

KEY TEACHING/LEARNING TOOLS

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Note: q.v. is used to refer to other items in this compilation.

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Annotated bibliography

The primary goal of annotating is for you to check the significance of the reading against your current project definition and priorities and clarify that definition and priorities. Annotations on an article, therefore, should indicate its relevance to your topic.

Preparing 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).

Both planned and completed readings may be included. Focus is more important than quantity. Don't pack or pad this with zillions of references you've found in your searches, but focus on the primary goal stated above. Omit readings that no longer relate to the current direction of your project.

Your topic might have changed and should be more concise by the time you submit or resubmit an annotated bibliography. Take stock of that and begin the bibliography with a revised statement of the current topic and a thesis question that conveys the focus, orientation, and purpose of your project. Writing a tighter statement will also help to expose changes, gaps, and ambiguities.

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Assessment System

My assessment system centers on dialogue around written work (see entry), not grades. Grades come in only at the end of the semester. I assign an automatic B+ for the written portion of the final grade for satisfactory completion of 80% of the assignments--satisfactory meaning no further revision and resubmission requested. (The 20% slack allows students to make tactical decisions around competing priorities in their work, lives, and course work.) My goal is to work with each student to achieve the 80% level. Students who progress steadily towards that goal during the semester usually end up producing work that meets the criteria for a higher grade (see typical rubric below). Students who do not reach that goal are pro-rated from B+ down to C for 50% of assignments satisfactorily completed. (I have cross-checked the pro-rating procedure by grading individual assignments for these students and the results have always been the same.)

Not grading each assignment during the semester helps teaching/learning interactions stay focused on the student's process of developing through the semester. It keeps time and space for students and myself to appreciate and learn from what each other is saying and thinking.

Usually the written assignments count for two-thirds of the final grade, with participation and contribution to the class process making up the other third. An automatic B+ is given for the participation/process portion of the final grade if students fulfill 80% of a list about 20 participation/process items, where 13 or 14 items correspond simply to "prepared participation and attendance" at the class meetings. Another two items are "minimum of two in-office or phone conferences on your assignments and project," which ensure that students' responses to my written comments can be aired before they fester.

A rubric is used to determine whether a higher grade is earned. Student who show half of the qualities in the rubric earn an A-. Students who show almost all of these earn an A. Qualities in a typical rubric include:

- A sequence of assignments paced more or less as in syllabus, often revised thoroughly and with new thinking in response to comments.
- A project that is innovative, well planned and carried out with considerable initiative, and indicates that you can guide others to think critically about the use of numbers in society.
- A project report that is clear and well structured, with supporting references and detail, and professionally presented.
- Active, prepared participation in all classes.
- Completion of most preparatory and follow-up homework tasks.
- Process Review that shows deep reflection on your development through the semester and maps out the future directions in which you plan to develop.

Although I do not emphasize this way of looking at the course, students can tally their grade along the way. If there are 10 written assignments, each one satisfactorily completed earns 10 points up to a maximum of 80 or a B+. Similarly, participation items fulfilled would count as 5 points. The student can then combine their points into a % grade giving 2/3 weighting to writing and 1/3 to participation.

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Briefings

For this assignment each student, or pair of students, selects a topic on which to prepare a summary (2-4 pages) in written form that gives other students a quick start when they face that topic. These briefings are intended to provide or point to key resources= key concepts, issues and debates, lesson plans, web sites and bibliographic references, annotations on and quotes or paraphrases from those references, informants/contacts on and off campus, relevant workshops, etc. Imagine as your audience peers who you can interest in your topic, but who do not want to start from scratch in finding key resources on this topic and learning how to think about it. To begin preparing their briefings, students view previous versions linked to the course website or meet with me to get initial suggested resources.

The briefing assignment addresses the goal of students becoming better able to "fulfill the needs of your school, community or organization, address the information explosion, adapt to social changes, and collaborate with others to these ends."

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Check-ins, Check-outs

The limited class meeting time means that we have to use it efficiently, but it is important to keep lines of communication active. One practice that helps is the check-in or check-out at start or end of class, in which you hear yourself and hear others say what's been going on personally. Later in the semester, when you're concentrating on your own projects, you might also establish a daily check-in with a live or phone buddy to ensure that you're doing what is essential and not simply doing what has accumulated on your list of things to do. A check-in will help you balance the divergent and convergent aspects of the research and writing process.

