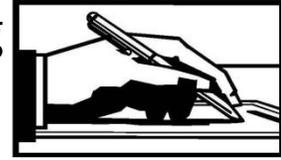


Teaching with Writing (TWW) Tip

Teaching with Writing



Quick, Effective Writing Instruction

Rationale: Writing instruction can be efficient and effective, taking minimal class time. And because writing helps students actively engage course concepts, that small amount of time is time well spent.

Five-Minute Workshop

Project a brief, de-identified sample of student writing (from a different section) that doesn't quite succeed at a writing ability that many students are struggling with—for example, a thesis statement. Ask students to say *what* about the sample thesis statement is insufficient, *how* they might revise to improve it, and *why* writers tend to struggle with this task. With another five minutes, a more successful sample can be projected and discussed. The key is that students actively discuss peer samples of what they are currently working on.

Reverse Outline

When students bring a preliminary draft of a writing assignment, they exchange drafts with a peer; each student extrapolates an outline of the partner's paper, showing the partner how a reader sees the text's structure. Students can then revise their organization. Alternatively, students can create a reverse outline of their own draft. See more at http://twp.duke.edu/uploads/assets/reverse_outline.pdf

One-Time, Last-Minute Proofreading

When students bring their first finished paper to class, tell them, "You're not quite done. You have five minutes to proofread your paper one more time; using a pen, correct any typos, spelling, grammar or other errors that you find. I will read and grade them as though they were correct on the typed manuscript." When the five minutes are up, ask students how many found errors to correct. Usually, about half will raise their hands. Point out the value of one last proofreading pass, and tell them that they will not have this in-class opportunity on subsequent assignments.

Comment: Devoting small portions of class time to student writing—discussing, analyzing, revising, or editing samples or drafts—shows students that writing is important in the class and the discipline; it also provides direct instruction in what often seems mysterious to students. Such time invested up front typically results in less time making repeated comments about focus, organization, and proofreading errors later.

Learn more:

- Bean, John C. *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom.* (2nd Ed.) San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011.
- Hillocks, George. *Research on Written Composition: New Directions for Teaching.* Urbana: IL, ERIC Clearinghouse, 1986.

• Informal, In-class Writing Activities:
<http://writing.umn.edu/tww/assignments/informal.html>

Questions? Visit us online at <http://writing.umn.edu/tww/index.html>

See attachment for a PDF version of this tip. PDF version may also be accessed at
<http://writing.umn.edu/tww/resources.html#tips>

Further support: Contact a member of the WAC (Writing Across the Curriculum) team for a phone, email, or face-to-face teaching consultation:
<http://z.umn.edu/twwconsultation>

Our purpose is to provide practical strategies for teaching with writing. Our goal: to offer timely and pragmatic support to faculty members and instructors who teach with writing in undergraduate and graduate courses in all disciplinary areas.