

CCT692

PHASES OF RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT

with

NOTES ON RECOMMENDED TASKS AND ASSIGNMENTS

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assignments and relevant briefings by previous students
& a few additional items

- A. Overall vision
- B. Background information
- C. Possible directions and priorities
- D. Propositions, Counter-Propositions
- E. Design of research
- F. Direct information, models & experience
- G. Clarification through communication
- H. Compelling communication
- I. Engagement with others
- J. Taking stock

The order of the phases may vary according to the opportunities that arise, and in any case these phases are overlapping and iterative...

...that is, you revisit the different phases in light of
a) other people's responses to what you share with them, &
b) what you learn in other phases

Phase A—Overall vision

A. Overall vision

Goal: "I can convey who I want to influence/affect concerning what (Subject, Audience, Purpose)."

Processes:

Draft and revise Governing Question and paragraph overview of proposed project (through brainstorming, pair-share, reporting to the class, office hours or a phone conference, free-writing and journaling)

Review previous years' reports (on reserve in Healey) to get a sense of the scope of previous projects and reports

Iterative process. Through sharing with others -> revise A, and angles of inquiry for B.

(Note: Sharing runs through the entire process -- see also C, D, G, H)

In class exercises

Brainstorming and pair-share on:

- your area of interest
- the specific case(s) you plan to consider
- the more general statement of the problem or issue beyond the specific case
- how you became concerned about this case/area
- what you want to know about this case/area by the end of the semester
- what action you think someone (specify who) should be taking on this issue
- what obstacles do you foresee and help you might need in doing the research
- who the audience for your research report might be

First stab at Governing Question and paragraph overview of proposed project that convey audience, subject, purpose: Who you want to reach? What you want to convey to them? Why you want to address them about that? The Governing Question is not your thesis, but what you need to investigate. It should be expressed in a way that orients your work, e.g., "How can approaches for effectively teaching empathy-based personal interaction be combined into a course for employees and managers?" or "What do I need to know to influence people who prescribe or seeks drugs for behavioral modification of children?"

Report to the group, to hear how it sounds shared out loud with others

Tasks after class 1:

Try out free-writing for 10 minutes at least a few times a week. See free-writing topics on the course website and chapters 1 and 2 from Elbow regarding the interplay of the creative and the critical in thinking and writing.

Discuss your ideas in office hours or a phone conference.

Review previous reports (on password protected link) to get a sense of the scope of previous projects and reports.

Asmt. A. Revised single paragraph overview of the subject, audience, purpose of proposed project & Governing Question

Building on your first stab and on the comments back from PT, compose an initial overview of your project—one paragraph that may, several revisions later, find its way into the introduction of your report. Such a paragraph should have a sense of orientation—where you're going and where you're intending to take your audience. The point is not to have your project defined straight away and stay with that, but to begin and then to continue the process of defining and refining it.

The Governing Question (a.k.a. Controlling Question) should summarize that paragraph in one sentence and focus you on what you need to find out that you don't already know or can't yet demonstrate to someone else. The gap between the Governing Question and the statement is often a very good diagnostic of unresolved issues about your subject, purpose, and audience. Put your Governing Question at the top of your page like a banner to help remind you to check that what you are writing sticks to what you intended or claimed to be writing about—instead of waiting or another reader to point out discrepancies. If the question and what you are writing don't match, something has to be reconsidered. Keeping the Governing Question in mind will also help guide you through the complexity of possible considerations so that you more easily decide priorities about what to read, who to speak to, and, in general, what to do in your project.

Because your topic will change or be more focused as time goes on, take stock of that and begin subsequent assignments with a revised statement of the current topic and a Governing Question. Writing a tighter statement will also help to expose changes, gaps, and ambiguities. I hope my comments on your initial statements also help (ignoring, of course, those rendered irrelevant by changes you make in your overall direction).

B. Background information

Goal: "I know what others have done before, either in the form of writing or action, that informs and connects with my project, and I know what others are doing now."

Processes:

Learn or refresh bibliographic searching skills on and off the internet.

