

**Colorado State University**  
**COCC150 College Composition**  
**Syllabus and Lesson Plans, 2003-2004**  
(Tuesday/Thursday)

Available on the Web at  
<http://writing.colostate.edu/comp/co150/teaching.cfm>  
(password: please)

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## COCC150 College Composition: Daily and Weekly Lesson Plans

Welcome to the COCC150 lesson plans. These plans are designed to support your teaching in COCC150 College Composition, the required first-year composition course at Colorado State University. COCC150 is equivalent to most “second-semester” composition courses. It focuses on academic writing (including summary, response, analysis, and argument), source evaluation, and source-based writing. The course is heavily influenced by theories of rhetorical situation derived from Lloyd Bitzer and others. It also relies heavily on technology, including the SyllaBase course management system (<http://writing.colostate.edu/syllabase/>) and an interactive “Writing Room” in the Writing Studio on Writing@CSU (<http://writing.colostate.edu/studio>).

In addition to online resources, COCC150 makes use of two print texts: the *Prentice-Hall Guide, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition*, and the *New York Times*, daily national edition. As an instructor for the course, you will be provided desk copies of both texts.

This set of lesson plans provides overall goals for each week of the course. Additionally, each lesson is conceptually linked to the course goals with a paragraph at the beginning. The first month of the course includes daily lesson plans for courses taught on Monday-Wednesday-Friday and Tuesday-Thursday schedules. The specificity of the lesson plans declines as the semester progresses. The purpose of this arrangement is to encourage you to take ownership of the course through the development of your own lesson plans that meet the goals of the course and reflect your strengths and philosophies as a teacher.

Resources that support the teaching of COCC150 are discussed in the following materials. In addition to materials found in the textbook, many of the resources are available on the composition section of the Writing@CSU Web site (<http://writing.colostate.edu/comp/>). Others are available in print form in the appendix of the hard-copy version of this set of lesson plans.

You will find the complete set of assignments, including overviews of each portfolio, at the start of each portfolio.

## COCC150: Course Goals

We come to CSU with widely varying experiences in writing classes. There are numerous ways to teach writing and to write successfully; as a result, we think it is central to begin a description of the course you will be teaching by clarifying its goals. We hope (and fully expect) that your teaching styles will differ and that you will make the activities in the common syllabus “your own,” based on your own writing experiences and knowledge about writing. However, in a multi-sectioned course such as COCC150, common goals ensure a similar educational experience for all students in the course. No matter who is teaching an individual section, the following goals should be pursued in all COCC150 classes:

- Present writing as a process of joining and contributing to a conversation among writers and readers

- Teach students how to ask questions about their writing (rhetorical) situations so that they might make the best choices as they produce documents that respond to those situations
- Teach writing as a process of drafting and revision
- Teach students to use writing for academic, personal, and civic purposes

## How the Four Goals Interact

Given the nature of writing situations, good writing can never be defined universally; rather, the appropriateness of a document can only be evaluated according to the choices a writer makes in light of his or her writing situation. For instance, is the purpose appropriate for the situation? Is the text appropriate for the readers' needs and interests? Is the document organized in a way that allows readers to follow it? Does the document take into account the social, historical, and cultural contexts in which it will be read? Does the writer recognize and address the limitations, requirements, and opportunities that are part of the writing situation? Rather than teaching writing as a set of rules on how to produce specific forms—such as a research essay or a review of literature—we focus on writing as a process involving questions that shape a writer's choices.

COCC150 is designed to help student writers understand and make informed choices about their writing processes and the documents they produce. We assume that, by modeling the process and choice-making strategies within the contexts we set up in the syllabus, we can help student writers apply these ways of thinking to future writing situations. Thus, the writing assignments addressed in the course focus on educated audiences inside and outside the academy. The assignments help students use writing processes and strategies to write to public audiences for specific purposes. Moreover, the focus on publicly debated issues throughout the course offers a way to help students think about how reading and writing might serve them, not only as students in a university but also as educated citizens of a democracy.