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Draft

Begin drafting your report early so the revision process helps you clarify what research is needed. A key thing to work on is GOSP--Grab your readers' attention, Orient them, and move through Steps so that they appreciate the Position you, the writer, has led them to.

I recommend reading Elbow, Writing with Power, chapters. 4 & 5 on Direct Writing & Quick Revising, then doing this for 90 minutes with the goal of completing an extended narrative outline or short draft. After completing this, read Elbow section III on revising, take stock of comments received on your outlines and other previous submissions, and then prepare the draft of your report.

The draft must get to the end to count, even if some sections along the way are only sketches. For the final report to be counted as final, you must have revised in response to comments from instructor and peers on complete draft (see peer commentary). Allow time for the additional investigation and thinking that may be entailed.

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E-clippings List and Archive

In addition to an emails list for exchange among course members (q.v.) another list can be established for posting e-clippings, i.e., web addresses with short annotations to explain their relevance. Egroups, now absorbed into yahoogroups (www.yahoogroups.com) allows for archived clippings to be viewed and includes a search box to help retrieve information, e.g., www.yahoogroups.com/group/Ed610Clips. (Note that Ed610clips was set up so it has only one member, the moderator, and messages on the website are readable by anyone.)

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Focused Conversation

In Focused Conversations a group, which could be a class, a grass roots activist organization, or a business, addresses some challenging or difficult situation by proceeding through a series of questions arranged in four stages:

1. **Objective** (getting the facts)
2. **Reflective** (eliciting feelings and associations)
3. **Interpretive** (consider the meaning and significance)
4. **Decisional** (formulating a decision, an action, or a shared picture)

In a Focused Conversation the facilitator leads as neutrally as possible. Participants who jump quickly to a decision or interpretation are encouraged to spend more time on the earlier stages, to be careful to separate facts from feelings, and to recognize at each step the differing assessments other participants have. Answers should be telegraphic, to allow for as wide a pool of contributions as possible. The result is not necessarily a consensus, but because the group shares a common pool of experiences of the situation, the result is larger than what any one person had beforehand, and there is a firmer basis for extensions of the group's work, either as a group or, in the case of a class, by group members in other settings.

For 100s of examples of Focused Conversation, see Stanfield, B. (Ed.) (1997). The Art of Focused Conversation and Nelson, J. (2001). The Art of Focused Conversation for Schools, both published by Canadian Institute of Cultural Affairs in Toronto and available via www.icacan.ca.

I see the four stages of a Focused Conversation as corresponding to the four points or stages on Kolb's cycle of learning, in which learners move from experiences to concepts which open them up to new experiences:

1. Concrete Experience (CE) = Objective
2. Reflective Observation (RO) = Reflective
3. Abstract Conceptualization (AC) = Interpretive
4. Active Experimentation (AE) = Decisional.

Translated to Group Learning the four stages become 1. Sharing of (concrete) experiences; 2. Public Reflection; 3. Sharing of Meaning; 4. Coordinated Action.

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Freewriting

Freewriting is a technique that helps you clear mental space so that thoughts about an issue in question can emerge that had been below the surface of your attention--insights that you were not able, at first, to acknowledge (see also Supportive Listening, q.v.).

In a freewriting exercise, you should not take your pen off the paper. Keep writing even if you find yourself stating over and over again, "I don't know what to say." What you write won't be seen by anyone else, so don't go back to tidy up sentences, grammar, spelling. You will probably diverge from the topic, at least for a time while you acknowledge other preoccupations. That's OK--it's one of the purposes of the exercise. However, if you keep writing for seven-ten minutes, you should expose some thoughts about the topic that had been below the surface of your attention--that's another of the aims of the exercise. Reference: Elbow, P. 1981. Writing With Power. New York: Oxford U. P.

In a guided freewriting exercise, you continue where a sentence I provide leads off (examples follow).

At the start of a project

- "I would like my work on X to influence Y to make changes in Z..."
- "I often/ sometimes have trouble getting going until..."
- "The differences between investigating ... and investigating might be that..."
- "There are SO many aspects to my topic. I could look at..... and...."
- "If I was given more background in how to analyze society-science relations, I would be better able to..."
- "From my past experience, the kinds of issues or aspects of research I tend to overlook or discount include..."