Connect with initial informant to guide your inquiries in their early unformed stage

Compile bibliography, filtered and annotated with respect to how what the reading/interview connects with your project (or literature review).

Other background library, WWW, and phone research to find out who's done what before/ who's doing what (through writing & action) that informs your evolving project.

Iterative process -> revise A, and grist for C.

In class exercises

Use the catalogs or databases during the class to locate an article or section in a book that appears to be very close to what you need to move forward in your research. Look especially for something that reviews what others have said and done, or discusses the state of some active controversy

Tasks after class 2:

Establish off-campus connection to UMass library

Establish your bibliographic and note-taking systems

Establish your system for organizing your journal/workbook, research materials, and class handouts. (Tip: Number the pages of your journal/workbook; make an index at the end; carry it with you at all times and use it—not pieces of paper—to write notes on.)

Continue background library, WWW, and phone research to find out who's done what before/ who's doing what (through writing & action) that informs your evolving project. Work on both of Elbow's "creative" and "critical" aspects—opening up your topic to more and more considerations, and seeking order and priority in the overabundance of material produced by the creative aspect. Elbow's insight is to alternate these aspects, not to let them stifle each other, as you define and refine a manageable project.

Active digestion:

It's easy to collect articles to read, but it's important for the progress of your project to sort out which give you what you need to move your project along. So you need to read "actively" -
- Develop a process for reading that ideally involves "focus, filter, note-taking, digestion, summary, plus record & file."

Focus: What do I want to learn now? Check out the title, intro, topic/thesis, ending, and subheadings of the article to see whether and how it connects.

Filter: You can't read all of every article.

Notes, especially dialoguing notes [I put these in brackets] so that at the end you have digested the article enough to say: What was argued? What was not? Where could it have been taken further? Where does all this connect with my project?

Summary: This forces you to push your own thinking further and make the material your own, and provides bits of text to use when you write your report.

Another approach to active reading is a "Sense-making" response (see endnote to this Phase):

- a) I appreciated...
- b) I learned...
- c) I wanted to know more about...
- d) I struggled with...
- e) I would have been helped by...
- f) My project connects with this in the following way(s)...
- g) I disagreed with...
- h) I think the author/presenter should consider...

Finally, don't give up on finding written material on your topics, even if it's to clarify the ways in which what you are doing is unique. It's a common trap to say you've tried and failed to find something when you're protecting yourself from unarticulated fears/self-doubts by not trying very hard, making time, asking for help, following leads... Better to face your demons now rather than have them limit what you can do.

Asmt. B1. Key (review or controversy) article: It's relatively easy to find an article that matches your project and gives you entry points, but a **key article is much more than an entry point or affirmation of your instincts**. It must point to many references to other publications and gets you close to being able to say, "I know what others have done before that informs and connects with my project." Submit a photocopy of a review or a controversy article (or link to it online) with EITHER a. a paragraph describing the different sides OR b. "sense-making" to indicate how the article or section in a book connects with your proposed research.

Asmt. B2. Initial informant: Identify an initial informant to guide your inquiries in their early unformed stage, make contact, make appointment for a time before class 4, use your conversation with this initial informant to learn about leads, i.e., key people to read and/or contact, and give a brief verbal report in class 4 on the conversation. It is important to connect with others in your area as part of developing your own approach; it does not help to procrastinate on this as if other people's work threatens yours. (This assignment is different from interviews, which make sense under phase F.)

Asmt. B3. Annotated bibliography (of reading completed or planned). The primary goal in asking for annotations is for you to check the significance of the reading against your current project definition and priorities. Annotations, therefore, should indicate the relevance of the article to your topic.

An annotated bibliography also allows you to a) compose sentences that may find its way into your writing, and b) have your citations already typed in (use the format/citation style you intend to use for your final report).

Focus is more important than quantity. Don't pack or pad this with zillions of references you've found in your searches, but instead use the assignment to stimulate your clarifying whether and in what ways an article is relevant to your project. Omit readings that no longer relate to the current direction of your project.

