laboratory report and of many intermediate-length examination questions. All serial presentations demand the careful management of transition words connecting the steps and expressing their temporal relationships. The simpler seriations often are essentially paraphrases of diagrams ("Describe the Calvin Benson cycle"). Some seriations are disguised as definitions (the question "Define mitosis," above, can also be interpreted as a request for a stage-by-stage description of the process). The most demanding seriations are probably those in which students must select chronological relationships according to interpretations of causes and effects ("Discuss the escalating role of the media in the rise and fall of Senator Joe McCarthy," or "Was Stalinism the inevitable consequence of the Russian revolution?").

(4) **Classification.** Usually the application of established or accepted categories to specific data. For example, having been asked to learn the features of various genera of microorganisms, students are then asked to categorize microorganisms they have not seen before and then to defend their judgments. Some classification assignments merely ask students to recite categories and provide examples ("Characterize the prevailing forms of government in post-colonial Africa"), and some classifications are merely ways of restructuring lists ("What are the social, psychological, economic, and political causes of World War I?"). But many such assignments give students room to extend or refine the categories they have been given, and some seem to demand such refinements ("Discuss the varieties of attitude in John Donne's love sonnets"). Few college assignments ask students to generate categories of their own, although the ability to create such categories is usually rewarded (given the question "Respond to the charge that D. H. Lawrence is a humorless writer," a student who responds, "There are at least three kinds of comedy at work in the fiction of Lawrence . . . is off to a good start).

(5) **Summary.** The most ubiquitous of demands in college writing, closely aligned with reading and listening skills, and often disguised as some more elaborate request. For example, a question apparently

calling for "discussion" or "analysis" may actually be asking for a summarized version of a particular lecture or reading. At its simplest, summary involves being able to identify and pull out topic sentences; at its most sophisticated, summary involves delicate recombinations, inferences, and clarifications (a question like "What is Hofstadter's assessment of the Populist movement?" will require both selective treatment of Hofstadter and a deft representation of the general view to which Hofstadter is opposed; and the most successful responses to an instruction such as "Summarize Paley's Design argument for the existence of God" will probably tactfully acknowledge the instructor's treatment of that argument).

(6) Comparison/Contrast. One of the most persistent formats for both examinations and assignments for papers. It varies in difficulty with the complexities of the materials themselves and according to whether or not the assignment expects students to perform independent evaluation of data and/or provide appropriate categories for classifying information (the instruction "Compare the respiratory systems of amphibians and reptiles" is already structured so that a student's main job is to recall information, taking care to balance the second description against the first; a question like "Compare the ideological visions of Weber and Marx" requires first the invention of bases for comparison).

(7) Analysis. At its simplest-never very simple-analysis demands breaking down a text or phenomenon into constituent parts or causes ("What does the following chart suggest about the relation between interest rates and home loans in the 1970's?" or "What specific features of Constable's 'The Hay Wain' account for its tranquility?"). But usually analysis also requires an application of some theoretical framework to the object in question. Sometimes that framework consists of concepts implicit in a discipline (the concept of "competing interests" in political science, for example, or, in astronomy, the cosmological principle of "uniformity"); more often in college writing it also employs the interpretive methods of a specific school or thinker as a model ("Analyze Dora's dream from Freud's perspective"; "Analyze the effects of the San Francisco earthquake according to elastic rebound theory"; "Do a semiological analysis of a local foodstore"; "Discuss the Miami riots in light of one or more of the theories of civil disobedience you have read this semester"). An effective analysis will usually employ the special vocabulary of the field or theorist.

(8) Academic Argument. An assignment that asks for information-based argument, as distinguished from one that asks only "What is your opinion?" Students are expected to construct their arguments by marshalling other people's facts and opinions; their essays are controlled by a single governing purpose, of course. But in college studies writers are expected to draw upon course work rather than general knowledge or value judgments. . . . In a philosophy course the question might take the form "What are the chief arguments in favor of capital punishment and what objections must they surmount?" In a political science course, it might take the form "When, according to Locke, does the state have the right to take the life of one of its citizens? Do you agree?" And in a history course it might take the form "At what period(s) of American history have the critics of capital punishment helped to decrease its popularity, and what forces have usually brought it back in favor?"

