Goals

- To share techniques for teaching students a variety of invention strategies.
- To share techniques for teaching students a variety of drafting strategies.
- To identify invention and drafting strategies that appeal to a variety of learning styles.
- To discuss ways to facilitate student practice of a variety of writing process strategies.

Instructional Goals based on Assessment Results

In both 2005 and 2006, students reported engaging in one or two strategies for invention and drafting but not a variety of strategies. By helping them identify multiple strategies and build a repertoire from which they can choose, we help students prepare to manage their future writing projects. As a result, one of our 2006-2007 instructional goals is to present a variety of invention, drafting, revising, and editing strategies in our classes.

Importance of Direct Instruction

Since conventions can vary widely among rhetorical communities, students (novice members of, or temporary visitors to, these communities) benefit from direct instruction in writing for varied audiences and purposes. They frequently struggle with reading model texts that employ unfamiliar writing styles, so as instructors, we need to incorporate support beyond simply providing sample texts.

Even as more advanced writers who are used to tackling academic discourse, when we encounter texts from another discipline, we often have to revise our reading strategies and slow our reading pace as we adjust to a different writing style. Yet our reading strategies (and struggles) often are invisible to our students.

To support students’ development as writers, if we give them samples of “good” writing, we also should give them strategies for reading these often varied texts. In addition, we can implement several direct instruction techniques to support developing writers.

Invention Activities

1. Sticky Note Activity: Brainstorm or take notes on sticky notes. Post sticky notes on poster board, grouping and regrouping to identify connections and possible organizations.

2. Ideas from *A Meeting of Minds* (p. 50):
   - Open-ended strategies:
     - Brainstorming
     - Sketching with visual clues/organizers
     - Talking with others
o Systematic strategies:
  ▪ Asking questions
  ▪ Testing the opposition’s perspective
  ▪ Collecting information from multiple sources (archival and field)

3. Ideas from University of Texas, Substantial Writing Component Resources, Brainstorming Handout (in packet)
   o Listing
   o Mapping (See a range of examples at http://classes.aces.uiuc.edu/ACES100/Mind/c-m4.html)
   o Diagrams

4. Tagmemics (Examples in packet)
   o Contrast: How the subject resembles or differs from other items in its class
   o Variation: How much and in what ways the subject could change without losing its essential characteristics
   o Distribution: How often and in what places the subject can be observed
   o Particle: Distinct features of the subject
   o Wave: How the subject changes over time
   o Field: Considers the different parts of the subject and how they interact as parts of a whole

5. Resources
   o Limited Diagram functions in MS Word
     (Insert → Diagram → Choice of Organizational Chart, Circle Diagram, Radial Diagram, Pyramid Diagram, Venn Diagram, or Target Diagram)
   o Extensive options in MatchWare OpenMind

Drafting: Direct Instruction in Thesis Development

1. Scaffolding Development (See the KU Writing Center handout for students.)
   a. Starting Point: I am writing about __________, and I am going to argue, show or prove __________.
   b. Revising for voice: Rewrite the sentence to match your personal writing style.
   c. Revising for conventions: Rewrite the sentence to match disciplinary conventions. (Additional step not mentioned in the KU Handout.)
2. Testing for Strength (See the UNC-Chapel Hill Writing Center handout for students.)

   a. Do I answer the question (posed by the assignment guidelines, my own research proposal, etc.)?

   b. Have I taken a debatable position?

   c. Is my thesis statement too vague? What makes my topic “good,” “successful,” or “disappointing”?

   d. Does my thesis address readers’ “how” and “why” questions?

   e. Do my thesis and the body of my paper match?


   o K → What do I know?
   o W → What do I want to know?
   o L → What have I learned?

4. Build in recursive writing process activities

   o 5-Minute Writes
     ▪ Research activity → Summary activity (i.e., summarize one source) → Synthesis activity (i.e., synthesize information from a few sources) → Thesis activity (simple statement through revisions)
     ▪ What have I learned, and how does my new knowledge affect my thesis?

   o Peer Response
     ▪ Do the thesis and the body text match?
     ▪ Separate sessions for higher order concerns (thesis, content, organization) and lower order concerns (grammar, punctuation)

   o Other ideas?

Additional Drafting Activities

1. Starting in the Middle: Free-write on Subtopic

2. Round-Robin Activity

   a. Conversational free-write: “I’m writing about…”
b. Pass to classmate. Classmate responds:
   i. “Your free-write leads me to ask the following questions…”
   ii. “I would like to know more about…”
   iii. “Have you considered…”

c. Continue to pass around the room for additional comments, questions, and feedback.

3. Discuss strategies for overcoming writer’s block and practice them in class

4. Other ideas?

Next workshop:
October 11th, 12:10 – 1:10 PM, Ward Octagon