Because your topic might have changed or should be more concise by the time you submit this assignment, take stock of that and begin the bibliography with a revised statement of the current topic and a Governing Question. Writing a tighter statement will also help to expose

changes, gaps, and ambiguities. I hope my comments on your initial statements also help, ignoring, of course, those rendered irrelevant by changes in your direction.

Included with Asmt E. Research and engagement design: Revised and updated annotated bibliography

* Note on sense-making

Brenda Dervin, in the Department of Communication at Ohio State University, has developed a "Sense-Making" approach to the development of information seeking and use. One finding from Sense-Making research is that people make much better sense of seminar presentations and other scholarly contributions when these are accompanied by the contextual information in the items below. Reference: Dervin, B. (1996). "Chaos, order, and sense-making: A proposed theory for information design," in Robert Jacobson (ed.) Information Design. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, in press; <http://edfu.lis.uiuc.edu/allerton/95/s5/dervin.draft.html>.

Author(s)

Title of paper

- a) The essence of the project is...
- b) The reason(s) I took this road is (are)...
- c) The best of what I have achieved is...
- d) What has been particularly helpful to me in this project has been...
- e) What has hindered me has been...
- f) What I am struggling with is...
- g) What would help me now is...

This "Sense-Making" approach also leads to recommendations about forms of response that authors/presenters learn most from -- and readers/listeners also. The response format suggested for active reading both acknowledges different voices and facilitates connections.

C. Possible directions and priorities

Goal: "I have teased out my vision, so as to expand my view of issues associated with the project, expose possible new directions, clarify direction/scope within the larger set of issues, and decide most important direction."

Processes:

Alternating between creative and critical aspects of any phase of research and writing—
"opening-wide, focusing & formulating"

Mapping, prepared then probed by others, for discovering/inventing/refining subject-purpose-audience

Pyramid of questions

Ten questions

Discussion with professors and peers

Sense-making contextualization applied to one's whole project

Iterative process -> revise Subject, Audience,
Purpose in A, more/ different work on B.

Asmt. C. Revised map with Governing Question

The goal of mapping is the same as for phase C. The idea is to do mapping BEFORE you have a coherent overall argument. Start in the center of a large sheet of paper with the "current social or educational issue that concerns you—because you want to know more about it, advocate a change, design a curriculum unit or a workshop, and so on." Draw connections to related considerations and other issues. (Post-its are useful, so you can move things around.)

To tease out connections, you might want to start with a dump-sheet (or stack of post-its) in which you address the following questions:

Where is this an issue—where is the controversy happening?

Who are the different groups implicated?

What changes could be promoted?

What are arguments for change for the change & counter-arguments.

What categories of things (and sub-categories) are involved in your subject?

What definitions are involved?

What related questions have other people investigated?

Where is there a need for primary vs. secondary research?

What is the general area & what are specific questions?

What are the background vs. focal issues?

What is your provisional proposal?

What are the research holes that need to be filled?

What would I be able to do with that additional knowledge?

What ambiguity emerges in all this—what tensions and oppositions?

When you have arranged these on a map, explain it to someone else, inviting them to
i) ask questions until they are clear about each your subject, purpose, and audience, and

ii) probe with the questions listed above. The interaction between the mapper and the questioner(s) should expose holes in the research proposal, force greater clarity in definitions of terms and categories, and help you see how to frame your inquiries so they satisfy your interests but don't expand out of control.

Out of this interaction you should eventually see an aspect of/ angle on all the complexity that engages you most and be able to define the Governing Question that conveys what you need to research (and what you no longer need to research). E.g., for the map on the color of hospital rooms, the question might be: "What research needs to be done to convince hospital designers/administrators that room color is one of the environmental features that can contribute to patient healing?" Use free-writing after mapping to help define such a question for yourself.

Alternatives or complements to a map & probing

Ten questions. State your topic. Write down 10 questions within that topic. Circle two that interest you the most. Take these two and list 10 questions under each. Circle two that interest you the most. Now define the Governing Question that conveys what you need to research (and what you no longer need to research).

