

## **CALL for UCSC Disciplinary Communication Educational Improvement Grants**

The Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education and the Academic Senate Committee on Educational Policy are pleased to announce the availability of funds to assist with instructional improvement initiatives for grants focused on Disciplinary Communication.

For 2016-17, we seek to fund about 10-20 projects for a total expense of up to \$150,000. The program is expected to continue is expected to continue through 2017 - 18, possibly longer depending on the rate of use.

DC Grant Proposal deadline: **Friday, March 18, 2016 at 5 p.m. send via email to Susanna Wrangell ([swrangell@ucsc.edu](mailto:swrangell@ucsc.edu))**

Funding available: **July 1, 2016**

Report required: **July 1, 2017**

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of Disciplinary Communication Grants (DCG) is to enhance writing proficiency and accomplishment within majors by promoting innovation and assessment of new approaches to DC education.

### **Example projects:**

- Undertake a formal analysis of the existing DC offering to inform plans for the future
- Facilitate collaborations with the writing program
- Launch a writing tutoring program
- Create an online or technology-assisted course
- Develop a new course or DC pathway in the major
- Support graduate students assisting underprepared or ESL students

### **Decision Making:**

The Senate Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) will recommend to the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education that proposals receive funding based on the purpose listed above and the department's justification for the request. Proposals that are submitted after the due date will be considered as long as funds are available. An application form is attached.

**Application for UCSC DCG Funds**  
**Submit via email to the Academic Senate Office, c/o Susanna Wrangell**  
**[swrangel@ucsc.edu](mailto:swrangel@ucsc.edu)**  
**by March 18, 2016**

Proposals must be approved by the department or program chair and Dean. They are due in the Academic Senate Office by Friday, March 18, 2016 at 5 p.m. submitted by email to [swrangel@ucsc.edu](mailto:swrangel@ucsc.edu).

1) Proposed title for Disciplinary Communication Grant (DCG)?  
The Anthropology Department Writing Assistant Program Center

2) Department/Program: Anthropology

3) Amount requested:

Option 1: \$ 31,877

Option 2: \$ 26,675

(Please see budget section with explanation and justification)

4) Number of students affected:

Writing Assistants = 6-12

Students visiting center = potentially all students enrolled in anthropology courses →  
**400-500 majors plus others enrolled for GEs**

Graduate Student Instructor = 1

5) Overview of the program's DC requirement:

Anthropology's DC requirement prioritizes cultivating high-level skills in critical analysis and ethnographic writing, with an emphasis on both scholarly and non-scholarly professional writing. To satisfy the DC requirement students must: a) complete an Anthropological Theory Course (chosen from ANTH 100, 150, 152, 170) and; b) complete a Senior Seminar or complete an Independent Senior Thesis, following the guidelines of the senior exit requirement, which includes using ethnographic and other forms of empirical evidence.

6) What is proposed?

We are proposing both to sustain the excellence of our already successful Writing Assistant (WA) Program and to expand it in order to encourage new possibilities for integrating the writing program further into department needs, including support for ESL students, the study abroad projects of our students, and senior seminar/senior thesis research requirements. Specifically, we plan to expand our capacity to offer writing services, with an emphasis on recruiting and training writing assistants who can support students with more diverse needs: for instance, transfer students, students who are not native English-speakers, students who are learning the basics of anthropological inquiry, and students who are working on advanced senior thesis projects that integrate primary data they have collected with critical social theory. Because we are a discipline that encompasses the qualitative social sciences, humanities, and physical sciences, our

courses require students to learn and master diverse writing skills in such genres as lab reports, ethnographic field data, proposal writing, and critical analysis. As such, our Writing Assistant Program needs the capacity to offer a broad range of support for multiple constituencies across the subfields.

From a pedagogical perspective, we believe that excellent writing is essential to critical thinking. From our perspective as practicing, professional anthropologists, we understand that writing is fundamental to the ways in which we practice our research, analyze our data, and communicate our findings, whether in scholarly or non-scholarly venues. Thus, we are firmly committed to ensuring that our students are fully equipped with superior writing skills in order to succeed, first, in their undergraduate courses, and second, and perhaps more importantly, in their post-graduation professional lives, both inside and outside the academy. Many of our students go on to pursue advanced degrees and take up careers in academia, law, social justice advocacy, museum studies, behavioral research, medicine, and forensic sciences, among many others. These are all careers that require the highest standards of written communication. We believe that it is our responsibility to train our students to these levels.

To address these needs, we have created a support program and administrative structure that has effectively and consistently produced positive changes in students' ability to engage anthropological concepts, materials, and styles of communication in their written communication. This program has two facets: The first is to identify and train a select group of undergraduate students to serve as Writing Assistants (WAs). The second is to provide extensive developmental writing support for all undergraduate students who take courses in our department, regardless of their major.

Every spring and early fall we identify a cadre of juniors, and occasionally sophomores, who are recruited into the WA program on the basis of a faculty recommendation or self-nomination. Potential WAs are screened through a rigorous application process that entails submission of their own writing, letter of support from a faculty member, and an interview to determine their skills, including their ability to relate well with peers. Selected students take a one-quarter class, ANTH 113, which introduces them to the peer-engagement process and a variety of writing assistance techniques, and serves as a supportive environment for them to discuss challenges and successes throughout their first quarter as WAs. WAs read widely on topics pertaining to writing techniques and strategies for engaging their peers in discussion and reflection. Department faculty provide guest workshops on topics such as proper citation, topic development, and their own writing and mentoring strategies. Historically, the cost of this course for instruction and materials has been borne by the Anthropology Department (please see WA Handbook, Appendix 1).

After their training, WAs work with students at a variety of stages throughout the writing process, from initial brainstorming of ideas to polishing final drafts. Students can and, and often do, return at multiple stages of the writing process or to work on additional assignments.

In our first four years of operation, WAs were assigned to specific classes and worked with individual faculty members. In fall 2014 we switched to a Drop-In Center in the department, which gives both students and WAs greater freedom to participate in the program despite a full class schedule, jobs, and commuting. This change has provided

several important developments. The flexibility of the program has made it easier for students to meet with WAs. In addition, students who visit multiple times have the opportunity to work with different WAs, which in turn provides them with access to diverse styles and skills. And finally, we are able to document student meetings with WAs, which makes it easier to study student outcomes and understand which needs are specific to individual students and which ones are more generalizable to the population as a whole.

The Anthropology Department has provided the WA program a dedicated office for meeting with students in Social Sciences 1, and in the past we have covered the expenses for generating the WA course readers.

7) What problem will this proposal solve?

Our WA Program is intended to address several critical problems experienced by our undergraduate students as they advance through our program and develop skills that they will need in their post-graduation work.

(1) The first problem to be addressed is the most basic: provide thorough support to bring our students to a sufficient level of writing proficiency to succeed in college-level anthropology coursework.

We initially launched our program in 2010 as a response to faculty concerns that the quality of undergraduate writing was deteriorating, a problem made more acute with decreasing campus resources for writing support. What we observed directly in class assignments was that in general our students lacked both basic proficiency in writing and an awareness of writing as an analytical process and form of scholarly communication. These deficiencies are particularly problematic in anthropology, which is a discipline that requires critical thought, careful argumentation, and descriptive skill – primarily communicated and assessed through written work. To date, our WA program has significantly improved writing performance among students who have availed themselves of these services, but the problem is ongoing and there continues to be great need and demand for assistance, as well as faculty referrals for students to seek help.

(2) The second problem to be addressed is helping students whose personal experiences are different from those of students who began their undergraduate careers at UCSC. We have numerous transfer students, both transfers from community colleges and transfers from other majors, as well as first generation college students who come to our major without extensive or rigorous experience with writing or critical thinking and need to catch up to their peers. Some of their deficiencies are academic, while others are social as these students are sometimes uncomfortable or unfamiliar with approaching faculty or TAs for assistance and find it easier to work with peers, especially peers who are also transfer students.

(3) A third problem to be addressed is the unique circumstances of students who are often more fluent in communicating in languages other than English. In fall 2015, we deliberately recruited WAs who were themselves ESL students and thus were able to help fellow students navigate between different systems of logic as they worked on their writing.

(4) A fourth problem to be addressed pertains to the transdisciplinary nature of anthropology. Because we are a discipline that encompasses the qualitative social sciences, humanities, and physical sciences, our courses require students to learn and master diverse writing skills in such genres as lab reports, ethnographic field data, proposal writing, and critical analysis. It is essential that we be able to recruit and train WAs to help students across the various subfields of our program.

Thus, to address these problems, we plan to expand our capacity to offer writing services, with an emphasis on recruiting and training writing assistants who can offer a broad range of support for multiple constituencies at different stages across the subfields.

Our data to date for 2015-16 (i.e., fall quarter and mid-way through winter quarter) show the following patterns supporting our assessment of these problems, as well as new problems. Approximately 80 students have visited the WAP Center for consultation. The majority of visits are students who want assistance with rough drafts, and ESL students who need more technical assistance. Two problems that emerged were: (1) In some cases, students requested assistance that the WAs could not provide (i.e., help with course materials or specialized project details) and were referred to their course TAs. (2) In other cases, students taking courses in other departments have come for assistance but were referred back to their instructors because our program cannot support students from outside our courses.

8) How does the DC fit within your program's learning outcome goals?

Written Communication is one of our program's explicit learning outcome goals. We expect that students will demonstrate the ability to write clearly and to formulate well-organized arguments that are grounded in supporting evidence while countering evidence that contradicts the students' claims. Having now run this program for six years, we have accumulated empirical evidence that the WAs' work makes an important contribution to student success in Anthropology. We anticipate that this program will yield reduced time-to-degree for anthropology majors, who have now a three-tiered support structure for their academic achievement. We also expect that the confidence gained by students who participate in this program can only result in improved student retention, especially among transfer and first generation college students.

In 2013-2014, one of our outstanding graduate students, Suraiya Jetha, received the Chancellor's Graduate Internship (CGIP) to study the educational outcomes of our WA Program. In 2014-2015, another outstanding graduate student, Rebecca Feinberg, received a CGIP to continue this study. Some of the notable findings from their work included the following:

- \* Students who participated in the WA Program in an anthropology class report that they are more aware of writing as a process than before their work with WAs
- \* Students who see WAs are likely to report that they have skills that could be improved (i.e. have a better sense of their own writing challenges than those who do not reflect on the writing process with WAs)
- \* Students report that seeing a WA helped them in time management. The attention to writing as a process and the incentivization provided by faculty (in the past) for working on multiple drafts of a project means that they get started earlier

and have more time for revision (\*note: per union rules, faculty can no longer mandate WA sessions for students in their classes)

\* Students who work with WAs attribute increased confidence in their writing skills to the WA program. Even in classes where WA visits were not mandatory, students use the WAs to help structure the completion of written assignments and state that this helped prevent procrastination and end-of-quarter stress.

\* Some students, including transfer students and students of color, report that meeting with a WA helps them prepare for or feel less intimidated by meeting with faculty or graduate student teaching assistants. This finding enhances our sense that the WA program can have direct, positive impacts on student retention.

We have also found that one of the true successes of this program pertains to the WAs themselves. Although our WAs are already strong writers before being selected, they report that their own writing skills and confidence in their writing improves after involvement in the program. In reflecting on their experiences, three current WAs directly linked their training and work with their future academic and professional career goals. All of the current WAs have reported that they now want to continue working with others in similar mentoring and teaching roles after they graduate.

*WA 1: I wanted to hone my editing skills. I want to go to grad school so I know that I will have to help others with their writing skills in the future as a TA.*

*WA 2: I thought that being able to learn the skills of a writing tutor and helping others would help me with my own writing.*

*WA 3 (currently planning on applying to graduate programs in anthropology): I got into the WA program because I wanted to get involved with the Anthropology department before I graduated. I wanted to do something that was focused on writing as that is my strong suit. The position seemed like a perfect fit and it was paid.*

By far our most striking finding so far, however, has been that

**\* Students who see a WA tend to become what we call “frequent flyers.” That is, they recognize a high value in the interaction and seek out support repeatedly throughout the quarter.**

Faculty also report noticeable differences in their students’ abilities to communicate effectively in written formats.

*Faculty 1: I find the Writing Assistant Program to be essential to my students writing an A paper instead of a C paper. Yes, it's that dramatic. Sadly, many of our students do not learn how to write a paper. This quarter in my senior seminar, I have encouraged virtually the entire class to go to the writing assistant program. Some of them have writing errors in every single sentence. Some of them don't know how to make an argument in writing. The writing assistants have really helped them clean up their papers. I wish we could require it again. They didn't go until I explained the difference between the grade they would get with the current version of their writing and the grade they could get if*

*they went to the writing tutor. Again, I wish they would figure out a way we could be allowed to require it (I know it has to do with grad student union contract but I think that could be re-thought).*

***Faculty 2:*** *I made announcements about departmental writing assistance in my senior seminar.... [Previously] Many [students] seemed unmotivated to edit their work (a simple spell check, grammar check, etc).*

We think this is clear evidence that we are so far very successful in building a lateral support structure – a community – that supports student writing. We are working to produce far-reaching changes in department and academic *culture* in the Anthropology program that may not be quantitatively measurable for a few more years but that we on the faculty have all certainly experienced on an anecdotal level. (One recurring theme among faculty was the desire to make consultation visits with WAs mandatory. Faculty felt that the value and impact of the WAP would be even greater and more extensive if we could better integrate the WAP services directly into our courses. This is an issue that our department would like to revisit in the future.)

9) Detailed budget: (you may attach additional spreadsheet)

***Option 1***

Salary for Writing Assistants (approximately 335 hrs/quarter)	\$15,000
Training Materials and Supplies for Writing Assistant Office	\$ 500
Computer for WA Center Office <sup>1</sup>	\$ 1500
Graduate Student Instructor to teach ANTH 113 <sup>2</sup>	\$13,377
Faculty Stipend <sup>3</sup>	\$ 1500
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$ 31,877</b>

***Option 2***

Salary for Writing Assistants (approximately 335 hrs/quarter)	\$15,000
Computer for WA Center Office <sup>1</sup>	\$ 1500
Course replacement for Faculty Member <sup>4</sup>	\$ 8175
Faculty Stipend <sup>3</sup>	\$ 1500
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$ 26,675</b>

## **Budget Details and Justification**

Please note that to date the Anthropology Department's annual contribution to the WA Program has been roughly \$19,000, an amount that includes (a) the cost of hiring a graduate student to teach ANTH 113 and (b) the department's apportioned contribution and supplement for two CGIP fellowships to support the WAP (2013-14 and 2014-15). For 2016-17 we are requesting a greater amount and are listing two potential options (See [2, 4] below).

(1): We are requesting a computer for the WAP Center. Currently, WAs must provide their own personal laptops on which they read student papers, schedule appointments, help students find additional writing resources, and fill out the documentation forms that we use to track and assess the program. This places an unfair and costly burden on WAs, and in fact it prevents some from applying because they do not have their own personal laptops. Thus we would like to install a dedicated computer in the WAP Center for the WAs to do their jobs more effectively and equitably.

(2, 4): We have proposed two possibilities for funding the instructor to teach ANTH 113. The first option (2) is to hire a GSI, as we have done previously. This is ideal because it provides an outstanding graduate student with funding and, more importantly, critical training in teaching writing. This skill will greatly benefit their professional experience and marketability.

Alternatively, (4) in lieu of a GSI, we would request funds for a course replacement to enable a faculty member to teach ANTH 113, at a cost of \$8175 (as per 2015-16 rates).

(3): This modest stipend provides a small bit of compensation to the Faculty Coordinator who runs the program and is in keeping with the stipend provided to the Faculty Undergraduate Director.

10) Assessment plan. How will the effectiveness of this change be measured?  
We have already implemented assessment plans and can report on findings to date. We intend to continue these assessment plans going forward.

In 2015, one of our graduate students, Rebecca Feinberg, received a CGIP to study the Writing Assistant Program. One of her responsibilities was to create a nuanced evaluation system that we implemented this year (2015-2016). After each meeting with a student, WAs fill out a form. This allows us to document and track the number of students who visit the center, patterns of use over the quarter and the year, and the kinds of assistance they seek. We also present an outtake form to each student who visits the Center, which they may opt to fill out and submit anonymously. This outtake form allows us to track students' self-reported evaluations of the extent and quality of assistance that they have received.

The feedback that we have received in 2015-16 to date has been overwhelmingly positive, with especially high praise and appreciation given to a WA who is not a native English speaker and was a junior transfer for his ability to support students from similar backgrounds.



In 2015, Feinberg also completed extensive, in-depth interviews with the WAs themselves, students who use the WA Center, and faculty members. Drawing on these data, she created an institutional map of writing support services available for various groups of students at UCSC. These data situated our departmental experiences within a broader campus context and provided a more robust picture of student writing challenges and the best avenues for writing improvement. Feinberg and Professor Megan Moodie, the previous WAP Faculty Supervisor, wrote up findings from these assessment studies in a report for the VPDUE (see Appendix 2).

We continue to use our reporting documentation for individual meetings between WAs and students, and we are planning a second extensive program review in three to five years. We also collect more qualitative data through solicitations of faculty and students to provide feedback. Because of changes to union rules that prevent faculty from requiring students to work with WAs, we are unable to integrate the program directly into individual classes, thereby making it difficult to track changes in individual students' written work over the course of a specific class. However, faculty have expressed their confidence that the program is helping students improve their writing even as they have expressed a desire to find ways to require students to seek out support for their writing.

11) Sustainability. How will this innovation be continued without DCG funding?

The Department of Anthropology has been proactive in seeking alternative means of funding this program. We have included information about our Writing Assistant Program in various outreach efforts to prospective donors. Two notable examples include a special insert on the Writing Assistant Program that is included in the annual newsletter that we distribute to students, parents, and alumni at our graduation ceremony and send to alumni, and a special feature in the formal fundraising brochure that the Anthropology Department has been creating with the Dean of Social Sciences to be distributed to "high capacity" donors. Members of the faculty have met with the Social Sciences Development team and other campus leaders to discuss additional ways to promote the program to prospective donors.

We are currently developing materials for crowd-sourced funding, including campus-based crowd-fund initiatives. In 2015, we hosted a "Write-In," in which WAs, professors, and graduate students offered public writing consults and spent time writing together in public spaces in the Social Sciences 1 building. Photographs from this event were posted to our Facebook page, along with a request to visitors and alumni for WA Center support. Our WA Program is also prominently featured in the physical spaces of the department, with posters advertising services.

Above all, the best public outreach of our program is that provided through word-of-mouth by our students, both our WAs and the students who have used their services.

To date, despite our extensive efforts, we have not yet received sufficient funds to make the program self-sustaining. Hence, because we believe strongly that this is an initiative that has already demonstrated significant and consistent benefits for our students, we will continue to seek out ways to fund the program into the future.

Recommended by (or attach dated email approval):

*Attached*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dept. Chair or Program Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Attached*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Approved by CEP January 6, 2016.**

**Subject:** Re: your approval for the Writing Assistant Program funding renewal request  
**From:** Danilyn Rutherford <druther1@ucsc.edu>  
**Date:** 3/10/16 4:19 PM  
**To:** lissa@ucsc.edu

Dear Lissa,

I am happy to support the renewal of the Writing Assistant Program, which has benefited our students enormously since it's founding.

Best,

Danilyn

Danilyn Rutherford  
Professor and Chair  
Department of Anthropology  
University of California, Santa Cruz  
1156 High Street  
Santa Cruz, CA 95064

[druther1@ucsc.edu](mailto:druther1@ucsc.edu)

On Mar 10, 2016, at 4:01 PM, Melissa L. Caldwell  
<[lissa@ucsc.edu](mailto:lissa@ucsc.edu)> wrote:

Hi Danilyn,

I'm working on the funding renewal for the WAP. I need your approval as Chair. Can you send me an email supporting our renewal? Do you need to see the proposal, or is it okay that it's going to be roughly the same but I may ask for a few more goodies.

Thanks!

Lissa

--

Melissa L. Caldwell

Professor of Anthropology

Editor, *Gastronomica: The Journal of Critical Food Studies*

Co-Director of the UC Multi-Campus Research Program on  
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**Writing Assistant Manual  
and  
ANTH 113 Reader**

**2014-2015  
Anthropology Department  
UC Santa Cruz**

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## **A Guide to Being a Writing Assistant (WA)**

### What's your job?

To help students improve their basic understanding of grammar, syntax, argumentation, and scholarly expectations for writing in anthropology courses.

To give your peers tools to get started writing when they feel "stuck" and help with early brainstorming and organization for written assignments.

To serve as the motor of revision – identify issues in paper drafts and help peers learn to identify and fix them during the revision process.

### How do you do it?

Meet with your fellow WAs in ANTH 113 and learn effective methods for engaging with student writing at every stage in the process.

Staff the WA Center (Social Sciences 1, 235) for up to six hours per week.

Meet with your faculty mentor or Professor Moodie if you have questions throughout the year.

### What are some basic steps to take when a student comes into the Center to talk about an assignment?

Have the student sign the log with the required information (name, course, professor, etc.)

Help to make sure that students understand and are interpreting the assignment correctly; students often misunderstand, misinterpret, or don't pay attention to the requirements of an assignment.

- In the event that a student does not seem to have a clear understanding of what is being asked or what the assignment requires, recommend that they see their TA or professor ASAP.

Show them how to fix the problems that they're encountering, and have them make the fixes. Do not write people's papers for them!

- In cases where there are recurring grammatical errors, correct the first mistake. Find a way to highlight future iterations of the same mistake, and have the student fix them.
- If students have spelling mistakes and word choice problems, circle or highlight the mistakes – and open up a discussion with the student about what some other options might be. Ideally the



revised spellings or word choices will come from the students themselves.

### What are your limits?

Don't spend more time commenting on a paper than the author spent preparing it.

- It is okay to work with students at an early brainstorming stage, but they must bring something on paper. If a student obviously hasn't taken an assignment seriously, limit your comments to what's actually on the page. Course content is not your concern, as ideally any WA can work with any student in any course in anthropology.

Students must meet with you in person in the WA Center. They are not allowed to e-mail you notes or drafts to look over.

You shouldn't discuss content, grades, or grading expectations.

- Although you might have completed the same assignment in the past, assume that you know nothing about the grading expectations of the assignment; your task is solely to focus on the preparation of content in line with the assignment's guidelines. You are a Writing Assistant, not a study buddy!

## **How to Report Your Hours:**

### **Reporting Hours**

Please be sure to keep track of your hours by signing into/out of the WA log located in the Center at the beginning/end of each shift. You will report hours every two weeks using the CruzPay time and attendance system. It is important that you submit your timesheet by the reporting deadlines to ensure timely receipt of pay.

\* Please note that you *must* meet with students in person. Writing Assistants are not permitted to comment on student work via e-mail or eCommons.

### **Access CruzPay**

<http://cruzpay.ucsc.edu/>

### **Quick Start Guide for Using CruzPay**

<http://cruzpay.ucsc.edu/etoolbox/studenttoolbox/Hourly%20Student%20Quickstart%20Guide.pdf>

- also available on following page

### **CruzPay Student Employee Manual**


<http://cruzpay.ucsc.edu/etoolbox/studenttoolbox/studentmanual/index.html>

### **Bi-Weekly Pay Calendar (Deadlines)**

[http://www2.ucsc.edu/lss/reports\\_and\\_apps/2014%20Biweekly%20Payroll%20Calendar.pdf](http://www2.ucsc.edu/lss/reports_and_apps/2014%20Biweekly%20Payroll%20Calendar.pdf)

## CRUZPAY: STUDENT / HOURLY EMPLOYEE QUICK START GUIDE

### LOGGING INTO CRUZPAY

1. Go to <http://cruzpay.ucsc.edu>
2. Click the **Click Here to Enter CruzPay** link or click on the  CruzPay logo.
3. Enter your CruzPay ID (this is the part of your UCSC email address before the '@' sign) and CruzPay password.
4. Click **Login** or press **Enter**.

User ID:

Password:

*The first time you log in, you will be prompted to change your password.*

### ENTERING YOUR TIME

1. After successful login, you will be directed to the dashboard. Click on **Enter My Hours** in the Employee Functions box.

Employee Functions

2. If you have more than one student job, you will be asked to **Choose an Assignment**.

Choose an Assignment

A-Chimney Sweep

D-Cook

E-Lab Technician

*Be very careful to enter hours on the correct timesheet! You will have one timesheet for each assignment in each pay period – mistakes will cause your timesheet to be rejected, and may delay payment!*

3. The system will display the first, unprocessed timesheet when you enter. Click the **Pay Period** drop-down menu to select the appropriate pay period.

Pay Period: 03/24/2008 - 04/23/2008

03/24/2008 - 03/23/2008

03/24/2008 - 04/23/2008

04/24/2008 - 05/23/2008

05/24/2008 - 06/23/2008

4. Student/hourly employees should enter time worked and leave taken to the nearest quarter hour. The default pay code for a student/hourly employee is **Regular Hours**.



Submit Timesheet | Save | Time Off | Balance | Pay Preview | Print | 10 - 9902 - Assistant II

Andy Ant1 800000222

Actions	Pay Code	Mon 03/24	Tue 03/25	Wed 03/26	03/24/2008 - 04/23/2008
	Regular Hours				
<b>Total</b>		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Pay Period: 03/24/2008 - 04/23/2008

### USING MULTIPLE PAY CODES

1. If you need to use a pay code other than Regular Hours, click the green  symbol for the appropriate week and a new row will appear above the existing row.
2. Click the **Pay Code** drop down menu, select a pay code and enter time in the new row.
3. If you need to delete a row, click the red  symbol in the row to be deleted.
4. Select **OK** or press **Enter**.

### SAVING YOUR TIMESHEET

Anytime you enter or change information on your timesheet, you will need to click the  **Save** button.

### SUBMITTING YOUR TIMESHEET

1. If you have no hours to report for the pay period, please submit your timesheet to indicate to your supervisor and timekeeper that your timesheet is finalized.
2. In the Time Entry window click the  **Submit Timesheet** button. This indicates your timesheet is ready for your supervisor's online review and approval.
3. Click **Submit Timesheet** when you receive the **Submit Timesheet** pop-up window. If this window does not appear, please refer to <http://cruzpay.ucsc.edu/techtoolbox/popup.html>

**Submit Timesheet**

Click Submit Timesheet below to confirm that all entries are a true and accurate representation of your hours worked and/or leave taken.

4. The process is complete when you receive the **Timesheet Submission Success** pop-up window and click **OK**.

**Timesheet Submission Success**

Operation performed successfully.

### LOGGING OUT OF CRUZPAY

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### NOTES

- Review and validate all **Exception Messages** appearing at the bottom of your timesheet. See <http://cruzpay.ucsc.edu/etoolbox/studenttoolbox/studentmanual/index.html>
- Contact your **Timekeeper** for questions regarding UCSC Time Reporting policies, work study balances or payment concerns. For a list of Timekeepers by unit, visit <http://cruzpay.ucsc.edu/timekeeper.html>.
- Do not use the standard browser navigation buttons, e.g. page back, page forward, etc.
- For more detailed instructions and reference materials, please see the Employee Toolbox at <http://cruzpay.ucsc.edu>

Natalie Goldberg, Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within. Boston: Shambhala, 1986.

## First Thoughts

The basic unit of writing practice is the timed exercise. You may time yourself for ten minutes, twenty minutes, or an hour. It's up to you. At the beginning you may want to start small and after a week increase your time, or you may want to dive in for an hour the first time. It doesn't matter. What does matter is that whatever amount of time you choose for that session, you must commit yourself to it and for that full period:

1. *Keep your hand moving.* (Don't pause to reread the line you have just written. That's stalling and trying to get control of what you're saying.)
2. *Don't cross out.* (That is editing as you write. Even if you write something you didn't mean to write, leave it.)
3. *Don't worry about spelling, punctuation, grammar.* (Don't even care about staying within the margins and lines on the page.)
4. *Lose control.*
5. *Don't think. Don't get logical.*
6. *Go for the jugular.* (If something comes up in your writing that is scary or naked, dive right into it. It probably has lots of energy.)

These are the rules. It is important to adhere to them because the aim is to burn through to first thoughts, to the place where energy is unobstructed by social politeness or the internal censor, to the place where you are writing what your mind actually sees and feels, not what it *thinks* it should see or feel. It's a great opportunity to capture the oddities of your mind. Explore the

## Writing Down the Bones

rugged edge of thought. Like grating a carrot, give the paper the colorful coleslaw of your consciousness.

First thoughts have tremendous energy. It is the way the mind first flashes on something. The internal censor usually squelches them, so we live in the realm of second and third thoughts, thoughts on thought, twice and three times removed from the direct connection of the first fresh flash. For instance, the phrase "I cut the daisy from my throat" shot through my mind. Now my second thought, carefully tutored in  $1 + 1 = 2$  logic, in politeness, fear, and embarrassment at the natural, would say, "That's ridiculous. You sound suicidal. Don't show yourself cutting your throat. Someone will think you are crazy." And instead, if we give the censor its way, we write, "My throat was a little sore, so I didn't say anything." Proper and boring.

First thoughts are also unencumbered by ego, by that mechanism in us that tries to be in control, tries to prove the world is permanent and solid, enduring and logical. The world is not permanent, is ever-changing and full of human suffering. So if you express something egoless, it is also full of energy because it is expressing the truth of the way things are. You are not carrying the burden of ego in your expression, but are riding for moments the waves of human consciousness and using your personal details to express the ride.

In Zen meditation you sit on a cushion called a zafu with your legs crossed, back straight, hands at your knees or in front of you in a gesture called a mudra. You face a white wall and watch your breath. No matter what you feel—great tornadoes of anger and resistance, thunderstorms of joy and grief—you continue to sit, back straight, legs crossed, facing the wall. You learn to not be tossed away no matter how great the thought or emotion. That is the discipline: to continue to sit.

The same is true in writing. You must be a great warrior when you contact first thoughts and write from them. Especially at the beginning you may feel great emotions and energy that will sweep

you away, but you don't stop writing. You continue to use your pen and record the details of your life and penetrate into the heart of them. Often in a beginning class students break down crying when they read pieces they have written. That is okay. Often as they write they cry, too. However, I encourage them to continue reading or writing right through the tears so they may come out the other side and not be thrown off by the emotion. Don't stop at the tears; go through to truth. This is the discipline.

Why else are first thoughts so energizing? Because they have to do with freshness and inspiration. Inspiration means "breathing in." Breathing in God. You actually become larger than yourself, and first thoughts are present. They are not a cover-up of what is actually happening or being felt. The present is imbued with tremendous energy. It is what is. My friend who is a Buddhist said once after coming out of a meditation retreat, "The colors were so much more vibrant afterward." Her meditation teacher said, "When you are present, the world is truly alive."

## Trouble with the Editor

It is important to separate the creator and the editor or internal censor when you practice writing, so that the creator has free space to breathe, explore, and express. If the editor is absolutely annoying and you have trouble differentiating it from your creative voice, sit down whenever you need to and write what the editor is saying; give it full voice—"You are a jerk, who ever said you could write, I hate your work, you suck, I'm embarrassed, you have nothing valuable to say, and besides you can't spell. . . ." Sound familiar?

The more clearly you know the editor, the better you can ignore it. After a while, like the jabbering of an old drunk fool, it becomes just prattle in the background. Don't reinforce its power by listening to its empty words. If the voice says, "You are boring," and you listen to it and stop your hand from writing, that reinforces and give credence to your editor. That voice knows that the term *boring* will stop you dead in your tracks, so you'll hear yourself saying that a lot about your writing. Hear "You are boring" as distant white laundry flapping in the breeze. Eventually it will dry up and someone miles away will fold it and take it in. Meanwhile you will continue to write.

a grain of sand to beauty. What we discover in this affront to the sacred rhythm of life, this defiant movement of little feet, this excellence born of constraint, is a paradigm of Art.

When movement has been banished from a nature that seeks its continuity, when it becomes renegade and remarkable by virtue of its very discontinuity, it attains the level of esthetic creation.

Because art is life, playing to other rhythms.

*From Muriel Barbey's novel  
The Elegance of the Deedeng-  
Europa Editions, 2008.*

## *Profound Thought No. 10*

### *Grammar*

#### *A stratum of consciousness*

#### *Leading to beauty*

In the morning, as a rule, I always take a moment to listen to music in my room. Music plays a huge role in my life. It is music that helps me to endure . . . well . . . everything there is to endure: my sister, my mother, school, Achille Grand-Fernet, and so on. Music is not merely a pleasure to the ears the way that gastronomy is to the palate or painting to the eyes. There's nothing terribly original about the fact that I put music on in the morning, just that it sets the tone for the rest of the day. It's very simple but also sort of complicated to explain: I believe that we can choose our moods: because we are aware that there are several mood-strata and we have the means to gain access to them. For example, to write a profound thought, I have to put myself onto a very special stratum, otherwise the ideas and words just don't come. I have to forget myself and at the same time be superconcentrated. But it's not a question of "the will," it's a mechanism I can set in motion or not, like scratching my nose or doing a backward roll. And to activate the mechanism there's nothing better than a little music. For example, to relax, I put on something that takes me into a sort of faraway mood, where things can't really reach me, where I can look at them as if I were watching a film: a "detached" stratum of consciousness. In general, for that particular stratum, I resort to jazz or, more effective overall but longer to take effect: Dire Straits (long live my mp3 player).

So, this morning I listened to Glenn Miller before leaving for school. I guess it didn't last long enough. When the incident

occurred, I lost all my detachment. It was during French class with Madame Fine (who is a living antonym because she has a repository of spare tires around her midriff). What's more, she wears pink. I love pink, I think it's a color that's had a bad rap, it's made out to be a thing for babies or women who wear too much makeup, but pink is really a subtle and delicate color, and it figures a lot in Japanese poetry. But pink and Madame Fine are a bit like jam and pigs. Anyway, this morning I had French class with her. That in itself is already a chore. French with Madame Fine is reduced to a long series of technical exercises, whether we're doing grammar or reading texts. With her it's as if a text was written so that we can identify the characters, the narrator, the setting, the plot, the time of the story, and so on. I don't think it has ever occurred to her that a text is written above all to be read and to arouse emotions in the reader. Can you imagine, she has never even asked us the question: "Did you like this text/this book?" And yet that is the only question that could give meaning to the narrative points of view or the construction of the story . . . Never mind the fact that the minds of younger kids are, I think, more open to literature than say the minds of high school or college students. Let me explain: at my age, all you need is to talk to us about something with some passion, pluck the right strings (love, rebellion, thirst for novelty, etc.) and you have every chance of succeeding. Our history teacher, Monsieur Lermitt, had us hooked by the end of the second class by showing us photos of these guys who'd had their hand or their lips cut off under Sharia law, because they'd been stealing or smoking. But he didn't do it as if he were showing us a gory film or something. It was enthralling, and we listened attentively throughout the class, the point of which was to warn us against the foolishness of mankind, and not Islam specifically. So if Madame Fine had taken the trouble to read a few verses of Racine to us, with a tremor in her voice, (*Que le jour recommence et que le jour finisse / Sans que jamais Titus puisse voir*

*Bérénice*) she would have discovered that the average adolescent is fully ripe for the tragedy of love. By high school it's harder: adulthood is around the corner, kids already have an intuitive idea of how grown-ups behave, and they begin to wonder what role and what place they are going to inherit on stage, and anyway by then something has been spoiled, and the goldfish bowl is no longer very far away.

It is bad enough to have to put up with the usual grind of a class in literature without literature and a class in language without cognizance of language, so this morning when I felt something snap inside me, I just couldn't contain myself. Madame Fine was making a point about the use of qualifying adjectives as epithets, on the pretext that our compositions were completely barren of said grammatical grace notes, "whereas really, it's the sort of thing you learn in third grade." She went on: "Am I to honestly believe there are students who are this incompetent in grammar," and she looked right at Achille Grand-Fernet. I don't like Achille Grand-Fernet but in this case I agreed with him when he asked his question. I feel it was long overdue. Moreover, when a lit teacher uses a split infinitive like that, I'm really shocked. It's like someone sweeping the floor and forgetting the dust bunnies. "What's the point of grammar?" asked Achille Grand-Fernet. "You ought to know by now," replied Madame Never-mind-that-I-am-paid-to-teach-you. "Well I don't," replied Achille, sincerely for once, "no one ever bothered to explain it to us." Madame Fine let out a long sigh, of the "do I really have to put up with such stupid questions" variety, and said, "The point is to make us speak and write well."

I thought I would have a heart attack there and then. I have never heard anything so grossly inept. And by that, I don't mean it's *wrong*, just that it is *grossly inept*. To tell a group of adolescents who already know how to speak and write that that is the purpose of grammar is like telling someone that they need to read a history of toilets through the ages in order to pee and

poop. It is utterly devoid of meaning! If she had shown us some concrete examples of things we need to know about language in order to use it properly, well, okay, why not, that would be a start. She could tell us, for example, that knowing how to conjugate a verb in all its tenses helps you avoid making the kind of major mistakes that would put you to shame at a dinner party ("I would of came to the party earlier but I tooked the wrong road"). Or, for example, that to write a proper invitation in English to a little *divertissement* at the château of Versailles, knowing the rules governing spelling and the use of apostrophes in *la langue de Shakespeare* can come in very useful: it would save you from embarrassment such as: "Deer freind, may we have the plesure of you're company at Versaille's this evening? The Marquise de Grand-Fernet." But if Madame Fine thinks that's all grammar is for . . . We already knew how to use and conjugate a verb long before we knew it was a verb. And even if knowing can help, I still don't think it's something decisive.

Personally I think that grammar is a way to attain beauty. When you speak, or read, or write, you can tell if you've said or read or written a fine sentence. You can recognize a well-turned phrase or an elegant style. But when you are applying the rules of grammar skillfully, you ascend to another level of the beauty of language. When you use grammar you peel back the layers, to see how it is all put together, see it quite naked, in a way. And that's where it becomes wonderful, because you say to yourself, "Look how well-made this is, how well-constructed it is! How solid and ingenious, rich and subtle!" I get completely carried away just knowing there are words of all different natures, and that you have to know them in order to be able to infer their potential usage and compatibility. I find there is nothing more beautiful, for example, than the very basic components of language, nouns and verbs. When you've grasped this, you've grasped the core of any statement. It's magnificent, don't you think? Nouns, verbs . . .

Perhaps, to gain access to all the beauty of the language that grammar unveils, you have to place yourself in a special state of awareness. I have the impression that I do that anyway without any special effort. I think that it was at the age of two, when I first heard grown-ups speak, that I understood once and for all how language is made. Grammar lessons have always seemed to me a sort of synthesis after the fact and, perhaps, a source of supplemental details concerning terminology. Can you teach children to speak and write correctly through grammar if they haven't had the illumination that I had? Who knows. In the meanwhile, all the Madame Fines on the planet ought rather to ask themselves what would be the right piece of music to play to make their pupils go into a grammatical trance.