For these reasons, the conversation metaphor used throughout the course is particularly important. By using this metaphor, we can help students build on their understanding of conversations as situated within larger social, historical, and cultural contexts. Students realize that they would be foolish to open their mouths the moment they join a group of people engaged in conversation – instead, they'd listen for a few moments to understand what's being discussed. Then, if they found they had something to offer, they would wait until an appropriate moment to contribute. Our students understand what happens to people who make off-topic, insensitive, inappropriate, or ill-considered remarks in a conversation. In COCC150, we build on this understanding by suggesting that, prior to contributing to the debate about an issue, they should read and analyze what other writers have written. Then, when they've gained an understanding of the conversation about that issue, they can offer their own contribution to it.

To become more effective writers, then, students need to ask questions about their writing situations and make informed choices to respond to those situations. In a nutshell, this course helps students engage in the processes of learning what has already been written about a publicly debated issue, drafting a response to the conversation about the issue, and revising that response as they consider their writing situation.

- **Learning about the conversation**—a process we refer to as becoming an accountable member of the conversation—involves learning how to read critically, how to write summaries, how to use textual evidence (e.g., quotation and paraphrase) and evidence from personal experience, and how to analyze and evaluate the arguments made by other writers. In the first portfolio we will guide students through such a process by carefully examining a range of documents related to a single issue, the use of SAT scores as a dominant criterion for college admissions. We then transfer the skills of Portfolio 1 into Portfolio 2, for which students decide on their own debatable, current issues—ideas for which will be obtained during the first portfolio by reading about current events in the *New York Times*--and then explore varied literature related to it.
- **Learning how to contribute to the conversation**—essentially, creating your own argumentative response to what others have written—involves learning how to generate ideas, develop claims and reasons, use evidence effectively, write effective and easy-to-follow prose, and organize documents that meet the needs of a specific context and take into account the needs and interests of readers. This will be the principal goal of Portfolio 3, for which students will select an audience, purpose, and specific publication context to offer their argumentative contribution to the conversation.
- **Learning to revise**—or learning to assess the effectiveness of a document you’ve written involves rethinking or revising your investment in a particular document and in the ideas presented within that document. We want students to learn that “revising” means “to re-see” rather than to edit or proofread. We understand that the effort entailed in producing a document can create a sense of attachment by the writer to the ideas and information in that document. This attachment can make writers reluctant to revise because they might fear it will distort their meaning. By encouraging and teaching revision, we help student writers learn not only how to revise their documents for clarity, completeness, and finish/polish, but also the value of revising the ideas and meaning within those documents. In short, we encourage them to remain open to the possibility of independent learning, the kind of revised thinking that can be obtained through serious study, research, reading, thinking, and writing. We also encourage them to think of both themselves and their audiences as both context/time-bound and continuously re-constructed. While revision is an important part of the entire syllabus, it is particularly emphasized at the conclusion of Portfolio 3 (the end of the course), when students will be asked to revise their contributions to the conversation (their arguments) for a new audience, an audience that we assign. Students will be encouraged to see that their own texts, like texts anywhere, are flexible documents that reflect their current thinking and yet can (and often must) be altered, not just for improvement to content and style, but for differing audiences and purposes and as circumstances dictate a revised view of the issue.

As students work on their assignments in COCC150, they are likely to find themselves challenged by the ideas they encounter in their reading about the issue on which they've decided to focus and by their efforts to draft and revise a response to the conversation they've decided to join. Writers are influenced by social, historical, and cultural beliefs and pressures, which influence their choices as they produce a document. By helping student writers understand the complexity of the situations within which they find themselves, we can help students recognize writing as a social act and view revision as a way to effect change within society. Therefore, students can also begin to see how writing can serve not only academic but also cultural and civic purposes. To make this interaction of the four goals more concrete, consider the following example . . .