Pyramid of questions. Compile a "pyramid of questions" in a part of your workbooks separate from the free-writing, personal reflections, and other mess. "Pyramid" because later questions build on earlier ones. In the list would go the initial questions (general & specific) for your projects, successive variants of your Governing Question, questions that arose during library research, possible questions to ask informants, and so on. These questions could be crossed out when no longer central to your evolving project and checked when satisfactorily addressed.

Discussion with professors and peers

Sense-making contextualization applied to one's whole project (see endnote to phase B)

D. Propositions, Counter-Propositions, Counter-Counter-Propositions...

Goal: "I have identified the premises and propositions that my project depends on, and can state counter-propositions. I have taken stock of the thinking and research I need to do to counter those counter-propositions or to revise my own propositions."

Processes:

Analysis of Ps, C-Ps, C-C-Ps for the different aspects of your issue

Present this to others who probe and discuss it

Iterative process -> more work on B, revising A & C, and to questions that need first hand information in E.

Asmt. D: Summarize the different sub-arguments for your topic and positions regarding each

First, note that there are two levels of "argument":

- a. the overall argument of your writing (how you Grab people's attention, Orient them, move them along in Steps, so that they appreciate the Position at each step that you've taken them to, and where you end up); and
- b. the component arguments or sub-arguments. It's this second aspect you should be working on at this stage. Doing so will open up your project, just as mapping & probing of maps does. Better you do this now than admit in a month that you have been avoiding grappling alternatives to the premises and propositions that your project depends on. The goal of phase D is to identify your various small and large premises and propositions and state counter-propositions. Then to take stock of the thinking and research you need to do to counter those counter-propositions or to revise your own propositions.

To tease out your various premises and propositions, you usually have to ask someone else to play devil's advocate and be prepared for others not seeing the issue in the same way as you do. It is possible to take the devil's advocate role for yourself—take each branch or angle in your map and ask whether there's any controversy there, whether anyone else would formulate it in a different way.

E. Design of (further) research and engagement

Goal: "I have clear objectives with respect to product, both written and practice, and process, including personal development as a reflective practitioner. I have arranged my work in a sequence to realize these objectives."

Processes:

Strategic Personal Planning (proceeding through 4 stages: Vision-> Obstacles-> Strategic Directions-> Action plans)

Compose a realistic timetable with a thought-out sequence of steps

Iterative process -> revisit/revise A - D, especially
Governing Question.

There is a whole field of Research Design—how to design questionnaires and a statistically valid sample of people to complete them, etc. Ask me for references if your project takes you into that area. In this course, design is primarily planning so you can undertake what you really need to do during the course of completing your project. This is easier said than done.

In class exercise

Strategic Personal Planning, 4/03

A. In order to complete a satisfying project you need to focus on something tight and do-able, but Strategic Personal Planning allows you to find this focus by first opening out and acknowledging a wide range of factors and wishes that your work could (should?) take into account.

B. Strategic Personal Planning is based on the Strategic Participatory Planning workshop process developed by the Institute for Cultural Affairs (ICA). The basic propositions of the ICA workshop process include:

Notwithstanding any initial impressions to the contrary, everyone has insight (wisdom) and we need everyone's insight for the wisest result.

There is insight in every response. (There are no wrong answers.)

We know more than we are, at first, prepared or able to acknowledge.

When a person is heard, they can better hear others and hear themselves. This causes us to examine decisions made in advance about what the other people are like, what they are and are not capable of.

The step-by-step workshop process thus aims to keep us listening actively to each other, foster mutual respect, and elicit more of our insight.

Your initial conclusions may change -- be open for surprises.

What we come out with is very likely to be larger and more durable than what any one person came in with; the more so, the more voices that are brought out by the process.

In particular, we will be engaged in carrying out/carrying on the plans we develop.

In sum, the workshop process aims for the "greatest input, with greatest commitment and the least confusion, in the least time."

C. Adapting these principles to Strategic Personal Planning means you should hope to come out with a plan for your project that is richer, deeper, and has more dimensions than what you came

in with. The more angles on yourself that are brought out by the process, the more likely you are to create something you did not anticipate. The experience of that creativity, in turn, leads you to be more likely to carry out the plan you arrive at.