So I said to Madame Fine: "Not at all! That is simplistic!" There was great silence in the classroom both because as a rule I never open my mouth and because I had contradicted the teacher. She looked at me with surprise, then she put on one of those stern looks that all teachers use when they feel that the wind is veering to the north and their cozy little class on punctuation might turn into a tribunal of their pedagogical methods. "And what do you know about it, Mademoiselle Josse?" she asked acidly. Everyone was holding their breath. When the star pupil is displeased, it's bad for the teaching body, particularly when that body is well-fed, so this morning it was like a thriller and a circus act all rolled into one: everyone was waiting to see what the outcome of the battle would be, and they were hoping it would be a bloody one.

"Well," I said, "when you've read Jakobson, it becomes obvious that grammar is an end in itself and not simply a means: it provides access to the structure and beauty of language, it's not just some trick to help people get by in society."

"Some trick! Some trick!" she scoffed, her eyes popping out of her head. "For Mademoiselle Josse grammar is a trick!"

If she had listened carefully to what I said, she would have



understood that, for me, grammar is *not* a trick. But I think the reference to Jakobson caused her to lose it completely, never mind that everyone was giggling, including Cannelle Martin, even though they didn't get what I had said at all, but they could tell a little cloud from Siberia was hovering over the head of our fat French teacher. In reality, I've never read a thing by Jakobson, obviously not. Though I may be supersmart, I'd still rather read mangas or literature. But Maman has a friend (who's a university professor) who was talking about Jakobson yesterday (while they were indulging in a hunk of camembert and a bottle of red wine at five in the afternoon). So, in class this morning I remembered what she had said.

At that moment, when I could sense that the rabble were growling and showing their teeth, I felt pity. I felt sorry for Madame Fine. And I don't like lynching. It never puts anyone in a good light. Never mind that I don't want anyone to go digging into my knowledge of Jakobson and begin to doubt the reality of my IQ.

So I backed off and didn't say anything. I got two hours of detention and Madame Fine saved her professorial skin. But when I left the classroom, I could feel her worried little gaze following me out the door.

And on the way home I thought: pity the poor in spirit who know neither the enchantment nor the beauty of language.

## 5. A Pleasant Impression

But Manuela, not terribly sensitive to the little steps of Japanese women, is already steering us toward another territory.

"That Rosen woman is in a regular state because Monsieur Ozu hasn't got two lamps that are the same."

"Really?" I say, taken aback.

"Yes, really. And why is that? The Rosens have two of everything, because they're afraid they'll end up missing something. You know Madame Rosen's favorite story?"

"No," I reply, already enthralled to think where this conversation might lead.

"During the war her grandfather, who had tons of stuff stored in his cellar, saved his family by doing a favor for a German who was looking for a spool of thread to sew a button back onto his uniform. If her grandfather hadn't had the thread, he would have been toast, and everyone else along with him. So believe it or not, in her cupboards and in the cellar she has two of everything. And does that make her any happier? And can you see any better in a room just because you have two lamps exactly the same?"

"I've never thought about it. But it's true that we tend to decorate our interiors with superfluous things."

"Super what things?"

"Things we don't really need, like at the Arthens'. The same lamps and two identical vases on the mantelpiece, the same identical armchairs on either side of the sofa, two matching night tables, rows of identical jars in the kitchen . . ."



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## ***AAA Documentation Style***

*The American Anthropological (AAA) Documentation Style is a close cousin of the Chicago Manual of Style (CMS). The AAA Style Manual, an online publication, offers anthropological writers and scholars guidelines on AAA variations from CMS style. This brief guide provides examples of the bibliographic format used by anthropologists. In the sample entries, note that unlike the formats used in other disciplines, book titles are not underlined; article titles are not surrounded by quotation marks; the date of publication precedes the title; and entries by the same author are arranged alphabetically by title. If you do not find an example of the type of citation you need, refer to the CMS. Note: Talk to your professor about specific formatting specifications for your class.*

### **In-Text Guidelines for AAA**

Give the author credit in the text in the following ways:

- Use quotation marks before and after the author's words in a short quotation, *always*. Place quotation citations *after* the quote.
- Use the author's full name in your text whenever possible. If you do not have this information, cite the author's last name, either in the sentence introducing the borrowed material or within parentheses at the end of the quotation or paraphrase.
- Cite the year the document was published within parentheses (after the author's name if it does not appear in your text). Follow the year with a colon; then note the page(s) on which the original information appears. (Note that there is no space between the colon and the page number(s). See examples below.)
- If you are citing reprinted material, type only the date from the version of the work used in your text.
- If a quotation takes up more than four manuscript lines, cite it as a block quotation. Exclude the quotation marks and use brackets instead of parentheses to enclose the bibliographic information. The brackets follow the sentence period.

### **Examples of In-Text Citations in AAA**

#### **Direct Quotes.**

*A source with one author (author cited in the text):*

According to Yancey, sports fans know that "the Final Four is the apex of college athletics" (1995:23).

*A source with one author (author cited in parentheses):*

Sports fans know that "the Final Four is the apex of college athletics" (Yancey 1995:23).

*A source with two authors:*

Sports fans know that "the Final Four is the apex of college athletics" (Yancey and Meier 1995:23).

***A source with three or more authors:***

Sports fans know that “the Final Four is the apex of college athletics” (Yancey et al. 1995:23).

***A note from a source cited in text:***

Sports fans know that “the Final Four is the apex of college athletics” (Yancey 1995:23n. 12).

***A work with no date:***

Sports fans know that “the Final Four is the apex of college athletics” (Yancey n.d.:23).

**Paraphrasing.**

***A paraphrased idea (general):***

The concept of race, as utilized in the U.S., endures despite contemporary claims of its demise or decline in significance (Wilson 1978) as a primary means of human classification.

***A paraphrased idea (specific):***

The ways in which Cape Verdeans contrast themselves to African Americans are similar to that which is conducted by Caribbean immigrants (Waters 1999:27). The argument made to explain their apparent socioeconomic “success” through the vehicle of ethnicity is attributed to the experience of being raised in a “majority” environment.

***A reference to an author and his/her work:***

Oliver C. Cox (1948) was the earliest theorist to reconsider the relationship of race, class, and power within a Marxist perspective.

***A reference to the text only:***

Cox 1948 reconsiders the relationship of race, class, and power within a Marxist perspective.

## References Cited Guidelines for AAA

- Title the page References Cited (with no quotation marks around the word, and no bold or italics).
- Arrange the sources in alphabetical order—by the last name of the first author listed on the source. References with the same author and date should be alphabetized by the title of the document.
- When there are two or more places of publication for a reference, list only the first.
- For student work, the References Cited page is generally double-spaced. However, in anthropological publications, the page is single-spaced. Check with your instructor to find out the spacing s/he prefers.

## References Cited Examples for AAA

### *A book with one author:*

Castles, Stephen  
1990 Here for Good. London: Pluto Press.

### *A coauthored book:*

Bonacich, Edna, and John Modell  
1975 The Economic Basis of Ethnic Solidarity: Small Business in the Japanese American Community.  
Berkeley: University of California Press.

### *Author, with others (use first author for in-text citations):*

Bonacich, Edna, with Mark Smith and Kathy Hunt  
1999 The Economic Basis of Ethnic Solidarity: Small Business in the Japanese American Community.  
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### *Multiple references in the same year (alphabetize by title):*

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1983a A Christmas Feast. New York: Oxford University Press.  
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Spindler, George  
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Should be cited in text citations, with specific date, but not in references cited:  
Horace Smith claims (letter to author, July 12, 1993)

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Sharing & Responding  
Peter Elbow &  
Pat Belandoff  
1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1989  
NY: Random House

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# Introduction

We talk in company, we write alone. Obviously the solitary dimension of writing has advantages: we don't need others in order to write. But the solitary dimension has drawbacks too: sometimes we lose track of our audience as we write, and sometimes we even get lonely. Therefore in this booklet we give extra emphasis to the *collaborative* and *social* dimension of writing.

It might seem odd to put all our suggestions for sharing and responding into a separate booklet instead of including them in the main book. We have done so because we want you to practice the activities in a special order—in the order we give them—whereas the units of the book may be juggled in different orders. Thus these responding activities are suitable for virtually *any* unit in the book, though we usually also make brief feedback suggestions in the units themselves.

In short, we are being somewhat pushy about sequence when it comes to sharing and responding. We have found that it is crucial to start with sharing and then move on to nonjudgmental kinds of responding before opening up to full criticism. This means moving from safety to risk. The progression builds trust: trust in yourself and in the others you work with. You can't give good responses to writing or benefit from them except in a situation of trust.

We trust you will tolerate our pushiness here—be willing to learn the modes of responding we present and in the order we present them—if we make it clear that our *goal* is to move on fairly quickly and put *you* in charge of the feedback process. We want you, as writer, to be able to choose whatever kind of feedback you need—depending on the time and the piece of

writing. Yet you can't really take charge of the feedback process if you haven't learned enough *kinds* of feedback to ask for. With this booklet we aim to teach you a rich and varied range of ways to get responses to your writing so you can then go on to take charge of the feedback process in the future. One of the main reasons why many people don't like getting feedback on their writing is that they don't know what to ask for and so end up helplessly putting themselves in the hands of readers.

By the way, don't assume that the later kinds of responding are necessarily better because they are later or harder to use. Some of the earliest—especially plain sharing—remain the best even though they are the easiest to use.

You should probably be able to try out all the kinds of responding we describe in, say, the first half of the semester. We summarize *all* the techniques in a final section that you can refer to when you are trying to decide what kind of feedback you might want on any particular occasion. We summarize them even more briefly inside the back cover of this booklet.

Among all the ways of giving feedback we describe in this section, there is a very good one we don't mention which you should also keep in mind. Simply *write a letter to the writer*. By making it a letter—taking a fresh sheet of paper, addressing him or her by name ("Dear \_\_\_\_\_"), and speaking in your own voice—you dignify the writing and dignify yourself. It often helps you think of particularly useful things to say and helps you naturally tailor your feedback to that person. We would appreciate it if you would try out this mode by writing *us* a letter (care of the publisher) telling us what helped you in our book and what got in the way—and any suggestions you have for revising.

### *The Need for All Three Audience Relationships*

We've designed this booklet on a premise we see confirmed over and over in our own writing and teaching: writing improves most from a balance of *all three* audience situations.

1. *Private writing*. We benefit from private writing—no audience—because of the safety it provides. With that safety comes an invitation to take risks. We introduce you to private writing at the very beginning of the course in the form of freewriting. We discuss and explore private writing most thoroughly in Unit 6.

2. *Sharing*. It is common to give your writing to an audience and get no response; it is a helpful, empowering, and enjoyable process. Yet many students have never had this experience because they have written only in school and always gotten feedback, sometimes even a grade. (Imagine how well you'd *speak* if you were graded on everything you said.)

It turns out that we learn most about writing with our mouths and our

ears. With our mouths we *feel* how our words and phrases and sentence work. With our ears we *hear* how our words sound—and also the words of others. What's nice is that this learning is *physical*; it occurs quickly *and without teaching*. When a word is wrong or a sentence doesn't work, you feel it in your mouth and hear it in your ear. Usually you stumble in your reading and almost automatically pause and say, "What I mean to say is . . . and come up with an improvement. You learn without having to theorize or ponder about what is good and bad writing. And you learn without any one's having to tell you what's wrong or what doesn't work. Sharing helps you develop a better ear and a better sense of voice and rhythm. These are the strongest foundations of good writing. Sharing is a way to celebrate and learn at the same time—and it's the quickest way to learn about writing.

Some people *hate* sharing their writing. As they read their words aloud they cringe: "Yuck! These words are awful." But that reaction is usual because they've gotten so much criticism of their writing in the past that they can't hear their writing without also hearing criticism of it in their minds. (No wonder they hate writing.) If they practice sharing their writing in a supportive setting, this painful reaction will gradually subside—and they too will begin to experience the pleasure of reading for the sake of communicating, not for the sake of getting criticized.

Sharing (with no response) is also important as preparation for the third audience situation: getting responses. Until you learn to read your writing aloud without being nervous and self-conscious, you won't benefit from the responses readers give you: you won't hear them very well. Similarly until you learn to *listen* to the writing of others—without worrying what you reactions are or how to give feedback—you won't be able to give good responses. Worry keeps you from hearing their writing well enough. Sharing gives you crucial practice in reading and listening.

3. *Responding*. Finally, of course, we *do* need to find out how readers respond to our writing. And we need responses from various readers, not just from the one reader who happens to be teacher. Readers in the work are enormously different, so if we learn only one reader's responses, we haven't learned what we need.

The kind of feedback we get most often is judgment ("It's good here it's bad there") and advice ("Here's how to improve the bad parts"). In this booklet we will help you work on this kind of feedback, but first we want to enlarge the *range of kinds* of responses you can get to writing. In particular we want to show you many ways to give *nonjudgmental* feedback: feedback that helps you see more clearly what you've written and tells you what go through to readers—but which doesn't try to tell you which parts are good and bad. *Nonjudgmental* feedback presents you with evidence of how readers experience your writing and lets you make up your mind what to think and do about it.

## Options for Sharing and Responding

It's important to realize how wide a range of options you have for sharing and getting responses to your writing. You probably can't use them all consistently, but you should try to make sure you *try* them all to see which are most helpful for various situations.

**Early or late drafts?** You can get responses to early drafts or late drafts—indeed, it helps to discuss your thinking even *before* you have written at all. And don't forget that it's also helpful to get feedback on *final* drafts even though you cannot or will not do any more revising. Even though you won't work any more on this particular piece, you will learn about your writing and how readers read: long-range learning and celebration too.

**Sharing out loud or on paper?** You can read your piece out loud or give your readers copies for them to read silently. The process of reading out loud brings learning: you can feel strengths and weaknesses physically in your ear and mouth. You can tell about responses by watching your listeners. And reading out loud is more alive. But if your piece is very long or time is short, you will need to use paper. Paper copy gives readers more time to read closely—especially if the material is technical. It gives them more privacy. New technology makes it easier to make multiple copies—using copiers or computers—but don't forget about good old carbon paper. (Nevertheless, if readers cannot follow you in two out-loud renderings, the writing isn't clear enough: it's no good blaming it on "the material.")

**Responding out loud or on paper?** Both ways are valuable. Written responses are usually more careful, and the writer gets to take them home to ponder while revising. Spoken responses are easier and more casual to give; they are more sociable if there's a group, and it's interesting for responders to hear the response of others.

There's a way to combine *written* and *spoken* responding. First, have all group members give copies of their paper to everyone else. Then members go home, read all the papers, and take a few notes on each to record their responses and reactions. But additionally each member has responsibility for giving a *careful* written response to *one* paper. When the group meets for sharing responses, the person who wrote the careful feedback starts by reading what he wrote (and hands his or her written feedback to the writer), but the others also chime in and add responses on the basis of their reading and notes. This method is particularly useful if there isn't much time for group work or if the pieces of writing are somewhat long.

**Pairs or groups?** On the one hand, the more people the better: readers are so different and reading is such a subjective act that you really don't know much if you only know how one or two readers react. On the other hand, more readers takes more time, and you *can* learn a lot from one reader if

she is a good one—someone who can really tell you in detail about what goes on in her head as she reads your words. Also it's easier to build up relationship of good honesty, trust, and support between just two people. (You know you are working on something important and you know you want to get feedback at various stages, you may have to use your trustee readers sparingly—one or two at a time.)

By the way, you can get both the multiple perspectives of groups and the trust of and support of pairs: first get brief feedback from the group and then divide into pairs for fuller responses and discussion. Some people prefer the opposite order: start with pairs and then move on to groups.

**New faces or same old faces?** There is a temptation to keep changing pairs or group members for variety and new perspectives. But good sharing and responding depend heavily on safety and trust, so we tend to prefer working with the same person or group. Certain things can't occur till reader and writer have built up trust, and that takes longer than you might think.

## Working in small groups

- If you read out loud, read twice and pause after each reading. At the end get people to jot a few notes about their reactions before anyone speaks so they are not too influenced by hearing what others say.
- Start off for a while with a "messy" system where everyone throws in bits of feedback helter-skelter—though make sure everyone makes some contribution. Then after a number of weeks when people get more comfortable with the process, get each person to give his whole set of responses at once—with no one else joining in. For the goal is to see your writing through the consciousness of one person and then another. You can't do that if everyone's response is all mixed together with everyone else's.
- Avoid all arguments whether between responders or between responder and writer. Not only do arguments waste time, they usually make responders less willing to be honest. Most of all you usually *benefit* from having different points of view—left standing, not reconciled. Don't look for a "right answer" but for how your writing looks through different sets of eyes. When readers disagree, that just helps the writer realize that she gets to make up her own mind about what it all means.

# Two Sample Papers for Illustrating Different Kinds of Feedback

## AN ORANGE BASKETBALL GAME

A Student

Of course we're here an hour before the game starts. I don't mind, though. Now I can see all the other crazy Syracuse Orangemen basketball fans besides me! My brother and I sit down, taking the whole scene in. The Carrier Dome is a massive building with a white, balloon-like roof. It can hold a 100-yard football field, but today there is a blue curtain cutting the area into two parts. One half has vendors selling refreshments and Syracuse University paraphernalia. There is also a stage with two men singing, tables with important patrons clad in orange, and a giant-sized screen which will show the game for the unfortunate fans sitting behind the blue curtain. On the other side of the blue curtain is the hard floor on which ten college men will bounce a one foot in diameter orange ball and attempt to throw it through a round metal hoop with intertwined ropes hanging on it. This may not seem very difficult—shooting a ball through a hoop—but with rules to follow and five men trying to block your shot, it is not as easy as it appears. To add to the main attraction, the basketball court, on this side of the Dome, there are thousands of people milling about—all in orange, of course. These people are just like me, hoping that their team will have more points at the end of a forty minute game. These fans are tough. They have seen defeat many times, whether it was a blow-out the entire game or a last second luck shot causing a loss by one point. But they hope for the elation of winning. This feeling is what keeps them returning for more possible disappointments. The high is much higher than the low is low.

Finally it is ten minutes until the tip-off. People sit down and wait with extreme anticipation and excitement. I look around and see only one color—orange! Orange hats, t-shirts, sweatshirts, sweaters, pants, banners, scarfs, and even orange faces

everywhere. Free orange bandanas, passed out before the game, are waving in the air. The crowd is chanting, "Let's go Orange!" No one is sitting down now. On the court are ten college men, five on your side, five not. Those ten individuals have approximately 32,000 pairs of eyes on them. I think they might be a little nervous.

The ball is thrown up and a hush comes over the Dome—the game has begun. For two hours no one in that stadium will relax. The first shot is taken by Syracuse and it is also the first point of the game! Listening to the cheering for a moment, I hear different phrases. Some happy, enthusiastic, optimistic phrases such as, "Come on Orangemen, you can do it!" Other expressions were angry and pessimistic, "You guys stink! Get your act together!" Every fan believes that what he screams is heard by the players and helps them win the game. Every fan is a referee, too. "What? saw that! It was a charge, not a defensive foul!" All these single voices blend together to create an unintelligible deafening roar. What a clamor!

The score is now tied with two minutes left in the first half. Two minutes in a basketball game is quite a long time. Everyone is anxious, wondering who will have the lead at half-time. The odors of hot dogs, mustard, sweat, beer, and stale air-conditioned ventilation combine as the temperature in the Carrier Dome rises. With thirty seconds to go, stocky pivot guard Pearl Washington of Syracuse dribbles the ball, intending to have the last shot of the first half. After what seems like a lifetime with ten seconds left, he takes an outside shot and . . . it's good! Syracuse leads by two. Hysteria breaks out in the Dome.

During halftime, people try to carry on normal conversations but they always end up discussing the game. All age groups are present, from baby Orange fans with t-shirts reading, "Future Orangeman," to old businessmen with Orange sweaters and their own portable cushioned seats to place on the cold cement benches. With five minutes remaining until the second half, these loyal fans settle down to watch their team continue the game. Two questions are whirling in their brains, "What will happen this half? Will they win?"

I sit on the cement with my brother amid the orange sea and say with confidence, "Of course they will win!"

## CLEANING UP THE ENVIRONMENT

Larry Kersh

I think it is disgusting the way people don't care about the environment they live in. I feel it is important for people to realize that the trash they throw on the ground is not going to be picked up. If everyone would make an effort to help clean the environment, then it would be much more appealing.

All people have to do is make an effort to find a garbage can to throw their trash into. They can even hold on to their trash until they get home where there is sure to be a trash receptacle. For example, I don't know how many times I've seen people throwing gum wrappers and cigarette butts on the ground when they are just a few feet away from a garbage can. I also remember a time when my brother and I went canoeing on the Delaware River. When it came time for lunch, we rowed over to one of the banks. As we pulled the canoe onto the bank, we noticed a pile of garbage near a deserted campsite. We both commented to each other about what we would like to do to these people if we caught them in the act. I suggested making them clean up an area of a certain radius. My brother suggested we make them eat it! There is definitely a need for people to become aware that others are not going to clean up

their garbage. These above statements are of how things are outside the home environment. Now I would like to discuss the problems in the home (especially on campus). There are close to ten thousand students living here on campus. Nearly everyone has a roommate and must be considerate of others. In my suite, however, there is a problem. There have been times when I've come back to my room to find a pile of dishes in the bathroom, and all sorts of stuff in the suite room. My roommate is the major cause of these messes. He doesn't seem to realize that it bothers the rest of the people living here. He seems to take it for granted that we don't mind. If people don't see the damage caused by littering the home environment, or any environment, they are more apt to assume that the effects are very little, and therefore will continue their bad habit. It is so unfair to the people who are making an effort to clean up our environment.

Some of my opponents have argued that the cost of cleaning up the outside environment far outweighs the results that will come of it. These people must live in high-priced neighborhoods where their areas are clean, or they must dwell in places where they don't see trash all over the place. They are blind to the areas that need to be cleaned up. Others feel that no matter how much you do to clean the environment, it will still remain unclean and therefore all the money spent would be a waste. My suite mates have the opinion that it is a waste of time to clean up the suite because they feel that my roommate will just continue to make a mess. Although these are valid points, I feel that a clean environment is very important.

All of the people that are in favor of cleaning up their environment have a few options. They can raise money or donate it themselves. I am not asking all that are in favor to take responsibility for the ones that aren't in favor. I am asking for a little help from all of the concerned citizens to give a little of their time and effort.

In addition to these arguments for a cleaner environment, I would like to add that this would benefit animal life because they are unable to rid their environment of the trash left by human beings. I think that this issue should be discussed between legislators and, more personally, my suite mates.

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# I

## No Responding: Sharing

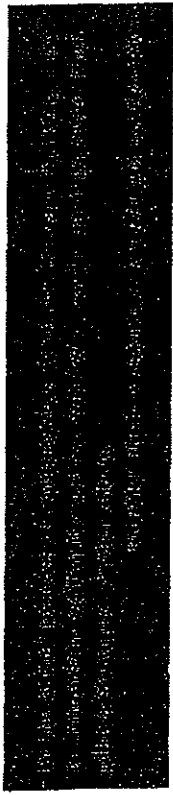
If you've never done freewriting before—writing words down and not showing them to anyone at all—it can feel peculiar. But quickly you find it natural and helpful. Similarly if you've never done sharing before—reading your words to someone without getting any comments back at all—that too can feel peculiar. When you read your words out loud (or give a copy of your writing to someone) you probably have an urge to ask how the listeners *liked* it—whether they thought it was any *good*. Because all school writing is evaluated, we sometimes assume that the *point* of writing is to be evaluated. When we speak to people, do we immediately ask them how *good* our words were? No. We speak because we are trying to *communicate*. We certainly don't expect listeners to give us a grade.

With sharing we're trying to emphasize writing as communicating rather than as performing for judgment. You'll find that it's a relief to give your writing to others (aloud or on paper) just to communicate, just for the fun of it—just so they can hear what you have to say and learn from you. It's a relief to say (on some occasions, anyway), "The hell with whether they liked it or not. I just want them to *hear* it." If you practice sharing in the right spirit, you will soon find it as natural and helpful as freewriting.

And what is the right spirit? In sharing, the goal is for writers to *give* and for listeners to *receive*. Writing is gift giving. When you give someone a gift, you don't want her to criticize; you want her to use it and enjoy it. If you happen to give someone a gift she doesn't like, do you want her to complain? No, you want her to thank you.

You will improve your writing much faster if you let us help you build a community in your classroom: a place where people hear clearly even

## PROCESS BOX



What is mumbled, understand what is badly written, and look for the validity even in what they disagree with. *Eventually* you will learn to write to the enemy—to write surrounded by sharks. But you will learn that necessary kill better if, for a while, you practice writing to allies and listening to friends.

*Sharing out loud and on paper.* We stress reading your words out loud here, specially at first, because you learn so much by using your mouth and ears. And there is a special psychological benefit from learning to *say* your words out loud: you get over the fear of *making a noise* with your written words. But it is also useful to share silently, by giving readers a copy of what you've written. Periodically throughout the semester, please find occasions to make copies of what you've written and give them to others—just for the celebration of sharing.

### Guidelines for Sharing Out Loud

To the writer:

- Take a moment to look at your listeners, relax, and take a deep breath. Say a few introductory words if necessary.
- Read slowly, clearly. Own your writing; read it with authority even if you are not satisfied with it.
- Concentrate on the meaning of what you're reading: don't worry about whether listeners like it.
- Take a pause between paragraphs.
- Let people interrupt to ask you to repeat or go slower, but don't let them give you any feedback.
- Read your piece a second time. Pause after the first reading but don't let people respond.
- When you are done, ask the group to go on to the next reader.

### To the listeners:

- Your job is to receive without comment.
- If the writer is racing or mumbling so you can't understand, interrupt him—appreciatively but firmly—and say, "Wait a minute, go back, I couldn't hear. Please read more slowly and clearly."
- Get the writer to read twice. Don't refrain from being assertive.
- Give *no feedback of any kind*.
- Thank the writer and suggest that the next person read.

If everyone is sharing a piece on the same topic, you might agree to discuss the *topic* after everyone has read. But don't let the discussion turn into disguised feedback on each other's writing.

Sharing & Responding  
 Peter Elbow & Pat Belinfante  
 NY: Random House, 1989.

## II

### Descriptive Responding

- Sayback
- Pointing, Summarizing, What's Almost Said or Implied, Center of Gravity
- Structure; Voice, Point of View, Attitude toward the Reader; Level of Abstraction or Concreteness; Language, Diction, Syntax
- Metaphorical Descriptions

*Why would anyone want feedback without criticism or advice?*

- We benefit from feedback on early drafts. When we put off feedback till after we've slaved over something, it's hard to revise because we've invested too much sweat and blood. Nonjudgmental or descriptive feedback lets us get early feedback (and new ideas) because it simply ignores the fact that, of course, there are obvious problems in our early draft. It makes readers into allies rather than adversaries while they help us see our still-evolving text better and give us new insights.
- Perhaps we're trying out a kind of writing or an approach that we're weak at: we're trying to break out of the rut of what we can already do well. Or we're working on something so difficult but important that we don't want criticism yet. We need a reader to trust us, to trust that we can see faults ourselves and work through them. We just need some *perspective* on our piece. And frankly we also need some encouragement and support in seeing what's *right* or *strong* in the piece.
- We may want feedback from a reader who is accurate and perceptive but she can do nothing except criticize. It's her only gear. We need her per-

ceptions but not her knife. These questions will help us nudge her out of her judgmental rut.

4. We often need to give feedback to a weak or inexperienced writer or to a writer in a rut. Often we sense that criticism and "helpful advice" are not what he needs. Sure, his writing has serious problems, but what he needs is encouragement and confidence. We often sense, in fact, that the very thing that's *undermining* his writing is too much criticism: he's clenching too hard. He's criticizing and rewriting every phrase as he writes it—until all the energy and clarity are gone from his writing. He's thinking about critics at every moment. He'll write better when he trusts himself better. Nonjudgmental feedback will help him do that.

### IIA. DESCRIPTIVE RESPONDING: SAYBACK

Sayback (or active listening) is simple but subtle: the author reads and the listener "says back" what she hears: what she hears the writer is "getting at." But she says it back in a slightly open, questioning fashion in order to *invite the writer to restate* what she means. In effect the listener is saying, "Do you mean . . . ?" so that the writer can say, "No, not quite. What I mean is . . ." or "Yes, but let me put it this way. . . ." Or even—and this is pay dirt—"Yes, I was saying that, but *now* I want to say. . . ." Sayback helped her move past her original thinking.

In short, sayback is an invitation to the writer to find *new* words and thoughts—to *move* in her thinking. Sayback helps the writing (and the writer) to continue to cook, bubble, percolate. Sayback helps the writer think about what she *hasn't yet said* or even thought of.

Thus, though sayback is useful any time, it is particularly useful at an early stage in your writing: before you have struggled, agonized, or tried to get it just right—when you have just written in an exploratory way and things haven't jelled yet, when you haven't finally decided what it all adds up to.\*

#### *Guidelines for Sayback Responding*

*To the writer:*

- Read your piece twice. Allow a bit of silence after both readings: don't rush even though you might feel nervous. Give your listener some time to collect her impressions.

\*We are grateful to have learned about the use of sayback responding from Sondra Perl and Elaine Avidon of the New York City Writing Project.

## SHARING AND RESPONDING

- Listen openly to the listener's sayback. Accept whatever invitations or questions she extends and see if what she says leads you to *different* words—or even different thoughts—and say them. If this happens, you might want to take a few notes.
- Don't feel stuck with what you've already written; don't defend it. Keep your mind open and receptive: think of this as help in *shifting, adjusting, refining your thinking*.

### To the listener:

- Don't worry about whether you like or don't like something: that's irrelevant here. Listen and get engaged with what you hear.
- After listening, try to sum up in a sentence or two what you feel the writer is really *getting at*. Say it in a mildly questioning tone so the writer can respond—perhaps by simply agreeing and saying, “Yes,” but perhaps by putting her thoughts in somewhat different words. Think of yourself as inviting the writer to *restate* and thereby get *closer* to what she is really wanting to say.
- If the writer adjusts or changes what she wants to say, you may be tempted to add, “Oh, then you ought to make the following changes in your piece.” Don't. Don't give *any* suggestions or advice about the writing itself. Leave all that to the writer. (We'll soon get to methods for giving that sort of feedback.)

You can do this in pairs or with groups of two to four listeners. After each listener gives sayback, the writer responds.

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### Sample of Sayback (IIA) for “An Orange Basketball Game”

We will illustrate each kind of response with sample feedback on two pieces of student writing (“An Orange Basketball Game” and “Cleaning Up the Environment,” reprinted on pages 6–8).

#### One Reader

You are telling me how excited you get when you go to the game? You are trying to take me there? You are saying that everyone else gets excited about who wins, but for you the excitement is being there—winning doesn't matter? Is that it?

## II. DESCRIPTIVE RESPONDING

### Another Reader

You want me to experience what it's like sharing support for a team? You want to focus in on the feelings of the fans and the physical environment rather than on the game itself?

### How a Writer Might Think about This Feedback

It's not exactly excited I get. Somehow just caught up; absorbed. As far as bringing readers there, I don't really think about readers—I'm writing this for me—this draft anyway. And I want to get across the connection between the team and the fans too—what it's like when everyone—such a huge crowd—has certain emotions based on what ten players do. Maybe I better start thinking about readers now. I'm mixed up about the score business. Winning does matter, yet it doesn't matter too. I have to figure out what really want to say.

### Sample of Sayback (IIA) for “Cleaning Up the Environment”

#### One Reader

You are really angry—seething—about how people leave garbage around—especially your roommates? But you are trying to be controlled and rational to take a larger view and give a sensible argument for how to deal with the problem?

### Another Reader

Trashing the environment is a terrible problem but there is, in fact, a solution?

## II.B. DESCRIPTIVE RESPONDING:

Pointing  
Summarizing  
What's Almost Said or Implied  
Center of Gravity

This is a group of ways to give descriptive, noncritical feedback:

- *Pointing*. Which words, phrases, or features of the writing do you find most striking or memorable (or which do you like best)?
- *Summary*. What do you hear the piece saying? What's the main meaning or message?



- *What's Almost Said or Implied.* What do you think the writer is going to say but doesn't? What ideas seem to hover around the edges? What do you end up wanting to hear more about?
- *Center of Gravity.* What do you sense as the generative center or the source of energy? (The center of gravity might *not* be the main point. Sometimes an image, phrase, detail, or digression seems a point of special life or weight in the piece. The center of gravity might be something minor that is "trying" to be major.)

It helps if listeners think of themselves as allies or co-writers with the writer. These questions can be used at any stage in a piece of writing. They're good at an early exploratory stage because the answers don't give you any criticism. Instead of readers standing off to one side and judging, these questions get them to jump in and help you with your thinking and writing. Readers give you ideas.

But they are good questions for later stages of writing too. Even after you have agonized over a piece of writing, you always need to know what *got through* to readers before you get any other feedback. You can't trust criticism or any other feedback unless you first know what the readers *think* you are saying. Sometimes too, you agonize over a piece yet still feel fragile about it and decide to hold off any criticism for a while. Criticism is not necessarily what improves your writing.

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### Sample Descriptive Responses (IIB) for "An Orange Basketball Game"

#### One Reader

##### • Pointing

- I like the energy of the writing. The sound of a voice right from the first sentence. "Of course, we're here an hour early."
- "On which ten college men . . . round metal hood . . . &c." It's like a man from Mars describing basketball. It makes me see the familiar as strange.
- "The high is much higher than the low is low." "Tip-off"
- The long paragraph in the middle that picks out all the sounds within the loud roar. And those "cement benches."

##### • Summary

- Sentence: Let me give you the excitement of going to a Syracuse University home basketball game at the Carrier Dome.
- Word/image: The game, tumultuous sea of orange.

- *Almost Said.* It doesn't matter who wins, really. It's a ridiculous game but I love it. I need excitement in my life—to get out of myself. (perhaps this): I am so upset that the team doesn't do better that I even bear to think about winning or losing. I've got to make fit people who worry about who wins. This is why I can't bear to tell about the second half of the game.

- *Center of Gravity.* The roar of sounds that contains all the other visual sounds inside it; or the odor of hot dogs, mustard, sweat, and stale air-conditioned ventilation—and rising temperature.

#### Another Reader

- *Pointing.* All the orangeness and the words about the bandanas free. The stuff about fans thinking the team hears each of them. table cushions for older fans. 32,000 eyes.

##### • Summary

- Sentence: It's wonderful to be a part of a group of fans.
- Word/image: clamor, orangeness.
- *Almost Said.* Fans may seem disappointed at a loss, but the true reason for going to a game is to be part of a cheering crowd—share our feelings with others. One can lose oneself, get outside of oneself—is all right (I think) even if the whole affair is a bit trivial.
- *Center of Gravity.* Noise, made up of various components. Physical colors, smells, food.

### How A Writer Might Think about This Feedback

I like the "sea of orange" summary. I'm still not pleased about "giving the excitement." Is that what my piece really sounds like or just one retranslation? It sounds too corny. Is my piece corny?

Interesting thought that I'm really upset about the team losing. I'd very sad about the team's record. All those trips to the stadium to see lose. But I don't feel I'm really hiding anything. But that reader does me wonder why I avoided talking about the second half of the game. How it feels right to avoid it—or I *wanted* to write about the first half stop before the game is done. I wonder why? I guess this is what I write think about more in revising.

Am I trying to get outside myself, is this some personal escape tactic or a society's escape? Is it too idea-less or do I want it that way? Some else to think about for revision. I don't really want to get philosophical at least I don't think I do.

## SHARING AND RESPONDING

I didn't think of those "centers of gravity" as central, but they were the parts I ended up liking most.

### Sample Descriptive Responses (IIB) for "Cleaning Up the Environment"

#### One Reader

• *Pointing.* (After one reading): The section about your roommate and dishes in the bathroom. It's not worth cleaning up his mess because it won't make any difference. "A certain radius." "Make them eat it." "Legislatures." "My opponents argue." "Animals." (After second reading): Problems in the home. "In my suite, however, there is a problem." "I am asking for a little help." I like the grappling with a hard issue—the caring.

#### Summary

— Sentence: I need help doing something about all the garbage and litter in the world.

— Word/image: Garbage.

• *Almost Said.* I hear two opposite unstated messages almost said: (1) "It's hopeless." (2) "We can do something about it." Not sure which I hear louder. Also, "I'm scared." I want to hear more about things that could be done—though I'm not sure whether that is central to where the essay is going.

• *Center of Gravity.* Dishes in the bathroom; garbage near the campsite.

## IIC. DESCRIPTIVE RESPONDING:

### Structure

Voice, Point of View, Attitude toward the Reader

Level of Abstraction or Concreteness

Language, Diction, Syntax

In literature classes we tend to *describe* what is going on in a story, poem, or novel, rather than to judge it or find mistakes. Inherent in such an approach is *respect for the text*: the result is learning—allowing the text to speak on its own. You can benefit from asking for that kind of respect for your writing and from showing that kind of respect to the writing of others—even if this writing is not yet famous and studied in literature classes.

But it's not easy to *describe* what is going on in a piece of writing or

## I. DESCRIPTIVE RESPONDING

how the piece works. It helps to use categories to describe important dimensions of a piece of writing.

- *Structure.* How is the piece organized? Note that there's no such thing as "no organization." You can always describe what serves as the beginning, the middle parts, and the end.
- *Voice, Point of View, Attitude toward the Reader.* How would you describe the voice you hear (e.g., objective, tentative, whispering)? What is his point of view or position or stance on the subject: does he speak from an objective position or as an involved participant? (And does he speak in first, second, or third person?) How does he seem to treat the reader (condescending, pleading)?
- *Level of Abstraction or Concreteness.* How much generalization and how much detail or example?
- *Language, Diction, Syntax.* What kind of words are used (technical: down to earth, full of metaphors and images)? What kind of sentence and phrasing (simple, complex, lots of pauses and inversions)?

Because this kind of feedback requires *acts of analysis*, readers cannot give it after just hearing your piece, even twice. They need your text in their hands so they can go back over it. Readers can get by without a text if they listen and work together to produce collective answers. (By the way, using this kind of feedback gives good practice for literature classes.)

Make sure readers describe the text in as "descriptive" or nonevaluative terms as possible—not praising or criticizing. Thus if they start to say "The paper is full of babyish sentences," point out the value judgment there and ask them to get rid of it, perhaps saying instead, "The paper is full of short sentences with simple syntax." Try to get them also to describe *where* these sentences occur and where the longer ones are.

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### Sample Descriptive Responses (IIC) for "An Orange Basketball Game"

#### One Reader

- *Structure.* The piece is a story or narrative; it moves straight through time. But it doesn't "move"; rather it *stops* at different moments (on hour before; opening moment; last minutes of first half; half time). But the emphasis is on description in space and mood, not time.
- *Voice, Point of View, Attitude toward Reader.* Excited voice, yet a sense of her being alone in the middle of tumult. It's told in the first person a person with her brother (though I forgot about the brother except a

## PROCESS BOX

Spent a long time writing a good draft of a memo to teachers in the writing program. I was making suggestions for an evaluation process I wanted them to use. (I wanted them to write reflectively about their teaching and visit each other's classes.) I worked out a plan very carefully and at the end I really wanted them all to do this—realizing of course that some would not want to. The more I thought about it, the more I felt I was right. I ended up putting it very strongly: they *have* to do it.

I read my draft out loud in a staff meeting to Pat, Bruce, Jeff, Aaron, and Cindy. Wanted feedback. People were slow to bring up that final bit (that they *have* to do it), but finally Cindy brought it up bluntly as a problem. Some disagreed and said, in effect, "Yes, we've got to insist." But Bruce and Jeff thought the way I wrote it went too far—it would get readers' backs up unnecessarily. ("I don't want to be inflammatory," I said, and Aaron replied, "But you seem to want to make a flame.")

I wanted to defend what I wrote, but I held back; but the impulse to defend kept recurring. Finally I saw that I *could* make my point more mildly—and it would get my point across *more* effectively. I could see it was better the milder way. Finally I ended up feeling, "That's what I *wanted* to say."

I tell the story—it came to me this morning as I woke up early—as a paradigm of how feedback can and should work: of writing as a potentially collaborative social process. That is, it now strikes me that I *needed* to write those things; I needed to punch it to them. But by having the chance to read it out loud to this surrogate audience rather than the real one—an audience with whom I felt safe—peers—I could as it were "get it said." And then listen; and finally hear.

By the end I felt comfortable and grateful at the outcome—even though of course some little part of me still experienced it as having to "back down" and "accept criticism." Yet by the end, it didn't feel like backing down and "doing it their way." By the end it was what I wanted to say.

In short, the process of reading a draft to a safe audience and getting feedback wasn't just a way to "fix" my draft. The main thing was that it *allowed my mind to change*. My intention ended up being different from what it had been.

PETER ELBOW, 3/84

the beginning and the end). The narrator identifies with the others ("they're just like me"), but she is kind of apart and in herself and standing back and describing them from the outside too. Is she talking to herself, not us? I certainly don't get a sense of her talking "up" to us or "down" to us. I guess we are overhearing her talking to herself.

- *Level of Abstraction or Concreteness.* It works more by way of concrete details: "hard floor," "ten college men," "one foot in diameter orange ball," "stocky pivot guard," "cold concrete benches." A lot of adjectives. Not much metaphor: "balloon-like roof," "orange sea," although this latter one is powerful. I don't feel much generalization or abstraction.
- *Language, Diction, Syntax.* Plain everyday conversational language; a sense of these words as *spoken*—yet not particularly informal, slangy, or even "conversational." Direct and *clear*. Some use of punchy phrasing: "These fans are tough." "High higher . . . low low." Energy injected by quite a lot of reported speech (or thought) by others: quotations.

## Another Reader

- *Structure.* A story. Events in a time sequence cause changes in mood, but the emphasis is on mood changes. Begins and ends with focus on what's happening to the "I"—and much less of that in center parts—which makes a kind of neat "frame" for the story.
- *Voice, Point of View, Attitude toward Reader.* An "I-report" of a person very tuned into details of sound and sight. Here's the tone of voice I hear: "You may wonder why I think this is so exciting, but I'm going to try to just feel it and live through it. I sort of hope you'll indulge me in this and maybe let me get you caught up too because of my enthusiasm—even though you really aren't much of a sports fan."
- *Level of Abstraction or Concreteness.* Concrete: color, smells are particularly evident. What such activity looks like. Physical sense of crowd. Still emphasis is on emotions. I can't think of any specific generalizations, and yet I feel a sense of generalization in the whole thing. Maybe if I looked back more carefully I'd find more generalization than I'm able to remember. That wouldn't surprise me.
- *Language, Diction, Syntax.* Informal, conversational—relevant to subject. Use of direct quotations adds zip. Occasional slang: "blow out," "tuck shot," but pretty much stays away from sports jargon. Staccato rhythm at times (see second paragraph in particular). Syntax feels like speech. Occasional exaggeration ("extreme anticipation"). Sense of an

additive style, details being continuously added, even piled up, just as they might occur to an observer.

### *How a Writer Might Think about This Feedback*

I'm definitely not writing for a sports enthusiast; there isn't enough about the game itself, and the language is not sportsy (actually I don't know that language well enough). And, yes, I suppose I do wonder how serious people might react—but I think it's okay. Am I being defensive I wonder? The orange really did look like a sea—all the waves and undulations when people started waving orange things. I'm afraid if I did more generalization, it would cut into the mood. I'm glad it's underplayed a bit—maybe I could even underplay it more.

I'm not sure about my slight sarcasm—whether it was really gone by the end. If so, I wonder why, or I wonder if I could show somehow how that happened. Seems as though the readers didn't get it.

I am a people person, so I'm glad that came through—though, frankly, I wasn't thinking about that at all! I'm not sure I exactly understand how one makes syntax like speech, although I'm glad it sounds that real. Still, can one do that and be at all philosophical? Because I keep thinking I'd like it to be a bit more reflective.

### *Sample Descriptive Responses (IIC) for "Cleaning Up the Environment"*

One Reader

- *Structure.* A general plea. Then two main examples: canoeing and the dorm room. Then attending to people who disagree. Finally talking about ways to do something about it.
- *Voice, Point of View, Attitude toward Reader.* First person: lots of "I." A somewhat preachy voice—at times a whiney sound. He's very caught up in the issue, very partisan. The sound of strong feelings somewhat held in check—working at being rational and somewhat controlled. At times I feel a helpless note—as though deep down he doesn't believe there's any hope at all.
- *Level of Abstraction or Concreteness.* Very much both: a large general claim—talking about garbage and damage to the environment at the largest level, yet it's full of very concrete and specific examples.
- *Language, Diction, Syntax.* Informal, slightly colloquial language ("I think it is disgusting the way people don't"). As though it's overheard speech. But there's also some rather detached "essay language" ("receptacle," "of a certain radius," "Some of my opponents have argued that").

## IID. DESCRIPTIVE RESPONDING: METAPHORICAL DESCRIPTIONS

It turns out that you can usually see a faint star better out of the corner of your eye than when you look at it directly. You notice the same thing when in the middle of the night you try to see the faint luminous dial of the bedside clock: a squint from the corner of your eye usually does better. So too it turns out that we can often capture more of what we know about something if we talk *indirectly*—through metaphor—than if we try to say directly what we see. For metaphorical feedback, get readers to describe what you have written in the following terms:

- *Weather(s).* What is the weather of the writing: sunny? drizzling? foggy? Try describing different weathers in different parts.
- *Clothing.* How has the writer "dressed" what he has to say? In fade denims? formal dinner wear? in a carefully chosen torn T-shirt?
- *Substitute Writing.* Pretend the writer wrote this instead of something very different that was on her mind. What was that something different?
- *Shape.* Picture the shape of the piece—perhaps even in a drawing.
- *Color(s).* If the writing were a color, what would it be? Different color at different spots?
- *Animal(s).* Ditto.
- *Writer-to-Reader Relationship.* Imagine a picture that symbolizes the relationship of the writer to the reader.

In order to give metaphorical feedback, you must enter into the spirit of the enterprise: be a bit playful. Don't strain or struggle for answers: just say the answers that come to mind even if you don't understand them or know why they come to mind. Some of the answers may be "off the wall"—and some of the really good answers may *seem* off the wall at first. Just give answers. Trust the connections your mind comes up with.

The writer too must listen in the same spirit: just listening and accepting and not struggling to figure out what these answers *mean*. The writer like the responder, needs to trust that there is useful material in there—even if it's mixed with things that aren't so useful. Eat like an owl: the owl swallows the mouse whole and trusts its organism to sort out what is useful and what's not. You too can listen in an attitude of trust, and *your* mind will use what makes sense and ignore what does not.

There's a side benefit to this kind of feedback. It highlights an important truth for almost all feedback: that we are not looking for "right answers," we're looking for individual perceptions—ways of seeing. And it all works best if there is a spirit of play and trust.

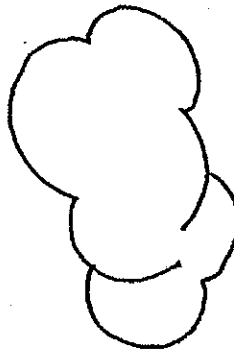
(Two kinds of feedback that you've already tried out are really metaphorical: center of gravity and voice. We included them earlier because they fit well in those earlier contexts; obviously they belong here too.)

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### Multiple Metaphorical Responding (IID) for "An Orange Skatball Game"

e Reader

- *Weather(s)*. It's clear and sunny, but through the middle the wind comes up and it gets blustery, but at the end, suddenly calm and windless.
- *Clothing*. It's a comfortable, well-worn jacket. It has a few wrinkles and stains, but it looks good and keeps you warm even in a chill.
- *Substitute Writing*. She's a little sad that she recently tried out for the swim team and didn't make it.
- *Shape*.



- *Color(s)*. I see the piece as blue, clean, and luminous.
- *Animal(s)*. I see it as a frisky goat.
- *Picture of Writer-to-Reader Relationship*. The writer is taking me by the hand and leading me carefully as though she is an older sister, explaining everything to me in a concerned way. But then she gets all involved in what she's saying and forgets all about me, forgets to hold my hand. But I stay with her and feel safe and close all the same (the opposite of feeling like a child who has lost his mommy in Macy's on a busy day).
- *Center of Gravity*. Roar of sounds.

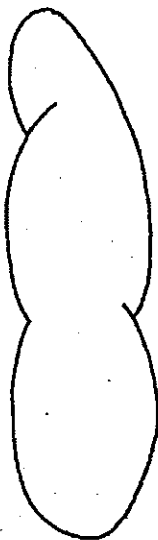
- *Voice*. Hard to answer. I hear excitement, yet a quiet voice—almost no voice. Now that I look again, I see a perky and assured voice in that opening sentence ("of course we're here an hour early") and a motherly assured voice explaining to me about the dome. But then I feel it drift-

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ing off and not talking to me anymore but rather musing to herself. I want to call it a silent but excited voice inside her head.

### A Second Reader

- *Weather(s)*. Bright, sunshiny, blocked out at times by thin clouds. Winds blow hard on occasion and on occasion die down.
- *Clothing*. It's a lively, brightly colored sweat suit but with a rip in the left knee.
- *Substitute Writing*. She's thinking about how much she's going to miss her brother when he goes away; how sad she'll be.
- *Shape*.



- *Color(s)*. Red-orange, patches of yellow, mixed up with pieces of brown.
- *Animal(s)*. Bear rummaging in underbrush looking for something, shaking itself, and pawing the ground every so often.
- *Picture of Writer-to-Reader Relationship*. Writer is talking to me out of a crowd, but there's a little space around her—no spaces elsewhere. Or else maybe she's bouncing around on waves—sometimes the boat rocks violently, sometimes it rocks gently. But the voice mostly stays the same. I'm on shore close enough to hear but not troubled by tossing waves.
- *Center of Gravity*. Physicality: colors, smells, foods.
- *Voice*. It's the voice of a young person, pulling out of adolescence, beginning to get perspective on her own perceptions. Sarcastic at times ("I think they might be a little nervous"). But unable to resist crowd excitement. Although it is not particularly excited, it records excitement. Any excitement is because of subject, not the game itself. Voice is not that of a die-hard fan.

### What a Writer Might Think about This Feedback

I'll just listen. But I guess I get a vague sense that readers think I'm ambiguous, being pulled in and resisting and then becoming part of crowd. I want the confusion to remain, but also some sense of calm.

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I don't really think I'm confident about the ending of the game—by saying I'm confident I'm being a certain kind of fan, giving myself to the experience, not drawing back anymore. I'm not sure whether I'd sit quietly through the remainder of the game or roar and yell like all the others. Maybe I've accepted my part in this place. I could write an essay about fan psychology—but I don't want to. Or about the place of spectator sports in my life—but I don't want to—although I'd like that to come through.

I'm not sure why one reader sees this as blue and the other as red-orange. Seem like opposites, but maybe they are both true. Yet both readers fantasize that I'm sad. I guess I can see that: something sad lying under all this excitement and fun, though I don't really know what it's about. A frisky goat but one who settled down? A bear looking for something? Perhaps, but I think I find it, and if I was a bear, I'd go back to my den satisfied.

### *Sample Metaphorical Responding (IID) to "Cleaning Up the Environment"*

- *Weather.* Stormy and very windy, but with little patches of no wind.
- *Clothing.* Old and worn but newly laundered clothes. A new pair of socks that somehow clash.
- *Substitute Writing.* He's wondering, slightly worrying, about whether he'll get to be really good friends with his roommate.
- *Shape.* Like a snake that has swallowed an elephant.
- *Color(s).* Patchy gray and blue.
- *Animal(s).* A mule that is angry but dogged.
- *Picture of Relationship to Reader.* He has come across some trash and has just run over to a friend's room in total exasperation to *sound off* in fury. But there is someone else there with the friend—someone the writer doesn't know. So he tries to temper his impulse to shout and pound the table; he tempers it with reasonable suggestions and *thinking* about the problem. But it is a struggle. The listeners are sitting with their mouths hanging open.
- *Center of Gravity.* Dishes in the bathroom, garbage in the campground.
- *Voice.* The voice breaks back and forth between being loudly furious and then swallowing and holding on to the table and talking quietly—trying reasonably to see what can be done.

## III

# Analytic Responding

- Skeleton Feedback
- Believing and Doubting
- Descriptive Outline

## IIIA. ANALYTIC RESPONDING: SKELETON FEEDBACK

A good way to analyze the reasoning in a persuasive or argumentative essay (or in any essay that is trying to assert something or make a point) is to get readers to answer the following questions:

### *1. Reasons and Support*

- What is the main point/claim/assertion of the whole paper?
- What are the main reasons or subsidiary points? (It's okay to list them as they come—in any order.)
- Taking each reason in turn, answer these questions:
  - What support, backing, or argument is given for it?
  - What support *could* be given?
  - What counter arguments or attacks could be made against this reason?

## 2. Assumptions

- What assumptions does the paper seem to make? What does the paper seem to take for granted?

## 3. Readers or Audience

- Who is the implied audience? Who does the writer seem to be talking to?
- Looking at the reasons, arguments, and assumptions, tell what kind of readers would tend to accept which ones (and what kind of readers would reject them).
- How does the writer *treat* the audience? as enemies? friends? equals? children? What's the stance toward audience?

### About Using Skeleton Feedback

It probably makes most sense for readers to answer these questions in writing and at leisure—with the text in hand. However, you *could* get this kind of feedback orally if you have a group and the members cooperate in working out shared answers for each question.

The power in skeleton feedback comes from the *distance* and *detachment* it gives you from your piece of writing. Thus, it is particularly useful when you feel all tangled or caught up in your piece from having worked long and closely on it. (By the way, all three procedures for analytic responding have a kind of power that makes them particularly useful ways for you to *give yourself feedback* on an essay of your own. The questions provide you with a perspective that you otherwise lack on your own writing.)

Skeleton feedback is useful not only on later drafts when you are trying to test out the strength of your revised reasoning, but also on early drafts when you want help in figuring out what you really want to say—and how to organize it or what to emphasize. Skeleton feedback is a kind of cooperative mode where readers add to and sharpen your thinking for you.

A word about finding or uncovering assumptions. We make assumptions all the time; we can't talk without making assumptions. We *notice* assumptions all the time too, but sometimes it's hard to notice our noticing—or hard to find words for what we notice. Some assumptions are more obvious than others. By way of illustration, here are some assumptions that are implicit in our writing of this book:

- that writing is a struggle for most people.
- that writers of a textbook tend to be seen as, in one way, more than usually trustworthy (as authorities who are sticking to what is known and not trying to put anything over on readers). But in another

way textbook writers are very *little* trusted because they don't seem human.

- that most of our readers want to work on writing—deep down—but that some of them will resent being made to do so.
- that we will be more persuasive if we are open about our prejudices.

Obviously some of these assumptions are questionable.

Arguments, in particular, always involve assumptions. Here, for example, are some common assumptions that turn up unstated in many arguments—assumptions that actually need to be questioned: that experts are usually righter than amateurs; that the majority should always rule; that what is modern is better than what is old. Here are two specific suggestions for uncovering assumptions:

- Look above at your answer to the question, "What support *could* be given?" for each reason or claim. Your answer might well constitute an assumption: an idea or argument or piece of evidence that the argument assumed was true.
- Look also at your answer to the question, "What attacks or counter arguments could be made?" on each reason or claim. Here too your answer might illustrate an assumption (e.g., "Your argument for recycling garbage assumes that people will take the trouble to separate their paper and their bottles from the rest of their trash; but that is unlikely").

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### Sample Skeleton Feedback (IIIA) on "Cleaning Up the Environment"\*

#### First Reader

**Main claim.** The problem of fouling the environment is serious and we have to do something about it.

#### Reasons and support

- People don't care. (Support: evidence of people throwing things down, trash all around on the ground, the garbage at the riverside campground.)
- If people would only care and take a little time, things would be much better. (Support: Not much; it's mostly just an assertion.)

\*Skeleton feedback doesn't fit the first paper about the basketball game since it's not trying to argue or assert anything.

- If people who made messes realized how much others were bothered by the messes, they wouldn't do it. (Support: Not much. Writer implies that he knows roommate well enough to know it's true of him.)
- I am disgusted and furious. (Support: tone of language, vividness of examples.)
- We can clean things up with everyone chipping in time and money—and legislation. (Support: None; just asserted as common sense.)
- Animals are hurt. (Support: None; just asserted as common sense.)

#### Assumptions

- People can be mobilized.
- The world can be made better.
- Telling how awful things are (and how bad I feel) will make a difference—change people's minds and behavior.
- People can work things out if they communicate their needs and feelings.
- Recognizing the objections of others—acknowledging them—will help defuse them, even if one doesn't offer an answer to them.

#### Readers and audience

- He seems to be talking to neutral bystanders. He's not treating us like the enemy. However, he is so angry and, at times, scolding, that some of it spills over and makes me feel a bit uncomfortable. I guess he's half sounding off his frustration to us, half trying to persuade us. Not sure. Is he perhaps implying that these (we) neutral bystanders are also petty offenders (chewing-gum-wrapper throwers) who might be persuaded to mend their ways?
- I guess the scolding seems directed at the offenders even though he doesn't quite *talk* to them. The arguments that reasonable and well-meaning people should pitch in and do something are most appropriate for us neutral bystanders.

#### Second Reader

*Main claim.* People should not litter.

#### Reasons and support

- It's disgusting to look at.  
campground

- dorm room
- people don't want to use dirty places.
- It's unfair to those who try to keep things clean.
- dorm room
- will discourage others from cleaning up but encourage them to become litterbugs also.
- Will the results outweigh costs of cleaning up?
- People in clean neighborhoods don't know how bad it is.
- It's a waste because it will just get littered again.
- Fewer people will get sick and that would save money.
- When people become more used to cleanliness, they won't litter so much.
- What people can do to help:
  - raise money
  - donate money
  - Everyone can help a little.
  - Laws against littering could be harsher.
  - Neighborhoods can organize clean-up squads.
- Would benefit animal life
  - Animals can't clean up for themselves.
  - may make some species extinct or drive them away

#### Assumptions

- that other people find trash disgusting too
- that other people feel some obligation to the environment and to other people
- that people can be shamed into being cleaner
- that people in high-priced neighborhoods don't litter
- that litterbugs expect others to clean up after them
- that someone who makes a mess in a dorm room litters outside also
- that animals are important to the quality of human life

*Readers or audience.* People most likely to accept the argument: those who don't litter; those who care about the environment and plant and animal life; those who like natural beauty and who like to go camping, hiking, etc.; perhaps those opposed to pollution from chemicals, nuclear waste, and so on.



People most likely to object to the argument: those who want to decrease government spending; those who don't care much for the out-of-doors; those who litter (?); those who believe that everyone is responsible only for himself.

### IIIB. ANALYTIC RESPONDING: BELIEVING AND DOUBTING

Here is a kind of response that zeroes in on the *content* or *ideas* in your writing. It invariably gives you more ideas, more material. The obvious place to use it is with essays, but if you ask readers to play the believing and doubting game with your stories, you'll get interesting feedback too.

**Believing.** Simply ask readers to *believe* everything you have written—and then tell you what that makes them notice. Even if they disagree strongly with what you have written, their job is to *pretend* to agree. In this way they will act as your ally: they can give you *more* reasons or evidence for what you have written; they can think of different and better ways of saying or thinking about what you have written.

**Doubting.** Now ask readers to pretend that everything is false, to find as many reasons as they can why you are wrong in what you say (or why your story doesn't make sense).

**About using believing and doubting.** Believing is harder for most people than doubting. Here are things that help:

- Remember it is a game. Just pretend.
- Role play. Instead of being yourself, pretend to be someone else who *does* believe the piece—and think of the things this person would see and say.
- Imagine a different world where everything that the piece says is true: enter into that fictional world and tell what you see. Or tell the story of what a world would be like where everything that the piece says is true.

Usually it makes sense to start with the believing game. First, find all the possibilities and richness in what you have written: build it up before tearing it down. But if readers have trouble believing—if they are inveterate doubters and can't turn off that habit—they sometimes benefit from playing the doubting game first. This can get the doubting out of their system or satisfy that skeptical itch, and afterward they sometimes find themselves freer to *enter into* a way of thinking that is foreign to them.

See my journal entry of this date on this disk. About how I react to feedback from \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ on my "Believing" essay. They give me critical feedback. \_\_\_\_\_ in particular is quite fierce about how I made him into the enemy; I made him mad.

The feedback from both of them is enormously useful, but it makes me uncomfortable and mad. I'm all stirred up. It leaves me upset and unable to sleep or relax. I think the crucial factor is that it doesn't feel like it's coming from an ally. I feel I have to fight. That's the main response: wanting to fight them. Energized for fight. Aggression. Unable to relax. Unable to put it aside. Caught.

I guess you could call that useful. It certainly triggers a piece of my character that is strong. I'm a fighter. My intellectual life is, in a way, a fight. (Perhaps I should talk about this in the Believing essay. I'm in combat.) But it's so exhausting always to be in combat. Yes, it is energizing; it keeps one going. But is it really the best way to go? I wonder if it brings out the *best* thinking. Thinking with my dukes up too much?

Compare the effect of this feedback with the effect of the feedback I got from Paul on the same draft. It was so energizing and comforting. But not sleepy comforting. It made me go back to my thoughts and ideas. It got me *unstuck* from the adversarial defensive mode where I'm trying to beat these guys. It sent me back into my thoughts and simply had me explore what I had to say.

The comparison casts an interesting light on the public and private dimensions of writing. Feedback from \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ keeps me fixated on *them*—on audience. I want to beat them. Paul's feedback sends me back into myself and helps me forget about audience.

What I'm curious about is whether this present upset, stirred up reaction is *unproductive* fighting. Arid and unfruitful? I wish I could forget all about it, put aside all memory of their criticism and just write what I want to write. Just explore my own train of thought.

But I probably have to admit that the turmoil does help; it keeps the pot bubbling. Though I don't like my condition. I'm mad, and I can't sleep or relax, and I feel like it's eating me up. There's clearly a compulsive element to it, it's getting in the way of my just plain living in present-time reality and with other people and relaxing. Nevertheless, *because I have confidence that there's something good in what I'm writing* (partly thanks to Paul), I'm not going to give up. I'm going to go on and make it good. But if I were younger and less secure than what I was doing, it would discourage me more or hold me back.

PETER ELBOW 10/84

You don't necessarily need to get *both* kinds of feedback. In fact, if you are working on an early draft—or if you feel very fragile about something you have written—it can be very useful to get *only* the *believing* responses. This is a way to ask people frankly to support and help you in making your case or imagining the world you are trying to describe. Conversely if you have a late draft that you feel confident about and are trying to prepare for a tough audience, you might ask only for doubting.

Readers need to learn a spirit of play to give this kind of response, and you, as writer, must also learn to take it all in a spirit of play. Especially the doubting. People can get carried away with the skeptical, wet-blanket game. (School trains us in trying to doubt—not in trying to believe.) You will hear lots of reasons why what you wrote is *wrong*. Remember it is all a game, purposely exaggerated. Taken as a game, the doubting needn't bother you. What's more, this play dimension helps you take *all* feedback in the right spirit. For all feedback is really a process of looking at what you have written through various distorting lenses—to help you see what you can't see. After all this bending and distorting, you get to make up your own mind and make changes or not as you see fit.

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### Sample Believing and Doubting (IIB) Responses to "Cleaning Up the Environment"\*

#### One Reader

**Believing.** It's a serious and important problem. We see the same issue on all fronts: in a small indoors living quarters, on the city streets, in the open space of the country, and on a global level.

People don't realize how much others care; and how much damage trash does to the environment. When they do, they realize it's in their own interest to take more care.

The small scale and the large scale can reinforce each other. On the small scale, people living together can communicate how much they care about the quality of their space—to affect the consciousness of the uncaring person. But they also need to end up with some rules to make it work. These rules need to grow out of discussion and be agreed on by all—thus a form of "legislation." Now this is the same process needed on the larger political scale: certain people communicating their need and their caring to other people; and pushing for and enforcing results through legislation.

But the key and the starting point has to be communication of *strong feeling* about how much harm comes from trashing the environment.

\*We put the essay before the story, since essays are the more obvious arena for believing and doubting.

**Doubting.** There's no way to make people care. The society and culture have indoctrinated everyone into a throw-away mentality of not caring about other people. Scolding and venting self-righteous anger certainly won't do any good. There's no "legislating" that kind of caring—or doing it through bandwagon preaching or cheerleading.

In fact, there is no problem: we probably live in one of the cleanest environments ever: think about the London of Dickens's time with the lethal soot and fog.

#### Another Reader

**Believing.** You're certainly right—more people litter than don't litter—even people dressed nicely. They're so careful about their own appearance and don't seem to have a hair out of place, and yet they'll throw stuff on the ground. And storekeepers don't really keep their sidewalks very nice either. People are really lazy. I'd often like to walk up and ask people who they think is going to pick up their stuff—do they think that just because they pay taxes which pay the salaries of sanitation men—that they don't have to do anything? And it isn't only campgrounds; it's also public parks and beaches.

I bet students wouldn't treat their houses the way they treat their dorm rooms. It's just like they can't accept the responsibility that comes with being on their own. You people in this room are wimpy—you ought to pick up all his junk one day and just throw it on his bed—or else build a fence around his bed and just keep throwing things on the other side of it. This jerk needs a good lesson and you guys just seem to "take it." You ought to do it yourself if the others won't join you. What about bugs—or doesn't this guy leave food around? You'll take the bugs home and your mother will love it.

The animals that profit from litter are the rats, and they're dirty and spread diseases. You ought to make copies of this and just go around distributing it to people—because I bet that most of the people who litter really don't like the mess—they need to be reminded that they're causing it.

There's so much emotion in the essay, and people need to feel that emotion. And also the way you look at the larger picture and the personal picture at the same time makes me see that the two are related—if each of us did our share everywhere in dorm rooms and outside in the streets and parks, the environment would be better.

It's good that you brought up the bit about money because some people may not care about the environment who would care about having to put out tax money.

I like your mention of the possibility of laws at the end—makes me see that there are other strategies—and yet you don't get caught up in what the legislation should be.

*Doubling.* Where are you supposed to throw litter? There's never any receptacles when you need them—or else they are full. It's not really a matter of people who are "disgusting" or bad—it's a systemic problem. Some people just like to blame *people*—it makes them feel good: instead of looking for real causes. We live in a system that makes people have to want things and then throw them away; that makes companies make a profit by selling people things they don't need—and by packaging things in wrappings that are not necessary but make them look more glittery. It's the people who live in lovely well-kept homes and neighborhoods who complain—who turn up their noses at the dirtiness in poor neighborhoods—but they are really living off those poor people. It sounds to me like you are trying to run away from the complicated situation—from your guilt even—from shaking a scolding finger at others.

### *Sample Believing and Doubling Responses (IIB) to "An Orange Basketball Game"*

#### *One Reader*

*Believing.* When I try to enter in, I feel as though I'm already there. I look around more. I look up at the high ceiling and imagine the fretwork of beams; my mind goes up there and I imagine looking down on all this activity.

Then I look over at my brother's face during the game and take a special pleasure in how it is flushed with excitement—he's totally oblivious to me observing him—completely wrapped up in the excitement.

I'm excited and enjoying this game too, but I also enjoy a certain quietness inside me as part of my mind steps outside the scene and drinks in with a certain calmness.

*Doubling.* I'm jerked from moment to moment. I don't know what happens in between—especially don't know how the game ends. I don't believe there is a brother there.

Why mention him if you don't do anything with him? (But immediately my believing side jumps in: I kind of like the companionship—even the mystery.)

I don't believe that shot in the last ten seconds. Too corny. The writer made it up.

Couldn't have a basketball player named Pearl Washington. And all those people couldn't really get so excited.

I can't quite feel the quality of the half time: is it quiet or noisy? What's the feeling?

#### *Another Reader*

*Believing.* As a big fan of basketball, I can really get into what you're writing about. Part of the excitement is the fans—it's wonderful to have emotional

reactions which are almost exactly the same as those of everyone else around you. Makes you forget other things and just live for the excitement of the moment. I hate it though when I have to watch a game on a big screen. It doesn't seem as real as the whole thing—still it's better than watching on TV because you still have the other fans around you. Basketball isn't an easy game—it's so fast paced and you have to think so quickly on your feet. Yeah, all the winning games easily make up for the losing games—although sometimes when there isn't a winning game for a long while, it's hard to keep up the spirit, and the crowds get smaller too.

When you're sitting waiting for the game to start, it seems like forever—the tension builds and builds and then it gets so quiet right when the game starts—and that's the most tension of all. The roaring crowds are such fun, but I'd like to know more about what's going on in the game—great shots? fouls? fights? I guess if you really think about the smells especially when it's hot, it could be a bit disgusting, but I don't really think I notice it very often.

The end of the half is always exciting, but I also find myself looking forward to some relief from the tension of the game—some chance to talk over what happened. It's hard to do that during the game—although you can shout things.

*Doubling.* No real basketball fan would pay so little attention to the game itself—you must not really know anything about the game—one of those people who just comes to be seen—to be able to say you were there. How could a real basketball fan be satisfied with just watching the game on some big screen? The whole thing is overdone—I don't think you're as excited as you try to make me think you are. And that silly business about describing the game just doesn't work. Or is that your real opinion—that it's a stupid game? You don't care about the game at all. And believe me, the lows are really low—that is, if you're really a fan. Building up the tension is really fake. What difference does it make if there's so much orange around. I don't think any of these people are true fans.

Those reported comments sound fake also—believe me, fans use much stronger language than that. You're so wrapped up in the noise you don't know what's happening on the court.

And why don't you tell me who wins? That proves it! You're not a fan, and I don't believe you know enough about the team to know whether they can win or not.

### **IIC. ANALYTIC RESPONDING: DESCRIPTIVE OUTLINE**

Where the skeleton feedback is useful on early exploratory writing as well as on late drafts, the descriptive outline doesn't make much sense unless the writing has been carefully shaped and revised. The descriptive outline

involves an analysis of each paragraph—which isn't worth the effort unless the paragraphs have been worked over.

The descriptive outline (developed by Kenneth Bruffee) is more disciplined and analytic than skeleton feedback—but correspondingly more powerful. It involves a careful mini-analysis of the *meaning* and *function* of each paragraph. You can't really do a descriptive outline unless you have the text in hand and take time; and it makes most sense to write out the results. Because the structure of the descriptive outline gives such perspective on a text, it is a particularly useful form of feedback to give to *yourself*: it helps you see what you couldn't see before. Here are the steps.

For the whole piece:

- Write a "says" sentence: a one-sentence summary of what the whole piece is *saying*—its main point.
- Write a "does" sentence: a one-sentence summary of what the whole piece is *doing* or trying to do or accomplish with readers.

Do the same for each paragraph or section:

- Write a "says" or summary sentence.
- Write a "does" sentence that tells how that paragraph or section is *functioning* in the strategy of the whole essay, or what it is trying to do to readers.

It's not so easy to write these sentences—especially "does" sentences which explain the *function* a paragraph is performing. Here is an example of a "does" sentence:

This paragraph introduces an objection that some readers might feel, and then tries to answer that objection.

Avoid letting your "does" sentence just summarize or repeat your "says" sentence. The key is to *keep out of your "does" sentence any mention of the content of the paragraph*. You shouldn't be able to tell from a "does" sentence whether the essay is about cars or ice cream.

Here is an ineffective "does" sentence—it's really just a disguised "says" sentence:

This paragraph states the idea that women's liberation has affected men more than it has women.

To fix it, remove any mention of any of the *ideas* in the paragraph—and talk only about form or function:

This paragraph introduces the main point of the essay in a way that tries to surprise the reader or violate his expectations.

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### Sample Descriptive Outline (IIC) of "An Orange Basketball Game"

#### One Reader

- Says, whole essay. The excitement of seeing a Syracuse University home basketball game is completely captivating.
- Does, whole essay. To *give* or make the reader *feel* the experience that is being described.
- Says, first paragraph. We come an hour early and look around to see the field house divided into two parts and the fans milling around, and we think about the game that is going to be played.
- Does, first paragraph. Sets the physical scene and tries to catch the reader up into the mood.
- Says, second paragraph. Ten minutes till it starts and I look around to see fans and players in place—waiting for the game to start.
- Does, second paragraph. Heightens the excitement; starts out appealing to the reader's time sense—zeroing in on a specific moment and only ten minutes to go. But the paragraph concentrates mostly on vision: sights and eyes.
- Says, third paragraph. The game starts, the first goal, Syracuse gets it, and the noise roars.
- Does, third paragraph. Zeroes in on an even smaller unit of time, yet concentrates on sound.
- Says, fourth paragraph. Pearl Washington of Syracuse gets the last score of the half with only ten seconds to go—breaking a tie.
- Does, fourth paragraph. Moves us forward to another exciting moment and, like preceding ones, tries to give us the experience—this time with smells and also an exciting happening (tie-breaking goal).
- Says, fifth paragraph. Everyone in the field house waits through the half—wondering "will they win?"
- Does, fifth paragraph. Moves the narrative forward in time, but emphasizes a quieter mood—relief from or contrast to the mood of the preceding two paragraphs.

- Says, last paragraph. We sit waiting and I am confident we'll win.
- Does, last paragraph. Zooms inside the head of the speaker—making things internal and quiet instead of external and noisy. Works for sense of ending by this contrast—and because it's so short a kind of punch.

#### Another Reader

- Says, whole essay. Fan involvement in a basketball game is more exciting than the game.
- Does, whole essay. Makes me, as reader, feel the excitement and also feel that there's nothing wrong about being excited about something which, from some points of view, might seem silly.
- Says, first paragraph. Arrival at Carrier Dome, description of scene, brief talk of game—tiny bit tongue-in-cheek—characterizes hopes of fans.
- Does, first paragraph. Sets scene, introduces main theme, sets tone, including original awareness of writer toward major theme.
- Says, second paragraph. Almost game time, anticipation grows, focus on court itself.
- Does, second paragraph. Builds suspense, narrows focus of emotion and action.
- Says, third paragraph. Start of game and what happens just at beginning and then focuses back on fans.
- Does, third paragraph. Heightens suspense momentarily—returns to main theme.
- Says, fourth paragraph. Back to game, end of first half and what happens (Syracuse breaking tie). Combined focus on game and fans.
- Does, fourth paragraph. Builds suspense to climax, creates tension. Draws reader into physical setting.
- Says, fifth paragraph. What happens at half time, some description of age range of fans, concludes with fans' hopes for second half.
- Does, fifth paragraph. Creates a lull—slight restoration of tension at end, but not as intense.
- Says, sixth paragraph. How writer feels.
- Does, sixth paragraph. Reinforces my sense of main theme of piece. Shows that writer has accepted her attitude toward game.

#### How a Writer Might Think about This Feedback

I'm amazed to see how much "orderliness" that descriptive outline shows. Is my paper really that orderly, or does it come from this kind of summarizing?

Yes, I need to make more than one paragraph where I have the first one. But on the other hand, I don't want some neat "essay-like" scheme where each paragraph seems mechanically to have a topic. I want this to have a certain casual jumbled quality—after all, the whole point is that all these different impressions crowded in on me, and I want them to crowd in on the reader. I'm not trying to write an analysis.

I do think that's what I want—to make what happens on the court important only because it has certain effect on fans—although I still wonder if I shouldn't connect players and fans more. And I suppose I too feel somewhat as though it's a little silly to be so excited over something so insignificant. And yet the feeling of the fans—the unity of the crowd—feeling part of it: I hope the bit at the end—and not actually describing the end of the game—gives that feeling. Maybe I need to work on the beginning a bit—and maybe concentrate on age-range stuff earlier as it shows that we're not all crazy adolescents—but then maybe I'm feeling a sense of belonging to that wide range more at end than at beginning.

My brother being there was important—and I see that. Should it be more obvious? Or is it good to have subtlety of this person close to me and my simultaneous connection to sort of a faceless humanity? Both things are there.

Descriptive outline makes my final paragraph sound better than it is: but helps me see it new. I wasn't satisfied in writing it, still am not. It's because I still haven't figured out what I'm trying to do in the whole piece. I mean I like most things in it, but this feedback is helping me realize that I'm still stuck as to the "so what" or the why of it all.

#### Sample Descriptive Outline (IIRC) of "Cleaning Up the Environment"

##### One Reader

- Says, whole essay. The problem of litter and garbage is serious and needs to be addressed.
- Does, whole essay. Attempts to make readers feel how bad a problem is—to make them want to do something about it.
- Says, first paragraph. People have to start caring about the environment and doing something about trash.
- Does, first paragraph. States the main point right off, injects feeling.

- Says, second paragraph. It's bad everywhere: out in nature on a river-side campsite and at home in my dorm room.
- Does, second paragraph. Tries to give bite and vividness to the general plea by giving full and particular descriptions of two examples. Uses some story telling in the examples—to involve readers.
- Says, third paragraph. Some people say it's impossible or not worth trying to clean up environment, but I disagree.
- Does, third paragraph. Summarizes arguments by people who disagree with him.
- Says, fourth paragraph. Those who care can raise or donate money to help the problem.
- Does, fourth paragraph. Talks about a solution to the problem raised by the essay.
- Says, fifth paragraph. Trash hurts animals, and the whole problem needs to be dealt with by legislatures and individuals involved.
- Does, fifth paragraph. Brings in a new dimension of the problem. Suggests an approach for solving the whole problem—a different approach from the one suggested in the fourth paragraph.

## IV

# Reader-Based Responding: Movies of the Reader's Mind

The story of what goes on in readers is what we need most as writers: not evaluation of the quality of our writing or advice about how to fix it, but an accurate account of what our words *did* to readers. We need to learn to *feel* those readers on the other end of our line. When are they with us? When are their minds wandering? What are they thinking and feeling? What do they hear us saying?

Feedback would be simpler if it were just evaluation and advice: readers telling us which parts of our writing are weak and then telling us how to fix them. But there are a number of problems with this simple, practical approach:

- You can't *trust* people when they tell you what's weak and how to fix it. Even experts on writing usually *disagree* with each other. And when they agree about what's wrong, they usually disagree about how to fix it. (Notice how different it would be if we were doing arithmetic. Someone who knows arithmetic could point out every mistake and tell us how to fix it; and virtually all observers would agree.)
- Even if you *could* trust the judgment and advice of experts or writing teachers, it's hard to get much of their time. Even your own writing teacher has lots of students and not enough time to give really full feed-

back to everything you write. (Think about teachers reading and responding to *twenty-five or seventy-five papers at a time!*)

- And even if you had unlimited access to trustworthy experts and followed their advice and made all your writing terrific, you wouldn't *learn* as much as you should. You'd just be following their orders, not thinking for yourself.

Thus the importance of reader-based movies of the reader's mind: *get readers simply to tell you what happens inside their heads as they read your writing*. But this kind of feedback can be confusing (till you are used to it) because it gives you only the *facts* about writing—what went on in readers' minds—and the facts about writing are confusing. The same piece of writing causes different things to happen in different minds, and there's no direct advice in all this feedback about how to *fix* your writing.

So if you want *simple* feedback, you will have to settle for untrustworthy feedback. One person can tell you your problems and how to fix them, but the next person will tell you a different story. If you want *trustworthy* feedback, you have to settle for a mess. But it will be an interesting and useful mess. For you will gradually develop a sense for how readers react to your writing.

Movies of the reader's mind do not require experts. In fact sometimes you get wonderfully clear and helpful movies from children or very naive readers. But it does require honesty and trust. And it can be hard for some readers to learn to notice and describe their own reactions.

Thus many readers need help in learning to give you movies of their minds. Here are some ways to help them.

- *Serialize or Interrupt Your Text*. Read to them (or give them) your text one part at a time. At each interruption get them to tell you what's going on in their heads right at that moment. These "stop-frame movies" are particularly important near the beginning of your piece—after about a paragraph—so you can find out how your opening affects readers. In particular you need to know whether your opening has made them fight you or cooperate with you. Their reactions to the rest of your piece will depend on whether—early in their reading—they became sympathetic or resistant readers. Ask them if they are pedaling with you or dragging their heels as they read. If you give them a written copy of your piece—so they can see it better and take more time at home—persuade them to interrupt their reading at least two or three times and take notes of what's actually happening in their minds at the time of each interruption.

- *Get It in Story Form*. Get readers to tell their responses in the form of a story, e.g., "First I felt this, then I thought that," and so on. This prevents them from falling into useless global generalities like "I was interested" or "I liked it" or "It was exciting."

- *Get "I Statements"*. If a reader says, "The third paragraph was boring," he hasn't given you an "I statement," but at least you can guess what was happening: *he* was bored in the third paragraph. Other readers might well *not* be bored. But if a reader says, "You should change this word or move that paragraph," you don't know what was happening to him. Was he bored, confused, or in disagreement? Get readers to tell their reactions in sentences starting with "I."

Movies of the reader's mind are probably the most useful all-around feedback. Indeed they involve all other forms of feedback since *anything* may go on in a reader's mind. But because they may well involve *judgment* or *criticism* we have held them till now—till you've tried other kinds of feedback and, we hope, developed trust in yourself and a relationship of trust and support with your readers. If readers are going to tell the truth about what your words did, you are liable to hear something like, "I was getting madder and madder because I felt this piece was so disorganized and misinformed, yet I also felt you were being condescending." It's hard to benefit from responses like that unless you feel them coming from a friend or ally.

When you get criticism, it helps to remember that the reader who is giving movies is not trying to criticize and not trying to reach a fair, impartial judgment (as in criterion-based feedback—which comes next). He is just trying to tell accurately what was occurring in him. It's clear that these are *his* subjective reactions and they might be unfair or wrong. He is not pretending to be God making an objective judgment.

#### *Suggestions to the writer:*

- This feedback requires honesty from readers. If you aren't getting honesty, perhaps it's *your* fault: you may not have convinced your readers that you really want honesty.
- If you want to get "unpolluted data" about what your words do, don't make apologies or introductions or explanations before they respond. (If it's an early draft, however, you may want to say a few words about what you were trying to do in your piece.)
- Don't quarrel with what a reader says—even if he utterly misunderstands what you wrote. You need to *learn about* readers' misreadings and mistakes—so you can think about whether your text needs changing. You're not trying to educate *readers* about your text, you're trying to get them to educate *you* about your text.
- *Invite exaggeration or parody*. This can be scary—but a big help if your readers are having trouble telling you what's happening to them or if they seem to be beating around the bush. For example, readers may feel vaguely bothered by something in your writing but be unable to



## PROCESS BOX

*Note: Our normal method of collaborating was for one of us to start a unit—do a very rough draft—and give it to the other to work on. The second person would just take it over—make it his or hers—make extensive changes—especially because the first version was often still quite unformed. Then what that second person produced would go back to the first person for more revision. All this usually on disks rather than on paper.*

*In this way we often lost track of who started something and who "owned" a section or an idea. We pretty much drifted or fell into this method: we were in a hurry, we knew we had a lot to write, and we didn't have time or energy to "protect" everything we wrote. Most of all we trusted each other. It worked remarkably well.*

*But for this particular unit we proceeded differently. Peter had worked out a fairly full outline and I took on the job of writing a draft from that outline. Then, instead of Peter taking it over from there—as we normally did—he wrote marginal feedback and gave it back to me to revise. (Peter was working on a couple of other units.) Thus we drifted into a problematic arrangement for this unit: I was writing a unit which felt like "Peter's"—and getting feedback from him about how to revise what I'd written.*

*I'm revising according to feedback and angry. Why doesn't he write the damn thing himself if he knows so surely what he wants. It's insulting—giving it back to me to do his way. I can't do it. I feel as though I'm not into it, not into the ideas—just into superficial stuff, trying to make it what someone else wants it to be. I'd like to just give it back to him and say that: "Here you have such a strange idea about what this should be, why give it to me to do if I'm not a stylist." Does he think I'm inept, stupid? Maybe he's right. Maybe he's too good at this and he's saving these things so you don't have to see that he doesn't think*

explain what they feel—indeed scarcely even noticing that they feel anything. "It's ok," they'll say—"I pretty much liked what you wrote." If you feel brave enough to invite them to *exaggerate* their reaction, they will often find words for what's going on and say something like this: "If I exaggerated, I'd say you are beating me over the head here." You need to feel fairly secure before you ask for exaggeration because it may lead to a strong statement. But an element of play or humor can keep things from getting too sticky. For example, another helpful question is this: "What would a *parody* of my paper look like?" This ques-

"Life is unfair" is good. But I like it and I'll keep it. He wants this to be mainly a paper handed in to a professor in some other class, not an explanation for the self of something difficult. But I prefer the latter. So I kept trying to make the unit into what he wanted, while still thinking my idea was good.

But somehow (because he's a nice guy I guess) I kept on working with the suggestions. And as I wrote, I got caught up in thinking about getting students to see something two different ways: for themselves and for others. An interesting problem presented itself to me for solution. Could I make it work out that way? I began to explore, and suddenly it was *my* idea; although it wasn't suddenly—just my realization of what had happened seemed sudden. Apparently I was writing according to the feedback, and the idea became mine. I saw an interesting way to develop it, potential for the unit I hadn't seen before, ideas I had never written before. I got excited about it because it was good. Then I could write again without anger or resistance.

The feedback was gone; I really didn't look at any more of the marginal comments because they no longer mattered. I had my own way to go. I just forgot the way it had been done. When I finished up and polished it a bit, I looked back and who'd believe it! I had—on my own—come to saying almost exactly the same thing he said later on in the part of the feedback I hadn't even read. That's weird. That must be an instance of automatically abstracted ideas—perhaps drawing from the words and ideas of others and finding them in the framework of my own world view. The ideas I got caught up with seemed to begin in the framework of his, but they also produced an interesting intellectual challenge to me. And there was something very satisfying about the way that the ideas of others had become in the same way my own. I'd like to go back and read that part of the feedback and see what I'd missed. I'd like to go back and read that part of the feedback and see what I'd missed. I'd like to go back and read that part of the feedback and see what I'd missed.

tion also helps readers who can't explain what is going on in their heads as they read.

### Suggestions to readers:

- Instead of trying to be judicious, your job is to show openly what's happening in you. This kind of feedback reveals just as much about *you* as it does about the writer. (Often the writer feels as though he is the only one revealing himself.)



- Don't quarrel with other readers. The more different the reactions, the more helpful they are for the writer. Quarreling about reactions is a waste of time—and will tend to make other readers scared to be honest, for fear someone will quarrel with them.

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### *Sample Movies of the Reader's Mind (IV) for "An Orange Basketball Game"*

#### One Reader

I was sucked in immediately by the opening sentence with its spoken voice; as though I'm dropping into the middle of a conversation—but comfortable. Later on (rereading) I ended up troubled by how long the first paragraph was—how much diverse material was in it; messy. But the truth is that when I first read it I just steamed on through, happy as a clam. Nothing bothered me. Feeling the welter of impressions; sense of business.

I did pause and feel a moment's hesitation or uncertainty, however, at what I've been calling a Martian's view of basketball; but once I figured out what was going on, I actually savored the pleasure. I reread the "high high . . . low low" sentence twice; stumbled; but liked it too. A kind of squeezed-together sentence. I stopped with "tip off." For a moment I didn't know what it was and then remembered/figured it out.

I was most caught up in the paragraph with all the sounds: I wasn't aware of my reading, got completely involved. I actually started to experience that large sound broken down into partial sounds. I stumbled with the sentence about Washington getting the basket.

I think I am somehow bothered by the scoring business. Somehow I feel the writer (or the other fans?) taking it so seriously, but yet I feel at a distance from it; or I resist it. Partly I want to say, "Who cares." I don't know what makes me do that.

But somehow this combined with a general feeling of letdown in the last two paragraphs. I don't know where it's going—what it's about—I want more. I've liked reading this, but now it's slipping through my fingers. Somehow I become resistant as a reader in the next-to-last paragraph—and genuinely resistant in the last paragraph: I don't as it were "believe" that last paragraph.

#### Another Reader

The first sentence made me wonder why "Of course." Are you annoyed at always being early and having to wait too long for the game to start? Or do you deliberately come early to be a part of what's going on? Oh, Lord, this

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is going to be about rooting for a team; those things are usually silly, immature babbings—I don't like it. I feel myself pulling away a little.

How can they block off half a court—I can't see it and I'm tempted to start skimming stuff because I guess I want to see and can't.

For a minute I didn't realize you were describing basketball. Is she? I asked myself and when I saw the bit about the tangled rope I knew you were. Makes me see you as making fun of it, but that doesn't exactly fit in with the previous stuff—so I feel a bit confused. Goals seem trivial to me; just hoping to have more points after forty minutes. Then "tough" seems like parody—hardly a thing to say about something like this. I find myself saying, "Oh, come off it!" But the end of the paragraph wins me over a bit because the wording is so precise—one of those phrases where all the words work.

"Finally"—was it a long time? Didn't really seem like it to me—just because you say it is doesn't make me believe it. A little phony. Color is wonderful, and here I feel some excitement and get pulled in—it's straight, not corny—real.

Exclamation point doesn't work for me—maybe the way it's phrased ("It's also the first point of the game!") Again, I get caught up (against my will?) by the remarks isolated out of the general noise; I'm beginning to believe this is not a typical great-fun-at-the-game story. Cognitively interesting: the bit about fans thinking players actually hear them. Does a team hear what we say? Do we think they do? Single voices blending back into generalized noise—get the sensation of separate colors blending into one. It's nice that it isn't overstated.

Attempt at suspense again to describe end of first half—I don't feel it just know it exists for others. Feel sort of embarrassed for you that you're trying and not succeeding, overplaying a bit. But with rising temperatures get a physical sensation of heat, and I do begin to believe in excitement and suspense. Exclamation point works better for me here. Hysteria after that: feel a break of the tension, so I guess I must have been feeling some tension.

I feel some calmness during half time and yet maintenance of some tension. "Cold cement" sort of surprised me; I think I was still feeling warm—so it hit a bit like a shock since I know what it feels like to sit unexpectedly on cold cement.

Nice coming back to just the speaker; I'd almost forgot about you. You strike me as an island of calm, and that makes it feel like an ending.

### *How a Writer Might Think about This Feedback*

I like my first sentence; I don't think I care which way a reader might take it. It could be either, although I guess we always got there early because we did want to be a part of the pregame excitement. Maybe the first paragraph is a bit long, but the confusion is part of what I want to get across.

And yes, my feelings are ambivalent, but basically I think it's okay to be a fan and cheer and all that. Maybe I worked too hard at the suspense in places—and since that isn't my main point, maybe I could do it some other way. But there does have to be some suspense, some caring about the scoring and what's going on. After all, that's why we're all there.

There are a few spots where I could change the wording, I guess, but what I really need to figure out is what I want to do with this piece—exactly what I want it to be. I really don't know what to do with the last sentence—I sort of liked it. Maybe I just need to do something about the last two paragraphs; that seems to be where the main problems are.

### *Sample Movies of the Reader's Mind (IV) for "Cleaning Up the Environment"*

#### One Reader

I started off browsing through the paper, not really reading it, yet was predisposed to be a sympathetic reader. For I agree with the writer's feelings about the problem of trash and the environment. And I like the idea of someone writing something that's trying to do something about a real problem: writing as trying to affect the world.

But when I started actually reading, I was put off by the first sentence—"I think it's disgusting." Feels too much like just grouching, not really doing anything. Doesn't feel like the decisiveness I was wanting. But still I want to go with him.

I agree at the beginning of the second paragraph. But I start to feel a scolding tone which puts me off again somewhat.

I'm pulled into the canoe story (though I want a new paragraph there). I'm beginning to notice the interjections of different language—more formal (and seemingly awkward), "essayish" language: "of a certain radius," "There is definitely a need," "These above statements are of how things are..." But I find I read the piece as a draft, and instead of getting bothered I say, "This is a problem and he's got to work it out, but this is what comes of writing fast and trying to get it all down." That is, I don't like that stiff language, but somehow I'm not bothered or annoyed. In fact then I get interested in a thought that occurs to me: that this essay is coming from two different impulses—the impulse to write from the gut or from feelings and the impulse to be controlled and judicious. I'm always trying to reconcile those two in my writing too.

I love the story of the dorm room: the reality of it, the inevitability of it. A microcosm of the world. And I like how he doesn't seem so scolding. I think in a way he is idealistic—and yet in the last analysis what he says seems true: that if the roommate really knew and felt how much it bothered the others he wouldn't do it so much.

"Some of my opponents..." I feel put off by this paragraph. It feels as

though some teacher told him, "Stick in a paragraph about opposing arguments," and he is just going through the motions. I'm annoyed because he doesn't really seem to take it seriously—take opponents or other views seriously. It feels mechanical to me. (And in fact I have trouble following his language here.) Really those are serious objections, yet he doesn't really give any answer to them.

I continue bothered with the last two paragraphs. The one suggesting options seems so thin. Was he just tired and bored? Can the problem be solved with just money? And I can't understand the difference between sentences two and three. I think things *can* be done, but the writer won't give me enough help on it.

The last paragraph confirms my feeling that he was getting tired and bored. Sticking in the bit about animals—out of the blue, undeveloped. I happen to think that legislation can do a lot for this problem—but somehow the way he says it ("discussed between legislatures") makes it sound like an impossible idea. *Whereas* to have the suite mates discuss their problem—that seems possible and promising. Maybe the essential paper is really a local and personal one—only about him and his dorm situation. Is that the strength of it?

I guess in the end I'm feeling somewhat battered from dissatisfactions, but I'm essentially rooting for the piece and wanting him to make it strong: hoping he can save it from mere scolding or "venting"—and from weak writing—and give it the strength—of feeling *and* thinking—that I want it to have. I don't want to have it just turn into a personal story about his dorm situation. I am rooting for his impulse to deal with the issue on a wider front—a wider, stronger, more thought-through case. I'm hungry for action in the world.

#### Another Reader

Beginning seems a bit immature, but actually I agree with him, and I might say it the same way. Yeah, but people don't make the effort, so why make it sound as though it's nothing; that's exactly what people won't do. As an ex-cigarette smoker, I felt a bit guilty about that. Story about campground seems anticlimactic until I read the part about suggested solutions; the brother is really right on! Almost seems like essay starts over with the bit about the dorm room. I'm sensing anger—real anger. Seems like emotional blurring.

I see this is following usual suggestion to take notice of opponent's argument, but just seems like more anger. Do I live in a high-priced neighborhood—probably. Is it clean? Well, our block is, but the shopping area is disgusting. (See, I used the same word.) I see some attempt to continually connect big issue and small issue—I guess I sort of like that—bringing it down to such a personal level.

Yes, concerned citizens should do something.

The business about the animals seems incomplete and not very effective with me. And last sentence seems weak; I feel myself wanting more.

But the anger is appropriate; makes me angry too—wish more people were angry, but I'm not sure I'm very convinced by all this—wish the anger were channelled more—too much emotion and not enough reason. The part about the campground remains with me most strongly, although the busi-  
ness about the dorm room is obviously deeply felt.

## V

### Criterion-Based or Judgment-Based Responding

You will have noticed how we keep arguing that judgment is not the most useful and important feedback you can get—especially because you can't *trust* judgments about something as complicated as writing. But if we have succeeded in persuading you to distrust judgments and to learn and use the *other* kinds of feedback, then we are happy now to turn around and try to show you how to make judgments about writing a *bit* more trustworthy.

If you get *just one overall judgment* about a piece of writing (such as "B+" or "very weak" or "75"), you are getting the least trustworthy kind of verdict—and you don't learn much from it. That is, different readers come up with different overall judgments or grades because they reflect different criteria: some readers count more for originality of the ideas, others for organization, others for clarity, still others for grammar and spelling.

But if you can get readers to make individual judgments about *specific criteria* (such as clarity of language, clarity of organization, mechanics), then those judgments tend to be more trustworthy. Readers are more likely to agree about clarity of language than about the grade for the paper as a whole. In addition, of course, these more specific judgments teach you more.

The criteria that are traditionally applied to *imaginative* or *creative* writing are these:

- Description, vividness of details. (Do we experience what's there?)
- Character. (Do we find characters real or interesting?)

- Plot. (Is it a believable, interesting, or meaningful story?)
- Language. (Not just "Is it clear?" but "Is it alive and resonant with meaning?"—perhaps through imagery and metaphor.)
- Meaning. "So what?" (Is there a meaning or impact that makes it seem important or worthwhile?)

The criteria that are traditionally applied to *expository* writing, essays, or nonfiction are these:

- Focus on task. (If the piece is written in response to a question, task, or assignment, does it squarely *address* that question or task?)
- Content. Sometimes this single criterion is divided:
  - Ideas. Are there good ideas, insights, or a good understanding of the subject?
  - Details, support. Are the ideas supported enough with examples, evidence, details?
  - Reasoning. Is the reasoning valid or persuasive?
- Clarity. Are words, phrases, and sentences clear?
- Organization. Does it hang together well? Can readers follow easily?
- Sense of the writer. Is there a sense of engagement or commitment to the topic and an appropriate voice and stance toward the reader?
- Mechanics. Spelling, grammar, punctuation; proofreading.

But of course you needn't be bound by these. Perhaps the piece of writing itself suggests certain of its own criteria (for example, the main job might be to *convey information*). Or perhaps there are certain criteria *you* feel hazy about and want to work on (for example, *organization* or whether the *voice* sounds natural or fake). Or you can let readers specify the criteria that they find most important (for example, certain readers always like to comment on *paragraphing*).

You can use criteria in a somewhat quantitative way if you wish, in order to give a quick picture of the strengths and weaknesses of a piece of writing. That is, you could just ask readers to give a one-word judgment about each criterion (or perhaps just rate them strong, satisfactory, or weak—"+" "ok" "—"). They can do this very quickly, and thereby give you a snapshot of their opinion of strengths and weaknesses. This leaves them lots of time for what we would call more interesting and more *writerly* kinds of feedback.

Watch out though. There is something very seductive about quantitative *ratings* of writing. You can get preoccupied with judgment—become a judgment junkie—or a "grade hound." And the judges can get all caught

up too and waste lots of time having arguments about whether the organization is, say, "weak" or "okay." We want you to spend some time learning to make these judgments—learning to give criterion-based feedback—so you know how to do it more responsibly than it is usually done. But once you have practiced all the kinds of feedback we suggest, don't forget to ask yourself "*What kind of feedback will really help me most in my writing?*" Don't assume that just because you are in the habit of getting judgments or grades (because of the way schools work) that this is the kind of feedback that will help your writing most. We find that movies of the reader's mind are usually more writerly and helpful.

*Giving feedback to yourself.* If you specify the criteria you want to know about, you gain a kind of leverage or perspective that helps you give feedback to yourself. Stating the criterion can focus your attention or help you see things you don't usually see in just reading over what you write. When you've written a draft and are about to read it over, you can pause and consciously ask yourself "What criteria are most important for this piece of writing?" Or "What features of writing do I especially need to be careful about?" This will help you see more.

*To readers:*

You can make your criterion-based responses more valuable in two ways.

- Be specific: point to particular passages and words which lead you to the judgments you make.
- Be honest and try to give the writer the movies of your mind that lie *behind* these judgments. That is, what reactions *in you* led you to these judgments about, say, the organization? For example, if you felt the organization was poor, were you actually feeling lost as you read, or was the meaning perfectly clear to you but you noticed some backtracking? And in noticing it, were you annoyed or just sympathetically aware?

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### Sample Criterion-Based Feedback (V) on "An Orange Basketball Game"

One Reader

- *Description, Vividness of Details.* Strong. Especially the sounds and smells.
- *Character.* Okay or strong. There is a strong presence and voice of the writer or narrator. And I get intrigued with her.

- *Language, Clarity.* Fairly strong. I find it lively and plain—and at times vivid. Some good images.
- *Meaning: So What? Weak.* I'm left hungry at the end knowing what to make of it all.
- *Insights, Understanding.* Okay. In a way I feel it as an analysis of a sports situation and get good insights. But I want more too.
- *Organization.* Okay, I guess. I was never troubled as I read, but at the end, not understanding the main focus or "so what?" I ended up worrying about the long first paragraph, and wondering what the "center" of the piece really is or should be.
- *Sense of the Writer.* Strong in a good way—because of the voice and character of narrator.

#### Another Reader

- *Focus on Task.* Good. Actual game stays subordinate to crowd excitement.
- *Description.* Strong, especially building up of sounds during play of first half.
- *Character.* Fans are believable, but I'm not sure about writer and her interest in game. I do feel she's a people person.
- *Plot.* Chronological, but places where it stops a bit are good. Not finishing game is okay.
- *Language.* Sometimes it's a bit too formal: "But they hope for the elation of winning"; "Wait with extreme anticipation." But one place it really works: "What a clamor!" I'm not sure about the tongue-in-cheek description of game. I have trouble judging it because it doesn't recur. Everything is very clear though. And I like "the high is much higher than the low is low." And I like all the orangeriness.
- *Meaning.* The "So what?" comes through to me at the end stronger because the writer *doesn't* say how the game turns out. The meaning for me is: It's fun just to experience this; there doesn't have to be anything more than a feeling of oneness with people; it's okay to do that once in a while.
- *Idea or Content*

- Insight, understanding: I particularly like the comment that fans think players can hear each one of them. I think the rendering of crowd psychology is valid.
- Thinking, reasoning: not much emphasis on this, but that's okay.

#### PROCESS BOX

It's a Saturday morning in August. My wife is sleeping late. My kids are downstairs watching TV and playing computer games, and I'm upstairs in my study revising our textbook. Or rather I'm reading over the extensive reactions and comments on the draft of our textbook by four professional readers that Random House provided—to give us feedback for our revising.

I've been working on revising for three or four weeks, and I'm curious why it's taken me this long to really sit down and read through all the readers' comments all at once. Why have I been putting it off? A good question for process writing.

I start to make a few notes by hand—sitting in the easy chair where I'm reading—and then realize I should go over the first reader's comments and do a read piece of process writing. And as I start, I also realize that I don't want to read the rest of the draft. I want to read the first reader's comments and do a read piece of process writing. And as I start, I also realize that I don't want to read the rest of the draft. I want to read the first reader's comments and do a read piece of process writing.

#### Feedback for the Writing

The first reader's comments are a mix of praise and criticism. I'm glad to hear that the book is "easy to read" and "clear." But I'm also glad to hear that the book is "too formal" and "too academic." I'm glad to hear that the book is "well organized" and "easy to follow." But I'm also glad to hear that the book is "too long" and "too repetitive." I'm glad to hear that the book is "well written" and "easy to read." But I'm also glad to hear that the book is "too formal" and "too academic."

not that Random House could have backed out of publishing our book; they'd already agreed to publish it, and they are obliged to do it so long as we produce something close to what we'd promised. But if the reviews were very negative, we feared the editor could have put strong pressure on us to make changes we didn't want to make—even to make a different kind of textbook from what we had in mind.

We happened to know who one reader was, because he was a friend and very sharp reader whom we had suggested. But otherwise these were anonymous. It's common for editors to remove the names of reviewers when passing on comments to authors—so reviewers feel freer about being honest. I always feel odd, somewhat bothered, reading anonymous comments. Nevertheless we felt pleased and lucky to have such extensive and careful feedback. You could say that the publisher went to the trouble to *hire* a little peer feedback group for Pat and me (for these readers are paid a fee).

One reader was definitely negative. He (he *seemed* male) thinks that our whole approach is in a bit misguided or extreme, and he is clearly troubled by some of our most of what we do. But I don't think threatened about his resistance because he made it clear that his opinion was due to the teaching of writing we different from ours. Then we let him write it back. The response was that of someone to reveal his view in our draft that *scientifically* "convinced" him to that way of thinking, but that the next day was *average* work. The other three readers were really very helpful, and constructive, and we have not always pointed out errors in their writing and feedback. But I think that this situation, already very encouraging after my "bold" request, could consist of all their input, the whole editorial board, and I think that their suggestion that we let them do the next draft would be a very good idea.

They all agreed that the school would need to have a modest long-term goal, such as "we want to be a place to which few would want to emigrate." They agreed to do this by concentrating on the young people and not on the old. They also agreed to be "open" to the outside world, and to be "open" to the outside world. They also agreed to be "open" to the outside world, and to be "open" to the outside world.

[illegible]

*This August Morning*

But somehow it's not till this morning—and I'm almost half way through my revising work—that I sit down and read all four readers' comments again—all together with an eye to using them explicitly for revising. (Indeed, perhaps I am stopping to do this process writing in order to find yet another way to put off my "duty" of listening to feedback on our writing.)

I wonder what's been holding me back? Is it that I'm plain reluctant to hear feedback on my writing? I usually love getting it. And it's not that their feedback is particularly negative or irritating or in some way bothersome. Even the negative one doesn't bother me.

In a way, I feel I've *already* learned from their feedback. I've thought a lot about it, and Pat and I have discussed their reactions and suggestions many times. Yet I must acknowledge that they wrote *lots* of small specific comments and suggestions that I couldn't possibly remember from my earlier reading—however careful. I'm really not sure why I haven't sat down to reread. I just detect a kind of stubborn resistance.

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There, I put aside this process writing and sat down and read them all. ("There now. That didn't taste so bad did it?") They really are very good, very helpful. I'm grateful to them—and to the editor for getting them. It's a pleasure to read someone talking back a little, especially and primarily good magazines. I'm already benefited from them and will benefit more. I hope all these bright feet we haven't followed all their suggestions but at least some of the principles of feedback in class; they get us just whatever story you want to present with little modification. Just would you like to have to improve to their satisfaction? What?

[illegible]

- *Clarity*. Fine.
- *Organization*. No problems moving from point to point.
- *Sense of the Writer*. An infectious sense of excitement and involvement. At times it seems detached: spots where formality creeps in. A mixture of detachment and involvement and then the touch of irony.
- *Mechanics*. Good.

### Sample Criterion-Based Feedback (V) on "Cleaning Up the Environment"

#### One Reader

- *Focus on Task*. I don't know if it is written in response to a set task or not.
- *Ideas or Content*
  - (a) Insights, understanding. Okay. Some good ideas and insights here. I like his mind ranging across the different dimensions of the problem.
  - (b) Thinking, reasoning. Weak. Very little reasoning at all. Mostly just the expressing of feelings or the asserting of appeals to common sense—but not backed up.
- *Clarity: Words, Phrases, and Sentences*. Mostly clear but two notably unclear places—for me—in the third and fourth paragraphs.
- *Organization*. If I diagram it or take an overall view of the scheme, it's very clearly organized: starts with the main assertion, then two examples, then objections, then proposals, and then the closing. (Though the injection of the animal issue at the end seems very random.) Nevertheless, I don't *experience* it as well organized. Somehow I bounce around and don't feel a clean overall scheme. The *realization* of the scheme seems obscured.
- *Sense of the Writer*. I like the strong feelings, but still the voice or stance needs work because (1) it drifts over into scolding, and (2) there is an uncomfortable mixture of casual and formal (and occasionally awkward) "essay" language.

#### Another Reader

- *Focus on Task*. Not sure what the task is—sometimes it seems just a release of emotion. Not sure what I'm to be persuaded of—that people are slobs? But I know that. Focus shifts for me.

#### • *Ideas or Content*

- (a) Insight, understanding. See very little of this—very little attempt to understand litterbugs—even roommate.
- (b) Thinking, reasoning. This is weakest of all, especially where he takes up possible opposing argument; he doesn't really deal with the costs or why costs would be worth it. Reasoning about animals seems strange: why should I care about animals cleaning up their own environment? And besides, I think some animals do.
- *Organization*. Connections between general and specific not always good: too abrupt and not made explicit. Doesn't seem to come to any conclusion. Mention of animals doesn't fit in. Actually, I don't see any pattern in the organization—or at least very little.
- *Sense of the Writer*. Voice is indignant, angry; tone is emotional and keeps argument from making points on the basis of logic. Seems at places like a long blurt with a few sort of reasonable sentences which are not followed up on (the opposing arguments, the cost, the animals).
- *Mechanics*. Paragraphing bothers me a bit. First paragraph in particular leaves me a bit breathless and wondering why all the examples are in one long second paragraph. But basically the mechanics are correct.
- *Language*. Sounds adolescent—probably because of high number of emotional words.



# Summary of Ways of Responding

## THE TWO PARADOXES OF RESPONDING

First paradox: The reader is always right; the writer is always right.

*The reader* gets to decide what's true about her reaction: about what she sees or what happened to her, about what she thinks or how she feels. It makes no sense to quarrel with the reader about what's happening to her (though you can ask the reader to explain more fully what she is saying).

*But you, as the writer*, get to decide what to do about the feedback you get: what changes to make, if any. You don't have to follow her advice. Just listen openly—swallow it all. You can do that better if you realize that you get to take your time and make up your own mind—perhaps making no changes in your writing at all.

Second paradox: The writer must be in charge; the writer must sit back quietly too.

*As the writer, you must be in control.* It's your writing. Don't be passive or helpless. Don't just put your writing out and let them give you *any* feedback. You need to decide what kind of feedback (if any) you need for this particular piece of writing. Is your main goal to improve this piece of writing? Or perhaps you don't really care about working any more on this piece—your main goal is to work on your writing in general. Or perhaps you don't want to *work* at anything—but instead just enjoy sharing this piece and hearing what others have to say. You need to make your own

decision about what kind of feedback will help you. Don't let readers make those decisions.

Therefore ask readers for what you want or need—and insist that you get it. Don't be afraid to stop them if they start giving you what you don't want. (Remember, for instance, that even after you are very experienced with all kinds of feedback, you may need to ask readers to hold back *all criticism* for a piece that you feel tender about. This can be a very appropriate decision; stick up for it.)

*Nevertheless, you mostly have to sit back and just listen.* If you are talking a lot, you are probably preventing them from giving you the good feedback they could give. (For example, don't argue if they misunderstand what you wrote. Their misunderstanding is valuable. You need to *understand* their misunderstanding better in order to figure out whether you need to make any changes.)

Let the readers tell you if they think you are asking for inappropriate feedback—or for feedback they can't give or don't want to give. For example, they may sense that your piece is still unformed and think that it doesn't make sense to give judgment. They may think sayback or descriptive feedback would be more helpful. Or they may simply hate giving judgment. Listen to them. See whether perhaps you should go along: they may be right.

If you aren't getting honest, serious, or caring feedback, don't just blame your readers. It's probably because you haven't convinced them that you really want it. Instead of *blaming* the readers, simply *insist that they give you what you need*.

What follows is a summary of the kinds of feedback we have earlier described.

## I. NO RESPONDING: SHARING

How to Use It	When It's Useful
Just read your words out loud; see what they sound like. You probably learn more from the act of <i>reading in the presence of listeners</i> than from any kind of feedback.	When you don't have much time. Or at a very early stage when you're just exploring or feeling fragile about what you've written and don't want criticism. It's also useful when you are completely finished with a piece; you've finally got it the way you want it or you don't have the time or energy to make any changes—so it's time to celebrate by <i>sharing</i> it with others and not getting feedback at all.



## II. DESCRIPTIVE RESPONDING

### Sayback

How to Use It	When It's Useful
Ask readers: "Say back to me in your own words what you hear me getting at in my writing. But say it more as a question than as an answer—to invite me to figure out better what I really want to say."	At an early stage when you are still groping, when you may not yet have been able to write what you are really trying to say. If readers say back to you what they hear—and invite you to talk—this often leads you to <i>exactly</i> what you want to write.

### Pointing

How to Use It	When It's Useful
Ask readers: "Which words or phrases stick in mind? Which passages or features did you like best? Don't explain why."	When you want to know what is getting through. Or when you want a bit of confidence and support.

### Summarizing

How to Use It	When It's Useful
Ask: "What do you hear as my main point or idea (or event or feeling)? And the subsidiary ones?"	When you want to know what's getting through. If a reader says she disagrees with you, you need to know what she thinks you are saying.

### What's Almost Said or Implied

How to Use It	When It's Useful
Ask readers: "What's almost said, implied, hovering around the edges? What would you like to hear more about?"	When you need new ideas or need to expand or develop what you've written—or when you feel your piece isn't rich or interesting enough. What you <i>don't</i> say in a piece of writing often determines the reactions of readers as much as what you do say. If this is an important piece of writing for you, you had better look to feedback about the implications.

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## Center of Gravity

How to Use It	When It's Useful
Ask readers: "What do you sense as the source of energy, the focal point, the seedbed, the generative center for this piece?" (The center of gravity might well not be the "main point" but rather some image, phrase, quotation, detail, or example.)	Same as for "What's Almost Said," above.

## Structure; Voice, Point of View, Attitude toward the Reader; Level of Abstraction or Concreteness; Language, Diction, Syntax

How to Use Them	When They're Useful
Ask readers to describe each of these features or dimensions of your writing.	At any stage. When you need more perspective.

## Metaphorical Descriptions

How to Use Them	When They're Useful
Ask readers: "Describe my piece in terms of weathers, clothing, colors, animals. Describe the shape of my piece. Give me a picture of the reader-writer relationship. What's your fantasy of what was on my mind that I wasn't writing about ('substitute writing')?"	At any stage. When your writing feels stale and you need a fresh view. If readers learn to give this kind of feedback, their other feedback tends to improve. Sometimes young, inexperienced, or naive readers can't give you other kinds of feedback but give very perceptive metaphorical feedback.

## III. ANALYTIC RESPONDING

### Skeleton Feedback

How to Use It	When It's Useful
Ask readers to tell you about these three main dimensions of your paper: • Reasons and support. ("What do	When writing a persuasive essay or any essay that makes a claim. At an early stage when you have a lot of unorganized exploratory writing.

## Skeleton Feedback (Continued)

How to Use It	When It's Useful
<p>you see as my main point and my sub-points—and the arguments or evidence that I give or could give to support each?”)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assumptions. (“What does my paper seem to take for granted?”)</li> <li>• Audience. (“Who do I imply as my audience? How would my reasons work for them? How do I seem to treat them in general?”)</li> </ul>	<p>skeleton feedback is a way to get help from your readers in adding to and organizing your material. At a late stage, readers help you analyze strengths and weaknesses. It's also helpful for giving <i>yourself</i> feedback.</p>

## Believing and Doubting

How to Use It	When It's Useful
<p>Ask readers: “Believe (or pretend to believe) everything I have written. Be my ally and tell me what you see. Give me more ideas and perceptions to help my case. Then doubt everything and tell me what you see. What arguments can be made against what I say?”</p>	<p>The believing game alone is good when you want help and support for an argument you are struggling with. Together they are useful at any stage. They provide strong perspective.</p>

## Descriptive Outline

How to Use It	When It's Useful
<p>Ask readers: “Write me <i>says</i> and <i>does</i> sentences—for my whole essay and for each paragraph or section.” <i>Does</i> sentences shouldn't mention the content of the paragraph—i.e., shouldn't slide into repeating the <i>says</i> sentences.</p>	<p>Descriptive outlines make most sense for essays—and are particularly useful for persuasive pieces or arguments. They give you the most <i>perspective</i>. Only feasible when the reader has the text in hand and can give a lot of time and care. Particularly useful for giving feedback to yourself.</p>

## IV. READER-BASED RESPONDING: MOVIES OF THE READER'S MIND

How to Use It	When It's Useful
<p>Get readers to tell you frankly <i>what happens inside their heads</i> as they read your words. Here are ways to help them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interrupt their reading and have them tell their interim reactions.</li> <li>• Get them to tell reactions in the form of a story (first . . . then . . .).</li> <li>• Get them to give subjective “I statements” about what is happening in them, not allegedly objective “it statements” about the text.</li> <li>• If they are stuck, ask them questions (e.g., about where they go along and where they resist, about their feelings on the topic before and after reading).</li> </ul>	<p>Movies of the reader's mind are useful at any stage—but they depend on a relationship of trust and support with readers. They can lead to blunt criticism. They're most useful for long-range learning: they may not give you direct help in improving this particular draft.</p>

## V. CRITERION-BASED OR JUDGMENT-BASED RESPONDING

How to Use It	When It's Useful
<p>Traditional criteria for imaginative or creative writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description, vividness of details. (Do we <i>experience</i> what's there?)</li> <li>• Character. (Do we find characters real or interesting?)</li> <li>• Plot. (Is it believable, interesting, or meaningful?)</li> <li>• Language. (Not just “Is it clear?” but “Is it alive and resonant with meaning?”—perhaps through imagery and metaphor.)</li> </ul>	<p>When you want to know how your writing measures up to certain criteria Or when you need a quick overview of strengths and weaknesses. This kind of feedback depends on experienced and skilled readers. Ask still you should always take it with a grain of salt.</p>

you need to be careful about, for example, "Is it organized?" "Error details or examples?" "Quotation mark problems?"

- Don't forget that if you do *process writing* about what you have written you will probably come up with helpful suggestions for yourself. Think about what pleases you and where you are troubled; spell out your frustrations.

How to Use It	When It's Useful
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- Meaning: so what? (Is there a meaning or impact that makes it seem important or worthwhile?)

Traditional criteria for expository or essay writing:

- Focus on task. (Does it squarely address the assignment, question, or task?)
- Content. (You might want to distinguish three dimensions: ideas; details or examples; reasoning.)
- Clarity.
- Organization.
- Sense of the writer. (Voice, tone, stance toward the reader.)
- Mechanics. (Spelling, grammar, punctuation; proofreading.)

Of course, you can specify whatever criteria you think right for a given piece of writing: what the particular writing task demands (e.g., persuading the reader) or what you are currently working on (e.g., voice). Or you can let *readers* specify the criteria that they think are most important.

## FEEDBACK FROM YOURSELF

Certain of these feedback procedures particularly increase your perspective and thus improve your feedback from yourself.

- Certain kinds of *descriptive feedback* sharpen your eye, help you see things about your text you hadn't noticed (e.g., summarizing; describing the structure; the voice and point of view; level of abstraction/concreteness; language, diction, syntax).
- *Descriptive outline* and *skeleton feedback* are particularly powerful analytic structures that help you see what's strong and weak in any essay.
- *Criterion-based feedback* can help you zero in on features you know

# Rules for writers, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Diana Hacker.

p 40

NK: Bedford  
2009, pp. 140-57.

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4

## Build effective paragraphs.

Except for special-purpose paragraphs, such as introductions and conclusions (see 2a and 2c), paragraphs are clusters of information supporting an essay's main point (or advancing a story's action). Aim for paragraphs that are clearly focused, well developed, organized, coherent, and neither too long nor too short for easy reading.

### 4a Focus on a main point.

A paragraph should be unified around a main point. The point should be clear to readers, and all sentences in the paragraph should relate to it.

#### Stating the main point in a topic sentence

As readers move into a paragraph, they need to know where they are—in relation to the whole essay—and what to expect in the sentences to come. A good topic sentence, a one-sentence summary of the paragraph's main point, acts as a signpost pointing in two directions: backward toward the thesis of the essay and forward toward the body of the paragraph.

Like a thesis sentence (see 1c and 2a), a topic sentence is more general than the material supporting it. Usually the topic sentence (italicized in the following example) comes first in the paragraph.

*All living creatures manage some form of communication.* The dance patterns of bees in their hive help to point the way to distant flower fields or announce successful foraging. Male stickleback fish regularly swim upside-down to indicate outrage in a courtship contest. Male deer and lemur mark territorial ownership by rubbing their own body secretions on boundary stones or trees. Everyone has seen a frightened dog put his tail between his legs and run in panic. We, too, use gestures, expressions, postures, and movement to give our words point. [Italics added.]

—Olivia Vlahos, *Human Beginnings*

Sometimes the topic sentence is introduced by a transitional sentence linking it to earlier material. In the following paragraph, the topic sentence has been delayed to allow for a transition.

But flowers are not the only source of spectacle in the wilderness. *An opportunity for late color is provided by the berries of wildflowers, shrubs, and trees.* Baneberry presents its tiny white flowers in spring but in late summer bursts forth with clusters of red berries. Bunchberry, a ground-cover plant, puts out red berries in the fall, and the red berries of wintergreen last from autumn well into the winter. In California, the bright red, fist-sized clusters of Christmas berries can be seen growing beside highways for up to six months of the year. [Italics added.]

—James Crockett et al., *Wildflower Gardening*

Occasionally the topic sentence may be withheld until the end of the paragraph—but only if the earlier sentences hang together so well that readers perceive their direction, if not their exact point. The opening sentences of the following paragraph state facts, so they are supporting material rather than topic sentences, but they strongly suggest a central idea. The topic sentence at the end is hardly a surprise.

Tobacco chewing starts as soon as people begin stirring. Those who have fresh supplies soak the new leaves in water and add ashes from the hearth to the wad. Men, women, and children chew tobacco and all are addicted to it. Once there was a shortage of tobacco in Kəbawā's village and I was plagued for a week by early morning visitors who requested permission to collect my cigarette butts in order to make a wad of chewing tobacco. Normally, if anyone is short of tobacco, he can request a share of someone else's already chewed wad, or simply borrow the entire wad when its owner puts it down somewhere. *Tobacco is so important to them that their word for "poverty" translates as "being without tobacco."* [Italics added.]

—Napoleon A. Chagnon, *Yanomamö: The Fierce People*

You will find that some professional writers, especially journalists and informal essayists, do not always use clear topic sentences. In college writing, however, topic sentences are often necessary for clarifying the lines of an argument or reporting the research in a field. In business writing, topic sentences (along with headings) are essential, since readers often scan for information.

### Sticking to the point

Sentences that do not support the topic sentence destroy the unity of a paragraph. If the paragraph is otherwise well focused, such offending sentences can simply be deleted or perhaps moved elsewhere. In the following paragraph describing the inadequate facilities in a high school, the information about the chemistry instructor (in italics) is clearly off the point.

As the result of tax cuts, the educational facilities of Lincoln High School have reached an all-time low. Some of the books date back to 1990 and have long since shed their covers. The few computers in working order must share one printer. The lack of lab equipment makes it necessary for four or five students to work at one table, with most watching rather than performing experiments. *Also, the chemistry instructor left to have a baby at the beginning of the semester, and most of the students don't like the substitute. As for the furniture, many of the upright chairs have become recliners, and the desk legs are so unbalanced that they play seesaw on the floor. [Italics added.]*

Sometimes the solution for a disunified paragraph is not as simple as deleting or moving material. Writers often wander into uncharted territory because they cannot think of enough evidence to support a topic sentence. Feeling that it is too soon to break into a new paragraph, they move on to new ideas for which they have not prepared the reader. When this happens, the writer is faced with a choice: Either find more evidence to support the topic sentence or adjust the topic sentence to mesh with the evidence that is available.

**EXERCISE 4-1** Underline the topic sentence in the following paragraph and cross out any material that does not clarify or develop the central idea.

Quilt making has served as an important means of social, political, and artistic expression for women. In the nineteenth century, quilting circles provided one of the few opportunities for women to forge social bonds outside of their families. Once a week or more, they came together to sew as well as trade small talk, advice, and news. They used dyed cotton fabrics much like the fabrics quilters use today; surprisingly, quilters' basic materials haven't changed that much over the years. Sometimes the women joined their efforts in the support of a political cause, making quilts that would be raffled to raise money for temper-

ance societies, hospitals for sick and wounded soldiers, and the fight against slavery. Quilt making also afforded women a means of artistic expression at a time when they had few other creative outlets. Within their socially acceptable roles as homemakers, many quilters subtly pushed back at the restrictions placed on them by experimenting with color, design, and technique.

ON THE WEB > [dianahacker.com/rules](http://dianahacker.com/rules)  
Writing exercises > E-ex 4-1

### 4b Develop the main point.

Though an occasional short paragraph is fine, particularly if it functions as a transition or emphasizes a point, a series of brief paragraphs suggests inadequate development. How much development is enough? That varies, depending on the writer's purpose and audience.

For example, when she wrote a paragraph attempting to convince readers that it is impossible to lose fat quickly, health columnist Jane Brody knew that she would have to present a great deal of evidence because many dieters want to believe the opposite. She did *not* write:

When you think about it, it's impossible to lose — as many diets suggest — 10 pounds of *fat* in ten days, even on a total fast. Even a moderately active person cannot lose so much weight so fast. A less active person hasn't a prayer.

This three-sentence paragraph is too skimpy to be convincing. But the paragraph that Brody wrote contains enough evidence to convince even skeptical readers.

When you think about it, it's impossible to lose — as many diets suggest — 10 pounds of *fat* in ten days, even on a total fast. A pound of body fat represents 3,500 calories. To lose 1 pound of fat, you must expend 3,500 more calories than you consume. Let's say you weigh 170 pounds and, as a moderately active person, you burn 2,500 calories a day. If your diet contains only 1,500 calories, you'd have an energy deficit of 1,000 calories a day. In a week's time that would add up to a 7,000-calorie deficit, or 2 pounds of real fat. In ten days, the accumulated deficit would represent nearly 3 pounds of lost body fat. Even if you are nothing at all for ten days and maintained your usual level of activity, your caloric deficit would add up to 25,000 calories. . . . At 3,500 calories per pound of fat, that's still only 7 pounds of lost fat.

— Jane Brody, *Jane Brody's Nutrition Book*

#### 4c Choose a suitable pattern of organization.

Although paragraphs (and indeed whole essays) may be patterned in any number of ways, certain patterns of organization occur frequently, either alone or in combination: examples and illustrations, narration, description, process; comparison and contrast, analogy, cause and effect, classification and division, and definition. There is nothing particularly magical about these patterns (sometimes called *methods of development*). They simply reflect some of the ways in which we think.

#### Examples and illustrations

Examples, perhaps the most common pattern of development, are appropriate whenever the reader might be tempted to ask, "For example?" Though examples are just selected instances, not a complete catalog, they are enough to suggest the truth of many topic sentences, as in the following paragraph.

Normally my parents abided scrupulously by "The Budget," but several times a year Dad would dip into his battered black strongbox and spurge on some irrational, totally satisfying luxury. Once he bought over a hundred comic books at a flea market, doled out to us thereafter at the tantalizing rate of two a week. He always got a whole flat of pansies. Mom's favorite flower, for us to give her on Mother's Day. One day a boy stopped at our house selling fifty-cent raffle tickets on a sailboat and Dad bought every ticket the boy had left — three books' worth.

— Connie Hailey, student

Illustrations are extended examples, frequently presented in story form. Because they require several sentences apiece, they are used more sparingly than examples. When well selected, however, they can be a vivid and effective means of developing a point. The writer of the following paragraph uses illustrations to demonstrate that Harriet Tubman, famous conductor on the underground railroad for escaping slaves, was a genius at knowing how and when to retreat.

Part of [Harriet Tubman's] strategy of conducting was, as in all battle-field operations, the knowledge of how and when to retreat. Numerous allusions have been made to her moves when she suspected that she was in danger. When she feared the party was closely pursued, she would take it for a time on a train

southward bound. No one seeing Negroes going in this direction would for an instant suppose them to be fugitives. Once on her return she was at a railroad station. She saw some men reading a poster and she heard one of them reading it aloud. It was a description of her, offering a reward for her capture. She took a southbound train to avert suspicion. At another time when Harriet heard men talking about her, she pretended to read a book which she carried. One man remarked, "This can't be the woman. The one we want can't read or write." Harriet devoutly hoped the book was right side up.

— Earl Conrad, *Harriet Tubman*

#### Narration

A paragraph of narration tells a story or part of a story. Narrative paragraphs are usually arranged in chronological order, but they may also contain flashbacks, interruptions that take the story back to an earlier time. The following paragraph, from Jane Goodall's *In the Shadow of Man*, recounts one of the author's experiences in the African wild.

One evening when I was wading in the shallows of the lake to pass a rocky outcrop, I suddenly stopped dead as I saw the sinuous black body of a snake in the water. It was all of six feet long, and from the slight hood and the dark stripes at the back of the neck I knew it to be a Storm's water cobra — a deadly reptile for the bite of which there was, at that time, no serum. As I stared at it an incoming wave gently deposited part of its body on one of my feet. I remained motionless, not even breathing, until the wave rolled back into the lake, drawing the snake with it. Then I leaped out of the water as fast as I could, my heart hammering.

— Jane Goodall, *In the Shadow of Man*

#### Description

A descriptive paragraph sketches a portrait of a person, place, or thing by using concrete and specific details that appeal to one or more of our senses — sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. Consider, for example, the following description of the grasshopper invasions that devastated the midwestern landscape in the late 1860s.

They came like dive bombers out of the west. They came by the millions with the rustle of their wings roaring overhead. They came in waves, like the rolls of the sea, descending with a

terrifying speed, breaking now and again like a mighty surf. They came with the force of a williwaw and they formed a huge, ominous, dark brown cloud that eclipsed the sun. They dipped and touched earth, hitting objects and people like hailstones. But they were not hail. These were five demons. They popped, snapped, crackled, and roared. They were dark brown, an inch or longer in length, plump in the middle and tapered at the ends. They had transparent wings, slender legs, and two black eyes that flashed with a fierce intelligence.

— Eugene Boe, "Pioneers to Eternity"

### Process

A process paragraph is structured in chronological order. A writer may choose this pattern either to describe how something is made or done or to explain to readers, step by step, how to do something. The following paragraph describes what happens when water freezes.

In school we learned that with few exceptions the solid phase of matter is more dense than the liquid phase. Water, alone among common substances, violates this rule. As water begins to cool, it contracts and becomes more dense, in a perfectly typical way. But about four degrees above the freezing point, something remarkable happens. It ceases to contract and begins expanding, becoming less dense. At the freezing point the expansion is abrupt and drastic. As water turns to ice, it adds about one-eleventh to its liquid volume.

— Chet Raymo, "Curious Stuff, Water and Ice"

Here is a paragraph explaining how to perform a "roll cast," a popular fly-fishing technique.

Begin by taking up a suitable stance, with one foot slightly in front of the other and the rod pointing down the line. Then begin a smooth, steady draw, raising your rod hand to just above shoulder height and lifting the rod to the 10:30 or 11:00 position. This steady draw allows a loop of line to form between the rod tip and the water. While the line is still moving, raise the rod slightly, then punch it rapidly forward and down. The rod is now flexed and under maximum compression, and the line follows its path, bellying out slightly behind you and coming off the water close to your feet. As you power the rod down through the 3:00 position, the belly of line will roll forward. Follow through smoothly so that the line unfolds and straightens above the water.

— The Doring *Kindersley Encyclopedia of Fishing*

### Comparison and contrast

To compare two subjects is to draw attention to their similarities, although the word *compare* also has a broader meaning that includes a consideration of differences. To contrast is to focus only on differences.

Whether a paragraph stresses similarities or differences, it may be patterned in one of two ways. The two subjects may be presented one at a time, as in the following paragraph of contrast.

So Grant and Lee were in complete contrast, representing two diametrically opposed elements in American life. Grant was the modern man emerging; beyond him, ready to come on the stage, was the great age of steel and machinery, of crowded cities and a restless, burgeoning vitality. Lee might have ridden down from the old age of chivalry, lance in hand, silken banner fluttering over his head. Each man was the perfect champion of his cause, drawing both his strengths and his weaknesses from the people he led.

— Bruce Catton, "Grant and Lee: A Study in Contrasts"

Or a paragraph may proceed point by point, treating the two subjects together, one aspect at a time. The following paragraph uses the point-by-point method to contrast the writer's academic experiences in an American high school with those in an Irish convent.

Strangely enough, instead of being academically inferior to my American high school, the Irish convent was superior. In my class at home, *Love Story* was considered pretty heavy reading, so imagine my surprise at finding Irish students who could recite passages from *War and Peace*. In high school we complained about having to study *Romeo and Juliet* in one semester, whereas in Ireland we simultaneously studied *Macbeth* and Dickens's *Hard Times*, in addition to writing a composition a day in English class. In high school, I didn't even begin algebra until the ninth grade, while at the convent seventh graders (or their Irish equivalent) were doing calculus and trigonometry.

— Margaret Stack, student

### Analogy

Analogies draw comparisons between items that appear to have little in common. Writers turn to analogies for a variety of reasons: to make the unfamiliar seem familiar, to provide a con-

crete understanding of an abstract topic, to argue a point, or to provoke fresh thoughts or changed feelings about a subject. In the following paragraph, physician Lewis Thomas draws an analogy between the behavior of ants and that of humans.

Ants are so much like human beings as to be an embarrassment. They farm fungi, raise aphids as livestock, launch armies into wars, use chemical sprays to alarm and confuse enemies, capture slaves. The families of weaver ants engage in child labor, holding their larvae like shuttles to spin out the thread that sews the leaves together for their fungus gardens. They exchange information ceaselessly. They do everything but watch television.

—Lewis Thomas, "On Societies as Organisms"

Although analogies can be a powerful tool for illuminating a subject, they should be used with caution in arguments. Just because two things may be alike in one respect, we cannot conclude that they are alike in all respects. (See "false analogy," p. 374.)

### Cause and effect

When causes and effects are a matter of argument, they are too complex to be reduced to a simple pattern (see p. 374). However, if a writer wishes merely to describe a cause-and-effect relationship that is generally accepted, then the effect may be stated in the topic sentence, with the causes listed in the body of the paragraph.

The fantastic water clarity of the Mount Gambier sinkholes results from several factors. The holes are fed from aquifers holding rainwater that fell decades — even centuries — ago, and that has been filtered through miles of limestone. The high level of calcium that limestone adds causes the silty detritus from dead plants and animals to cling together and settle quickly to the bottom. Abundant bottom vegetation in the shallow sinkholes also helps bind the silt. And the rapid turnover of water prohibits stagnation.

—Hillary Hauser, "Exploring a Sunken Realm in Australia"

Or the paragraph may move from cause to effects, as in this paragraph from a student paper on the effects of the industrial revolution on American farms.

The rise of rail transport in the nineteenth century forever changed American farming — for better and for worse. Farmers who once raised crops and livestock to sustain just their own

families could now make a profit by selling their goods in towns and cities miles away. These new markets improved the living standard of struggling farm families and encouraged them to seek out innovations that would increase their profits. On the downside, the competition fostered by the new markets sometimes created hostility among neighboring farm families where there had once been a spirit of cooperation. Those farmers who couldn't compete with their neighbors left farming forever, facing poverty worse than they had ever known.

—Chris Mileski, student

### Classification and division

Classification is the grouping of items into categories according to some consistent principle. For example, an elementary school teacher might classify children's books according to their level of difficulty, but a librarian might group them by subject matter. The principle of classification that a writer chooses ultimately depends on the purpose of the classification. The following paragraph classifies species of electric fish.

Scientists sort electric fishes into three categories. The first comprises the strongly electric species like the marine electric rays or the freshwater African electric catfish and South American electric eel. Known since the dawn of history, these deliver a punch strong enough to stun a human. In recent years, biologists have focused on a second category: weakly electric fish in the South American and African rivers that use tiny voltages for communication and navigation. The third group contains sharks, nonelectric rays, and catfish, which do not emit a field but possess sensors that enable them to detect the minute amounts of electricity that leak out of other organisms.

—Anne and Jack Rudloe, "Electric Warfare: The Fish That Kill with Thunderbolts"

Division takes one item and divides it into parts. As with classification, division should be made according to some consistent principle. The following passage describes the components that make up a baseball.

Like the game itself, a baseball is composed of many layers. One of the delicious joys of childhood is to take apart a baseball and examine the wonders within. You begin by removing the red cotton thread and peeling off the leather cover — which comes from the hide of a Holstein cow and has been tanned, cut, printed,



and punched with holes. Beneath the cover is a thin layer of cotton string, followed by several hundred yards of woolen yarn, which makes up the bulk of the ball. Finally, in the middle is a rubber ball, or "pill," which is a little smaller than a golf ball. Slice into the rubber and you'll find the ball's heart — a cork core. The cork is from Portugal, the rubber from southeast Asia, the covers are American, and the balls are assembled in Costa Rica.

— Dan Gutman, *The Way Baseball Works*

### Definition

A definition puts a word or concept into a general class and then provides enough details to distinguish it from others in the same class. In the following paragraph, the writer defines *envy* as a special kind of desire.

Envy is so integral and so painful a part of what animates behavior in market societies that many people have forgotten the full meaning of the word, simplifying it into one of the synonyms of desire. It is that, which may be why it flourishes in market societies: democracies of desire, they might be called, with money for ballots, stuffing permitted. But envy is more or less than desire. It begins with an almost frantic sense of emptiness inside oneself, as if the pump of one's heart were sucking on air. One has to be blind to perceive the emptiness, of course, but that's just what envy is, a selective blindness. *Invidia*, Latin for envy, translates as "non-sight," and Dante has the envious plodding along under cloaks of lead, their eyes sewn shut with leaden wire. What they are blind to is what they have. God-given and humanly nurtured, in themselves.

— Nelson W. Aldrich Jr., *Old Money*

### 4d Make paragraphs coherent.

When sentences and paragraphs flow from one to another without discernible bumps, gaps, or shifts, they are said to be coherent. Coherence can be improved by strengthening the ties between old information and new. A number of techniques for strengthening those ties are detailed in this section.

#### Linking ideas clearly

Readers expect to learn a paragraph's main point in a topic sentence early in the paragraph. Then, as they move into the body

of the paragraph, they expect to encounter specific details, facts, or examples that support the topic sentence — either directly or indirectly. In the following paragraph, all of the sentences following the topic sentence directly support it.

A passenger list of the early years [of the Orient Express] would read like a *Who's Who of the World*, from art to politics. Sarah Bernhardt and her Italian counterpart Eleonora Duse used the train to thrill the stages of Europe. For musicians there were Toscanini and Mahler. Dancers Nijinsky and Pavlova were there, while lesser performers like Harry Houdini and the girls of the Ziegfeld Follies also rode the rails. Violinists were allowed to practice on the train, and occasionally one might see trapeze artists hanging like bats from the baggage racks.

— Barnaby Conrad III, "Train of Kings"

If a sentence does not support the topic sentence directly, readers expect it to support another sentence in the paragraph and therefore to support the topic sentence indirectly. The following paragraph begins with a topic sentence. The italicized sentences are direct supports, and the rest of the sentences are indirect supports.

Though the open-space classroom works for many children, it is not practical for my son, David. *First, David is hyperactive.* When he was placed in an open-space classroom, he became distracted and confused. He was tempted to watch the movement going on around him instead of concentrating on his own work. *Second, David has a tendency to transpose letters and numbers, a tendency that can be overcome only by individual attention from the instructor.* In the open classroom he was moved from teacher to teacher, with each one responsible for a different subject. No single teacher worked with David long enough to diagnose the problem, let alone help him with it. *Finally, David is not a highly motivated learner.* In the open classroom, he was graded "at his own level," not by criteria for a certain grade. He could receive a B in reading and still be a grade level behind, because he was doing satisfactory work "at his own level." [Italics added.]

— Margaret Smith, student

#### Repeating key words

Repetition of key words is an important technique for gaining coherence. To prevent repetitions from becoming dull, you can use variations of a key word (*hike, hiker, hiking*), pronouns

### Providing transitions

Transitions are bridges between what has been read and what is about to be read. Transitions help readers move from sentence to sentence; they also alert readers to more global connections of ideas—those between paragraphs or even larger blocks of text.

**ACADEMIC ENGLISH** Choose transitions carefully and vary them appropriately. For instance, avoid using a transition that signals a logical relationship (such as *therefore*) if no clear logical relationship exists. Each transition has a different meaning; if you do not use an appropriate signal, you might confuse your reader.

- Although taking eight o'clock classes may seem unappealing, <sup>For example,</sup> coming to school early has its advantages. <sup>Moreover,</sup> students who arrive early typically avoid the worst traffic and find the best parking spaces.

**SENTENCE-LEVEL TRANSITIONS** Certain words and phrases signal connections between (or within) sentences. Frequently used transitions are included in the chart on page 55.

Skilled writers use transitional expressions with care, making sure, for example, not to use *consequently* when *also* would be more precise. They are also careful to select transitions with an appropriate tone, perhaps preferring *so* to *thus* in an informal piece, *in summary* to *in short* for a scholarly essay.

In the following paragraph, taken from an argument that dinosaurs had the "right-sized" brains for reptiles of their body size," biologist Stephen Jay Gould uses transitions (italicized) with skill.

I don't wish to deny that the flattened, minuscule head of large-bodied *Stegosaurus* houses little brain from our subjective, top-heavy perspective, *but* I do wish to assert that we should not expect more of the beast. *First of all*, large animals have relatively smaller brains than related, small animals. The correlation of brain size with body size among kindred animals (all reptiles, all mammals, *for example*) is remarkably regular. As we move from small to large animals, from mice to elephants or small lizards to Komodo dragons, brain size increases, *but* not so fast as body

### Common transitions

**TO SHOW ADDITION** and, also, besides, further, furthermore, in addition, moreover, next, too, first, second

**TO GIVE EXAMPLES** for example, for instance, to illustrate, in fact, specifically

**TO COMPARE** also, in the same manner, similarly, likewise

**TO CONTRAST** but, however, on the other hand, in contrast, nevertheless, still, even though, on the contrary, yet, although

**TO SUMMARIZE OR CONCLUDE** in short, in summary, in conclusion, to sum up, therefore

**TO SHOW TIME** after, as, before, next, during, later, finally, meanwhile, then, when, while, immediately

**TO SHOW PLACE OR DIRECTION** above, below, beyond, nearby, opposite, close, to the left

**TO INDICATE LOGICAL RELATIONSHIP** if, so, therefore, consequently, thus, as a result, for this reason, because, since

size. *In other words*, bodies grow faster than brains, and large animals have low ratios of brain weight to body weight. *In fact*, brains grow only about two-thirds as fast as bodies. *Since* we have no reason to believe that large animals are consistently stupider than their smaller relatives, we must conclude that large animals require relatively less brain to do as well as smaller animals. *If* we do not recognize this relationship, we are likely to underestimate the mental power of very large animals, dinosaurs *in particular*. [Italics added.]

—Stephen Jay Gould, "Were Dinosaurs Dumb?"

ON THE WEB > [dianahacker.com/rules](http://dianahacker.com/rules)

Writing exercises > E-ex 4-2

**PARAGRAPH-LEVEL TRANSITIONS** Paragraph-level transitions usually link the first sentence of a new paragraph with the first sentence of the previous paragraph. In other words, the topic sentences signal global connections.

Look for opportunities to allude to the subject of a previous paragraph (as summed up in its topic sentence) in the topic sentence of the next one. In his essay "Little Green Lies," Jonathan H.

Alder uses this strategy in the following topic sentences, which appear in a passage describing the benefits of plastic packaging.

Consider aseptic packaging, the synthetic packaging for the "juice boxes" so many children bring to school with their lunch. One criticism of aseptic packaging is that it is nearly impossible to recycle, yet on almost every other count, aseptic packaging is environmentally preferable to the packaging alternatives. Not only do aseptic containers not require refrigeration to keep their contents from spoiling, but their manufacture requires less than one-tenth the energy of making glass bottles.

What is true for juice boxes is also true for other forms of synthetic packaging. The use of polystyrene, which is commonly (and mistakenly) referred to as "Styrofoam," can reduce food waste dramatically due to its insulating properties. (Thanks to these properties, polystyrene cups are much preferred over paper for that morning cup of coffee.) Polystyrene also requires significantly fewer resources to produce than its paper counterpart.

**TRANSITIONS BETWEEN BLOCKS OF TEXT** In long essays, you will need to alert readers to connections between blocks of text more than one paragraph long. You can do this by inserting transitional sentences or short paragraphs at key points in the essay. Here, for example, is a transitional paragraph from a student research paper. It announces that the first part of the paper has come to a close and the second part is about to begin.

Although the great apes have demonstrated significant language skills, one central question remains: Can they be taught to use that uniquely human language tool we call grammar, to learn the difference, for instance, between "ape bite human" and "human bite ape"? In other words, can an ape create a sentence?

Another strategy to help readers move from one block of text to another is to insert headings in your essay. Headings, which usually sit above blocks of text, allow you to announce a new topic boldly, without the need for subtle transitions. (See 5b.)

#### 4e If necessary, adjust paragraph length.

Most readers feel comfortable reading paragraphs that range between one hundred and two hundred words. Shorter paragraphs force too much starting and stopping, and longer ones strain readers' attention span. There are exceptions to this

guideline, however. Paragraphs longer than two hundred words frequently appear in scholarly writing, where they suggest seriousness and depth. Paragraphs shorter than one hundred words occur in newspapers because of narrow columns; in informal essays to quicken the pace; and in business writing and Web sites, where readers routinely skim for main ideas.

In an essay, the first and last paragraphs will ordinarily be the introduction and the conclusion. These special-purpose paragraphs are likely to be shorter than the paragraphs in the body of the essay. Typically, the body paragraphs will follow the essay's outline: one paragraph per point in short essays, a group of paragraphs per point in longer ones. Some ideas require more development than others, however, so it is best to be flexible. If an idea stretches to a length unreasonable for a paragraph, you should divide the paragraph, even if you have presented comparable points in the essay in single paragraphs.

Paragraph breaks are not always made for strictly logical reasons. Writers use them for the following reasons as well.

##### REASONS FOR BEGINNING A NEW PARAGRAPH

- to mark off the introduction and conclusion
- to signal a shift to a new idea
- to indicate an important shift in time or place
- to emphasize a point (by placing it at the beginning or the end, not in the middle, of a paragraph)
- to highlight a contrast
- to signal a change of speakers (in dialogue)
- to provide readers with a needed pause
- to break up text that looks too dense

Beware of using too many short, choppy paragraphs, however. Readers want to see how your ideas connect, and they become irritated when you break their momentum by forcing them to pause every few sentences. Here are some reasons you might have for combining some of the paragraphs in a rough draft.

##### REASONS FOR COMBINING PARAGRAPHS

- to clarify the essay's organization
- to connect closely related ideas
- to bind together text that looks too choppy

me. On one such occasion, a jovial little man, peering a toy gun for his son came up to me and said in a Humphrey Bogart impression, "Give me all your money, Sweetheart." I didn't laugh. Instead, my heart skipped a beat, for I had heard those words before.

—Diana Crawford, student

Whatever concluding strategy you choose, keep in mind that an effective conclusion is decisive and unapologetic. Avoid introducing wholly new ideas at the end of an essay. Finally, because the conclusion is so closely tied to the rest of the essay in both content and tone, be prepared to rework it (or even replace it) when you revise.

3

### Make global revisions; then revise sentences.

For most experienced writers, revising is rarely a one-step process. Global matters — focus, purpose, organization, content, and overall strategy — generally receive attention first. Improvements in sentence structure, word choice, grammar, punctuation, and mechanics come later.

### 3a Make global revisions: Think big.

By the time you've written a draft, your ideas will probably have gone in directions you couldn't have predicted ahead of time. As a result, global revisions can be quite dramatic. It's possible, for example, that your thesis will evolve as you figure out how your ideas fit together. You might drop whole paragraphs of text and add others or condense material once stretched over several paragraphs. You might rearrange entire sections. You will save time if you handle global revisions before turning to sentence-level issues. There is little sense in revising sentences that may not appear in your final draft.

Many of us resist global revisions because we find it difficult to view our work from our audience's perspective. To distance yourself from a draft, put it aside for a while, preferably

overnight or even longer. When you return to it, try to play the role of your audience as you read. Ask questions such as "What is the main point of this paragraph?" "Why have I put these paragraphs in this order?" "How will readers respond to this point?" If possible, enlist the help of reviewers to play the role of audience for you, or perhaps visit your school's writing center to go over your draft with a writing tutor. Ask your reviewers to focus on the larger issues of writing, not on the fine points. The following checklist may help you and your reviewers focus on global concerns.

### Checklist for global revision

#### Purpose and audience

- Does the draft accomplish its purpose — to inform readers, persuade them, entertain them, call them to action?
- Is the draft appropriate for its audience? Does it account for the audience's knowledge of the subject, level of interest in the subject, and possible attitudes toward the subject?

#### Focus

- Is the thesis clear? Is it prominently placed?
- If there is no thesis, is there a good reason for omitting one?
- Are any ideas obviously off the point?

#### Organization and paragraphing

- Are there enough organizational cues for readers (such as topic sentences and headings)?
- Are ideas presented in a logical order?
- Are any paragraphs too long or too short for easy reading?

#### Content

- Is the supporting material relevant and persuasive?
- Which ideas need further development?
- Are the parts proportioned sensibly? Do major ideas receive enough attention?
- Where might material be deleted?

#### Point of view

- Is the draft free of distracting shifts in point of view (from I to you, for example, or from it to they)?
- Is the dominant point of view — I, we, you, he, she, it, one, or they — appropriate for your purpose and audience?

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# WORDS OF ADVICE

- ◆ The long comment that you write at the end is as important as the comments that you write in the margin. They both work together. Your end comment gives the student your overall impression of the paper and your recommendations for improvement or revision. Your marginal comments point out specific places in the paper where the logic or analysis may have broken down; where the student may need to develop further or pare down the argument; or where the student should integrate examples or source material to strengthen the paper. The end comment and marginal comments should provide consistent advice for the student.
- ◆ Respond to grammar and proofreading errors **after** the student has demonstrated a strong grasp of the assignment and has created a competent analytical structure for the assignment. Otherwise, the writer may make only surface changes rather than the structural and rhetorical revisions which will make the paper better. Usually, language use improves as the student develops a sense of purpose and can organize the paper to fulfill that purpose.
- ◆ When you don't understand what you are reading or if the paper appears to be off-topic, incoherent, or badly written, respond primarily to the overall purpose or focus of the paper. Don't try to untangle the sentences or fix the grammar; simply indicate that language use needs attention.
- ◆ The more information that you can give about why the idea, paragraph, sentence, or word is inappropriate, the more directed the student can be in the next draft or paper. (Often times the students guess at what they think you think is wrong and guess incorrectly. If you tell them, they don't have to guess.) Undergraduates need to learn, both in class and in your written comments on their papers, about the written conventions of your field.

Responding to and Commenting on Student Papers

The Committee on Teaching & The Writing Program at the MCSC

## SOME GENERAL ADVICE FOR RESPONDING:

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- ◆ Emphasize communication first; make grammar and mechanics the servants of ideas. Encourage a genuine writing voice and try to build confidence. Explain that a simple and direct writing style is usually most effective.
- ◆ Mark good sentences, effective uses of language—as well as problems.
- ◆ Resist the impulse to mark every error; this can overwhelm both the student and yourself. When there are a lot of problems, focus on one or two main things; errors that seem to interfere most with your understanding as a reader, errors that seem most patterned or prevalent in the writing.
- ◆ Have the student do the work, once you've given some suggestions or guidance. Don't do all the correcting yourself. You might indicate what needs to be done by editing just a paragraph or two, concentrating on one or two problems.
- ◆ Avoid vague marginal notes such as "awk" that might leave a student wondering what to do. At the same time, don't feel it necessary to articulate "rules." It often helps if you just show how a sentence ought to be. Sometimes show different ways of saying the same thing.
- ◆ Keep in mind that some errors are more important than others. In the list inside this brochure, the first four items can seriously impede communication. The next four can be troublesome, but usually allow meaning to be understood. The last two can distract a reader but otherwise don't matter much. These last two can be stubborn problems for some ESL writers. Concentrate your response not on prepositions and articles, but on errors that interfere more with meaning.

## SOME ADVICE TO PASS ALONG TO THE STUDENT:

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- ◆ Always allow at least a day between the time you finish your paper and the time you have to turn it in, to get away from it; then come back and read it aloud several times looking just at language and punctuation. If you can, read it aloud to a friend.
- ◆ Get a good dictionary and use it to check on word meanings and spelling. If you prepare your paper on a computer, use a spelling checker, but don't rely on it to catch all errors.
- ◆ Get a handbook of grammar and usage, and use it as a reference. Some recommended books:
  - A Student's Grammar of the English Language*, by Sidney Greenbaum and Randolph Quirk (Longman, 1990).
  - A Writer's Reference*, 2nd ed., by Diana Hacker (Bedford Books, 1992).
  - Concise English Handbook*, 3rd ed., by James W. Kirkland and Collett B. Dilworth, Jr. (D.C. Heath and Co., 1994).
  - Rules of Thumb: A Guide for Writers*, 2nd ed., by Jay Silverman, Elaine Hughes and Diana Roberts Wienbroer (McGraw-Hill, 1993).
- ◆ Read as much as possible—novels, nonfiction, magazines, newspapers—whatever you like. Keep a journal in which you write down thoughts about your reading, your plans, your daily life. Exposure to language through reading, and plenty of practice in writing, help more than anything else to increase vocabulary and develop competence in using written language.

Respond first to:

1 SCOPE: →

*As appropriate:*

- ◆ comment on whether the paper responds appropriately to the paper topic or assignment.
- ◆ comment on whether the paper has a clear argument or strong synthesis and analysis of the material.
- ◆ give your general response to the paper as a reader.

Then:

2 STRUCTURE: →

*As appropriate, comment on whether the paper provides:*

- ◆ an adequate introduction to the paper with sufficient background information.
- ◆ an argument that develops logically and coherently.
- ◆ main arguments which are well supported by examples, explanations, and acceptable reasoning.
- ◆ a conclusion.

Then:

3 LANGUAGE USE: →

*As appropriate, make general responses as to whether:*

- ◆ the text is easy to read.
- ◆ the sentences make sense.
- ◆ the tone is appropriate for the purpose of the assignment.
- ◆ words are used precisely and accurately.
- ◆ the text demonstrates effective usage and grammatical control. (See Brochure 2: "Responding to Student Writing: Errors in Language Use.")

Then:

4 CONVENTIONS: →

*As appropriate, note whether:*

- ◆ the spelling and punctuation are acceptable.
- ◆ the citations and acknowledgments are accurate.
- ◆ the paper format is consistent and clean.

