College Writing Faculty Development Workshop

Direct Instruction in Process Strategies
October 14, 2009

Goals

- To support a College Writing Objective:
  
  All sections of College Writing aim to develop... a more sophisticated writing process—
  including invention, peer responding, revising and editing—that results in a clear,
  effective, well edited public piece.

- To examine best practices for offering direct instruction in writing process strategies.
- To share a variety of process activities to which we can introduce students.

Why Include Direct Instruction in the Writing Process?

- “The writing process is a complex matter; it varies for each writer, on each writing occasion. The
  differences in individual learning styles make writing a very different task for each writer. So it’s
  hard to generalize about teaching techniques that ‘improve’ the writing process. Probably the
  best we can do is to help students develop a repertoire of strategies to use in writing and to
  help them learn when and where the strategies work best for them.”

  Josephine Koster Tarvers & Cindy Moore, “Intervening in the Writing Process,”

- “Applying rigid rules, studying grammar or composition topics, or reading works of literature
  does not improve student writing. How wonderful if good writing could be reduced to a recipe.
  Students would just put the necessary ingredients together and have a readable paper.
  Instruction in the process-oriented classroom is different.... The process approach recognizes
  that writing is a very personal activity in numerous respects, which means not only that there
  are many behaviors that are not universal but also that there is variation within the universals.”

  James D. Williams, Preparing to Teach Writing: Research, Theory, and Practice, 3rd Edition, p. 101

- “We know that the act of composing through writing is a complex process.... We cannot say that
  there is one composing process invariably successful for all writers, for all purposes. Rather, we
  know that composing processes vary both as the same writer attempts different kinds of
discourse and as different writers attempt the same kind of discourse, and that such variations
may be necessary to success in composing.... Learning to write requires writing. Students cannot
be expected to master such complex processes if they only practice them two or three times in a
school term, or without a teacher’s guidance.”

  Patricia Bizzell, “Composing Processes: An Overview,”
  The Allyn and Bacon Sourcebook for College Writing Teachers, pp. 123-124
Invention
Listing, Brainstorming, Freewriting, Cluster Maps, Looping or Focused Freewriting, Journalist’s Questions (Who, What, when, Where, Why, How), Topical Questions (Definition, Comparison, Testimony, Relationship/Cause/Motive/Purpose, Circumstance/Context), Researching, Discovery Draft, Writing Dialogue or Role-Play, Sketching, Mapping, Visual Brainstorming, Journaling

- Sketching or Mapping: Ask students to draw a picture or map of a concept or place. Who is involved? How and where do they interact? What’s nearby? Jessie uses this activity, for instance, when she’s introducing campus proposal projects. She asks students to draw maps of sections of campus or buildings related to their topics and then to add the people who occupy or interact with the space, adjoining spaces/things that would impact or be impacted by a change to the initial space, etc.

- Rhetorics as Resources: The Academic Writer (Chapter 9), Writing: A Manual for the Digital Age (Chapter 3), Harbrace Guide to Writing (Chapters 3, 10-13)

Drafting

- Building Momentum – Modified Freewriting: Ask students to open a Word document, turn their monitors off, and write for ten minutes. If they can’t get distracted by sentence-level details, they may find an initial momentum to help them start drafting.

- Rhetorics as Resources: The Academic Writer (Chapter 10), Writing: A Manual for the Digital Age (Chapter 4), Harbrace Guide to Writing (Chapter 3)

Peer Responding and Other Feedback
Identifying Goals for Feedback, Framing Questions for Feedback, Point/Summarize/Reflect, Comment Tags for Situated Questions

- Targeted Feedback – Activity Contributed by Victoria Shropshire
  “I setup a discussion board in BB in which all students must post 2 versions of the introduction to the essay on which they are all currently working, and then their classmates must reply as to which version of the PRG they prefer, and why (emphasis on this latter part). I post a series of questions to consider for those who need guidance with peer review and then let them at it! The posts are typically insightful, and the authors really like the "free space" to try out new ideas, but it also forces students to look critically at this particular piece of writing, a skill they can always hone and use towards their own. I try to reply to everyone the first time I use such a DB, but as the semester progresses, I will read them all but only comment on a few.
“Students are assessed on a complete/incomplete scale so the pressure of assessment is virtually removed. 10 points for the original post, and 5 points each for 2 responses to classmates for a 20 point (total) DB, which is like a quiz grade. I praise really in-depth and insightful responses and mention the need for more substance in ones that are non-committal, but the directions include a few comments about the importance and value of substantial responses, and thus far I am pleased with the result.”

- Conferencing

- Rhetorics as Resources: The Academic Writer (Chapter 12), Writing: A Manual for the Digital Age (Chapter 6)

**Revising**

*Developing a Revision Plan, Examining Content, Examining Organization, Planning Dedicated Revision Time, Revising for Style, Paragraph Glossing, Cutting and Pasting, Computer Read Aloud, Color Coding*

- Color Coding Example: Students could mark transitions, lexical ties, and pronouns in three different colors to illustrate how they are using coherence strategies.

- Rhetorics as Resources: The Academic Writer (Chapter 12), Writing: A Manual for the Digital Age (Chapters 5, 6), Harbrace Guide to Writing (Chapter 3)

**Editing**

*Computer Read Aloud, Microsoft Word Tools (Spell Check, Grammar Check, and Thesaurus), Highlighting Parallel Structures, Tracking Common Errors*

- Computer Read Aloud: The computer will read the paper exactly as it’s written, helping writers examine their writing more closely. Adobe Acrobat (installed in some labs) has this capability, but students also can download a free program like CutePDF Writer. In Adobe Acrobat, choose “View” from the top menu bar and select “Read Out Loud.”

- Rhetorics as Resources: Writing: A Manual for the Digital Age (Chapters 5, 6)

**Upcoming English 110 Events – Mark Your Calendars**

- October 20: National Day of Writing
- November 11, 12:15-1:15 PM, McEwen 213: Assignment Showcase - Providing Opportunities to Write for Academic, Professional, and Public Discourse Communities
- February 10, 12:15-1:15 PM, Location TBA: Digital Literacies and College Writing
- March 10, 12:15-1:15 PM, McEwen 213: Assessing and Responding to Student Writing
- April 14, 12:15-1:15 PM, McEwen 213: Activity Showcase - Facilitating Peer Response and Self-Assessment