Writing a paper for a graduate course includes a variety of possible topic choices, such as which literary text you will choose, what reading approach you will take, and what aspect of the text is most important. All of these choices are influenced by the situation in which it was assigned and the audience for which it is being written, and includes such factors as what you've done in class, the nature of past discussions, and what you believe the professor might expect. Within this complicated writing situation, writers define goals for papers that, hopefully, also have something to do with what they want to express about the text to this audience. What such a situation creates is the need for writers to make a series of choices about the writing task based on an assessment of every aspect of the situation. Each choice limits the other kinds of choices to be made. If you choose, for instance, to write a feminist analysis of *Pride and Prejudice*, you've already limited which aspects of the novel you might focus on and what kinds of analyses you will have to conduct. As you clarify your ideas about the phallogocentric nature of the "romance," you might also have to decide what to include based on what you think your audience will readily accept and what you will have to prove in detail. Perhaps you will complete a draft only to decide the professor is a bit threatened by feminism (because of her cultural experiences and positioning), so you might then go back and revise the essay to be a bit more attentive to the audience's concerns. Or, you might choose to stay with your original analysis to try to confront the audience's possible beliefs more directly. Thus, we can see the interaction of revision and asking questions about the rhetorical context and how they inform a writer's response to that context.

However, the writing process doesn't really end there. In a larger sense, writing always occurs within a cultural context. In writing an essay about *Pride and Prejudice*, you're also writing about culture. How does culture view romance? How do cultural forces influence our actions within relationships? In effect, as we write, whether we're aware of it or not, we're participating in culture. Writing is a way to gain a voice in the constantly changing nature of society. Yet, in order for this voice to be authentic, writers must be aware of the social, historical, and cultural contexts in which they write. If we return to the example above, we see that writing such an analysis is already analyzing cultural

notions of how relationships are affected by the phallogentric culture of the time (e.g., the book may reproduce expectations about gender roles within a relationship that was dominant at that time). However, as the writing process unfolds, writers can also express and revise their own views of society and culture. For example, while writing a paragraph on how the novel reinforces traditional gender roles, you might be able to see how those roles are present in your own relationships. While the act of revision changes what you're saying in the text, it also may change your cultural views. If you then decide to stay with your original analysis rather than revise to more readily fit what you suspect are the views of the professor, you could make an active and direct attempt to change cultural notions of gender roles within relationships, thus representing your own (revised) beliefs more accurately.

## **Final Thoughts**

We begin our common syllabus with this philosophical statement because it is easy, once you begin teaching, to focus only on how to produce the particular kinds of documents asked for in the major writing assignments. Keeping the goal of teaching choice within a context, however, can help prevent too much focus on producing an "A" paper of a particular genre. While success in particular genres will no doubt help your students succeed in COCC150, it will not necessarily help them succeed in writing tasks beyond this individual class—the main purpose of a first-year course.

Although much of this syllabus focuses on specific essays and reports, it is important to keep in mind that the goal of COCC150 is not simply to teach students to write these particular kinds of documents well. Although COCC150 is meant to help students write for other courses, the variety of genres and assignments across the curriculum cannot be readily reproduced in this course. Instead, the major goal of COCC150 is to teach students about writing in such a way that they can respond effectively to a variety of writing assignments, contexts, and tasks in the future. Therefore, we have designed the course so that students must choose and analyze real writing situations. Our hope is that this will help students learn how to apply academic thinking and writing strategies to new, more public contexts. In short, then, the main goal of the course is to create better writers rather than writers proficient only at producing certain kinds of documents.

# **Portfolio 1: Introduction to Goals and Essay Assignment Sheets**

## **Overview of Portfolio 1: Developing Accountability. Understanding the Conversation through Critical Reading. Writing a Summary/Response for an Educated, Public Audience**

Goals of Portfolio 1 include our desire to:

1. Develop student awareness of texts as ongoing conversations on issues of importance and relevance to themselves and the world
2. Develop engagement in the world of both problems and ideas through reading of a major national newspaper and to reassure students of their ability--and indeed their responsibility as adult citizens--to participate in the development of ideas and actions that contribute to improvements and solutions
3. Develop student awareness of texts as products of particular purposes, audiences, and contexts (rhetorical situations) and develop student ability to read such texts critically
4. Develop student accountability to ongoing conversations by encouraging them to read widely, to develop positions based on knowledge and critical reading rather than on unchallenged opinions
5. Teach students the principles of objective, academic summary of texts as a basis for effective responses
6. Teach students how to focus and develop their own texts (response essays) for educated audiences
7. Teach students how to make choices about the content and development of their writing based on context
8. Teach students how to incorporate their own experiences into their responses while also moving outside the self to incorporate knowledge gained from other sources (text evidence)
9. Teach students how to do deep (global rather than merely local or stylistic) revision of their writing.
10. Introduce students to the conventions associated with citing sources.

## COCC150: Portfolio 1 Essay Assignment

Write a summary/response to an article that's part of the discussion on the issue of *SAT Use in College Admissions*. This summary/response should be written as an extended Letter-to-the-Editor of the *New York Times* (750-1000 words) and should be accompanied by a compressed version (or abstract) of the same letter but of a length not exceeding 200 words, which is the typical length of the edited versions of published letters to the *NYT*.

**Introduction:** To complete this portfolio, you will read, summarize, and respond to various articles about a publicly debated issue, specifically the ongoing debate over use of the SAT as a major criterion for admission to universities. Then you will select one of your summary/response essays to revise and polish into a form appropriate for an extended *New York Times* Letter to the Editor. You will then reduce this extended letter and generate an "abstract" or mini-letter of approximately the length published by the *Times*.

**Workshop Draft Due Date: September 1, 2003**

**Due Date:** September 2, 2003

**Worth:** 20% of your final grade

**Purposes for this Portfolio:** To understand and critically examine a written argument; to communicate an author's argument and your response to that argument.

**Audience:** Address your essay to typical readers of the *New York Times*, which you can assume is a general, though well-educated, audience. Your essay will take the form of a Letter-to-the-Editor of the *New York Times*. Assume that your audience has not read the article you're responding to, although they are likely to be familiar with the issue, in part because it has been dealt with to some extent in the *Times*. (Specifically, the Diana Jean Schemo article published by the *Times*, laid out the basics of the debate and documented an excerpt from the proposal made by Dr. Richard C. Atkinson, President of the University of California system.) Therefore, your audience can be assumed to know only as much about the debate as the Schemo article describes. Therefore, they will need for you to provide a summary of the article you're responding to *and* make a connection—however brief--somewhere in your letter to the Schemo article. This audience will expect you to thoroughly support and explain each point you make in response to the article you've selected. In addition, they will expect you to use a reasonable tone and show respect for your readers and sources by avoiding slang. You can assume that certain style and formatting decisions (such as abbreviation and citation methods) will be made by editors of the *Times*. You should therefore apply MLA style guidelines and allow the editors at the *Times* to revise as they see fit. You should think of this letter as a specific application of the principles of summary and response writing, generated for a particular context--a Letter-to-the-Editor of the *New York Times*. Once you've completed your extended letter, you should write a very brief version of it—like an abstract to an article—of <200 words, since this length is more typical of the letters published by the *Times*.

**Portfolio Content:** Please submit your essay in a folder clearly labeled with your name and email address. Your portfolio should include:

- The final draft of your polished summary/response essay, formatted with one-inch margins, double-spaced lines, and a readable 12-point font
- The final draft of your mini-letter (<200 words), anticipating the length the *Times* will cut your letter to
- All rough drafts of your polished summary/response essay
- Your initial summaries and/or responses to the assigned articles (these will be completed as part of the homework for this portfolio)
- Workshop comments you received from classmates

**Essay Requirements:** It is understood at the outset that your letter would be compressed or reduced if it were published in the NYT. Therefore, it is not necessary for you to worry about your extended letter being too long for the context. You should write a full letter, of 750 to 1,000 words in length. This letter will be a specific application of summary and response principles, written for the specific context of the *Times*. Roughly one-third of the letter should be devoted to summary. In your summary, clearly identify the article to which you are responding and provide a fair and accurate description of the author's purpose and main ideas and connect this summary to the Schemo article, which your readers will be familiar with. Your response to the article can indicate that you agree or disagree with the article, have applied interpretation/reflection processes or have analyzed the article. You should clearly state your main and supporting points in your response. You should support your points with evidence (personal experience, information from sources, and analysis/explanation). Your second, shortened version of the letter will compress the focus of your longer letter, and will necessarily move more quickly into response.