Early on in a project

- "When I think about sharing my incomplete work, what comes up is.... And this means I should...."
- "It may be very premature to lay out the arguments involved in my research, but it may help me define where I am going, so let me try..."
- "Incorporating regular freewriting into my resesarch practice is (difficult? wonderful? a not yet achieved ideal?)..."
- "In the next two months what I most want to see happening in my project is... What is blocking me realizing this vision is...."
- "Usually when I try to plan my work, what happens is.."
- "Some aspect of research I'd like to be able to explain clearly for my project is.."
- "If I had to state a question that keeps my subject, audience and purpose most clearly in focus, I would say..."

When you begin to draft a report

- "My ideal report would lead readers to see... I would grab their attention by... and lead

them through a series of steps, namely....."

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Gallery Walk (ice breaker activity)

As participants in a course or workshop arrive at the first meeting, they can be grouped in 2s or 3s, given marker pens, asked to introduce themselves to each other, and directed to one of a number of flip chart stations. Each flip chart has a question. Participants review the answers already contributed by any previous groups and add their own, then move on around the station. As the first group returns to where they began, volunteers are asked to summarize the main themes and contrasts on one of the flip charts. They present these to the whole group, with the aid of an overhead transparency or simply as they stand by the flip chart in question. A sheet listing the questions can be distributed for participants who want to take notes.

This activity exemplifies the principles that people already know a lot, including knowing what they need to learn, and, if this knowledge is elicited and affirmed, they become better at learning from others.

Example 1: Gallery Walk Questions for Class 1 of Evaluation of Educational Change

1. What changes (big & small) are being pursued in teaching, schools, and educational policy?
2. What kinds of experience prepare teachers, administrators, and policy makers to pursue change in constructive ways?
3. What things would tell us that positive educational changes had happened?
4. What do you hope will come from this semester's experience?
insert excerpt from patton briefing

Example 2: Gallery Walk Questions used at the start of a year long professional development course for math and science educators to promote inquiry and problem-solving in a watershed context.

1. What factors (big & small) are involved in maintaining healthy watersheds?
2. What watershed issues might translate well into math. and science teaching?
3. What pressures & challenges do you see facing teachers wanting to improve math. and science teaching?
4. What has helped you in the past make improvements successfully (+), and what has hindered you (-)?
5. What things would tell you that positive educational changes had happened?
6. What kinds of things do you hope will come from this course/ professional development experience?

Here are the specific reasons for using the Gallery Walk given by the hosts of the STEMTEC workshop (<http://k12s.phast.umass.edu/~stemtec/>) where I first experienced this activity:

"A useful classroom practice--

1. Breaks the ice and introduces students who might otherwise never interact.
2. Begins the community-building process so central to cooperative learning and emphasizes the collaborative, constructed nature of knowledge.

3. Suggests to students their centrality in the course, and that their voices, ideas, and experiences are significant and valued.
4. Allows for both consensus and debate - two skills essential to knowledge-building - and facilitates discussion when the class reconvenes as a larger group.
5. Enables physical movement around the room, an important metaphor for the activity at the course's core.
6. Depending on the gallery walk questions, provides one way for the instructor to gauge prior knowledge and skills, and identify potentially significant gaps in these.
7. Depending on the gallery walk questions, provides a way to immediately introduce students to a central concept, issue or debate in the field.
8. Through reporting back, provides some measure of closure by which students can assess their own understandings. "

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GOSP (Grab, Orient, Steps to Position)

Drafts and final project reports should Grab readers' attention, Orient them, and move through Steps so that they appreciate the Position you, the writer, has led them to. Keep in mind peer readers -- not only the professor or an expert who might know enough to read between the lines.

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Historical Scan

This is a variant of Focused Conversation used to review a group's progress or evolution over time. The sequence I intend to follow during the end of semester Historical Scan is:

"As this course draws to a close, most of you will be moving on to or back to classes that involve Let's look back at the experiences we've had, from the time you heard of the course until today.

Take a moment to jot down things that struck you, e.g., Keith's video, "heterogeneous construction," "OK/RNR," the interpreters,....

Now choose 5 of them and write them in on the post-its in as large block letters as will fit.

Select one from early on. [Put them on the board, consulting the class to keep them in order] ... from the middle... from the later part of the course.... others [including those covering the whole period]

- When were you excited?....discouraged?
- What do these experiences remind you of?
- When were there transitions?
- If this were a book, what name would you give for the "chapters" between the transitions?
- ...name for the whole "book"?
- What have you learned about a diverse group of students coming together to "read this book"? [Remind participants to be telegraphic -- avoid speeches.]
- What have you learned about facilitating thinking and learning as they relate to computers?
- How shall you translate the learning to future situations?

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In-tray, Out-tray

Drop off and collect written work on your own from my in and out trays before you leave class. This gives me more time to set up the class and talk with students before and after class. But please do not try to draw me into an on-the-spot discussion or read comments once class is underway. The comments are intended to be read when you have a copy of your assignment in front of you and can give time to digesting the comments before responding.

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Mini-Essays (or Thought-pieces or Journal Extracts)

The goal of mini-essays (200-400 words) is for you to weave the course material -- readings, activities, homework tasks -- into your own thinking, and for this to help you bring your own thinking back into class activities. Although I will suggest some possible topics for the mini-essays, the choice of topic is open as long as it meets this goal. Write as if the audience included your peers as well as me.

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Narrative Outline

Preparing a standard outline--one that looks like a table of contents--may have some value, but you need to do more to ensure that your ideas and material really will fit your outline. It is better, therefore, 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."

It is even better to prepare a narrative outline, which is an outline or plan of your report with explanatory sentences inserted at key places so as to:

- i) explain in a declarative style the point of each section;
- ii) explain how each section links to the previous one and/or to the larger section or the whole report it is part of.

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 (q.v.) for your project and get feedback before preparing your outline.

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Notes on Research and Planning

Pull together notes on your reading and your thinking and present it in a form that will elicit useful comments from me. Record the full citations (incl. URLs) for your sources.

Pull together notes on your reading and your thinking and present it in a form that will elicit useful comments from me, such as an updated overview, an outline and/or annotated bibliography of readings done or planned (*q.v.*). Record the full citations (not just the URLs) for your sources. I recommend starting to use a bibliographic database. I recommend is Endnote, which can be downloaded for a 30 day trial from <http://www.endnote.com>

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Peer commentary

After the draft report is completed I require you to pair up and comment on other students' drafts. 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.

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Phases of Research and Engagement

Note: the order of the phases below may vary according to the opportunities that arise, and in any case these phases are overlapping and iterative. That means 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.

At the same time, you will be developing as a reflective practitioner, in and through relationships (q.v.).

A. Overall vision

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

Processes: Freewriting and journaling (using workbook).

Compose and revise initial description and Thesis Question

Iteration: Sharing initial description and thesis question with others -> revise A, and angles of inquiry for B. (Note: Sharing runs through the entire process -- see also C, D, G, H)

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: Identify possible informants to guide your inquiries in their early unformed stage.

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

Establish internet link-ups, and bibliographic and note-taking systems.

Compile bibliography, filtered and annotated with respect to how what the reading/interview connects with your project

Literature review

Phase B -> revise A, and provides grist for C.

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, decide most important direction expressed in revised Thesis Question."

Processes: Mapping, prepared then presented to & probed by others

Discussion with professors and peers.

Phase C -> revise Subject, Audience, Purpose in A, more/ different work on 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, prepared then presented to & probed by others.

Discussion with professors and peers.

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

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: Compose a realistic timetable with a thought-out sequence of steps, or

Strategic personal planning (proceeding through 4 stages: Vision-> Obstacles-> Strategic Directions-> Action plans)

Phase E -> revisit/revise A - D, especially Thesis Question.

F. Direct information, models & experience

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

Processes: Identifying practitioners who can be informants, instructors, interviewees.

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.

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

G. Clarification through communication

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

Processes: Work-in-progress presentations--preparing text and visual aids, delivering, digesting feedback.

Narrative outlines.

Phase G -> revise E, D, Thesis Question in C, and also revise A, more work on B & F.

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: Drafts, commented on by readers

Final report.

Phase H -> 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.

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.

Phase I -> more I, and possibly E-H.

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: Process review cover note & annotations.

Written self-evaluation.

Discussion with peers.

Written evaluation of processes.

Begin to plan future extensions of your research.

Phase J -> future A-I.

An overlapping list of process goals

The course aims to cultivate research and action processes that you will continue to use, including:

1. Integrate perspectives from previous courses into your own research and action. Connect knowledge and skills to an interest in social and educational change.
2. Organize time, research materials, computer access, bibliographies, etc.
3. Self-discover and self-clarify direction to take.
4. Not to get blocked by obstacles, but turn them into opportunities to move into unfamiliar or uncomfortable territory.
5. Develop your own criteria for doing work, criteria other than "the professor is setting the hoops that I jump through to get a good grade."
6. Get support and advice from peers, professors and outsiders. Initiate and develop a supportive community for your development during this semester.
7. Experiment with new tools, even if not every one becomes part of your toolkit as a learner and as a teacher/facilitator of others.

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Process review

Identify 4-6 examples that capture the process of development of your work and thinking about the subject of the course. Journal entries, freewriting, drafts, etc. may be included, that is, not simply your best products. Explain your choices in a 1-2 page cover note and through annotations (large post-its are a good way to do this). Submit with your notebook or workbook, or extract into a portfolio.

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Pyramid of Questions

Compile a "pyramid of questions" in a part of your workbooks separate from the freewriting, 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 thesis 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.

Updated: 6-17-02

Revising

Writing is an essential part of working out your ideas. I don't think you really understand something until you are able to convey it to someone else. Moreover, you shouldn't expect to work out your ideas in one attempt -- everyone needs to revise! And this means not just after your teachers have slogged their way through the version you submit and identified the problems in your exposition, but beforehand.

In the first draft of a piece or in your preparatory notes you are inventing the problem; delineating the main points. You're getting your thoughts out to arrive at a working set of words.

Once you have this much of a paper you can (re)organize those points, and after (re)writing the paper you can better identify the weaknesses in it. Cosmetic changes in wording do not constitute revision; there are two levels of revision which should precede fine-tuning your vocabulary:

First, you should RE-ENVISION the paper. Does it need major restructuring? How does each paragraph connect with the previous one, and to the paper as a whole? Try shifting sections around; incorporate new insights as they arise. Also ask yourself: Is what I have written true? Have I written about what I set out to write? If not, why not? Have I changed my mind?

Re-envisioning requires some distance from your draft. Spend some hours or a day away from it, nominally doing something else but remaining pre-occupied with your paper, letting it digest. Jot down notes wherever you are when the ideas come to you so you can try them out when you return to your writing table.

Next, FILL THE HOLES. What transitions and links are weak or missing? (Words such as "surely," "it seems," "logically," and so on are sure signs of connections unmade.) What are your blind spots? Are you avoiding admitting to yourself that you need to do more research? Think about the holes in your information and your argument; can you fill them? Have you provided examples? Have you anticipated counter-arguments? Long sentences with many loosely linked ideas are cues that you need to divide the sentence and develop each idea separately.

Perhaps you feel that you know the meaning of what you've written, so there's nothing to change. If so, then read it to someone else. Do they follow what you mean? Frustratingly, they may not. You may even feel they are being thick or difficult in not understanding you. Perhaps they are. Nevertheless, if you clarify your writing so that bothersome readers can follow, you will probably improve it for other readers who were (more or less) understanding you.

On the other hand, you should be prepared to DELETE as well as to add. It is often harder to delete than to add because it is difficult to overcome your investment in what you've already written. Nevertheless, deletion is an important part of revision.

The aim of writing is not to explain everything for all time, but to achieve some temporary closure. If you can't fill a hole, make clear those places where you or the field in general need to do further work. In a few weeks you may know more, but the appropriate question is whether you have finished with the paper for the moment.

After such self-scrutiny and revision you should know exactly what it is you want to say, and the third level of revision, the FINE-TUNING of vocabulary to achieve the desired connotations, should be much easier. However, even when typing the final draft you should be thinking and not merely transcribing, remaining open to opportunities to rewrite and restructure your paper so you are saying what you want to as well as you can.

Also remember:

-Take responsibility for what you're saying. The passive voice may be useful for variety, but do not use it to avoid thinking through an issue. Instead, identify the group or person hidden behind a passive construction.

-Before every sentence, paragraph and section ask yourself: What am I trying to say? What words or phrases express that idea best? After writing a paragraph check to make sure it is about what you said it would be about.

-Watch out for gobbledegook and jargon. Clean this out and use English.

Peter Taylor, with help from Ann Blum and Greg Tewksbury.
(Version 4, September 1993)

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Self-Assessment

One way to facilitate autonomy building is to facilitate a process of self-assessment and evaluation. The process of assessing our own needs and goals is an opportunity to take possession of our development. When we are encouraged to decide what we want to learn and how we want to challenge ourselves, we have the opportunity to develop a directorial and self-affirming stance toward our own lives. And when we learn to how make our own choices, we become less dependent upon external authority figures.

Self-assessment Instructions

This self-assessment of goals achieved has two purposes (in order of decreasing priority):

1. Stock-taking to inform your future work; and
2. To provide insight for the instructor and for other interested parties.