D. The Str Pers Planning Process begins with the Practical Vision stage. This is meant to generate a larger vision of your work, something that informs the specific project you do for this course. In that spirit, do not focus on for now on what your project topic. Instead, consider a more global question: What's needed for your Personal & Professional Development in [insert general area required to be addressed by the project]?

Steps

Post-it brainstorming

1. Imagine yourself some time after the course is over looking back with a sense of accomplishment on how far you have come in the area of [insert general area required to be addressed by the project]. (Construe “accomplishment” broadly so it can include your own reflection and growth.) What different kinds of things do you envisage having gone into that personal and professional development?

To prepare for this brainstorming, note:

- a. These things can span the mundane and inspiring; tangible and intangible; process, as well as product; relationships as well as individual skills. (By mundane, think of all the different tasks on your plate -- over and above those for this course -- that potentially affect your ability to carry out your project in a way that is satisfying.)
 - b. Reread the syllabus for course description, objectives and expectations.
 - c. For other ideas—but feel free to depart from these—review handouts from previous post-it brainstorming by students (photocopied handouts distributed in class).
2. Keep in mind the question in 1. above, brainstorm your 3-5 word answers onto post-its in block letters.
3. Pair up and get more ideas from hearing about the kinds of things the other person came up with. Make more post-its.

Clustering (once you have about 30 post-its)

4. i) Move post-its around into groups of items that have something in common in the way they address the question; ii) describe the groups using a phrase that has a verb in it or, at least, indicates some action*; iii) group groups in pairs or threes and give these descriptive active names; iv) group the groups and name them, until you arrive at a descriptive active name is achieved for the vision as a whole. (*E.g., instead of "Holistic Artistic Survival Project," an active name would be "Moving holistically from surviving to thriving as artists." For more examples of clustering and naming, refer to

http://www.faculty.umb.edu/peter_taylor/693visions.doc.)

5. Pair up again and discuss your overall vision.

6. After the class, redraw the groups in a neat form (without the original post-its) so you can refer back to it as you define and undertake your project.

D. During class we will complete only the first of four stages of Str Pers Planning. With your vision in mind, now free-write (for 7-10 minutes) on the specific actions you might take so as to complete a project at the same time as fulfilling the other objectives and expectations for the course. Keep these in sight together with your vision as you plan your work during the remainder of the course.

E. After class, you might pursue the other three stages of Str Pers Planning, starting with brainstorming on the obstacles to your realizing this vision. Email or ask during the next class

to get some coaching about how to re-vision those obstacles until you see the underlying issues and a gateway through to new directions, and then to specific actions.

Translating Str. Pers. Planning into a concrete research and engagement design?

Ideally, you progress through the other three stages of Str. Pers. Planning, the last of which is action plans. But, as a shortcut, simply keep the SPP vision in front of you as you compose a set of specific action plans and schedule them into the time ahead.

Asmt. E. Research and engagement design (including revised and updated annotated bibliography)

A research and engagement design should reflect your answers to the following questions:

- What do you most want to see happening in your project in the next two and a half months? ("Happening" refers both to process and content. It includes, but should not be limited by, who you might be able to influence and what you hope to influence them to do, a.k.a. audience and purpose. Take note of your Governing Question.)
- What things might be blocking you from realizing this vision?
- What can you do to deal with the obstacles and realize the vision—what new directions do you need to move in?
- What achievable steps would move you in these directions?

You will have already done this if you completed the whole personal strategic planning process. If you have only done the vision stage or used some other process of reflection, you will need to do some brainstorming.

As part of this process restate your title and Governing Question. (Check and revise these if needed. Do they match each other? Do they dictate what you actually have to do?)

Map out your research onto the weeks ahead—be more specific about the immediate future. (Check—do the steps you propose allow you to fulfill your purpose, answer your Governing Question, support your arguments?)

The design may be in note form provided you make evident the reasons for the sequence of steps you propose.

F. Direct information, models & experience

Goal: "I have gained direct information, models, and experience not readily available from other sources."

Processes:

Identify practitioners who can be interviewed or who can demonstrate their work.

Arrange the necessary interviews, participant observation, evaluations, and other engagements.

Prepare interview guide, practice mock interviews using equipment, conduct interviews and digest recordings or notes, or

Prepare evaluations, conduct them, and analyze the data, or

Conduct a pilot survey or intervention and then design and undertake a revised version; or

Attend workshops or demonstrations on practices that might be incorporated in project.

Establish contacts with practitioners and specialists who can interpret the technical issues and identify where you might pursue studies in greater depth.

Establish contacts with and interview practitioners or activists who can help you interpret the controversies and politics around your issue.

Iterative process -> revise D, and also revise/
revisit A-C (especially Thesis Q.) & possibly E.

Interviewing moves you out of the library/WWW and into the world of actual people you can talk or interact with about your projects. The goal is to get answers to questions for which you can't easily get answers from published literature. (If you want suggestions of what to read, who to contact, or other guidance, think of this talking with a Phase B informant, not as an interview.)

Pre-class exercise

Write down five questions you would like someone to answer for you—not just any questions, but ones for which you can't easily get answers from published literature.

In-class exercises

Prepare interview guide (see model in handout) and practice interviewing

Asmt. F1: Revised interview guide. Do this only if it helps you actually interview someone who would help you meet the goal of phase F. Write out fully your opening and closing "script," but an outline is usually sufficient for what's in-between.

Alternatives: Survey/Questionnaire or Evaluation of Participant Observation/Workshop -- consult with PT on how to design these.

Asmt. F2. Brief written report on interview conducted, participant observation, or workshop attended (200-400 words). Write this report in a form that is useful to drafting your project report; don't address it to the instructor. No need to give blow by blow; simply extract what speaks to goals of Phase F.

G. Clarification thru communication

Goal: "I have clarified the overall progression or argument underlying my research and the written reports I am starting to prepare."

Processes:

Clarification of the overall structure of your argument

Work-in-progress presentations—preparing text and visual aids, practicing, delivering, digesting feedback.

Exploring your writing preferences to identify strengths and issues to work on

"GOSPing

Narrative outlining

Beginning to revise

Iterative process -> revise E, D, Governing Question in C, and also revise A, more work on B & F.

Preparing to communicate about your project does not presuppose that you have finished your research. In fact, you could continue to do research up until the day you submit your final report. At this point in the course you will probably still be rethinking the direction and scope of your research. Nevertheless, because preparing talks and writing are excellent ways to work out your ideas, your research will be helped by giving a work-in-progress talk and starting writing now.

In-class exercises

Analyze arguments implicated in previous student's research

Draft sequence of overhead projector transparencies, in preparation for work-in-progress presentation and to clarify the structure of your overall argument/progression of thought/GOSP (see below)

Practice work-in-progress presentation in preparation to give it and to clarify the structure of your overall argument/progression of thought/GOSP (see below).

Explore your writing preferences (see handout on determining your preferences and ways to use knowledge of your preferences)

Asmt. G1. Public Presentation on Work-in-Progress

When you prepare to give a presentations (freewriting on your desired impact, designing visual aids, etc.), when you hear yourselves speak your presentations, and when you get feedback, it usually leads to self-clarification of the overall argument underlying your research and the eventual written reports. This, in turn, influences your research priorities for the remaining time. These presentations will necessarily be on work-in-progress, so you'll have to indicate where additional research is needed and where you think it might lead you.

There won't be time for extensive discussion, so, to allow for more feedback, the rest of us will write notes to provide appreciations, suggestions, questions, contacts, and references.

I recommend using visual aids, of which the simplest to use are overhead transparencies.

Tips (which apply to powerpoint slides as well):

- Include only key words or prompts to what you're going to say
- 15-20 words only on any sheet
- text should be 1/2 inch high or more.
- To design your overhead/powerpoint layouts don't work on full size sheets, but divide a sheet of paper into 4 parts and print by hand into these quarter sheets. Then scale up to your actual overheads.

Let PT know needs other than overhead projector or powerpoint. Blank overhead sheets and pens are in the envelope on the noticeboard to the left of my office if you want to come early and make some on the day. Alternatively, bring material to copy center to be photocopied onto overhead transparencies. Return spare pens and overhead sheets. It's OK to get more after the practice talk shows you that you want to revise your visual aids.

The Work-in-Progress Presentation is your first opportunity to "GOSP" your audience: GRAB listeners' attention. (It's often helpful for people to hear something that explains how you personally got involved in this, or what it means to you.) ORIENT listeners to the direction of movement in your project as well as in your talk. In that spirit verbs are important. E.g., I suggested to one student that she revise her title from (something like) "Lack of funds for girls sport" to "Convincing Corporation to fund girls sport." STEPS = overall argument/progression that leads your audience to the POSITION you want them to appreciate. Avoid bullets—Although all of the bulleted points may be relevant and interesting the challenge is to give them names and an ordering that conveys a flow of previous points preparing the way for the one that follows. If you are more of a bullet person, send me your bullets and I'll try to suggest an argument formulation, which you can respond to and reshape into your own words.

POSITION for a work-in-progress presentation may be your program to find out what you need. In general, think of the talk less in terms of performing to the public and more in terms of getting the help you need from others to make further progress. In that spirit, make sure you allow time to present the leading edge of your work even if that means being brief on educating the listeners about the facts you've established. (Visual aids can help in conveying the essential background.)

Asmt G2. Narrative Outline

Preparing a standard outline that looks like a table of contents has some value for some people, but not much. Instead, to ensure that your ideas and material really will fit your outline, it is better to:

- a) *nest* or indent subsections inside sections, and sub-subsections inside subsections; and
- b) indicate with arrows and annotations how each section or subsection *connects* with the previous one, and how each connects with the larger whole (including the paper) of which it is a part. This is what I call a "nested and connected table of contents."

Even better, prepare a narrative outline, which is an outline or plan of your report with explanatory sentences inserted at key places:

- i) to explain *in a declarative style* the point of each section;
- ii) to explain how each section *links* to the previous one and/or to the larger section or the whole report it's part of. The object of doing a narrative outline is to move you beyond the preliminary thinking that goes into a standard outline or a nested and connected table of contents. Insertion of explanatory sentences helps you check that your ideas and material really will fit your outline.

Give your narrative outline a title that is long and descriptive, not short and cryptic. Follow this by restating your overview—this may need to be revised since your most recent submission of Asmt. A. Having these at the start will help you think as you write and help any reader offer well-focused feedback.

Preparing visual aids for presentations can help order your thoughts for an outline, and vice versa. You might also try to lay out the overall argument or GOSP for your project and get feedback before preparing your outline.

H. Compelling communication

Goal: "My writing and other products Grab the attention of the readers/ audience, Orient them, move them along in Steps, so they appreciate the Position I've led them to."

Processes:

Direct Writing & Quick Revising (to produce narrative draft)

Producing a Complete Draft

Revising in response to comments on a complete draft.

Final report

Iterative process -> revise outline G, and revise H, with possibility of further research B, E & F for this project or future projects (see C -> new A), and even revisit/revise A, C & D.

In-class exercise

Direct Writing & Quick Revising (Elbow chapters. 4 & 5) for 90 minutes with the goal of completing an extended narrative outline or short draft (say 4-5 pages). After completing this, read Elbow section III on revising, take stock of comments received on your outlines, and then prepare the draft of your research report.

Asmt. H1. Complete draft:

A key thing I look for is GOSP—whether you **Grab** readers' attention, **Orient** them to the direction you are taking, and move through **Steps** so that they appreciate the **Position** you, the writer, have led them to (see also Phase G). In this light, the complete draft must get to the end even if you only sketch some sections along the way. An incomplete draft does not allow readers to see if you are clear about the Position you want to lead them to and the steps needed to get them there.

After the draft is completed, you should pair up with another student and comment on each other's draft. Take Elbow's chapters 3 & 13 in mind when you decide what approaches to commenting you ask for as a writer and use as a commentator. In the past I made lots of specific suggestions for clarification and change in the margins, but in my experience, such suggestions led only a minority of students beyond touching up into re-thinking and revising their ideas and writing. On the other hand, I believe that all writers value comments that reassure them that they have been listened to and their voice, however uncertain, has been heard.

Reverse outlining

Make a note on the topic(s) or thesis(theses) of each paragraph you have written and then see how these can be rearranged, streamlined, discarded, combined, split, so that each paragraph makes a distinct contribution to a definite GOSPing path. If you have not made a narrative outline before this may be the time to do so.

Asmt. H2. Final report:

The report on your project is not a report to show me, the professor, that you have done lots of work. Instead, think more of reporting to your fellow students—what do they need to know to get interested in and understand what you've done?

The report should be 10-15 pages or 2500-3500 words (plus references). If the report presents an activity for a class, organization, or your own personal development, you may have fewer words for the same number of pages.

For the final project report to be counted as final, you must have revised in response to comments on previously submitted outlines/drafts. Allow time for the additional research that may be entailed.

Cite references consistently (an annotated bibliography is not needed). For a guide on technical matters of writing scholarly papers, I recommend Turabian, K. L. (1996). A Manual For Writers of Term papers, Theses, and Disertations. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Submit by the Monday (4.30pm) after classes end, in both paper and electronic form. If you have arranged an extension, leave in my mailbox in the Department of Curriculum & Instruction, or mail it to me at 41 Cornell St. #2, Arlington, MA 02474, with self-addressed, stamped envelope for sending comments.

I. Engagement with others

Goal: "I have facilitated new avenues of classroom, workplace, and public participation."

Processes:

Run-through of activities and other group processes, commented on by participants.

Plan for future development of activities or group processes in light of run-through.

Plan future written and spoken presentations.

Begin to explore avenues of public participation and define proposals for (further) engagement/action.

Iterative process -> more I, and possibly E-H.

Suggested task

Volunteer to practice/present what you've developed/discovered in, e.g., the spring CCT Orientation or CCT in Practice Open House

J. Taking stock

Goal: " To feed into my future learning and other work, I have taken stock of what has been working well and what needs changing."

Processes:

Feedback to PT on course processes

Feedback to oneself on progress

Process review, including annotations and cover note

Written self-assessment of goals achieved and further work ahead

Iterative process -> future A-I (especially revisit phase E to plan future extensions of your research and engagement)

In-class activities

Throughout the semester please make suggestions about changes and additions to the course activities and materials. Also email me addresses of valuable websites with a brief explanation (1-2 sentences) of their value. Support me as I experiment in developing this course (see "Teacher-research on CCT698 in Fall 1999" on website).

Open question: What is the means of best presenting the group's work to the wider public, and of supporting each other in doing so?

Mid-semester self-evaluation

End of semester **Evaluations**. I devote the whole of the last class to "taking stock":

a) to feed into your future learning (and other work), you take stock of your process(es) over the semester;

b) to feed into my future teaching (and future learning about how students learn), I take stock of how you, the students, have learned.

Standard evaluation forms are not very conducive to taking stock, so I have designed another evaluation form for you to complete.

End-of-semester **Process Review**. These should contain 4-6 examples of the process of development of your project and approach to research and writing. Journal entries, free writing, drafts, etc. may be included. The point is to demonstrate the development of your work and thinking, not simply the best products. Explain your choices in a cover note and through annotations (post-its are a good way to do this).

Alternative: Self-assessment with respect to two sets of course goals (see handout):

I. Phases of Research and Engagement; and

II. Developing as a reflective practitioner, including taking initiative in or through relationships

First, you should describe for each goal two things:

a) one that reflects what you have achieved well related to this goal, and

b) one you have struggled with/ need more help on/ want to work further on.

(Even though you may have many examples for some items, one is enough. Write neatly or get the self-assessment off the website so you can type your responses.)

After you have written something for all the items, mark in the left margin beside each goal either

** [= "fulfilled very well"],

OK [= "did a reasonable job, but room for more development"], or

-> [= "to be honest, this still needs serious attention"]

If there are big discrepancies between my assessment and yours, we should discuss the discrepancies and try to come to a shared understanding about them.