**Grading Criteria:** I will check your portfolio for completeness. In addition to checking your process materials, which document your steady progress and engagement, I will ask myself the following questions as I read your extended Letter-to-the-Editor (#16 applies to your shortened version of the letter):

1. Have you clearly identified the article and author in your summary?
2. Have you clearly identified the main point of the article in your summary?
3. Have you clearly identified other key points related to the main point?
4. Have you used quotations and paraphrases effectively in your summary?
5. Have you attributed information to the author in your summary (using author tags)?
6. Have you clearly identified your main point in your response?
7. Does your response focus on the main point you are making?
8. Does your main point indicate a clear understanding of the essay you are summarizing? (In other words, are you responding to a key idea or main point made by the author of the essay you are summarizing?)
9. Have you used quotations and paraphrases effectively to support your main point?
10. Have you provided (if appropriate) personal experience as evidence to support your

main point?

11. Have you provided reasons to support your main point and backed up those reasons with evidence or analysis?
12. Have you organized your response in a reasonable manner? (In other words, a manner that your readers should find easy to follow.)
13. Are your summary and response written to a general, though well-educated audience such as we would expect to be readers of the *New York Times*?
14. Are your summary and response written in a form that conforms to standard American English? (In other words, is it generally free of grammatical, mechanical, and spelling errors?)
15. Have you applied standard MLA citation method (as needed)?
16. As I read your mini-letter (abstract), I will evaluate its success at reducing the content of your overall response to a much shorter form. I will ask: Does the shortened version capture the essence of your overall point? Does it seem publishable in the *NYT*?

**Articles:** We will read the texts listed below during our work on this portfolio. For your response you will choose either the Atkinson full speech (primary source) or the Sacks, Williams, Bollinger, or Thernstrom essay (secondary sources about Atkinson’s speech) to respond to.

- “Head of U. of California Seeks To End SAT Use in Admissions” by Diana Jean Schemo in *The New York Times*, February 17, 2001, A1+.
- “SAT Speech” by Dr. Richard C. Atkinson. Available from the web page of the University of California Office of the President:  
<http://www.ucop.edu/pres/comments/satspch.html> or at:  
<http://www.ucop.edu/ucophone/commser/sat/speech.html>
- “SAT—A Failing Test” by Peter Sacks in the *Nation* (04/02/2001) **or** “Radicals Undermine College Admissions Criteria” by Walter E. Williams in *Human Events* 58.13 on 04/08/02
- “Debate Over SAT Masks Perilous Trends in College Admissions” by Lee Bollinger. Published in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* 48.44 on 07/12/02 **or** “Admissions Impossible” by Abigail and Stephan Thernstrom in the *National Review* 53.5 on 3/19/01.
- A few additional *NYT* articles, editorials, op-ed pages, and letters-to-the-editor on the subject of the SAT to get a sense of the conversation as well as to familiarize you with the style and formality of writing in the *NYT*.

**Additional optional readings with descriptive and evaluative annotations in MLA form:**

Atkinson, Richard C. “Achievement Versus Aptitude in College Admissions,” *Issues in Science and Technology* 18.2 (Winter 01/02), 31-36.

In this article, published subsequent to Atkinson's proposal and the uproar that followed, Richard C. Atkinson, President of the University of California system, clarifies his position on the SATs, noting for instance his general support for standardized testing, although not the SAT I when used for admissions purposes. Atkinson's article includes a valuable set of additional, recommended readings in the bibliography.

Lemann, Nicholas, "The SAT Meritocracy," *Washington Monthly* 29.9 (September 1997), 32-36.

Lemann, a regular columnist for the *Atlantic Monthly*, is author of several criticisms of American education and is particularly concerned about entrenched class-ism in U.S. schooling. Lemann's article presents a stinging condemnation of the SAT's tendency to reward the "mandarin elite." This article was written before Atkinson's proposal and may be particularly valuable as a representative voice of those who criticized the SAT before Atkinson's well-publicized proposal.

# Week 1: Monday, August 25<sup>th</sup> – Friday, August 29<sup>th</sup>

## Goals for this Week

You have eight primary goals for this week:

1. Take care of the administrative work of making sure students are enrolled in the course and have a syllabus.
2. Introduce the overall goals of COCC150 and make sure that your students understand those goals and how the sequences of activities, homework, and assignments will help them reach those goals. Clarify due dates for each portfolio so that they can record these on their master calendar.
3. Establish your policies. Make sure to establish your policy on homework collection, attendance, late portfolios, and the revision of portfolios. These will be discussed during the orientation week and in your teaching methods course, E684.
4. Provide students with an overview of the primary concepts that will be used in the course:
  - the writing situation model, which highlights the text, writers' purposes, readers' needs and interests, limitations and opportunities, and social/cultural/historical contexts
  - the notion of writing as participation in a conversation; the importance of becoming accountable to what others have written and the subsequent need to offer something new to the conversation
  - the role of public discourse in society and the obligation to understand the complexity of the writing situations shaping public discourse
5. Introduce students to the key instructional resources they will be using during the course, including the *Prentice Hall Guide*, the SyllaBase course page (<http://writing.colostate.edu/syllabase/>), Writing@CSU (<http://writing.colostate.edu>), especially the bibliography and drafting functions of Writing Studio, and the *New York Times* national edition.
6. Assign a homework assignment, which students will post to the Class Discussion Forum on their SyllaBase course page. You should read the work produced by your students with attention to their overall writing abilities. If you find students who have what appear to be fairly weak writing skills, pay particular attention to subsequent homework and, if appropriate, meet with them and develop a plan to enhance their writing skills. You might suggest that the student work with consultants in the Writing Center or you might set up individual meetings during your office hours.
7. Introduce students to critical reading strategies and to the principles of summary writing. As you introduce summaries, address the concept of "objectivity" in summarizing and discuss three types of summaries: main point, key point, and outline summaries. However, it's critical that students understand that "objectivity" in an

absolute sense is difficult, if not impossible to attain, since the purposes for summarizing will vary from writer to writer. It is more appropriate, as a result, to discuss the concept of “fairness” in summarizing. Students should strive to fairly and accurately convey the ideas and information in a text that are most appropriate given their writing situations (purposes, readers, etc.). Consider, for instance, two writers who are summarizing a particular scientific report about recent advances in cloning. One writer is interested in what the study has to say about the potential for applying these advances to a commercial venture. The other is interested in the specific data discussed in the report. The two summaries, as a result, would vary significantly, even though both might be fair and accurate. Be sure to consult the teaching guide on summarizing and responding at

<http://writing.colostate.edu/references/teaching/summaryresponse/>.

#### 8. Assign Portfolio 1.

### **Activities for this Week**

Detailed lesson plans are available for the first four weeks of the course, which is the entire first portfolio of the course. You will note at the start of week three, however, that the lesson plans ask you to start writing your own introductions, conclusions, and transitions for the lessons. Beginning in the fifth week, you will be expected to choose activities from a set of suggested activities (The Activity Bank) and to develop your own activities for the Bank, which will help you, your fellow GTAs, and your students achieve the goals for the course, the week, and the specific lesson.

Throughout the course, even in the first weeks, it’s a good idea to type up your own plans for the class, rather to rely upon these sheets. Making your own plan for sequencing activities—and comparing it to this original--will ensure that you get full coverage of the material AND that you are doing things in a manner and sequence that makes sense for you.

## Day 1 - