Writing Across the Curriculum
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Activities for Teaching Writing in a WI Course

The following document lists some options for instruction that faculty can include in their courses to help students learn what it means to write in their field/major and how to successfully complete assignments in their courses. This list is not exhaustive but illustrative of some options available.

Demonstrations (instructor-led)

- Demonstration of key disciplinary literacy skill (e.g., how to access and use a discipline-specific database; how to locate key journals/publications; how to read and annotate a scholarly article)
- Modeling of writing processes & problem-solving (e.g., how to revise a paragraph or sentence; how to interpret and prioritize feedback; how to write an effective research question)
- Modeling of project management strategies (how to establish project timelines and prioritize tasks; how to plan revisions)
- Modeling of peer-review processes (e.g., how to provide useful feedback to a colleague; could also include a workshop from the Writing Center)

Discussions (instructor-facilitated)

- Discussion of prior learning and experience as applied to current/upcoming assignments (e.g., has anyone written something like this? How might you go about it?)
- Discussion of model texts (or sections of texts) and their key conventions (e.g., types of evidence used)
- Discussion of ongoing writing processes & drafts (i.e., project check-ins, could be part of a regular class session or offered as conferences with teams, groups, or individuals)
- Discussion of key values for writing in the field, major, and/or course (e.g., clarity, originality, objectivity) and how they appear in sample texts
- Discussion of key terms related to assignments (e.g., analyze, evaluate, synthesize, voice) and how they appear in sample texts

Guided practice and activities (individual or small groups, often with whole class debrief)

- Writing workshops: class time dedicated to working on projects at various stages (brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing) with focus and insights offered by faculty or peers; can be done individually or in groups; click here for a list of activities
- Reading & research activities: class time dedicated to reading and related tasks
    - Identifying sources
    - Creating research logs
    - Evaluating sources using SIFT or lateral reading strategies
- Writing process activities: lower-stake tasks that help students develop relevant higher-stake projects (e.g., idea-mapping, free-writing, using a literature review matrix, conducting stakeholder or audience analysis)

- Peer review activities (e.g. hot-spotting, review of text sections or of full drafts, reverse-outlining)
    - Use a discussion board in the early stages of higher stake assignments for students to post their research topics and receive their peers' feedback (well-developed prompts needed from instructors)
- Revision activities
    - Add, move, change, delete: an activity asking writers to add, move, change, or delete text from their drafts (could be a word, sentence, paragraph, etc.)
    - Shift in perspective: an activity that asks writers to change their point of view (e.g., moving from 1st to 3rd person perspective)
    - Summarizing feedback (from peers and/or instructor) and creating a revision plan
        - An alternative version could be more targeted reflection writing that asks students to reflect on their decision-making process on (1) research processes and/or (2) rhetorical negotiations and/or (3) textual negotiations
- Evaluation of model/sample texts using an assignment rubric
    - This can be adopted as a great in-class activities: provide model-texts (of a range of quality) and have students discuss or evaluate the writing with their peers
    - Students can collectively develop rubrics from their discussions

Resources supporting instruction

- Rubrics aligned with course/assignment learning outcomes
- Sample texts (student or professional)
- Peer review prompts
- Literature review matrices
- Research logs
- Disciplinary writing guides
- Definitions of key terms related to writing
- Self-reflection prompts
- Revision memo templates

A final note about instruction in a WI course

Effective instruction needs to involve interaction between students and their instructors. Resources (such as handbooks and rubrics) while vital are not sufficient on their own; students need their instructors to talk about the value, meaning, and application of these resources. Feedback is also essential to high quality course design but should reinforce instruction and guide students through their writing projects. That is, a well-designed Writing-intensive course should include instruction on writing, opportunities for practice, and feedback on ongoing projects. These activities should also complement meaningful assignments and clear expectations for success.