The goals are divided into two sets:

- I. "My Report Shows That..."; and
- II. Developing as a reflective practitioner, including taking initiative in or through relationships

First, you should describe for each goal

- a) something that reflects what you have achieved well related to this goal, and
- b) something 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 ask for the items by email 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"]

Make a copy for me. If there are big discrepancies between my assessment and yours, we should discuss the discrepancies and try to come to a shared agreement about them.

I. "MY REPORT SHOWS THAT..." (goals of the ten phases of research and engagement)

A. I can convey who I want to influence/affect concerning what (Subject,

Audience, Purpose).

B. 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.

C. 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 the most important direction.

D. 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.

E. 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 (with realistic deadlines) to realize these objectives.

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

G. I have clarified the overall progression or argument underlying my research and the written reports.

H. 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.

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

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

II. DEVELOPING AS A REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER, INCLUDING TAKING INITIATIVE IN AND THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS

1. I have integrated knowledge and perspectives from CCT and other courses into my own inquiry and engagement in social and/or educational change.

2. I have also integrated into my own inquiry and engagement the processes, experiences, and struggles of previous courses.

3. I have developed efficient ways to organize my time, research materials, computer access, bibliographies...

4. I have experimented with new tools and experiences, even if not every one became part of my toolkit as a learner, teacher/facilitator of others, and reflective practitioner.

5. I have paid attention to the emotional dimensions of undertaking my own project but have found ways to clear away distractions from other sources (present & past) and not get blocked, turning apparent obstacles into opportunities to move into unfamiliar or uncomfortable territory.

6. I have developed peer and other horizontal relationships. I have sought support and advice from peers, and have given support and advice to them when asked for.

7. I have taken the lead, not dragged my feet, in dialogue with my instructor and other readers. I didn't wait for them to tell me how to solve an expository problem, what must be read and covered in the literature, or what was meant by some comment I didn't understand. I didn't put off giving my writing to my instructor and other readers or avoid talking to them because I thought that they didn't see things the same way as I do.

8. I have revised seriously, which involved responding to the comments of others. I came to see this not as bowing down to the views of others, but taking them in and working them into my own reflective inquiry until I could convey more powerfully to others what I'm about (which may have changed as a result of the reflective inquiry).

9. I have inquired and negotiated about formal standards, but gone on to develop and internalize my own criteria for doing work--criteria other than jumping through hoops set by the instructor so I get a good grade.

10. I have approached this course as a work-in-progress. Instead of harboring criticisms to submit after the fact, I have found opportunities to affirm what is working well and suggest directions for further development.

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Supportive Listening

Each person takes half the time available, to be listened to and simply paid attention to even if not talking. The other half of the time you are the listener.

The listener may offer supportive words, but should not interrupt or bring in their own experience. It is enough just to be listening attentively and non-judgementally. It is OK for there to be pauses; the listener does not have to "interview" you, or otherwise keep the conversation going.

Being listened to in this way helps you move through what is distracting you from being clear. It is a way of moving you on to being able to take initiative in new ways.

From experience, just having someone listen to you with no strings attached can bring up strong feelings. This is especially true when you stop talking a lot and really notice that someone is listening to you supportively. Although this can be scary, it's a positive experience. Try not to be embarrassed.

This is done in **absolute confidentiality**. Afterwards, the listener must not refer to what is said to anyone, not even to the person who said it.

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Think-Pair-Share

After preparing your thoughts, you pair up with another person, and, through sharing ideas, you refine your own and prepare to share a key part of them with the whole class (time permitting).

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Work-in-Progress Presentation

Preparing presentations, hearing yourself deliver them, and getting feedback usually leads to self-clarification of the overall direction of your project and of your priorities for further work. In this spirit, presentations are scheduled early in your projects and are necessarily on work-in-progress. I encourage you to indicate where additional investigation is needed and where you think it might lead you. A web site or PowerPoint presentation is not needed at this stage.

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Workshop Process

Basic propositions of the ICA workshop process, plus some supplements

Adapted from ICA material by Peter Taylor

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."

The basic structure of ICA workshop processes is to move through four phases -
- objective, reflective, interpretive, decisional. This is best represented in a "focused conversation" (Spencer 1989, Stanfield 1997).

Contacts and references

Burbidge, J. (Ed.) (1997). *Beyond Prince and Merchant: Citizen Participation and the Rise of Civil Society*. New York: Pact Publications.

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Stanfield, B. (Ed.) (1997). *The Art of Focused Conversation*. Toronto: Canadian Institute of Cultural Affairs.

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