Student-Chosen Topics – for sections without a theme:

These are some thoughtful posts that appeared recently on the WPA listserv in response to a request for advice on how to “limit” taboo subjects for research papers (this faculty member didn’t want a batch of papers on the usual suspects: abortion, the death penalty, the war in Iraq, etc.). For those of you without a concrete theme, I strongly recommend that you adopt some of these methods. They directly support the other approaches outlined elsewhere in this handbook. I myself am following the ideas in #2 with my class (where students can write on anything they get interested in while reading the *New York Times*.)

Response #1:

I think the ruling principle is value for readers: writers need to address topics in a way that presents original insights, viewpoints, and arguments. One way I try to encourage that outlook is to call the research paper an investigation. Also, I include these statements in my research assignments:

Good investigations address topics in ways that meet a genuine need for both you and your readers. Lousy, rotten topics include the following:

- * Disease papers-The danger with attempting to write all about cancer, anorexia, etc., is superficiality. Most often these kinds of essays try to address so many aspects (cause, prognosis, prevention, treatment) that they can only skim the surface. The writer has no chance to contribute original insights, and the papers tell readers nothing we can't find for ourselves in easily accessible sources.

- * The Big 4: abortion, gun control, capital punishment, drug use/legalization- Papers on these topics typically rehash the same arguments that each side has been repeating for decades. As with disease papers, the writer has little opportunity to present information or conclusions that readers haven't heard before.

- * Conspiracies: Papers that attempt to expose cover-ups (assassinations, UFOs) or secret plans for worldwide domination are lousy for the same reasons, plus the problem of obtaining reliable information.

- * Controversy-of-the-month papers-Maury Povich's and Jerry Springer's audiences might be fascinated by husbands or wives who have affairs with [insert description of unsuitable partner]. I am not. There's a difference between sensational and significant.

If you are convinced that writing about one of the above topics meets a need for you, discuss with me how to focus your investigation in order to make it worth writing. For example, a writer with an interest in abortion could investigate the effect of parental-notification laws.

Response #2:

First, describe, generally, the sorts of topics that, in your professional experience, tend to get students so trapped in the land of pitfalls that they can't get out. (Generally, these are the most culturally "binaried" issues--things so divisive that finding a fresh path through them is

difficult for even the best writers and thinkers, because, in the popular imagination, and in much of the available writing about these topics, the choices are limited to pro and con, and so very difficult to analyze anew in ways that transcend a priori judgments.)

Second, you can then describe your policy of requiring students to submit their topics for your approval before they move forward with them. This allows you to permit the otherwise "no-no" topics in those instances (there will usually be some) in which the student convincingly demonstrates that he or she is, indeed, heading down a fairly fresh, un-binarian to death path, but it also gives you a chance to lead students in a different direction when you can see that they are headed toward the kind of argument that not only won't work, but also really fails to *be* an argument at all.

You aren't, then, unreasonably restricting their options, but simply being a good writing teacher, who is intent on both teaching students about the nature of argument (including evaluating what sorts of things are and aren't arguable to begin with), and doing all you can to ensure that they navigate this learning experience successfully. You might even point out that, once they've really begun to master these skills, their chances of writing well about our central cultural debates will go way up.

Finally, I think it's very important to point out that it isn't the stances they might take on these things that concern you. For instance, as a writing teacher, you might be very inclined to agree with, say, a pro-literacy stance. However, that kind of paper could well prove disastrous if it isn't framed in such a way that the issue really is arguable. After all, very few folks are out there demanding that this whole reading and writing thing come to an immediate halt. With a topic like that, the challenge is to find the portion of it that involves interestingly debatable issues narrowly defined enough to write well about in x number of pages. So, your topic approval phase isn't an attempt to weed out odious stances, but an attempt to ensure that each student formulates a topic clear and defined enough to allow for *any* stance to be taken effectively.

Response #3:

This is one of the many dilemmas that led me to focus my first-year writing class on topics related to language, literacy, writing, rhetoric, and composition (see Glen's new CompFAQ for my full tirade on the subject--and also look for the CCCC SIG on this). There are many, many topics I don't know a lot about and about which my students do not think very critically or deeply. In a class focused on the topics of interest to people in Writing Studies, the students can write on anything related to language, literacy, and rhetoric. They want to write about Iraq or the death penalty? Well, they can, but they will have to research only rhetorical strategies in the debates about those issues or rhetorical strategies in the news coverage of those issues.

Since I made this switch to topics related to language, literacy, writing, rhetoric, and composition three years ago, I have happily resigned from the position of having to veto irritating and overdone research topics. The students really think hard about topics related to language and writing that come out of their own experiences and histories and I am always able to help them find good research.

V PEER REVIEW

(Many thanks to Jean Graham for providing these ideas culled from earlier WRI 102 workshops and instructors!)

- Put student drafts on a table, and give each student a card with one thing to should look for in the student drafts (e.g., a clear thesis statement, comma splices—anything several in the class are having trouble with). As each student reads each draft, s/he writes comments on the draft as the “class expert” on that aspect of writing. (If you give the student something s/he has been having trouble with him/herself, you’ll reinforce learning.)
- Using passages from student drafts, ask the class first to identify a particularly well-written sentence in each draft, then a sentence that could be improved (not “fixed”), and to explain how they’d improve it.
- Do the above on published writing first, and/or show the class earlier drafts of a published piece.
- Do the above using a rough draft of your own first, either where you’ve written on the same assignment or where you’re writing for a “real” purpose such as grant application. (Give yourself a tight time limit so you won’t have time to revise.)
- Using a rough draft of your own as in the example above, ask Diane Gruenberg or another colleague to model a writing conference for the class. Then have the students critique the conference before responding to one another’s drafts.
- Have students use the peer critique worksheets (<http://www.tcnj.edu/~writing/faculty/peer.html>), collecting them and giving some credit for a good-faith effort before giving them to the student writer. There are three different worksheets on this page, so either you or each student can choose which to use for each essay. As/after the student writer reflects (in writing) on the essay s/he’s turning in, s/he should share with the peers how much their feedback has helped. [Variation: have the student writer address one of the reflective letters to the peer(s) who gave feedback.] On the last essay, have each student design his/her own peer critique worksheet before the workshop; collect these and grade on the questions as well as on the feedback.

One last option is to meet with groups of three students (in lieu of class that week) for an hour and have students bring copies of their draft as they normally would for peer review, but you participate in the session as well. First each student should have a copy of the rubric at hand. After the first student reads his or her paper, allow time for the group members to jot down ideas on the rubric. Then ask each student to respond to the following question:

What’s the one most important thing that Sue could work on the make this paper more effective?

You then answer the same question and summarize what kinds of macro-level revisions the writer should work on. I have found this to be one of the most effect ways to give feedback on drafts.

VI LIBRARY INFORMATION LITERACY SESSION

WRI 102 is not a research course, but academic argumentation is inherently about joining a conversation with others who have thought about and studied a problem, questions, or issue. Thus, reading what others have said is an essential step in formulating one's own ideas. Interpreting, connecting and synthesizing new information (or data) is also a key component in formulating and supporting a claim. Thus, WRI 102 should more properly be thought of as a "researched writing" course, not a research course.

One of the key goals of the library session is to show students how to use online academic databases to find scholarly, peer reviewed articles. More than ever, students need to understand how to access the vast array of potential sources of information, and they need to know how to evaluate them (for example what's the difference between websites ending in .gov, .edu, .org, and .com?)

Each section of WRI 102 has a guided session with a librarian in the library. Our Library staff has always been wonderfully supportive, led by Jacqui DaCosta, the Information Literacy Librarian. In December you will receive the day and time of your section's library session, and I urge you to contact your assigned librarian to discuss ways to tailor the session for your class's theme or focus. **The library sessions will take place sometime during the 3rd and 6th weeks of the semester.** If you realize you need your session at a later or earlier date, please notify me as soon as possible.

Finally, please consider using some version of Nina Ringer's wonderful method of slowly introducing students to interacting with and using outside sources. This is an over-simplified summary of the process, but you can contact Nina directly for more details and adapt as you see fit:

1. You select and give them one article to use first (to learn to cite and quote in their text—to use someone else's ideas in support of / as contrast / opposition to).
2. Then have them find two of their own from a list of pre-selected sources that you have provided.
3. Next, require that students find their own from a select group of databases. This is where the library session will be helpful. Students must learn to use academic databases, finding both full text articles and those available only in bound journals in the stacks.

VII TEXTBOOK OPTIONS

All sections of WRI 102 will use the following two texts:

Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say / I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*. New York: Norton, 2006.

NOTE: The Allyn and Bacon text is customized to TCNJ.

Ramage, John D., John C. Bean, and June Johnson. *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing*. 4th Edition. Pearson-Longman, 2006.

MyCompLab (an internet-based resource which complements *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing* and which is free. Students receive an access code in the shrink-wrapped version of their text. For future years, when students may be purchasing used versions of the TCNJ customized book, they must still purchase the MyCompLab component separately.)

These orders will be placed automatically for all sections. In addition, you may require additional reading based on your theme. Please submit your book orders to Sue Ciotti.

VIII Syllabus Template

WRI 102-xx: Academic Writing

-Instructor's Name

-Office, Office Phone, and Office Hours

-TCNJ email address

**Note, if you would like to follow the model of a syllabus as an “invitation” see Writing Program Bulletin 9/27/06 (<http://www.tcnj.edu/~writing/faculty/bulletinarchive/index.html>)*

Although there are required elements in this syllabus, the course is yours and your students should hear **your voice. Where the template indicates that you complete certain sections, use this as the first chance to model for students your identity as a confident writer! ☺*

Course Description

Academic Writing offers students from across the college the opportunity to practice and develop their skills in the production of academic prose—particularly, academic argumentation. Within a framework of weekly reading, guided writing workshops, and instructor feedback, students will practice the modes of writing necessary to succeed in college. Students will develop their skills in critical thinking and reading, cultivate habits of effective and ethical research using proper documentation methods, and advance their use of information technologies.

**Optional: Include an additional paragraph here that outlines your theme and how it relates to the course components above.*

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- use writing and reading for inquiry, learning, critical thinking, and communicating.
- collect, analyze, and interpret information and to communicate it to others effectively and ethically.
- reason, using analogy, deduction, and induction.
- write clearly and effectively in Standard Written English.
- respond to the needs of different audiences and situations.
- use skillfully the conventions of academic writing.
- use technologies appropriate to meet the needs of particular audiences.
- construct writing processes suitable to your learning style.
- interpret and apply the feedback you receive on your writing in an appropriate and conscientious way.
- offer tactful and productive feedback to others on their written arguments.
- edit, proofread, and revise your own work.

Textbooks and Required Readings

**List here any books that students must purchase, as well as readings that you will be including in SOCS. Of course, you can add some additional readings later (for example, a newspaper or magazine article that is relevant to your topic), but primary readings must be listed here. Indicate if they will be handouts or files in SOCS.*

Learning Activities & Course Requirements

**You must include all major learning activities and assignments, including all formal papers—anything that will be expected of students during the semester. Although you will be handing out (and posting in SOCS) the detailed assignment, you should still provide a brief description here. You may also want to include a brief statement about your teaching philosophy (for example, you may want to describe your role as “coach.”)*

Grading & Student Assessment

**Include a list of all graded assignments and their weight within the final course grade. Also mention here that all formal assignments will be assessed according to an assignment-specific rubric, which will be distributed when the assignment is given out.*

You may want to include any other expectations you have. As an EXAMPLE, here something I regularly include in my syllabus:

What I expect of you and what you can expect of me and one another:

- That you attend all classes
- That you arrive on time (10:00 AM).
- That while you are in class, you focus your mind and energies on the tasks at hand, whatever they may be: working with your peers, discussing a reading, etc. Getting an education is an active process which requires your participation. If you don't show up--physically or mentally--then you won't be getting an education.
- That you express your concerns and questions rather than assume that I or your fellow classmates can read your mind. If I don't know that something's wrong, I can't help you fix it. If I don't realize that you don't understand something, I won't know to explain it in a different or better way.
- That you treat everyone in this class with respect and that we, as a group, work hard to make this a class where everyone feels safe to be themselves, express their views, try out new ideas, and make mistakes without fear of ridicule.

***The syllabus should not say that attendance will be graded. However, attendance is a precondition for participation which can be graded if you desire. If participation is graded, some evaluation criteria should be included. See link to the College's attendance policy:*

<http://www.tcnj.edu/%7Eacademic/policy/attendance.html>

Course Schedule

**Include a date-by-date account of the day's topic, classroom activities, readings due, and any written assignments due. Please choose a visually clear and effective format.*

Academic Integrity

**You must include this official formal statement. (You may include additional points as long as you are not contradicting the college's policy.)*

The College of New Jersey is a community of scholars and learners who respect and believe in academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is not tolerated at The College of New Jersey. Each student must do his or her own work and behave in an ethically responsible manner. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following behaviors:

- Using another author's words without enclosing them in quotation marks, without paraphrasing them, and/or without citing the source appropriately
- Concealing, destroying, or stealing research or library materials with the purpose of depriving others of their use
- Falsifying bibliographic entries
- Submitting any academic assignment which contains falsified or fabricated data or results
- Submitting the same term paper or academic assignment to another class without the permission of the instructor
- Feigning illness or personal circumstances to avoid a required academic activity
- Sabotaging someone else's work
- Collaborating on homework or take-home exams when instructions have called for independent work
- Attempting intimidation for academic advantage
- Inappropriate or unethical use of technologies to gain academic advantage
- Submitting a falsified document

For a complete description of the college's policy, including the adjudication process and possible sanctions, please see: <http://www.tcnj.edu/%7Eacademic/policy/integrity.html>.

Differing Abilities

**You must include this official formal statement.*

Any student who has a documented disability and is in need of academic accommodations should notify the professor of this course and contact the Office of Differing Abilities Services (609.771.2571). Accommodations are individualized and in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992. For additional information and guidelines for registering with the Office of Differing Abilities, please see <http://www.tcnj.edu/~wellness/disability/>

Works Cited

- Bean, John C. *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking and Active Learning in the Classroom*. Jossey-Bass, 2001.
- Bean, John. "Writing Assignments as Ill-Defined Problems." The National Conference on Student Writing and Critical Thinking in Agriculture, April 4-5, 2003.
- Dohrer, Gary. "Do Teachers' Comments in Students' Papers Help?" *College Teaching* 39.2 (1991): 48-55. *Academic Search Premier* EbscoHost AN #: 87567555. (9 November 2006).
- Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say / I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*. New York: Norton, 2006.
- Haswell, Richard. "The Complexities of Responding to Student Writing; or, Looking for Shortcuts on the Road of Excess," *Writing Across the Disciplines*, forthcoming.
- Kiniry, Malcom, and Ellen Strenski, "Sequencing Expository Writing: A Recursive Approach." *CCC* 36.2 (1985): 191-202.
- Larson, Richard. "Writing Assignments: How Might They Encourage Learning?" *Twelve Readers Reading: Responding to College Student Writing*. Ed. Richard Straub and Ronald Lunsford. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 1995. 375-85.
- MacAllister, Joyce. "Responding to Student Writing." *Teaching Writing in All Disciplines*. Ed. C. Williams Griffin. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1982. 59-65.
- Slattery, Patrick. "Encouraging Critical Thinking: A Strategy for Commenting on Critical Thinking" *CCC* 41.3 (Oct 1990): 332-35.