# SOME COMMON LANGUAGE PROBLEMS IN STUDENT WRITING:

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1. **The hypercorrect "academic voice":** imitating an inappropriate notion of formal style, trying unsuccessfully to sound sophisticated or academic, perhaps misunderstanding what is expected. Garbled syntax, vocabulary inappropriately used, some sentences that just don't make sense.

## Example:

*Word Play by Peter Farb, is a collective combination of essays written by one of America's finest authors. The essays colabrated by Farb were vivid and they had alot of constructive creditability to them. The author enabled me to grasp on both concepts of what the author may have been trying to express. He asserts in his statement to consider society with writing, in which he believes language matters when and how it is being used. In this aspect, I am in agreement with him.*

## Response to the writer:

Imagine that you are writing your paper for a particular friend or someone in your family — a real person. Explain what you think to him or her. Keep that person in mind as you write; he or she has got to be able to understand it when you're done. Be yourself.

2. **Unconventional sentence boundaries:** incomplete sentences, or sentences that just keep going sometimes with commas between.

## Examples:

*I used to hate writing, now I write every day. Because I learned that if you don't write at least every day, you're missing out on something.*

*I have not had much experience with writing any other language therefore English is the language I write in. Being the one I used in school.*

## Response to the writer:

Read your paper out loud, exactly as it's written.

When your voice tries to go down at the end of an idea, check your punctuation. If it looks like you've read a sentence (with a subject and verb), make sure you do one of three things: (1) put a period at the end; or (2) if you want it to feel connected to the next sentence, use a semi-colon; or (3) connect it to the next sentence with a comma and a conjunction like "and," "but," or "so."

When you come to a period but it sounds like something is missing, check: would the "sentence" make sense if you walked into a room and said it by itself? If not, then either (1) it can't stand alone and you need to join it to the sentence before it—usually with a comma; or (2) it's just part of a sentence, and you need to add something to make it complete (with a subject and a verb).

3. **Errors in verb tense and time reference:** often, switching inappropriately between present and past.

## Examples:

*I remembered when I write an essay in high school I took a few drafts to get all my ideas organized in the essay.*

*I live in Taiwan for the first fifteen years of my life. When we arrived here in the United States, we do not know any English.*

## Response to the writer:

Go through your paper concentrating only on the verbs. If you're referring to something that happened in the past, keep verbs in the past tense. If it's something that happens sometimes, all the time, or any time (including now), use the present tense. As long as you're talking about the same time, keep the tense the same. But if you switch the time you're talking about, you need to change the verb tense. Use the present tense to refer to what another writer says, or the action of a story.

4. **Ungrammatical complex sentence structure:** The pieces don't fit together, or they don't add up to a sentence.

## Examples:

*This conclusion is unquestionable to me since unnecessary difficulties or problems, such as becoming disabled and losing a job or missing school.*

*I agree that the labels of which society classifies and judges the legitimacy of one's thoughts through spoken expression is unfortunate.*



*Although I know how to read and write very well in Vietnamese, but I'm still having trouble in English writing style.*

**Response to the writer:**

This sentence doesn't work. Try to find another way of expressing the idea. Without looking at the sentence you wrote, say what you meant—then write it that way. [Sometimes, just provide the student with an appropriate way of expressing the idea.]

**5. Faulty subject-verb agreement.**

**Examples:**

*The revision have more clear examples.*

*The things that has happened to others*

*So does other people, including myself.*

**Response to the writer:**

Read your paper out loud, exactly as it is written, and concentrate on the verb forms. Listen for the subject of each verb, and make sure the verb goes with it.

**6. Missing word endings, particularly -s and -ed.**

**Examples:**

*Then I am satisfy.*

*I have work on this paper for four drafts.*

*One of her main reason*

**Response to the writer:**

Read your paper aloud, paying special attention to word endings.

Read it once looking just at verbs. Look for places where you need a participle (with an -ing or an -ed ending, or an irregular form)—especially after forms of have or be.

Read the paper again looking just at nouns. Look for places that should be plural (where you need to put in an -s) or places that should be singular (where you need to take one out).

**7. Wrong word forms.**

**Examples:**

*What is the different between fear and anxiety?*

*China was in a danger situation then.*

**Response to the writer:**

Look up these words (different/difference, danger/dangerous) in the dictionary. Keep a list for yourself of these related word forms, to study how they are used.

**8. Unconventional expressions or words used inappropriately.**

**Examples:**

*As a conclusion, I find myself thinking*

*One of the greatest affects of the war*

*Her legs were spotted with bellicose veins;*

*The pompous grass was waving in the wind.*

**Response to the writer:**

[Provide the right words.] It's *in conclusion*. Look up *affect* and *effect*. You probably mean *varicose*. The word is *pompous*; look up *pompous*.

**9. Misused articles: leaving out the or a, or using them inappropriately.**

**Examples:**

*It is easy to find example of same thing in United States.*

*I explained little bit more in the conclusion.*

*He began work for the IBM in January.*

**Response to the writer:**

If you pay attention to the way articles are used as you read, you will gradually pick up the patterns. This will take time; for many non-native speakers of English, problems with articles linger after the rest of the grammar has been mastered.

**10. Inappropriate prepositions.**

**Examples:**

*I agree to the President's policy about nuclear waste.*

*I enjoy writing on my journal each day.*

**Response to the writer:**

You learn each of these expressions individually, like vocabulary. You could keep a list of unfamiliar expressions. Like articles, prepositions are learned gradually, often over a long time.

# Maria Cecilia Freeman Working on Language with ESL students

Writing 203

MCF May 2007

## "Grammar":

### 1. Internalized patterns

Snarking dabbantly, ergy ginks wibbled glots in the foogrum.

Who wants tutoring?

students

middle-school

several

Ethiopian

clever

### 2. Linguistic etiquette

Jerry brung his girlfriend some flowers.

What time are we meeting at?

My Spanish sucks.

### 3. Knowing different English patterns

She busy.

She be busy with that new baby.

She live in Oakland.

This is mines.

She is busy (right now.)

She is busy (habitually, in general, all the time)

She lives in Oakland.

(yours, hers) ...mine.

### 4. Not knowing English patterns

If you do bad things, monsters would come and get you. Someone of you might never heard of that line, but I am sure a lot of you definitely hear that line inside of stories for many times. When you are young, most of the mothers always told their kids' fiction stories to scare them away from make mistakes that would cost heavy consequences on them. Maxine Hong Kingston had a family story about her aunt was forgotten in the family because she disgrace her own family by having a baby that does not belongs to her husband.

## Who are California students?

- (Non)native speakers of (non)standard English
- Recent immigrant English Language Learners
- Long-term immigrant bilingual speakers of (non)standard English
- "Generation 1.5"
  - children of families who migrate back and forth between their home country and the U.S.
  - U.S.-born children of immigrants in linguistic enclave communities

## Working on language in ELL student writing

### Don't

Focus on grammatical errors first

Do all the correcting yourself

Try to correct everything at once

### Do

Acknowledge what has been done well

Have the writer make his or her own changes

Focus on one or two main things.

Some errors are more important than others. Concentrate your efforts on errors that are most global, systematic, patterned and prevalent rather than more local, idiosyncratic, scattered and few.

**Some common areas of difficulty for ESL/bilingual writers**

(moving from most global and systematic to most local and idiosyncratic):

- **Errors in overall (usually complex) sentence structure**

Examples:

Although I can read and write well in Vietnamese, but I'm still having trouble in English writing.

His most happiest moment was when ever elamentre school is over he is happy but he has to go back is get sad.

- **Mixing up verb tense and time reference**

Examples:

I remembered when I write an essay in high school I took a few drafts to get all my ideas organized.

Erin had a puppy like 3 years ago. The dog is a mud, he is brown and has black spot.

- **Missing word endings (-s, -ed): subject-verb agreement, verb participles, noun plurals and possessives, count/noncount nouns**

Examples:

He regret he made many mistake in high school.

I am satisfy. I have work on this paper for a long time.

- **Other Errors in verb forms**

Examples:

You don't have to concern about that problem because it doesn't matter.

People can survived from the fear of hunger.

It is the emotion which is only belong to the human.

- **Word form (part of speech) errors**

Examples:

What is the different between fear and anxiety?

He was in a danger situation then.

- **Count/noncount nouns and misused articles (a/an, the)**

Examples:

We are force to write paper in certain way.

It is important to have a base of writing such as grammars and spellings.

- **Inappropriate prepositions**

Examples:

I agree to his idea that Alien was a good movie.

My birthday comes on September.

Two good resources for tutors/teachers of ELL students:

*Longman Advanced American Dictionary* (Longman/Pearson Education Limited, 2000)

*The Essentials of English: A Writer's Handbook*, by Ann Hogue (Longman/Pearson Education, Inc., 2003)

### Three facts about the English verb system that will cover a lot of ground

#### 1. The English verb system has TWO tenses.

##### PAST

###### *simple past*

Joe worked at 7-11 last year.  
(a definite time in past)

###### *past perfect*

Joe had worked at 7-11 for two years  
before he got the job at McDonalds.  
(up to a definite past time)

###### *past progressive*

Joe was working at 7-11 in October 1997.  
(in progress at a definite past time)

###### *past perfect progressive*

Joe had been working at 7-11 for almost  
2 years when he got fired.  
(in progress up to a definite past time)

##### PRESENT

###### *simple present*

Joe works at McDonalds.  
(now, any time in general)

###### *present perfect*

Joe has worked at McDonalds for 10 months.  
(up to present time)

###### *present progressive*

Joe is working at McDonalds now.  
(in progress now)

###### *present perfect progressive*

Joe has been working pretty hard lately.  
(in progress up to present time)

What about FUTURE? We have no special verb form for future; we construct a phrase:

Joe will work at McDonald's for another year. He is going to work one more year.

He will have worked there for a year and ten months when he quits.

He will be working somewhere else in the year 2008.

He will have been working full time for about four years by then.

#### 2. There are two "auxiliary" verbs which must be followed by present (-ing) or past (-ed) participles:

some form of BE +*ing* (progressive)

some form of BE +*ed* (passive)

some form of HAVE +*ed* (perfect)

He is taking a linguistics course.

He is excited about grammar.

He has studied the verb system.

He has been working very hard.

#### 3. Modal verbs and DO are always followed by the root form of the verb (no endings).

Joe can / could / should / may / might / must / will / does / did work on Saturday.

# Peer Review and Revising in an Anthropology Course: Lessons for Learning

Anne J. Herrington and Deborah Cadman

I didn't have that much criticism of the actual material so I added to that. Penny's paper was different from mine. She didn't really provide as much of a summary of what was in the book as she did an analysis. So I said, I think I should add some. She went the other way.

Tom had told me that I needed to put in some questions [about needed research in the future]. I didn't know why I really needed to do that. . . . It fit in Tom's paper because he wasn't able to do as much with his study. I got basically what I wanted.

These comments were made by two students in a college anthropology class, explaining revisions they made in their writings after a peer exchange of drafts. Both students talk about substantive changes they considered in their own drafts on the basis of reading peers' drafts and receiving some advice from their peers. The comments reflect the writers' processes of weighing alternatives and then deciding how to act. We believe this process of active, reciprocal decision-making represents the primary value of peer review—not only for writing classes, but also for classes in any discipline where students are asked to write.

Our aim in this essay is to demonstrate this value of peer review by showing how it was used by students in one anthropology class.<sup>1</sup> We hope that the work of these students will give teachers who are uncertain about using peer review a broader view of the role it could play in their classes.

More specifically, we will illustrate the following characteristics of peer-review exchanges as they were accomplished in this course:

1. Peer review can create occasions for active and reciprocal decision-making where students are their own authorities, not the teacher. Instead of following a peer's or even a teacher's advice uncritically, they feel more latitude to decide for themselves how to act, specifically how

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they will respond to a peer's response. Indeed, the value of peer-review exchanges can be realized as much in instances where a writer decides not to follow a peer's advice as where she does.

2. Students can give sound advice to their peers, even on matters they are having difficulty with in their own writing.
3. Writers can profit both from the response they receive about their own drafts and from reading the drafts of others.
4. In peer-review exchanges, students focus not only on matters of organization and style, but also on substantive matters of interpretation and methods of inquiry central to learning in a given discipline. As they do so, they are working out their own understandings of methodologies, ways to interpret information, and ways to present themselves in their writing.<sup>2</sup>

We believe that the degree to which these claims will be borne out in a given class depends not only on the students, but also on the teacher and the classroom environment she creates. We have also been talking in generalizations. The rest of the essay is grounded in the concrete experiences of students in an anthropology course. We focus on the full exchanges of two students as they worked through the writing assignments for this course, showing how characteristics of the process are evident in their exchanges with other students. In the closing section, we identify aspects of the teacher's approach that we believe contributed to the success of peer review for these students in this course. First, a bit of background on the course.

## Writing in Anthropology

Writing in Anthropology is a writing-intensive course for junior and senior anthropology majors at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.<sup>3</sup> It was taught by Sylvia Forman, Professor and Chair of the Department of Anthropology, assisted by a teaching assistant, Ned, a doctoral student in anthropology.

In the syllabus, Forman explained to students two learning goals for the course: "to help you employ writing and research skills to better understand anthropology; and to help you improve your ability to write effectively and comfortably, both generally and in an anthropological context." To this end, students completed four major writings: a book review, a descriptive field report, a research article for a professional journal, and a popular media article. The first three were to be written for a professional journal such as *American Anthropologist* or *Food and Foodways*; the fourth for a publication such as *Natural History* or *Smithsonian*. Although the emphasis of the course was writing, it also had an anthropological focus, which that semester was food and culture.

We chose to study this course because of the approaches Forman used, in-

cluding peer review and revision, and because it was recognized as a successful course. Student course evaluations for the past two semesters had been overwhelmingly positive; specifically, over 90% reported that peer review was valuable.

The course procedures were the same for each writing. The salient characteristics are summarized in Figure 1. As that figure indicates, Forman followed a process approach, having students work through multiple drafts for each writing, receiving response from peers and herself or the teaching assistant.

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General characteristics:

- Multiple drafts of all writings, at least three of each.
- Peer and teacher review of drafts.
- Students free to choose own research questions for writings.
- Grading deferred until the end of the semester.

Typical procedure for each writing:

- Detailed printed copy of the assignment.
  - Model(s) to read and discuss in class, with students noting differences among approaches and their own preferences.
  - Brief presentation by the professor regarding various stages of the research and writing for each assignment and brief class discussions of issues that would arise as students were writing, e.g., use of ethnographic present tense, adapting for a popular audience a technical journal article written first for a professional audience.
  - In-class small group discussions of, e.g., ideas for research questions and an opening "hook" for the article for a popular audience.
  - Peer critique of first draft, written outside of class.
  - Teacher critique of second draft: Forman commented on half of the students' drafts, the teaching assistant on the other half.
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Figure 1. Course Procedures for Writing in Anthropology.

Forman introduced peer review to the class after they had written their first draft for the book review. She distributed a sheet of instructions stressing the importance of being constructive, of pointing to strengths as well as weaknesses, and of being specific. The most important matters to address were identified as "(1) clarity, (2) organization of data and concepts—including analysis, and (3) interest." She then distributed a sample draft and had everyone write a response to it. Rather than having to follow specific forms to structure responses, the reviewers were to decide for themselves what to comment on. She asked them to begin all responses by addressing the writer by name. After they had discussed their responses to the sample draft, they exchanged their book-review drafts with one another and wrote the peer reviews. The reviews for subsequent writings were written outside of class, although students usually discussed them a bit at class sessions.

## Peer-Review Exchanges

We focus on two students, Penny and Jim, for each describing their exchanges with peers as they worked through two writings. We begin with Penny and her experiences with the first and second writings and then move to Jim and his experiences with the third and fourth writings. In two instances, we also comment on exchanges with the teaching assistant to develop points about assuming authority.

We've made these selections for a couple of reasons. By describing exchanges for each writing in succession, we can demonstrate how the focus of peer responses shifted from one writing to another corresponding to the issues students were trying to deal with to meet the particular demands of each assignment. By using two focal students and their exchanges, we can show how characteristics of the process are evident in the work of more than one student. The nature of their responses is representative of the responses of the eighteen students whose peer critiques we analyzed. Still, their exchanges illustrate how various individuals perceived and carried out the process of peer review. Both Penny and Jim were average students and neither felt very confident about writing: of the two, Penny was the less confident and had more obvious difficulties with organization, grammar, and spelling.

To save space, we present only excerpts from the peer-review critiques. A typical full critique ran from one page to two pages and included comments about a wide range of matters, including development and interpretation, organization, clarity and readability, rhetorical effectiveness, and correctness.<sup>4</sup> The excerpts we have chosen refer primarily to development, interpretation, and rhetorical effectiveness.

### *Penny and Her Peer-Review Exchanges*

Penny was a first-semester junior. She said she'd always had a difficult time writing. In fact, she'd been in remedial courses in high school. Although she had passed her first-year college writing course, she still lacked confidence in her writing. She was more confident of herself as a student of anthropology. Despite her own difficulties with writing, she was able to give sound advice to her peers.

The first writing in the course asked students to review *Consuming Passions*, a popular book on food and culture, for the journal *American Anthropologist* (AA). Forman viewed this assignment as a way to give students a common starting point and introduce them to writing procedures they would follow throughout the course. In the written assignment which explained the purposes and characteristics of reviews for AA, she stressed that a review was to include both description and evaluation.

For this writing, Penny exchanged drafts with Ann, a friend she knew from



other classes. Ann was also a first-semester junior. She was more confident than Penny of her writing and reported that she usually received positive comments from teachers about the quality of her writing.

Their exchange is notable because even though Ann was apparently the better writer, she profited a good deal from Penny's response and reading Penny's draft.

In her peer response to Ann's draft, Penny began with a positive comment: "Your paper is very good. It includes most everything needed as far as I could see." She indicated her own insecurity about spelling and syntax in two comments:

I will mark what I believe to be spelling mistakes, but unfortunately, I didn't inherit my father's knack for the subject. Double check it with a dictionary later!

Do not take the way I refer to structure sentences as gospel because your writing, overall is clear. Where I put in a word or two is only where I stumbled and thought it might flow a little smoother so the sentence probably just needs a little attention to make it smooth, not necessarily my words.

Through two of her comments, she tried to move Ann to include more of her own evaluation of the book, focusing implicitly on its value for readers: "Did you find the book enjoyable or a waste of time?" Penny also picked up on a claim Ann made that "the book is more a recital of known facts than an argument or presentation of any new thesis on food and culture." Penny asked, "If they were just reiterating stuff that's already been written about, did you see any point to their writing the book?"

Reading Penny's draft, Ann also decided that she should include more evaluation. As she wrote in her response to Penny's draft, "Your criticism is legitimate and I like how you juxtapose it with your praise. It makes me see how my paper is lacking." In an interview, Ann commented further, "I realized I didn't have that much criticism of the actual material. Penny's paper was different from mine. She didn't really provide as much of a summary of what was in the book as she did an analysis. So, I said, I think I should add some. She went the other way." This comment reflects her decision-making. She assessed her own draft in light of Penny's, deciding that while Penny's lacked enough summary, her own lacked sufficient evaluation. In her revision, then, she added a few evaluative sentences, such as one about presentation: "The organization of facts is occasionally confusing and one must pay close attention to the material, as transitions between examples are often ill marked."

In direct response to Penny's question about the "known facts" claim, Ann added a sentence of clarification: "It does, nonetheless, present a perspective on the significance of food that the reader may have never examined previously." She said she added that because she felt the claim she made in the first draft was misleading because "I think for the general public it was a real-

ly interesting book.” For her, then, Penny’s comment and the opportunity to review and revise her draft led her to reassess and clarify her point.

Ann’s response to Penny’s draft was generally positive, reinforcing Penny’s own sense of satisfaction with it. However, consistent with her sense that Penny’s draft “went the other way” in not providing quite enough summary, Ann suggested that “the audience might be interested in more examples of the content discussed in the book.” Penny followed this suggestion by adding in two places clauses containing more detail. Aside from some spelling corrections, she made no further revisions.

For the second writing, the descriptive field report, students were instructed “to conduct a brief field study of some aspect of food and culture with local people.” For most students, this was the first field study they had done, let alone tried to write up. Forman saw it as a central assignment in the course:

The major issue in this paper is actually taking raw data and learning to make sense of it. That’s part of learning some process of anthropological inquiry. . . . That’s one of the major things anthropologists do, that process. . . . [This project] is an empowering device, because this is really something they own, that nobody else knows about and research is not a matter of going to the library, it’s something you hold yourself.

So, it was a learning experience: practicing anthropology as the ones in charge and trying to present themselves as anthropologists to other anthropologists. Furthermore, it was intended to encourage them to feel more authority.

How to convey that authority in their writing became a major issue for a number of students, specifically when they tried to balance acknowledging limitations with maintaining their credibility. Note that this issue was not addressed explicitly in the written assignment, the published sample, or class discussions. We note this to show that through peer review, students can address, on their own, issues that might not have been anticipated by the teacher. As they worked on the issue of authority in their own writing, they also were sensitive to it in their peers’. Through their exchanges, they negotiated their own provisional resolutions to the issue.

The dynamics of that negotiation are evident in the exchanges between Penny and her peer reviewer Tom, who reviewed her first draft, and the teaching assistant Ned, who reviewed her second draft. These exchanges also demonstrate that she was more likely to weigh critically the advice from her peer reviewer than the advice from the teaching assistant.

Although Penny was satisfied with her field research, she was not satisfied with her presentation of it in her first draft. Her study examined how the dieting habits of wrestlers affected their social lives. She came up with that question because her boyfriend was a wrestler and she had some firsthand knowledge of it. She’d interviewed five wrestlers and their coach and felt she’d gotten a good deal of information from them, so she didn’t feel there were many

limitations to her study. Still, the issue of limitations and her authority as a researcher arose in her first draft and Tom's response to it, specifically in the Data Analysis and Conclusion. If you look at the two excerpts from the Data Analysis section (Figure 2), you can see that Penny included comments about herself as the researcher. Neither in this section nor in the Conclusion did she mention any other limitations of her study.

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The Effect Dieting Has on Wrestlers' Social Interactions

Data Analysis:

Although not all of the questions asked were directly related to the topic of wrestlers diets and the effect posed on their social life, they were helpful to me, because of the lack of basic knowledge I had on the subject. I now understand the sport to a much fuller extenet.

.....

[Commenting on one of the wrestlers:] Dieting and wrestling in general effected his relationship with hes girlfriren. "She hated it," he said. I tried to get in touch with her, to duscuss her view but was unable to reach her.

Conclusion:

It is very important for wrestlers to make thier weight class. These wrestlers social lives were radically effected by their dieting. . . .

In addition the converse was also true, social interactions with friends effect how the athletes chose to lose thier weight. This is seen in how some wrestlers, despite the coaches advice will eat only dinner instead of breakfast or lunch. *This is because* dinner tends to be a more social meal. . . .

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Figure 2. Penny's First Draft for Writing 2, Descriptive Field Study (Excerpts Transcribed as Written).

In his peer review, Tom made the following comments relevant to these sections:

*Data Analysis:* First paragraph not needed.

*Conclusion:* Conclusion is okay but you should maybe talk about problems you may have had with the study in terms of reliability of data and problems due to the design of the study. Recommend other questions that might be asked in another study.

His comments on the Data Analysis section made no explicit reference to the researcher's authority and he gave no reason for suggesting that the first paragraph be omitted. His advice about the conclusion seemed to reflect his assumption about a convention of the genre: acknowledge limitations and pose questions for future research. Tom may have developed this notion from his other readings or classes. In this class, although neither the written assignment nor Forman's explanations in class included these injunctions, the published sample that was distributed did. It ended with the sentence: "Further research is required to test these expectations." As you will see, Penny had a different view about this convention.

In her second draft, Penny made two deletions in the Data Analysis section. Both reflect her attempts to present herself in a new role, one where she had some authority: that of a professional writing to other professionals, not a student to a teacher. First, consistent with Tom's advice, she dropped the first paragraph in the Data Analysis. When we asked her why, she didn't acknowledge that Tom had suggested it. Instead she said the paragraph was to her what she called an "anthroapology": "I'm sorry I did this, I'm sorry if you don't like it, but I did it because—and I try not to put that in my paper." She said she saw it used in "every single anthropology paper I've ever seen" and she didn't like it. Penny saw this as an instance of something she'd seen in professional writing and wanted to avoid. There are two things to note in this exchange: Penny did not acknowledge Tom's advice, although her action was consistent with it; and she explained her decision by drawing on a broader context of her perceptions of the writings of professional anthropologists.

In writing her second draft, Penny also made a self-initiated decision to delete the comment she'd included in the first draft about trying to contact one of the wrestler's girlfriends. When we asked her why, she told us that "it was too personal. This was almost like 'so forgive me, I really wanted to get. . . .' As I started to get to know Sylvia and Ned, I didn't really think I had to prove to them that I was trying to do everything I possibly could to make this paper perfect. You know, some teachers you feel like you have to show them that even though it didn't come out, you tried to do it. But I thought once I got through the paper it was apparent that I had done the research as much as I could, so I think, I really didn't need to do that."

This issue of shifting from presenting one's self as a student to a professional is one, we think, many students in upper-division courses struggle with and is one that entails more substantial questions than whether to use first-person pronouns. As Penny's example shows, it entails as well questions about how to justify research decisions and major claims. (See also Herrington 344–54.) In this course, a number of factors of the class helped students work on this transition for themselves. Most obviously, the assignment did so by asking students to assume the role of practicing anthropologists throughout their research and writing. Another factor was doing the revisions, which gave students occasion to reflect on their own work and try out different options if they wished. A third and particularly important factor was the specific classroom relation students perceived between themselves and the professor, one where some authority and assumption of competence was conveyed to them.

Following her peer's suggestion, Penny expanded the conclusion with paragraphs commenting on one difficulty she had with the study and identifying questions that remained. (See Figure 3.) She explained that in an interview "Tom had said to me that I need to put some questions in. . . . I didn't know why I really needed to do that, but I said, 'All right, I'm tired. . . . If I do this, then I can be finished with this.' So I put in some questions." But she also said, "I didn't like that—but I thought maybe I should put it in because

it was good in Tom's paper." Here, Penny quite honestly admits a choice many of us make at times: we're tired or out of time, so we take the path of least resistance. Even so, she is thinking critically, trying to decide what is appropriate—here on the basis of what she'd read in Tom's draft. Everything is not an "anthroapology."

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Data Analysis: [deletes both of the sentences cited in Figure 2]

Conclusion:

It is very important for these wrestlers to make their weight class. These wrestlers social lives were radically affected by wrestling. . . . The converse was also true, social interactions with friends affected how the athletes chose to lose their weight. Despite the coaches advice some wrestlers will eat only dinner instead of breakfast or lunch. *It is likely that this is because* dinner tends to be a more social meal.

.....

Once the study got underway, it went rather smoothly. The wrestlers were difficult to contact but, when I did get to speak to them, they seemed very interested to speak on the subject and were very helpful.

Several questions still remain and were unanswerable in the time given for this study. ie. How does dieting effect the athletes sex life? What were the friends and girlfriends side of this story.

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Figure 3. Penny's Second Draft for Writing 2 (Excerpts Transcribed as Written).

The teaching assistant reviewed the second draft, making two comments relevant to these sections. The first was in his summary comments: "Tighten up your conclusion. It rambles." The second comment was a question—"Did you ask them?"—written in the margin next to the underlined phrase in Penny's second draft: "It is likely that this is because. . . ."

In the third draft, Penny changed the sentence lead from "It is likely that . . ." to "I hypothesize that . . . but this question should be studied in fuller detail." She explained the change to "hypothesize": "I thought about it . . . and I wasn't too sure. He [the TA] probably even—probably realized that I wasn't too sure about it." She decided to add the comment about needing further study, so she could cut the questions she'd added at the end. She said that the TA's comment to "tighten up your conclusion" encouraged her to cut the final paragraphs. Not surprisingly, the TA's comment seemed to carry more weight than the student's did; it also fit with Penny's own inclinations. This exchange shows Penny's process of negotiation in action: she added something on the basis of advice from Tom and her reading of his paper, something that went against her own inclination and her assessment of other anthropological writing; but she didn't take this advice uncritically and ultimately modified it considerably with a substitute that better fit her sense of how she wanted to present herself and her study.

*Jim and His Peer-Review Exchanges*

Jim's drafts and peer-review exchanges for the third and fourth writings in the course illustrate some of the same characteristics that were at work in Penny's writing, particularly the reciprocal nature of peer exchanges and the active decision-making throughout the process. The dominant concerns are different, however, given differences in Jim and Penny and differences in the assignments.

Jim was a first-semester senior. He didn't perceive himself to be that good a writer, telling us in an interview that "I don't have a strong background in English." He said that in high school, "I wasn't really into writing. It was just take the English requirements." He began college at a community college where he took a writing course that he described as "not very structured. It was more getting the ideas going."

He said he was least confident about "analytical writing" and most confident with "basically descriptive-type work." That self-assessment was borne out in his descriptive field study, which both he and Forman felt lacked sufficient interpretation. As Jim said, "It was descriptive, but we were trying to find why, basically." It was in analyzing "why" that his field report fell short. As he approached the third writing, the professional journal research article, his primary aim was to be more analytic.

For this writing, students were to write a "research article of the type generally published in a scholarly journal" such as *American Anthropologist* or *Food and Foodways*. In other words, they were to write as specialists to other specialists. Forman stressed that it was to be "professional in tone" and "more analytic, more theoretical, more 'why' oriented" than their previous paper, the field study. In writing their first drafts, the major problem students struggled with was foregrounding their own interpretations and not getting overwhelmed by all the published research they were drawing on. Having finished their first drafts, many felt they'd not yet succeeded. Still, they were able to assist one another for revising. Their sense of their own difficulties and their support for one another are evident in the following exchange between Jim and Peter, a second-semester junior.

Jim's paper was titled "The Validity of the Maritime Theory on the Development of Early Complex, Societies on the Coast of Peru." He chose this issue because he was interested in archaeology and, along with Peter, was taking a course on South American archaeology. In his peer-review comments to Jim, Peter focused on matters of analysis. He made a global comment asking Jim to work more of his own interpretation into the paper:

In the data analysis section and archaeological section, try to breathe more of your own insights into the situation. At times it seems as though the paper is a statement about Wilson and Moseley's arguments and not your own. . . . My paper in retrospect probably has the same shortcomings.

Note that Peter's comment reflects on his own work as well as Jim's. Acting on this global advice, Jim decided for himself on the particular revisions he would make. Most significantly, he added more of his own interpretive comments to open and conclude paragraphs that discussed various research findings. For instance, at the end of one paragraph, he dropped this sentence reporting on a claim that is counter to his argument: "Moseley (1975) doubts that the small amounts of maize found at the site of Aspero had anything to do with the development of maize on that site." Instead, he put it with other claims that presented both sides of the argument and ended the paragraph with this sentence:

Although more archaeological excavation is needed to determine the role of domesticated plants, one cannot dismiss the fact that Preceramic peoples did use maize and other crops to a limited degree at a time when they were supposedly totally dependent on marine resources.

When we asked him why he made this change, he did not explicitly acknowledge Peter's advice although his explanation was consistent with it. He explained that the Moseley sentence "doesn't really help me at all. . . . I'm trying to sway the people, so to speak." As this comment suggests with its focus on 'what I'm trying to do,' Jim had moved from trying to summarize others' positions to making his own argument.

Jim's second draft was reviewed by Ned, the teaching assistant. Their exchange illustrates how Jim, like Penny, weighs advice critically. In this instance, however, the advice came from the teaching assistant, not a peer. Commenting on the draft, Ned was generally positive. Still, he made a few suggestions, including that Jim specify dates in some places and elaborate some sections. Jim followed these suggestions. In one instance, however, he decided not to. Ned had asked Jim to consider whether trade could have been a factor in the development of these societies. Jim decided not to add a section on trade, saying "that's not a part of this paper. That's going to open up—I don't have room for it [referring to limitations on the length of the paper]. I don't really have the time to do it." So, for a number of reasons, including substantive ones, Jim elected to reject Ned's advice. In short: he felt free to decide for himself which advice from the teaching assistant he would follow. We feel he was more inclined to trust his own judgment because he also had Peter's peer review to give him another point of reference. As Jim commented when he explained why he didn't follow the TA's advice about considering trade, "I just rewrote it with the peer critique."

When Jim reviewed Peter's draft, he advised Peter on the same matter he had difficulty with: interpretation. In one comment, he attempted to prompt Peter's interpretation by posing questions:

On p. 4, the Central Ohio River Valley. You say when increased use of Mesoamerican cultigens (corn, beans, etc.) occurred, a clear decline in health results, which you show was part of the cycle of declining health

throughout the time and area. My question: What was the health of the people *before* maize was introduced as opposed to the health of the people after maize use? Was the trend of declining health linked, at least partially to population densities or was it totally based on subsistence use? This may be an area you could touch on in your paper.

Peter marked this comment with a check and made a note to himself in the margin: "Mention health of both populations to illustrate subs. change being a factor." In his revision he added information that would help make his point.

This same kind of reciprocal support was evident between Jim and Peter with the fourth paper, the popular media article. For this paper, they worked with the same material as they did for the third paper, but recast it for a popular magazine such as *Smithsonian* or *Natural History*. Forman saw this writing as an important part of learning to be anthropologists. As she explained to them in class, if anthropologists aren't able to explain their work to a wider audience, then they won't be able to affect decisions and action in the world.

For this writing, Forman introduced the strategy of using a "hook" at the beginning to get readers' interests, e.g., an anecdote that might personalize the issue for readers. Getting an effective hook was a concern for many, both in their own drafts and in their review of one another's drafts. Peter commented to Jim:

Obviously you know what you're talking about in the paper, but you need a hook desperately. I did not see one comment as to why the work is interesting and/or important. I know it's not always easy to come up with a hook, but the paper suffers greatly w/o one.

Jim made a similar observation about Peter's draft, but also offered a suggestion:

You need to stress the hook more. I think it is best stated on the top of p. 4 ("agriculture can be functional or dysfunctional, depending on the circumstances.") Perhaps you could pose this as a question in the introduction and answer it in the conclusion. I admit this is a simplistic tactic, but as the paper is intended for a non-anthropological audience, simplicity is best.

Peter followed Jim's advice.

That Peter and Jim followed each other's advice is not so much the point here, though. The more important point is that during peer review they were advising each other on matters that they were working on themselves as writers. In the third paper, their primary focus was on the problem of synthesizing and interpreting research information to make one's own claims. In the fourth paper, their focus was more on a rhetorical problem of adapting a technical, highly specialized article for a non-specialist audience. In both cases, these were matters Forman felt were important to learning to think and write as anthropologists.



## Closing Observations

The examples and comments of these students document the critical thinking that can occur in peer-review exchanges as well as the reciprocal and authority-assuming learning it encourages. Revising one's own draft and reviewing another's draft move students from passive roles of receivers and demonstrators of knowledge to more active roles in shaping their own ways of thinking and writing.

The reason peer review worked as it did in this course lies in large part in the procedures Forman used in the course and in her view of students. Through the course procedures, Forman maintained an effective balance between structure and autonomy. For each writing, she provided structure by giving detailed assignments defining the issue and conventions for the genre. She provided autonomy after the first writing by allowing each student to choose the particular issue she/he would investigate. Further, for each assignment, Forman provided guidelines and samples from professional journals to illustrate a range of approaches for writing. These samples and, equally important, drafts written by others in the class gave students a context from which to decide for themselves how to proceed—as writers and as reviewers of one another's work.<sup>5</sup> To encourage experimentation, Forman deferred grading until portfolios were due at the end of the semester and allowed students to do additional revisions if they wished. As she explained in the course syllabus, "We do not want to discourage you when you are truly trying to improve your understanding and skills—even if, at the moment, your efforts are not producing optimal results."

Individual autonomy was encouraged in the context of collaboration. Indeed, the aim of collaboration with peers was not to reach group consensus on ideas or ways of writing. It was, instead, for individuals to consult with others and, in the social context of sharing ideas and drafts, fashion their own ways of proceeding. Forman took it as a sign of success that most exercised critical judgment in assessing their own and others' drafts and the peer advice they received. Pointing to this critical assessment as a primary rationale for peer review, Forman commented:

I think they take each other's comments seriously, but not uncritically. Whereas they're inclined to take my comments uncritically. . . . So, I think they're more thoughtful about their dealing with those kinds of comments than they are about the instructor's comments. And I think that, pedagogically, that's a very useful experience.<sup>6</sup>

For her, peer review was pedagogically useful in the same way as the descriptive field study. To use her words, both were "empowering devices" that fit with her philosophy for her teaching: "The responsibility is basically on the student to learn and my role is to find out effective and interesting ways to encourage them into assuming that responsibility." From what we observed and heard from students, a main reason that they took on this responsibility

was that Forman conveyed she believed they were capable of good work—as aspiring anthropologists and writers—and she expected it of them. They viewed peer review and redrafting as a chance to assist one another and improve their drafts before giving them to Forman or the teaching assistant. As one student said, “She somehow conveys this impression that she has high expectations. So, it’s almost intimidating, but she’s not intimidating as a person. She’s sensitive to the students, but she really has a way of getting you to work at your highest level.”

Forman’s belief in her students’ capabilities came through during an interview as she tried to pinpoint why peer review seems to be successful in her courses:

These are adult people, not fully developed people, but they’re adult people and they’re capable of putting the effort into this if they want to. And they have a kind of autonomy and control in that and they seem to understand that. . . . Students are sufficiently sensitive to those power messages that undercut the process: “It doesn’t matter what I say or what my peers say to me. This is not really a significant part of the process because really all the power is over here.” And what I’m trying to say is that not all of the power is in my hands. Some of the power is in their hands. Not all of it, but some of it. And they know they can make of it what they will. And I think as long as they perceive that, they do pretty well with it.

By conveying to them her belief that they could be helpful to one another and giving them some “autonomy and control,” Forman helped students believe in themselves and their abilities. Penny commented on the feeling of “knowing you can help somebody else. It’s the confidence thing you know. If you know you can help somebody else make their paper better, then you know you obviously have some sorta talent or some sort of, you know, good ideas.”<sup>7</sup>

It is important that we recognize the value of developing that confidence and authority and creating occasions for students to make the kinds of decisions they were making in this class—decisions that carried forward their own thinking, decisions that encouraged them to reflect on their own conduct as researchers and how they would present themselves to others.

That kind of learning *can* be accomplished with peer review. Whether it does will in large part depend on teachers. It means that the primary concern when initiating peer review in a class is not to teach students how to critique written drafts—that’s secondary; it is first to create a classroom environment where we give students the gift of having some responsibility—some authority for their own learning. To do that means first believing that students can exercise that responsibility productively. They can.<sup>8</sup>

## Notes

1. Our information is derived from a semester-long field study of this class. We observed nearly every class session and participated in all small-group discussions. We focused on nine

students chosen to represent a range of experiences as writers and students of anthropology. From these nine students, we collected and analyzed drafts and final versions of all writings and both the written peer critiques they did for others and the ones they received. Consequently, for the analysis of peer critiques, we had responses from eighteen students for each writing. We also interviewed each case-study student twice, asking particularly about specific changes students had made in successive drafts for each writing. We conducted comparable interviews with Professor Forman and her teaching assistant. Finally, we administered a questionnaire to all students at both the beginning and end of the semester (25 students). We also had access to students' course evaluations for this semester and the previous one.

In this essay, we use pseudonyms for the students and the teaching assistant.

2. The first and fourth claims in particular reinforce two primary assumptions about the value of collaborative learning. It can decentralize authority so that students assume more authority for their own learning instead of being passive followers of a teacher-authority (Bruffee, "Way Out"; Trimbur, "Collaborative"). And it can create a situation conducive for individuals to test out and share their ideas and ways of writing with their peers (Bruffee, "Writing").

3. For another description of this course and the university's writing program, see Forman et al. Even though this is a writing-intensive course, we feel that the values of the peer review observed in this course can extend to "regular" courses as well, where there are fewer writings, fewer drafts for each writing, and less in-class attention to matters of writing. For example, Professor Forman reports that peer review has also worked well in an Introduction to Anthropology course she has taught. Steffens writes of using peer review in an undergraduate history course. In *Programs that Work*, a number of teachers from various disciplines report on using peer review in their courses.

4. We analyzed the peer-review responses in two ways. First, we did a content analysis of the written peer critiques for each writing. For this analysis, we trained two readers to read and classify each comment, following a scoring guide we had developed. Their percentage of agreement for all critiques averaged above 80%. This analysis showed that students focused on such matters as interpretation, clarity, organization, development, correctness, and rhetorical matters of *ethos* and effectiveness with an audience. Further, it showed that the nature of their comments changed with the particular demands of each writing. For example, for Writing 2, the descriptive field report, they focused on providing adequate backing for assumptions and how to acknowledge limitations of their research; for Writing 3, the professional journal article, they focused on interpretation; and for Writing 4, the popular media article, they focused on rhetorical effectiveness for readers not trained as anthropologists.

For each of the case-study students, we also studied their drafts and peer and professor critiques to analyze the nature of their revisions. We supplemented this information with interview comments.

5. Recall also that for peer-review exchanges, Forman presented general guidelines, but gave students the latitude to say what they wanted in each exchange. Many teachers and researchers point to similar factors as central to effective peer review. For example, both Atwell and Freedman use the term "ownership" to make the point that students need to be granted more autonomy for their writing and learning. Both stress as well that the teacher should provide guidance—but not prepackaged formulas—without taking ownership away from students. Also see Gere (99–112), and in reference to collaboration, Bruffee, "Way Out" and Trimbur, "Collaborative" (101–06).

6. In a critique of collaborative learning, Trimbur argues that the aim of collaboration need not be consensus that results in accommodation with peers or to existing conventions. Indeed, he argues that collaborative learning can be a "powerful instrument to generate differences" ("Consensus" 603). In one respect, we can see such differences in the exchanges amongst students in this course. As we have said, the peer-review exchanges were not intended to generate consensus on ways of writing, but rather to allow for diversity as individual students decided for themselves how they would follow conventions. Recall Penny and the "anthropology." Trimbur goes further to advocate a "critical practice of collaborative learning" where courses focus on identifying and transforming "the dominant power relations that organize the production of knowledge" (603). That was not an explicit aim of this course, although the traditional power relation of teacher to student was clearly altered by the ways Forman gave students authority for their own learning. Further, in class discussions, Forman made a point of explaining

conventions associated with anthropological genres as just that: social "conventions," not ideals of "good writing" that could not be questioned. In this way, her approach was nearer that described by Myers: she taught students the forms of academic writing in anthropology, without "assuming there is anything liberating about these forms or about academic discourse" (170). Also, by creating assignments where students tried to use some of these conventions to explain their own research and by encouraging students to discuss them, she helped create a situation conducive to students' reflecting critically on them.

7. Penny's comment reinforces Gebhardt's claim that we should recognize the "tangle of technical and emotional matters" writers struggle with and, in turn, recognize the emotional as well as the intellectual benefits of peer feedback (71). It is his view—one we support—that advocates of collaborative learning too often stress the intellectual aspects of it and neglect the emotional ones (70).

8. We wish to thank Sylvia Forman, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and the graduate teaching assistant and students in her Fall 1988 Writing in Anthropology course for their time, good nature, and insights. We acknowledge also the helpful responses we received from readers of our earlier drafts, particularly Marcia Curtis, Peter Elbow, and Christine Plette.

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**ANTH 134: Medical Anthropology**  
**Midterm Exam**

Choose one of the following postulates and argue for or against it in 2-3 typed, double-spaced pages. It must be saved as a Word document, and typed in 12 point Times New Roman. All citations must follow the AAA Style Guide (discussed in the syllabus). You should not include a bibliography, title or cover page; your name and section must appear at the top of page 1. Your document must be submitted via eCommons by [date] at 6 PM.

Strong answers will discuss theories from 2 articles and will provide and *analyze* 2 examples each from 3 books (Porter, Martin, Langford, Zhan, and Flint). That means you will have 2 discussions of articles, plus a total of 6 examples from the books. Examples may be paraphrased, but you must include a citation for its location in the book. Analysis should follow your argument, and demonstrate how the example provided supports your claims.

1. Integral medicine produces scalar levels upon which it operates. In producing and acting upon these scales it reflexively produces its power and authority.
2. Integral medicine's authority depends on rendering distinctions between the normal, pathological and the natural.
3. Science is politics by another means. Scientific power and authority is based upon the power non-scientists accord to it. Scientists, to be powerful, must also be politicians.

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A point of clarification: When I say you should be using examples from the texts, what I mean is that you should be drawing on the empirical material that the anthropologists and historians are providing you to support their claims. So, you should be focusing on the 'cases' they provide you -- interviews, descriptions of places & events, documents & advertisements, descriptions of material culture, etc. This necessarily means you'll be paraphrasing the author's work to fit their case into a sentence or two. What you *should not* be doing is simply quoting a passage from a text to support your claim -- especially an argumentative passage that relies on evidence for its power. Instead, quote (or paraphrase) the evidence. If you have any questions, please post them in the Forum (there's a new topic for Midterm Questions).

### Example #1

Anth 134: Medical Anthropology  
Midterm

Integral medicine does not produce however operates the existing on the scalar levels which produces its power and authority. Integral medicine depends on the social constructions of a society to act on the scalar levels. The scalar levels are what Scheper-Hughes and Lock calls the three bodies: individual body, social body, and body politic (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987: 6). The way these levels work is by the ideals set by a society (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987: 7). This relates to Taussig's idea of reification. Evidence of this can found in .

Scheper-Hughes and Lock develop this idea of the three bodies. The individual body is the actual experience of the body. The social body is how a society and culture see the body. What a society idealizes and values. The body politic is the control of the body both individual and collectively (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987: 7). Scheper-Hughes and Lock believe that medicalization classifies the social to biological (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987: 10). The idea is that the standard are placed by society at each aspect of the three bodies. The body politic affects the social body which in turn affects the individual body. The body politic is conducting the regulation and surveillance of the body therefore people are trying to control the body to fit the ideas of the social body. In the social body there is an ideal that people are reaching for that no one reaches (Lecture 10/3). This ideals and surveillance of the body affect the individual bodies ideals. Creating a new regulation or ideal affect the body thus giving control to those who change or regulate the changes.

Taussig discusses this idea of reification which is thingification organized around society. Meaning that people place meaning to objects, experiences, etc. However, the meaning placed on an object is subjective. Based on the society and culture is the meaning placed on the object are culturally based. Significance can change over time and are determined by the diagnostician (Taussig 1980 :87). The power to determine the condition of a person is given to physician therefore giving them a power over the patient. Taussig states that the relationship between a doctor and patient is social interaction as

well as a technical one, which reinforces the culture's power. That a sick person is subject to manipulation and moralism by the doctor. The doctor has the power to enter a patient's psyche and cause destruction (Taussig 1980: 86-87).

An example of how the scalar levels play a role can be found in Emily Martin's *Flexible Bodies*. She discusses how her friend Bernard was HIV+ and decided to have acupuncture. He was getting experimental treatment by request of his family yet he was ready to accept his pending death. The family had these social ideas about treatment while he who had been going through the diseases was ready to accept the truth. Alternative practices are not all seen as acceptable however some alternatives are seen as acceptable. Since alternative medicines are some that are seen as acceptable by most of a society then the whole scalar levels change to accept the certain alternative treatments. For Bernard the biomedical physicians were focused on cure while Patricia the acupuncturist focused on the patient. (Martin 1994: 83-86). The physicians believe they have authority over alternative treatments. There is a reification of medicine. One is seen as having more power over another and classification of alternative medicine is made. It makes alternative seem as if it should be last resort.

Also in Martin's book, she discusses how average people explain the immune system. Most of the people have the same responses (Martin 1994: 65-67). The media has influenced their ideas of immunity. Martin became interested in the depiction of the military analogy. These ideas create reification and affect the scalar levels. These ideas about how to stay healthy are passed through the levels. Controlling the ideas at each level.

In Mei Zhan's book, she discusses how people come from all over the world to study Chinese medicine. Ideas of medicine as both Scheper-Hughes and Lock and Taussig agree is relative. Zhan mentions how when the nurses in the acupuncture area are asked where they could find Chinese medicine they would point towards Internal Medicine (Zhan 2009:5). Here in the U.S. acupuncture is considered Chinese medicine. This would of course have a different affect to the scalar levels of each country. Who has authority is relative as well depending on the country. She goes on to mention how

when patient get nervous when they see foreigners in the treatment room and ask if they should trust them with needles then nurse responses that people come from all over to study Chinese medicine(Zhan 2009:5). This shows how the nurses use their authority to make patients trust the treatments. This idea that foreigners can not conduct Chinese medicine properly is presented affecting the scalar levels which the nurses must correct using their authority. People are trusting the nurses because they hold authority over them. They have more knowledge about the treatment and what is occurring in the hospital. This calms the fears of the patient at the individual level and affects the other levels because they idea that foreigners come to learn the correct way to perform Chinese Medicine is put in place.

In Karen Flint's book *Healing Traditions*, Flint discusses how the Zulu Chiefs had power of medicine. The chief or king had the role of ruler and dealt with medicine to help the Chief (Flint 2008: 72). In this society it is normal for the chief to have so much power and use medicine for help themselves. The Chief has authority on medicine. They saw themselves as having political, medical, and divine powers (Flint 2008:73). They regulate at the body politic and social body therefore affect the ideas of the individual. They have full authority because they control all aspect of the body. They can use it to benefit themselves.



## **Example #2**

Anthro 134

Integral medicine produces scalar levels upon which it operates. In producing and acting upon these scales it reflexively produces its power and authority. There are different scales in which our bodies are influenced and react. Based on these scales we provide authority to those we deem experts and with that power. The power is the knowledge that our experts control and which we know very little if anything. The power distribution is disproportionate leaving the individual powerless and forced to adhere to the professional's recommendations.

The scales are individual, the social and the political bodies. The individual is responsible for detecting their own health or sickness. They depend upon their own intuitions and sensory which varies from person to person. The social is the model of health that represents the whole, and sickness is the dysfunction or problem affecting society. The political is the control or regulation and surveillance of the social and individual bodies (Lock and Schéper-Hughes 1987:7)

The Medicalization of problems has given the political body of integral medicine power over individuals and society. Problems have become defined in medical terms, language, and framework leading to intervention by medicine to treat them (Conrad 1992:211). Medical professionals being the only people able to decipher this information take control over the individual and social bodies.

Medical professionals maintain their power by giving only their peers legitimacy. They see no value in non-specialists and lay people's views or opinions. Medical professionals would prefer for them to stay out of this arena (Martin 1994:4). By keeping people out of the medical circle the power they control gives them authority over their patients.

Science in the view of the scientists is above everything else, the everyday world and laboratory are two separates that are not connected. This shows how the political body believes itself have more authority and power over the other two. Nonscientists and alternative practitioners see it much differently and very connected (Martin 1994:96). This shows the alternative views yet the scientists still hold more power and legitimacy than the others.

Individualization in modern research does not consider the individual but compares them to others and certain criteria. (Langford 2002:166) This is how authority is passed down the scale, with the political body doing the research and making the rules they create the norms, giving the social body power over the individual.

Some doctors use their celebrity or create an ambiance that makes the individual feel as though a practitioner has legitimate authority. The quack Langford writes about had many articles published and pictures all over his office exemplifying his legitimacy giving him authority. Even though he did not have the credentials, he created a type of magic in which the individual had no or little understanding of his practice which gave him authority and power over his patients (2002:201).

Zhan discusses the differences in the views between Chinese and Biomedicine. In this she illustrates the fact that Biomedicine gets its authority from science while Chinese medicine is recognized for its "clinical miracles." Here we see two types of authority one through the magic of science and one through the magic of being the other medicine that sometimes cures what biomedicine cannot (2009:94).

In order for a medicine to have any authority it has to be recognized as so by the ones making the rules for science. Traditional Chinese medicine can only be seen as legitimate if it

plays by the same rules that biomedicine does. For it to gain authority the practitioners adopt the same methods used in Biomedicine to give power and authority to their practice (Zhan 2009:114).

For integral medicine to get its authority it has to be at the top of the scale. It does this by making its own language, techniques, and tests. The lower bodies on the scale are subjugated to accepting this as the authority which in turn gives it power over the rest. It depends on these scales to maintain and extend its authority. The authority is passed down through the levels decreasing as it gets closer to the individual.

ANTH 134 Midterm Grading Rubric – Fall 2011

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Final Score: \_\_\_\_\_/16

Does the answer conform to the expectations of the assignment? Yes/No

Does the answer have a defensible thesis? Yes/No

Does the answer have logically organized topic sentences? Yes/No

Answering No to any of the above questions results in -1 point per No.

Adjustment: \_\_\_\_\_

**Ethnography References** maximum value of 12 points: \_\_\_\_\_/12

Flint, Karen. *Healing Traditions*

0	1	2
0	1	2

Langford, Jean M. *Fluent Bodies*

0	1	2
0	1	2

Martin, Emily. *Flexible Bodies*

0	1	2
0	1	2

Zhan, Mei. *Other-Worldly*

0	1	2
0	1	2

**Article References** maximum value of 4 points \_\_\_\_\_/4

Armstrong, David. "The Rise of Surveillance Medicine."

0	1	2
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Barthes, Roland. "Semiology and Medicine."

0	1	2
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Bivins, Roberta. "Pragmatism, Pluralism and the (Im)Patient Consumer."

0	1	2
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Conrad, Peter. "Medicalization & Social Control"

0	1	2
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Davis, Lennard. *Enforcing Normalcy*

0	1	2
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Good, Byron J., and Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good. "Learning Medicine"

0	1	2
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Healy, David. "The New Medical Oikumene."

0	1	2
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**ANTH/FMST 148**  
**Spring 2010**  
**Essay Assignment #2**

The Nobel Peace Prize Committee, which selected Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank as the recipients of the prize in 2006, made the following comment in their press release announcing the award: "Micro-credit has proven to be an important liberating force in societies where women in particular have to struggle against repressive social and economic conditions." The committee's statement reflects the belief, widely held by development workers, government officials, and concerned global citizens, that microcredit is inherently empowering, especially for women. However, Yunus' approach is not without its critics and his claims about microcredit's effectiveness have been repeatedly challenged. Drawing on at least three class sources, discuss the basic premises of the Grameen Bank approach to poverty alleviation and women's empowerment and, providing specific examples, explain possible critiques of the microcredit approach.

Essays should be five pages, double-spaced, with standard formatting and margins and appropriate citation. Essays without citations will not be accepted. Please number pages. You should complete a rough draft of your essay and bring **two** copies for the Writing Workshop on Friday, May 21<sup>st</sup>. Final drafts are due on **Monday, May 24<sup>th</sup> in class**. Late papers will not be accepted.

Early Draft *Essay Assign. # 2*  
*Microfinance*

There is a big global problem with poverty that affects every country in the world, including rich ones and poor ones. Microcredit is seen to be the best method to alleviate poverty today. Many believe it is a neoliberal discourse. Like Muhammad Yunus who founded the Grameen Bank in the 1970s. Yunus won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 and stresses the survival skills of the poor. He says that people in Bangladesh “were poor not because they were stupid or lazy” (50), but because of a lack of access to capital. Though Yunus is convincing some others do not see things his way. Aminur Rahman, for instance, thinks that the Grameen Bank increases violence towards women in rural Bangladesh.

Women make up 95 per cent of Grameen Bank borrowers. Apparently, “poor women see further and are willing to work harder to lift themselves and their families out of poverty” (72). Yunus bases this claim on the assumption, that women always doing reproductive work, ignoring age and other intersections of identity, and have an innate orientation around their children, never acting for themselves (Moodie). In this sense, even though he acts like he is liberating them, he actually supports traditional views of hierarchy. Yunus tells a story of a divorced woman named Mufia, who did not have the money to sustain her bamboo business. She was forced to be a beggar. Begging is a big problem in Bangladesh, especially because Bangladesh has many ecologically disastrous floods due to erosion in the Himalayas. Yunus writes that “Mufia is one of thousands of former beggars who are now living a dignified life because they were able to access loans

from the Grameen Bank” (68). Through a loan from the Grameen Bank, she was able to restart her business and provide for herself and her children (67-68).

Although the Grameen Bank claims to be a women’s bank, its based on a hierarchal structure in which “more than 90% of the Grameen Bank field staff—bank workers, program officers, and area managers—are men.” The Grameen Bank claims to be a women’s bank even though “The [female] borrowers must address men bank workers as ‘sir’; the real power of bank workers (men) over borrowers (women) may therefore be reinforced by cultural norms of male status” (Montgomery qtd. in Rahman, 5). Ethnic minorities also have to have honorifics. The Grameen Bank claims to be doing something revolutionary for women in Bangladesh when all they have really done is instrumentalized old hierarchal systems (Moodie).

It has been claimed that microfinance institutions “reduce domestic violence by channeling resources to families through women, and by organizing women into solidarity groups that meet regularly and make the women’s lives more visible” (Schuler qtd. in Rahman 120). There is another major claims that Rahman debunks is that the Grameen Bank reduces violence committed against women. However, he shows, because of “current practices of grassroots lending to the poor,” that they actually escalate violence against women (120). For example, he found that 60% of women borrowers do not retain control over their loan (106). These women are threatened with violence if they refuse to pass on their loan to their husband (121). The patriarchal Grameen Bank does nothing to change patriarchal social structures that allow violence against women. They claim that by simply injecting capital they can alleviate poverty and eliminate

patriarchy, when in fact they do neither, and in reality feed patriarchy. This is a tragic disaster.



Seductive Logic:  
Challenges to the Bold Claims of Microfinance Institutions

Microcredit has become widely accepted and celebrated as the solution to end poverty, empower women, and connect rural people to the world (market). It is the champion of neoliberal discourse, allegedly proving that capitalism can work for the poor as well as the rich. Muhammad Yunus, in founding the world-recognized Grameen Bank, attempts to show that poverty can be alleviated through microcredit rather than through the neoliberal boogeyman: the welfare-state. Yunus stresses the survival skills of the poor, stating they “were poor not because they were stupid or lazy,” (50) but because of a lack of access to capital. Yunus’ rhetoric seems to empower the poor, stating that they are already skilled and thus all they need is a tiny bit of credit to bring them out of poverty. It is this seductive rhetoric of empowerment to the poor and especially to that of women that veils the real, “on the ground” effects of microcredit in the villages of Bangladesh. Microcredit, at least within the methodology and structure of the Grameen Bank, does not work to alleviate poverty or empower women, but may actually have the opposite effect.

Muhammad Yunus’ approach to poverty alleviation fits neatly into neoliberal ideals of individualism. Within a neoliberal framework, the problem of poverty becomes the issue of an individual rather than that of the nation-state; the state should not bear responsibility for the welfare of its citizens. It is within this discourse of neoliberal individualism that Yunus claims “all human beings have an innate skill. I call it the survival skill” (140). Yunus uses this persuasive rhetoric to justify his claim that all that is needed to bring the poor out of poverty is the injection of capital. The poor already have skills, they just lack the capital to get their entrepreneurship started. Rather than providing skill-training for the poor, Yunus believes that with microcredit the poor can expand on their “inherent” skills, and that “it is the ability to

control capital that gives people the power to rise out of poverty” (141). Rather than focusing on social change as a solution to poverty, Yunus makes poverty a technical, almost quantifiable, problem. The poor have the power to bring themselves out of poverty; all they need is a loan from the Grameen Bank.

Another major claim by Muhammad Yunus is that the Grameen Bank project empowers women by getting them out of debt and giving them more control over their lives. The Grameen Bank targets women almost exclusively as their borrowers: 95% of Grameen Bank borrowers are women (Rahman, 5). Yunus justifies this by claiming that women are “the majority of the poor, the underemployed, and the economically and socially disadvantaged, but they more readily and successfully improve the welfare of both children and men” (72-73). Apparently, “poor women see further and are willing to work harder to lift themselves and their families out of poverty” (72). Yunus bases this claim on the assumption that women are always doing reproductive work, ignoring age and other intersections of identity, and have an innate orientation around their children, never acting for themselves (Moodie). Yunus tells a story of a divorced woman named Mufia who was forced to be a beggar because she did not have the money to sustain her bamboo business. Through a loan from the Grameen Bank, she was able to restart her business and provide for herself and her children (67-68). Yunus writes that “Mufia is one of thousands of former beggars who are now living a dignified life because they were able to access loans from the Grameen Bank” (68). Yunus’ key claim about the Grameen Bank is that their loans empower women to be able to become economically self-sufficient—independent from men—freeing them from an oppressive patriarchal culture.

Although the Grameen Bank claims that it empowers women and works against patriarchy, the very structure and methodology of the Grameen Bank is no different than other institutions that oppress women and limit their agency. In his work *Women and Microcredit in*

*Rural Bangladesh*, Aminur Rahman offers many examples as to how the Grameen Bank works in opposition to its said goals. Although the Grameen Bank claims to be a women's bank, it is based on a hierarchal structure in which "more than 90% of the Grameen Bank field staff—bank workers, program officers, and area managers—are men" (5). The Grameen Bank claims to be a women's bank even though "The [female] borrowers must address men bank workers as 'sir'; the real power of bank workers (men) over borrowers (women) may therefore be reinforced by cultural norms of male status" (Montgomery qtd. in Rahman, 5). The Grameen Bank claims to be doing something revolutionary for women in Bangladesh when all they have really done is instrumentalized old hierarchal systems (Moodie). In order to achieve feminist goals, Gita Sen and Caren Grown argue that the organizational structure of development projects must reflect feminist methodology. They write "we strongly affirm that feminism strives for the broadest and deepest development of society and human beings free of *all* systems of domination" (19); thus the organizational structure of development projects must not be hierarchical, otherwise they simply enforce patriarchy and the subordination of women.

Another major claim that Rahman debunks is that the Grameen Bank reduces violence committed against women. It has been claimed that microfinance institutions "reduce domestic violence by channeling resources to families through women, and by organizing women into solidarity groups that meet regularly and make the women's lives more visible" (Schuler qtd. in Rahman 120). However, Rahman's research shows that the Grameen Bank actually escalates violence against women because of "current practices of grassroots lending to the poor" (120). For example, Rahman found that 60% of women borrowers do not retain control over their loan (106). These women are threatened with violence if they refuse to pass on their loan to their husband (121). The Grameen Bank does nothing to change patriarchal social structures that

allow violence against women. They claim that by simply injecting capital they can alleviate poverty and eliminate patriarchy, when in fact they do neither, and in reality feed patriarchy.

In her ethnographic study “Demystifying Microcredit”, Lamia Karim shows how the Grameen Bank does not empower women and fight against patriarchy but rather depends on patriarchy to make its loan repayments. The Grameen Bank does not make loans to individuals, only to groups of five women. Yunus writes “If an individual is unable or unwilling to pay back her loan, her group may become ineligible for larger loans in subsequent years until the repayment problem is brought under control. This creates a powerful incentive for borrowers to help each other solve problems and—even more important—to *prevent* problems” (65-66). The “powerful incentive” that Yunus is referring to is tied up with what Karim calls an “economy of shame” (9). In rural Bangladesh, “Women are the traditional custodians of family honor...to lose face is the ultimate mark of dishonor” (10). Due to honor/shame codes, men are not supposed to let their women come into contact with non-kin men, but rural men allow their wives to take out loans even though these codes will be violated. Although the Grameen Bank claims to not ask for collateral, “In reality, *the collateral that Grameen and all other NGOs extract from the poor is the Bangladeshi rural woman’s honor and shame*” (16). The Grameen Bank depends on the very patriarchal structures it claims to be dismantling.

Contrary to their claims, the Grameen Bank does not alleviate poverty, and even their alleged payback rate of 98% is not accurate. Patrick Bond, in his article “Microcredit Evangelism, writes “a typical Grameen gimmick was to reschedule short-term loans that were unpaid after as long as two years instead of writing them off, letting borrowers accumulate interest through new loans simply to keep alive the fiction of repayments on the old loans” (230). Rather than letting a borrower default, the Grameen Bank simply gave them another loan so that it wouldn’t bring down their repayment rate. This “Enron-style accounting” (230) has led to a

misrepresentation around the world of the effectiveness of the Grameen Bank. The Grameen Bank's hierarchal structure puts massive pressure to keep repayment rates high, even if that means resulting to Enron-style economics. Although it appears to be alleviating poverty, microcredit is not enough.

Muhammad Yunus' rhetoric seems to suggest that all that is needed to alleviate poverty is an injection of capital into the bloodstream of the "poorest of the poor." This helps women to become economically independent from their husbands, creating an alternative economic base. Rahman believes the situation on the ground is more complicated than that. He argues that "women often tie their own interests to the success of the household unit" and this "lack of choice outside of marriage and family makes the concept of autonomy—in the sense of independent, individual existence supported by a separate income—not meaningful for most of these women" (112). The neoliberal development discourse that the Grameen Bank is framed within makes complex, systemic social problems technical problems. Rather than having to rethink social structures, neoliberal idealists simply add capital, mix, and stir.

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**ANTHROPOLOGY 194L:  
AFRICAN DIASPORA ARCHAEOLOGY  
FINAL PAPER GRADING RUBRIC**

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>1 Unacceptable (Below Standards)</b>	<b>2 Acceptable (Meets Standards)</b>	<b>3 Good (Occasionally Exceeds)</b>	<b>4 Excellent (Exceeds Standards)</b>	<b>Weight</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	Does not adequately convey topic. Does not describe subtopics to be reviewed. Lacks adequate theses statement.	Conveys topic, but not key question(s). Describes subtopics to be reviewed. General theses statement.	Conveys topic and key question(s). Clearly delineates subtopics to be reviewed. General thesis statement.	Strong introduction of topic's key question(s), terms. Clearly delineates subtopics to be reviewed. Specific thesis statement.	5%
<b>Focus &amp; Sequencing</b>	Little evidence material is logically organized into topic, subtopics or related to topic. Many transitions are unclear or nonexistent.	Most material clearly related to subtopic, main topic. Material may not be organized within subtopics. Attempts to provide variety of transitions	All material clearly related to subtopic, main topic and logically organized within subtopics. Clear, varied transitions linking subtopics, and main topic.	All material clearly related to subtopic, main topic. Strong organization and integration of material within subtopics. Strong transitions linking subtopics, and main topic.	10%
<b>Support</b>	Few sources supporting thesis. Sources insignificant or unsubstantiated.	Sources generally acceptable but not always peer-reviewed research.	Sources well selected to support thesis with some research in support of thesis.	Strong peer- reviewed research based support for thesis.	15%
<b>Archaeological Evidence</b>	Minimal use of archaeological sources. Evidence overwhelmingly historical or ethnographic	Weight of the paper is historical or ethnographic, but available archaeological sources are used appropriately	Substantial archaeological focus, yet paper sometimes trends towards a focus on historical / ethnographic sources.	Primary focus on archaeological analysis. Historical and ethnographic material used to elaborate archaeological patterns	15%
<b>Conclusion</b>	Does not summarize evidence with respect to thesis statement. Does not discuss the impact of researched material on topic.	Review of key conclusions. Some integration with thesis statement. Discusses impact of researched material on topic.	Strong review of key conclusions. Strong integration with thesis statement. Discusses impact of researched material on topic.	Strong review of key conclusions. Strong integration with thesis statement. Insightful discussion of impact of the researched material on topic.	5%
<b>Grammar &amp; Mechanics</b>	Grammatical errors or spelling & punctuation substantially detract from the paper.	Very few grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors interfere with reading the paper.	Grammatical errors or spelling & punctuation are rare and do not detract from the paper.	The paper is free of grammatical errors and spelling & punctuation.	10%
<b>Style &amp; Communication</b>	Word choice is informal in tone. Writing is choppy, with many awkward or unclear passages.	Word choice occasionally informal in tone. Writing has a few awkward or unclear passages.	Scholarly style. Writing has minimal awkward or unclear passages.	Scholarly style. Writing is flowing and easy to follow.	10%
<b>Citations &amp; References</b>	Reference and citation errors detract significantly from paper.	Two references or citations missing or incorrectly written.	One reference or citations missing or incorrectly written.	All references and citations are correctly written and present.	10%
<b>Maps &amp; Figures</b>	Maps and Figures rarely used and inappropriately labeled.	Adequate use of figures. Occasional absences, poor labeling or sourcing which detract from argument	Good use of images. Rare absences or errors in labeling or sourcing	Strong use of figures to support written argument. Figures are clear, well labeled and sources.	5%
<b>Paper Length and format</b>	In TNR 12 pt font, paper is less than 15 pages	In TNR 12 pt font, paper is 15 - 16 pages	In TNR 12 pt font, paper is 17 - 19 pages	In TNR 12 pt font, paper is 20 pages	15%

Shelly Errington, sherring@ncsc.edn

### **Advice on How to Read**

**... for class discussion; or for something you may want to use for a paper or your research in the future**

written by Shelly Errington for her students at UCSC

When you read, do you just plunge in, trudging along, as though you are starting on a long journey up a steep hill, looking only at the trail in front of you? If so, you probably dread reading your assignments for class. The easy way --and the best way, the one that will give you the most comprehension the most quickly--is to survey the hill you're going to climb before you start on your journey. You do that by flying over it quickly, following the trail, but zipping over it to see how the path is structured, what flora and fauna you'll encounter along the way, and the general characteristics of this trail and mountain. It's also helpful to look back every once in a while to figure out what you've been through, and to speculate on how that is going to lead into what you're about to traverse next.

You could call this process "skimming" (different from "speed reading"), and the point is to comprehend rather than get stuck in details. You'll remember details better if you understand what place they have in the overall landscape.

Here are some tips for articles and then for books:

### **How to Skim, then Read, an Article for Class Discussion**

Articles in the humanities and literary social sciences (such as Anthropology) are more and more written as essays – the author reflects on something, makes an argument, and also puts in examples and illustrations in order to persuade (rather than to "prove" something). Therefore, they are likely to have a **rhetorical structure** that **begins** with an introductory section that sets the tone and puts forth the argument, giving you most of what you'll need to understand what follows. You may not understand it in depth, and you won't yet be persuaded, but you'll get the idea and you'll know what to look out for.

This opening section is like the topic sentence in a paragraph, and the rest of the article should illustrate it, spell it out, explicate it, complicate it, persuade you of it, expound on it, and, finally, clinch it. Read the opening section carefully and ask yourself what the article will be about. It is worth looking up words or phrases or movements or isms or events or names you don't know –use the web!

From there on out it is easy. Many writers of articles these days divide the article into sections. Read the name and the first paragraph of each section; then read and/or the first (topic) sentence in each paragraph. After this rapid survey, You'll now know not only the argument being made but also how the author proceeds to persuade you of it, and what



kinds of evidence she uses to convince you of it. You won't know the evidence or remember it, but you'll have a frame for it.

Now you can go back and make some notes, pull out some quotes, and read more carefully for the things that interest you.

When you have read enough to get the argument, understand what kind of evidence the author uses to persuade you, and pulled out a quote or two that really struck you as insightful or as emblematic of what the author is saying, you've done enough reading for many class discussions. You still need to make some notes for your records.

Now you need to think about it and make notes to yourself and for yourself. You should end up with notes on these things: (1) what is the most important idea or argument you got out of the article? Did it change your mind about something, or give you insight you didn't have before? How? (2) make a list of phrases and ideas the author uses that are unfamiliar to you. Ideally, you'll go back to puzzle out and/or look up those key ideas on the web or by reading around the phrases in the article itself. (3) Relate what you have just learned and thought to other things you know and you have thought. These juxtapositions will give you some insight and ideas for projects and for what to say in class!

Now you can go into more depth, particularly if you are a serious student and really want to understand the issues, or if you are in a seminar where you'll be on the spot, or if you want to use the article later for your own research, or if you need to do a response paper or are responsible for leading class discussion. – take notes, write down quotes, make notes to yourself about your issues, REALLY look up words and people and events you don't know. Put them on a computer or a research notebook for your future use.

### **How to Read an Article to Use in Your Research and Paper/s**

The initial method is the same as for class discussion, but with luck you will already have done that first once-over and you still have your notes on it. Re-read your notes (or go through the above instructions for scoping out the article) and then ...

Go back to the sections more deeply with questions in mind. For instance, does this author claim something I want to say in my final paper? Is there a good quote I can use? Are there any examples or story or data that will help me make my point in my final paper?

If you find something useful, either quote it completely (preferably in a file on your computer) or write yourself a note about where to find it – “see Smith 1980 p. 18 for a lengthy quote on beauty pageants” – or “Smith 1980 –p 10 ff gives 3 examples of history of beauty pageants, says didn't really happen until photog commercialization 1860s Philadelphia” etc.

You'll want to understand the article better, too, to make sure you are milking it for all it's worth. If you find a word you don't know, look it up in your desktop dictionary; or in

your browser write "define: unknownword." If it refers to a movement or character you need to understand, put in your browser "who were Jacobins?" or "cultural capital" or "habitus" or "situated knowledge" or "contact zone," enclosing them in quotes. Magically, something will come up in Wikipedia, or you'll find an article or biography or pdf or a society preserving the memory of something or other.

Keep notes on it all, preferably in a computer file. Of course, you can copy and paste from many files online – just be sure to put the url or print reference so you can use it or find it in the future.

### **How to Read a Book to Use for Your Research and Paper/s**

In this stage, you are confronted with a stack of books that are required or that you are contemplating using for a paper. Let's assume you have a stack of books you are trying to weed out so that you'll have only a few that you will draw on a lot for a research paper. Try proceeding like this:

Look at the table of contents. What's the book about? Read the Preface quickly. (Oddly, the Preface and Acknowledgments not only sometimes set the tone, but the author may tell you a very straightforward and unpretentious way how she came to write the book and what she thinks the biggest issue is that the book addresses.

Next step—read the Introduction. Pay special attention to the first paragraph and the first few pages. These set the tone and introduce, substantively, what the author is going to talk about. Sometimes the author will ease you into it, sometimes not. Where's the author coming from? What does he or she think is important about the book? Why does he or she think it is worth writing? How does he or she claim it is different in method or content from other treatments of the same or similar subject-matter?

Usually, in the introduction or first chapter, the author summarizes what each chapter does and how it contributes to the argument as a whole.) How does the author claim the book is structured? You may find that you want to read more carefully some of the chapters more than others because they are more relevant to your research paper. Where does the author claim the book will end up? You could now read the last chapter briefly or skim it to see if you think the conclusions are worth your while finding out how the author got there.

#### **Actually reading the book: Next step**

After doing the initial preview, you are in a position to know whether you want to bother putting the effort into reading this book. Do you care about not just the conclusion, but the argument the author makes to show how she got to that conclusion? Do you care about the examples and illustrations that support the argument? Will you want to use some quotes in your own paper, do you think? If so, you will decide to read the book seriously.

Then read through chapter 1, treating it like an article – flying over it, touching down when necessary. Make a few notes after each chapter, or even after each section of the chapter if it seems full of good quotes and ideas you'll want to locate in detail later.

Then read through all the other chapters doing the same thing.

**Relate the material to what you already know.** Make some notes to yourself about how this book and its argument relate to things you already know about or have thought about, or to other readings and ideas you have encountered in the course. For instance, in one class a student named Celeste mentioned the state of African trade beads sold by a family friend, and in Steiner's book (read for that class) there's a story about African trade beads. Celeste will find the background provided by Steiner especially interesting, because she already has some experience and observations with that topic. Steiner also has a lot of material on differing views of "authenticity." Ask yourself how what he says differs or is similar to the arguments made by Errington and in class, or at least, in this stage, ask yourself why the teacher assigned the book and how it might fit into what you already have learned.

**Read actively.** Now you'll really read the thing, but your fly-over means that instead of trudging into the unknown, you will be skipping and hopping and jogging and running over the path, and noticing what's on the path and on either side of you, checking out the interesting view.

Go back to Chapter 1. How does the author introduce the chapter? Jot it down. (For instance, Chapter 1 of Steiner begins with a description both of the market and with his confusion. After a few paragraphs, Steiner tells us that after several weeks of confusion and watching and talking to people, some order began to emerge in his own mind. He then gives us an overview of what he found. The rest of the chapter is a descriptive listing of the commodity outlets for African art, aside from the major market. Make a note on what those outlets are and where to find a description of them.

Go through each chapter in the same way.

*Reading "actively" means doing it by asking yourself questions and interacting with the material.* It can also mean marking the book or article if it belongs to you. I always use pencil, and I make a little mark next to an important point. I also write a capital Q next to quotable quotes that I believe especially well convey the author's point, or definition, or that sound good and that I might want to use in my own writing as a quote or paraphrase.

If you read like this --noting both the structure of the writing and its content-- you'll be able to increase your comprehension *and* the rapidity with which you read. You won't get bogged down in details, but you'll be able to locate details that you need for a paper you plan to write.

A productive way to get bogged down, however, is to look up words you don't know. At any point, but especially 1. if you want to understand the book's argument fully; 2. if you

want to do well on your GRE scores for grad school; 3. if you want to get the most from your education in these expensive times . . . look up words you don't know, and look up events, phrases, authors, theories that you don't know. Nothing could be simpler with a computer nearby. When you don't know a word (say, "behaviorism," or "positive reinforcement," go to your built-in dictionary for Word (or whatever you use) or to your browser and write define: behaviorism. You'll be taken to dictionaries, to Wikipedia, etc.

**Review and take more detailed notes.** If you are especially interested in some aspect of the book; or if you are going to have a quiz; or if you want to work on a paper that will use parts of this book; or if your teacher has given you study questions that help guide you to what is important and that you should actually remember, or be able to locate and use for an argument you'll make in the future . . . . then you'll want to review your jottings and the structure of the book as you understand it, and you'll want to write more detailed notes about those items.

\*You'll also want to copy by hand or into your computer the quotable quotes PLUS page numbers that you've marked so that you can recover them later when you write a paper.

\*And if there are important ideas that you have paraphrased, but not quoted, you'll want to make a note of what page they are on. That way you can cite them for your future paper, or look them up to review them to make sure you've gotten them right.

\*You'll also want to make sure you have a complete bibliographic information at the top of your page of notes, and that you've numbered the pages and put some identifying mark on each page so that you'll be able to figure out what book it is if the pages get separated.

\*At this stage I also write my own observations and comments in the text, but I put them into square brackets [ like so] so that I know that I'm saying it rather than the author.

Next topic: how to keep track of your notes (another handout)

## Copy Editing and Proofreading Symbols

Symbol	Meaning	Example
	Delete	Remove the <del>end</del> fitting.
	Close up	The tolerances are with <sup>in</sup> the range.
	Delete and Close up	<del>Delete</del> and close up the gap.
	Insert	The box is <sup>not</sup> inserted correctly.
#	Space	The <sup>#</sup> procedure is incorrect.
	Transpose	Remove the fitting <sup>end</sup> .
/ or lc	Lower case	The <del>E</del> ngineer and manager agreed.
	Capitalize	A representative of <u>nasa</u> was present.
	Capitalize first letter and lower case remainder	<del>G</del> ARRETT <del>P</del> RODUCTS are great.
stet	Let stand	Remove the <del>battery</del> <sup>stet</sup> cables.
¶	New paragraph	The box is full. ¶ The meeting will be on Thursday.
no ¶	Remove paragraph break	The meeting will be on Thursday. ¶ <sup>no</sup> All members must attend.
	Move to a new position	All members <del>attended</del> <sup>who were new</sup> .
	Move left	[ Remove the faulty part.
	Flush left	[ Move left.
	Flush right	] Move right.
	Move right	] Remove the faulty part.
	Center	] Table 4-1 [
	Raise	16 <sup>2</sup>
	Lower	16 <sub>2</sub>
	Superscript	16 <sup>2</sup>
	Subscript	16 <sub>2</sub>
	Period	Rewrite the procedure. Then complete the tasks.
	Apostrophe or single quote	The company's policies were rewritten.
	Semicolon	He left; however, he returned later.

Symbol	Meaning	Example
	Colon	There were three items: nuts, bolts, and screws.
	Comma	Apply pressure to the first, second, and third bolts.
	Hyphen	A valuable byproduct was created.
	Spell out	The <u>info</u> was incorrect. <u>sp</u>
	Abbreviate	The part was <u>twelve feet</u> long.
	Align	Personnel Facilities    Equipment
	Underscore	The part was listed under <u>Electrical</u> .
	Run in with previous line	He rewrote the pages) and went home.
	Em dash	It was the beginning so I thought.
	En dash	The value is 120 408.
	Set in Italics	The book was titled <u>Technical Writing Styles</u> . (ital)
	Set in bold	This is the <u>only</u> time we can offer this price. (bf)
	Wrong font	This is <u>the first step in the procedure</u> . (wf)
	Set in small caps	Set the <u>MFG REGISTER</u> to zero. (sm cap)

Meaning	Symbol	Example
Abbreviate		The part was <u>twelve feet</u> long.
Align		Personnel Facilities    Equipment
Apostrophe or single quote		The company's policies were rewritten.
Capitalize		A representative of <u>nasa</u> was present.
Capitalize first letter and lowercase remainder		<u>G</u> ARRETT <u>P</u> RODUCTS are great.
Center		]Table 4-1[
Close up		The tolerances are <u>with</u> in the range.
Colon		There were three items: nuts, bolts, and screws.

Meaning	Symbol	Example
Comma		Apply pressure to the first, second and third bolts.
Delete		Remove the end fitting.
Delete and close up		Delete and close up the gap.
Em dash		It was the beginning so I thought.
En dash		The value is 120 408.
Flush left		Move left.
Flush right		Move right.
Hyphen	-	A valuable byproduct was created.
Insert		The box is <sup>not</sup> inserted correctly.
Let Stand	stet	Remove the <del>battery</del> cables.
Lower		16 <sub>2</sub>
Lower case	/ or lc	The <del>Engineer</del> and manager agreed.
Move left		Remove the faulty part.
Move right		Remove the faulty part.
Move to a new position		All members <u>attended</u> who were new.
New paragraph	¶	The box is full ¶ The meeting will be on Thursday.
Period	○	Rewrite the procedure ○ Then complete the tasks.
Raise		16 <sub>2</sub>
Remove paragraph break	no ¶	The meeting will be on Thursday. ¶ no All members must attend.
Run in with previous line		He rewrote the pages and went home.
Semicolon	;	He left; however, he returned later.
Set in bold	<b>(bf)</b>	This is the <u>only</u> time we can offer this price <b>(bf)</b>
Set in italics	<i>(ital)</i>	The book was titled <u>Technical Writing Styles</u> <i>(ital)</i>
Set in small caps		Set the <u>MFG REGISTER</u> to zero <i>sm cap</i>
Space	#	The <sup>#</sup> procedure is incorrect.
Spell out	sp	The <u>info</u> was incorrect. sp
Subscript	<sub></sub>	16 <sub>2</sub>

Meaning	Symbol	Example
Superscript	^	19 <sup>2</sup>
Transpose	~	Remove the fitting end.
Underscore	—	The part was listed under <u>Electrical</u> .
Wrong font	wf	This is <u>the first step in the procedure</u> wf





# THE KIDS ALL WRITE

**AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE WRITING LANDSCAPE FOR  
ANTHROPOLOGY MAJORS AT UCSC, WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON THE WRITING  
ASSISTANT CENTER PROGRAM**

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Spring 2015

# THE KIDS ALL WRITE

## AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE WRITING LANDSCAPE FOR ANTHROPOLOGY MAJORS AT UCSC, WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON THE WRITING ASSISTANT CENTER PROGRAM

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## SPECIAL THANKS

To the people and organizations who have made this report possible: the faculty and students of the Department of Anthropology, especially our Writing Assistants, the Office of the VPDUE, the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), and the Chancellor's Graduate Internship Program (CGIP, 2013-2014 and 2014-2015).

## **I. Introduction and report outline**

Teaching students to write clearly and compellingly is central to the mission of the Department of Anthropology. Strong writing skills are crucial not only for student achievement in the major and the fulfillment of the mandatory Disciplinary Communication requirement, but also, and crucially, for students' professional career beyond the department. Many of our students go on into local government, law, business, teaching, and non-profit work, all of which require that they be adept with written language. This report traces the experience of UCSC anthropology students as it pertains to their writing training, resources, and struggles. Our goal is to highlight current lacunae in writing support but also to document the vital importance of the Anthropology Department's unique, one-on-one Writing Assistant Program, the only peer writing program at UCSC housed within an academic department.

The role of the anthropology Writing Assistant Program can be best evaluated when considered in relation to the educational context in which students accomplish their written work. Drawing on data from six months of surveys, interviews, and observations, this study follows the experiences of students who arrive at UCSC (often with a California public school education), enroll in various courses to complete their writing requirements, and major in Anthropology. Each stage of their education at UCSC presents a different set of writing approaches, requirements, and support. This exercise will highlight our efforts in the Department of Anthropology to keep students from "slipping through the cracks," (i.e. graduating without the skills they need) as well as the significant obstacles we face in training our majors to be skilled and effective writers.

### **Methods**

The data for Part II of this study was drawn mainly from structured interviews with experts from different departments and offices on the UCSC campus. Data for sections III-IV was largely collected via anonymous surveys from students in classes using Writing Assistants and from students who visited the Writing Assistant Center; semi-structured interviews with other important groups and individuals were also used. The main respondents were:

- Writing Assistants and students who visited the center
- Anthropology faculty, Teaching Assistants, and undergraduate majors
- Writing Program coordinators, instructors, and tutors
- Writing resource staff and instructors across campus (LSS, Oakes College, Faculty Panels)
- Career Center advisors

This ethnographic approach put together a broad picture of the variety of actors and experiences that shape student writing at UCSC. There is no ‘typical student’ here, but there is a common set of resources, requirements, and challenges with which students engage. Studies of education usually focus on a single classroom or quantitative data sets, which this study has drawn upon to confirm observed and reported trends. By considering the bigger picture, however, this study aims to document the gaps in support and preparation for undergraduate writing and the very serious implications of those deficits during and after student time at UCSC. In this perspective, the WA program is more than a departmental resource—it is an initiative geared towards instituting a cultural change in the Anthropology Department and across campus, fostering practices of collaboration and support where they are needed most.

## II. The Writing Landscape at UCSC

### 1. Students: diverse and dynamic

UC Santa Cruz's student body has changed dramatically over the last decade, both in terms of the backgrounds with which students arrive and the writing preparation they receive in high school. There is no 'typical student' at UCSC; the variety of skills, strengths, and deficits in the classroom challenges instructors across departments. However, increasingly we are finding that anthropology instructors, including professors and graduate Teaching Assistants (TAs), struggle with poor student writing on a daily basis, and in all of their classes.

We are now working to educate the first generation of students educated entirely under the auspices of the No Child Left Behind initiative. The policy's heavy emphasis on test scores and quantitative educational measures means that writing skills and awareness of writing as a process have been compromised in California and across the country. Education researchers from a variety of geographical locations and theoretical perspectives have noted the erosion of writing-based curricula. The following remark from McCarthy is representative:

**although writing is included as a component of the prescribed curriculum teachers do not necessarily use the materials; instead, they are concentrating on preparing students for the state reading tests. Writing in these contexts may be neglected altogether, denying students opportunities to engage in meaningful, purposeful projects" (McCarthy 2008: 493).<sup>1</sup>**

Referring specifically to California, Sandra Murphy finds that there is a broad consensus among scholars and professional organizations that standardized testing has "negative effects on students teachers and learning" (2003: 28). Ironically, this insight led California to adopt an innovative approach to writing instruction in the 1980s that was subsequently abandoned in favor of high-stakes testing to determine student promotion and retention in the 1990s. Tied to federal requirements under No

---

<sup>1</sup> She is here discussing a low-income school in Illinois, but the comment is representative.

**[L]ack of training  
in writing is an  
especially acute  
problem for  
students majoring  
in Anthropology,  
which is a  
discipline that  
requires critical  
thought, careful  
argumentation,  
and descriptive  
skill – primarily  
communicated  
and assessed  
through written  
work.**

Child Left Behind, high-stakes testing is now nearly universal. In the present context, teachers (and their students) are increasingly demoralized and, due to the strong relationship that now exists between scores and teacher evaluations, teaching only “to the tests,” California students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century write less, and less well, than students in the 1980s (Murphy 2003).

The lack of training in writing is an especially acute problem for students majoring in Anthropology, which is a discipline that requires critical thought, careful argumentation, and descriptive skill – primarily communicated and assessed through written work.

Students arriving from high schools with 200+ students per teacher, minimal writing expectations, and non-English speaking homes are particularly likely to come to UCSC without the language, style, and reading skills they need to be effective scholars. Instructors describe creative and inventive students who are hungry to be more critical thinkers and empowered speakers, yet fundamentally lack basic skills; resources to teach these skills are limited.

As Heather Shearer, director of the Writing Program put it, we need to seriously consider the kinds of writing support that students need, the quantity and quality of student-tutor contact required, and the resources the University is willing to invest in that skill.

## **2. Campus Requirements and Resources**

### **Initial tracking and the Writing Program**

When students first arrive at UCSC, they are sorted according to test scores or previously completed equivalents, including AP testing and community college work. While instructors and students report that this system does not always adequately recognize student abilities and needs, it does determine the writing instruction they receive.

Students who fail to satisfy the English Language Writing Requirement (ELWR) may take up to five quarters of writing intensive courses (Core Course, Writing 2, and remedial C 20, 21, 23) and meet regularly with tutors, but students who transfer into the UC system or test well will likely receive only 10 to 20 weeks of writing instruction (Core Course and Writing 2) before they are expected to write at the college level.

After completing the Core Course and Writing 2 requirements, the Writing Program provides no further support or resources to UCSC students.

### **Core Courses and ELWR tutoring**

Students who do not satisfy the ELWR in the Analytical Writing Placement Exam enroll in a college Core Course (C1), the content and focus of which varies widely depending on the instructor. Students learn a specific way of conceptualizing and composing writing assignments—this varies from one instructor to the next—which they report as satisfying some of their later instructors and frustrating others.



Students who need additional support are paired with tutors provided exclusively to students who demonstrate major writing issues. ELWR tutors describe students who struggle with language barriers and maintaining an effective work ethic despite slow progress. While there are plenty of willing tutors, there is currently insufficient funding to serve student demand. Tutors and instructors report some improvement in student writing and work, especially those students who receive additional or individualized support.

While failing the Core Course is presented to instructors as a necessary part of some students' training, it does carry larger implications for students' financial aid, scholarships, or time constraints. As long as a student produces acceptable work in their Core Course, they are promoted to Writing 2.

Should instructors assess students as requiring additional training before moving to the C2 requirement, they can enroll in one of three remedial courses:

### **Writing 20, 21, 23**

These courses address some of the key issues identified by TAs and instructors in undergraduate writing, focusing on 'The Nature of Written Discourse', 'Meaning and Style: the Sentence in Context', and 'Grammar and Rhetoric: Language and Writing'. The course objectives align directly with many of the main challenges that ESL and undertrained students face in writing at the college level, but only a fraction of students who could benefit from this kind of instruction are required to enroll.

### **Writing 2**

In Writing 2 (C2), instructors aim to prepare students for a variety of genres, balancing a syllabus that provides students with consistent feedback but also gives the instructor time to provide individual comments. The program is actively trying to expand beyond the humanities and literature approach to writing, offering courses that focus on scientific or activist writing. Many students have yet to settle into a major at this stage, and so while they can enroll in a topic of interest, it may not align with the disciplinary demands they will encounter in later studies. Most instructors do see significant improvement in writing organization, but insist that the quarter is too short to sufficiently develop college writing skills.

### **Writing Program insights**

While there is no 'typical student', the faculty and staff at the Writing Program report the following as recurring problems with incoming student writing:

difficulty recognizing and reproducing the codes and standards of academic genres, i.e. an analytical essay, research paper, or reflection piece

gaps in basic grammatical rules and problems with sentence structure

lack of familiarity with strategies to improve their own work: multiple drafts, proofreading, etc

incomplete command of English, especially written English, and reliance on internet translations in composing their work

Writing Program faculty and staff recommend the following as the most effective approaches to improving student writing:

- One on one support: talking about writing to draw out ideas and engage students in the process of developing and articulating their thoughts
- Close reading of their work with a tutor to identify and remedy grammar and spelling errors
- Another person (a tutor, TA, or instructor) to hold them accountable for their ideas and work progress
- Peer-to-Peer editing to motivate students and give them a chance to learn from their peer's strengths and weaknesses

### **Learning Support Services**

LSS provides students with one-on-one tutors by appointment or on a drop-in basis. Tutors are trained in EDU 96 and listed with their disciplinary experience for appointments. While LSS does their best to match students with tutors according to courses and departments, there is no guarantee that the tutors will have in-depth experience with the specific genre or style assigned, especially for the drop-in center.

### **Westside Writing Center (Oakes)**



Provides tutors (usually graduate students) on an appointment basis to students from Oakes, Porter, and College 8 only. This is a strong program, but it excludes the majority of the undergraduate population and does not address course specific style.

#### References:

McCarthy, Sarah. 2008. The Impact of No Child Left Behind on Teachers' Writing Instruction. *Written Communication*. 25(4): 462-505.

Murphy, Sandra. 2003. That Was Then, This is Now: The Impact of Changing Assessment Policies on Teachers and the Teaching of Writing in California. *Journal of Writing Assessment*. 1(1): 23-45.

### III. Writing and Anthropology at UCSC

#### 1. The role of writing in our curriculum

The Anthropology Department's undergraduate studies web page introduces the discipline as a writing intensive practice:

**[Anthropology] offers critical perspectives on the diversity of human experience - and how to think, write and talk about it. It is an excellent major for students considering careers that involve communication, writing, and critical analysis of information and high levels of cultural interaction.**

Professors consistently emphasize that the ability to write compellingly and critically is *the skill of their discipline*. Writing is part of every class in the course catalog, and students give some of the most enthusiastic reviews to the courses that ask them to write the most. Anthropology students compose argumentative essays, synthesize theory and data into research papers, and critique nuanced theoretical texts in their own words.

Professors and TAs read hundreds of pages of student writing every quarter, and often exceed their expected work hours in order to provide constructive feedback to students. This proves to be a Herculean task, as many students arrive in the department without the basic tools to compose a passing paper. Given that UCSC students may receive only 10 weeks of writing training before writing for anthropology courses, it is less shocking to find students in upper division courses who continue to fail assignments due to writing deficits.

#### 2. Disciplinary Communication (DC) in Anthropology

Anthropology's DC requirement works toward cultivating high-level skills in critical and ethnographic writing. To satisfy the DC requirement students must: a) complete an Anthropological Theory Course (chosen from ANTH 100, 150, 152, 170, 270) and; b) complete a Senior Seminar or complete an Independent Senior Thesis, following the guidelines of the senior exit requirement. Students who take 270 to fulfill the theory/DC requirement may not use the course to satisfy the senior exit requirement.

When students arrive at the Senior Seminar or Thesis level, they are asked to compose thorough and convincing research papers, thinking with and communicating complex ideas. At this stage, an inability to compose grammatically correct sentences or organize a composition is unacceptable, and demands that both instructors and students spend considerable time working on issues that are not intended purpose of the course or the project.

### 3. Challenges and Gaps

Faculty, TAs, and Writing Assistants (WAs) in the Anthropology Department report the following major challenges in student writing:

serious grammar  
and style issues  
that inhibit the  
expression of clear  
ideas

inability to sustain a  
cohesive argument  
or maintain a  
consistent theme

lack of familiarity  
with citation styles  
and plagiarism  
protocols

failure to properly or  
fully address the  
prompt or  
assignment

difficulty articulating  
a thesis as separate  
from a claim or  
example

They also note that particular groups of students demonstrate a clear pattern of challenges, especially first generation students, second language learners, and those who transfer from community colleges.

These groups, both as described by others and as self-reported, often struggle with:

- reading effectively and recognizing key ideas
- reproducing the codes and conventions of academic writing
- a hesitancy to engage with peers or faculty that they perceive as coming from more privileged backgrounds or social groups

Students are often keenly aware of their shortcomings, and in interviews and anonymous surveys conveyed widespread anxiety over their writing abilities and assignments. Central among these is skill in revision. Papers filled with grammar and spelling errors are not always a sign of carelessness on the student's part, but rather an inability to recognize their own mistakes. In their own words, students describe writing for anthropology courses as:

- varying widely between the sub-disciplines (sociocultural, archaeology, biological)
- at once technical and theoretical, analytical and argumentative

- using a patterned way of thinking and writing
- requiring them to break from the conventions of writing for history or English classes
- providing more freedom to experiment and express themselves, but also asking for consistent critique of assumptions and perspectives

### **Writing in a typical course context**

Teaching Assistants read the majority of student written work and use office hours as well as section time to discuss writing issues, strategies, and assignments with their students. With the student-to-TA ratio increasing each year, however, TAs are often responsible for grading 50 to 80 assignments, each several pages long, periodically throughout the quarter. It is logistically impossible for TAs and instructors to meet with each student to work on their writing, and even in-text comments are limited to the time they can allot to each student's work.

#### **IV. The Writing Assistant Program**

In this broader campus and departmental context, the Anthropology Department created the Writing Assistant (WA) Program in 2010. The goal was to address the needs of students who must master writing skills in order to succeed in the discipline, but arrive woefully unprepared to do so. A combined two-year study of the program's implementation and impacts, carried out by Suraiya Jetha and Rebecca Feinberg with support from the Chancellor's Graduate Internship Program, indicates a high degree of overlap between identified problems and needs and the program's services and outcomes.

Every fall, faculty in the Anthropology Department identify a cadre of juniors, and occasionally sophomores, who are recruited into the WA program on the basis of an anonymous faculty recommendation. If they accept their appointment – and the vast majority of WAs are thrilled to be nominated and participate with gusto – these students take a two-credit class, ANTH 113, which introduces them to the peer-engagement process, a variety of writing assistance techniques, and serves as a supportive environment for them to discuss challenges and successes throughout their first quarter as WAs. WAs read widely on topics related both to the techniques of writing and to strategies for engaging their peers in discussion and reflection; faculty also provide guest workshops on topics such as proper citation. Historically, the cost of this course has been borne by the Anthropology Department. In addition, a faculty coordinator is appointed each year to oversee the recruitment of the WAs, the operations of the Center, as well as to work on grant writing and donor outreach. Each writing assistant is also assigned a faculty mentor, who serves as an additional research with whom the WA can discuss questions and concerns that arise in the process of peer assistance.

In our first four years of operation, WAs were assigned to specific classes and worked with individual faculty members. Given ongoing scheduling issues, however, in the fall of 2014 we switched to a drop-in model and the Writing Assistant Center (WAC) was opened in the department. The WAC model gives both students and WAs greater freedom to participate in the program despite a full class schedule, jobs, and commuting. So far we are pleased with this change; one notable development is that studying student outcomes has been made far easier by having all students who work with WAs documented in one place (see below).

The Anthropology Department has given the WA program its own office in Social Sciences 1, 235, where the meetings are held. WAs work with students at a variety of stages throughout the writing process, from the initial brainstorming of ideas to polishing a final draft. Students can and do return at a later stage in the writing process or with additional assignments.

Having now run this program for five years, we are beginning to amass empirical evidence that the WAs' work makes an important contribution to student success in anthropology. We anticipate that this program will yield reduced time-to-degree for anthropology majors, who have now a three-tiered support structure for their academic achievement. We also expect that

the confidence gained by students who participate in this program can only result in improved student retention, especially among transfer and first generation college students.

## 1. WA Program Outcomes 2013-2014 (Jetha)

In the first year of evaluation, we found several interesting trends:

- Students who participate in the WA Program in an anthropology class report that they are more aware of writing as a process than before their work with WAs
- Students who see WAs are likely to report that they have skills that could be improved (i.e. have a better sense of their own writing challenges than those who do not reflect on the writing process with WAs)
- Students report that seeing a WA helped them in time management. The attention to writing as a process and the incentivization provided by faculty (in the past\*) for working on multiple drafts of a project means that they get started earlier and have more time for revision (\*note: per union rules, faculty can no longer mandate WA sessions for students in their classes).
- Students who work with WAs attribute increased confidence in their writing skills to the WA program. Even in classes where WA visits were not mandatory, students use the WAs to help structure the completion of written assignments and state that this helped prevent procrastination and end-of-quarter stress.

In addition, Jetha noted a very unexpected, though welcome, outcome of the WA program:

- Some students, including transfer students and students of color, report that meeting with a WA helps them prepare for or feel less intimidated by meeting with faculty or graduate student teaching assistants. They effectively use the peer advising sessions as a rehearsal for interactions they find significantly more intimidating.

This finding enhances our sense that the WA program can have direct, positive impacts on student retention and speaks to the possibility of changes that extend far beyond the technics of writing.

We have also found that one of the true successes of this program pertains to the WAs themselves. WAs continue to be recruited exclusively through faculty nomination. Several of the selected students were surprised at their nomination, but program participation gave them a new level of confidence and, they reported, significantly improved their own writing. As one WA put it:

*Being invited to participate in the writing assistant program took me by surprise. Sincerely, I was not aware of my potential and competence to work with my classmates' writing. However, I [knew this was an] opportunity, and I decided to accept the invitation and see how it unfolded. Little did I know it [would become] one of the most rewarding experiences of my undergraduate career. As a transfer student*

*coming from a non-native speaking background, I believed that the way I expressed myself... was nothing more than average... [I realized that] I had the capacity to [bring topics to the table] in a clear manner.*

By far our most striking finding in 2013-2014, however, was that

**Students who work with a peer Writing Assistant tend to become what we call “frequent flyers.” That is, they recognize a high value in the interaction and seek out WA support repeatedly throughout the quarter.**

We think this is clear evidence that we are so far very successful in building a lateral support structure – a community – that supports student writing. We are working to produce far-reaching changes in department and academic *culture* in the Anthropology program that may not be quantitatively measurable for a few more years but that the faculty have all certainly experienced on an anecdotal level.

[http://anthro.ucsc.edu/undergraduate/writing\\_assistant\\_pro](http://anthro.ucsc.edu/undergraduate/writing_assistant_pro)

## **2. WA Program Outcomes in 2014-2015 (Feinberg)**

Taking the previous year's findings, we have worked this year to increase the WAC's visibility through greater publicity and outreach. WAC hours are available on-line at the Anthropology website ([http://anthro.ucsc.edu/undergraduate/writing\\_assistant\\_program.html](http://anthro.ucsc.edu/undergraduate/writing_assistant_program.html)). The WAs also advertise with posters and class announcements; a “Write In,” in which the WAs held extra, public drop-in hours for writing assistance was also held in March 2015 (see cover photo).

We also set out to further investigate program outcomes. With the new centralized WAC up and running, we were able to obtain more fine-grained data on the areas in which students feel they need the most assistance.

WA reports and student outtake surveys analyzed by Feinberg during the current academic year indicate that WA sessions are most often spent working on **rough drafts of analytical essays and critical reflection papers**. WAs work most often with students on:

- improving the clarity and organization of student papers
- synthesizing a concrete thesis that properly addresses the prompt
- recognizing and reproducing anthropological writing styles
- correctly and effectively using notes, data, and citations in papers

## **“FREQUENT FLYERS”**

Students who work with a peer Writing Assistant tend to become frequent users of the program.

They recognize a high value in the interaction and seek out WA support repeatedly throughout the quarter.

- identifying and correcting repetitive grammatical or spelling mistakes

WAs also describe reminding their peers to write *respectfully*. One of the most important skills in anthropology is the ability to distance oneself from assumptions and prejudices in order to think more creatively and productively. WAs hold themselves and their peers accountable to those standards in writing.

The issues and skills that WAs do work on with students align directly with the problems that instructors and TAs have identified. In addition, the WAC provides students with many of the resources that the Writing Program recommends as key to improving writing skills, including:

- one on one close readings and immediate verbal feedback on their work
- another mind to talk through tough concepts and help them develop their ideas
- a peer who is approachable but who students want to impress
- identifying repeated errors and correcting them

The Writing Instruction panel held on 5/6/15 for UCSC instructors reinforced our sense that across the disciplines, peer-to-peer review and conversational feedback are some of the most effective forms of improving student writing. WAs are a familiar and friendly face, one that is less intimidating to approach than their instructor or TA, but also one that students do not want to disappoint. Thus, our finding from 2013-2014 with regard to the “rehearsal” aspect of peer-to-peer tutoring seems to be confirmed.

As one student put it, *“After my experience in a predominately white middle school, I began to believe that white people could write better than me. Because majority of my teachers after middle school were white and male, I made sure not to hand in poorly written essay assignments.”* Writing Program instructors also report underprivileged students as arriving to UCSC with a less developed sense of voice and confidence in the classroom. A WA explained that she felt similarly when she first arrived to UCSC, and so wanted to serve her peers as a more approachable female student of color.

**Student outcome surveys and interviews report an overwhelmingly positive experience with the WA program. The most common results that students report include:**

- feeling more confident about their writing abilities *and* more comfortable asking for help with writing
- approaching assignments with a clear sense of their instructor’s expectations
- getting past writing blocks and concretizing jumbled ideas



- identifying and recognizing repeated errors
- feeling supported by the department and their peers

### **Community and Appreciation**

Many students explain that they wish they had started visiting the WAC earlier in their career at UCSC and express their gratitude towards the program and their tutors, saying “I wish other departments had something like this” and emphasizing the enthusiasm and patience their tutors bring to their work. Within the Anthropology Department, the program builds a sense of community amongst the undergraduate students, while also giving WAs a chance to work directly with faculty and build relationships that can be difficult to establish at a large public university.

### **A Note on the Relationship Between WAs and TAs**

WAs are not replacements for TA or instructor support, nor should they be. WAs are taught to recognize the difference between content and writing tutoring and refer students to their TAs or professors when appropriate. As noted above, we find that this increases the likelihood that students will attend office hours for their courses. Further, it helps them identify questions for their instructors. Thus, we view the WA program as one part of a multi-faceted approach to addressing the writing needs of our students.

## **3. WA Program Broader Impacts**

### **Student Support and Retention Rates**

At a campus seeking to improve retention rates while increasing enrollments and fees (and therefore decreasing student-teacher contact and the services/resources available to each student), students express a fair amount of frustration and alienation with the UC system, explaining that “It feels like the university doesn’t care about us, and [the WAC] is a nice alternative to that reality.”

### **Writing after Graduation: Career Counseling and Continuing Education**

Upon graduating from UCSC, social science majors and anthropology majors are likely to pursue careers in which writing skills figure prominently in both the application process and their job description. Anthropology majors in particular rely heavily on their disciplinary training in thinking through complicated ideas and expressing them clearly in writing.

Whether writing statements of intent for graduate education or composing cover letters for professional positions, advisors agree that clear and well-organized writing is crucial to success after graduation. They identify the following as most important to career building writing:

- composing persuasive arguments, either to sell an idea or oneself as the ideal candidate
- concise and effective communication of concepts
- polished and professional writing with no grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors

Not all students arrive prepared for career track writing, and advisors report that students struggle especially with:

- identifying and demonstrating their skills and strengths
- reading their writing “through someone else’s eyes”
- proofreading their work for stylistic errors

Advisors stressed the frequency with which they assist second language learners who continue to struggle with English grammar and spelling well into their final quarters at UCSC. Both Career Center counselors and Writing Program staff alike commented that there is not enough support for these students; they caution that the issue will intensify for UCSC, which has been named a Hispanic Serving Institution, in the future. In assisting students with their applications, advisors describe the ethically fraught process of wanting to help, but having resisting the urge to turn student writing into their own.

### **WAC and UCSC’s HSI mandate**

As a recognized Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), UCSC is committed to improving its programs for underrepresented groups. The goals that Dean Hughey outlined below for the HSI team align directly with the services and example that the WAC provides:

- initiatives and ideas to increase our visibility, value, and effectiveness for students from underrepresented groups
- review of best practices and their feasibility for expansion at or adaptation to UCSC
- determination of opportunities for fund raising related to HIS status, potentially including grant proposals

### **4. Budget**

The final aspect of the Writing Assistant Program that we would like to note is its cost effectiveness. In the first three years of the program, costs were shared somewhat by the Anthropology Department and Learning Support Services (LSS). In 2013, we made the decision to move the program entirely “in-house,” which meant we also had to seek out other sources of funding. Our costs for the 2014-2015 year have been as follows, with WA salaries listed in Table 2:

Table 1.

## ANCEP - ANTH - ACADEMIC SENATE CEP GRANT

Date	Description	Doc Code	Ref 1	Ref 2	Account	Account Title	Budget	Expenses	Liens	Balance
09/17/14	DC Initiative Funding - Moodie	J0445841	EV009		B00000	ACADEMIC SALARIES	10,000.00	0.00	0.00	
09/30/14	UCSC Copy Center Copy Sept 2014	J0446557	ANTH113		000050	PRINTING-FORMS, STATIONERY,E	0.00	152.15	0.00	
10/23/14	BOOKS	J0448342	20794		000500	LIBRARY MATERIALS(NON-INVENT	0.00	522.00	0.00	
04/06/15	Moodie, Megan C.	I2255072		REIMB-03/30/15	000030	OFFICE SUPPLIES	0.00	149.54	0.00	
04/06/15	sales tax due for reimbursement	J0456143	I2255072		000030	OFFICE SUPPLIES	0.00	13.08	0.00	
ANCEP - ANTH - ACADEMIC SENATE CEP GRANT							Total	10,000.00	836.77	0.00
							Grand Total	10,000.00	836.77	0.00

Table 2. WA Salaries\*

Fall 2014	\$ 1,707.31
Winter 2015	\$ 3,796.48
Spring 2015	\$ 1,077.19
Total 2014-15	\$ 6,580.98

\*Please note that the figures for spring are preliminary, but we are on target to come in right at our budget of \$10,000

In addition to the \$10,000 we received from CEP and the VPDUE's office for the program this year, the department has made a significant contribution to the program in the form of cost-sharing for the CGIP, a course relief for Coordinator Moodie to compile data, write grants, and manage the new WAC, and the cost of ANTH 113, which in 2014 was \$4,076.17.

As our department gains more secure funding for all our operations we would expect to see this program become part of our normal operations. Yet we are also aware it could be the perfect focus of an endowment from our alumni. The Department of Anthropology has been proactive in seeking alternative means of funding this program. We have included information about our Writing Assistant Program in outreach efforts to prospective donors (<http://anthro.ucsc.edu/news-events/anthropology-chronicle/2014-chronicle/WA-gratitude.html>). in the annual newsletter that is distributed to students, parents, and alumni at our graduation ceremony, and the Writing Assistant Program will be featured in the brochure that the Anthropology Department is creating with the Dean of Social Sciences and Fly Communications to be distributed to "high capacity" donors. Faculty Coordinator (2010-11, 2013-present) Megan Moodie has also met at length with Anne Hayes of the Social Sciences development team to discuss the program and highlight reasons it may be an attractive option for donors. We are also investigating the prospects for foundation support for this program, given its relevance to our commitment to empowering students from underrepresented groups and preparing them for careers in our field.

We are currently researching our options for more crowd-sourced funding for this program. We are weighing the relative benefits and drawbacks of a public service website like

Kickstarter.com and have submitted a proposal for the campus-based Crowdfund UC Santa Cruz (<https://crowdfund.ucsc.edu>). Photos of our recent “Write-In,” in which WAs, professors, and graduate students offered public writing consults and spent time writing together in public spaces in the Social Sciences 1 building were also posted to our Facebook page, along with a request to visitors and alums for WA Center support.

## V. Conclusion

### Principle Findings

At this point, we feel there is sufficient data to argue that

**The Anthropology Department's Writing Assistant Program addresses a state-wide, campus-wide problem by providing face-to-face peer support for students. In addition, because many of the students who visit WAs are not Anthropology majors, we are providing a service that extends far beyond our department.**

To summarize the main findings of the two graduate student researchers who have looked at the WA program:

- Undergraduate writing is global problem on campus. This study found gaps and deficiencies in student work across backgrounds and social groups. While ESL or first generation students do face specific challenges that contribute to particular writing issues, UCSC undergraduates as a whole need better writing training and support.
- Students who are not writing at the college level are not lazy or unintelligent. They are bright, hardworking thinkers who have not been adequately prepared by their high schools or brief writing training at UCSC.
- The WAC is not just a triage for a broken system, though it certainly does provide desperately needed services, but a model for doing things differently that could be part of a campus-wide initiative to provide better education and the skills students need to succeed

### Suggestions for Other Departments Interested in Supporting Student Writing:

There are several steps for setting up an initiative like the WA program, and we are eager to share what we have learned with our colleagues across campus. In an ideal world, students would encounter similar programs in several departments, and thus have even denser webs of support for their writing improvement.

There are some things that can be done without establishing a separate WA program. These include:

- Incorporate disciplinary writing skills into lectures, sections, labs, etc. and provide students with online or printed guides and resources to refer to while composing their assignments
- Offer the opportunity to revise and resubmit assignments in which writing issues, rather than content, is the main problem with the student's work
- Alternatively, design assignments in which students can take feedback from one writing task and apply it constructively to the next

- Foster classroom contexts in which students read and edit each other's writing to encourage peer support and collaboration
- Refer students to the resources that may be available to them, including the Oakes Writing Center and Learning Support Services

For departments that are considering establishing a peer writing program, some things to consider as you develop an approach that works for your discipline might be:

1. Collectively identifying issues and deficits in student writing abilities and considering which skills are most important in disciplinary communication practices can guide the process whereby you select and train WAs.
2. Though it is less transparent than having, for instance, an application process, we have found that the faculty nomination procedure for WAs lends to its status as an honor among undergraduates. One of the reasons we have such success with the WAs themselves is that they feel privileged to participate in the program, both because they reap real personal rewards from working with others and because they get sustained, closer contact with the faculty coordinator and their faculty mentor.
3. We have found that we have to put significant effort into publicity and outreach. Once we reach students in our classes, however, as we showed above, they become regular users of the WA center. It can take anywhere from 1-3 years for the idea of peer writing support to permeate through the student population. The number of sessions we provide has grown from year to year and from quarter to quarter (particularly during the 2014-2015 year when we switched to a drop-in center).
4. Not all good student writers make good student Writing Assistants. We do not just seek out the "smartest" students in our classes, but also those who demonstrate friendliness, empathy, and attention to detail – qualities that are as important as grammatical correctness in working with peers.
5. All of our efforts to set up and fund the WAC have also been accompanied by departmental activism around the shrinking levels of support for graduate students on campus. We do **not** see our WAC as a substitute for the expertise of TAs and professors and we hope that future years will see stable, higher levels of support for our TAs to reduce class size and increase the amount of individual attention we can provide to struggling students.
6. One issue that has emerged is that the role of the Faculty Coordinator takes a considerable amount of time and energy. We have usually treated this as a normal, though significant, service assignment within the department. Given the fundraising/grant writing efforts that are increasingly attached to the position, however, we have had to think about ways to incentivize faculty members to fill this crucial, but somewhat strenuous, role. One possibility is course relief for the Coordinator; as this is an expensive option every year (we are now considering offering one for a term of three years of service to the WAC), we have written a small

stipend (\$1500) to be deposited in the Coordinator's research account into our most recent budget. Another model to be considered is having the WA training course (in Anthropology, this is ANTH 113) taught by a faculty member as a full five-credit seminar. This seminar, which would never have more than 12 students, could be an honors-like space to combine WA training and contentful work in the discipline – a luxury in an era of rising enrollments!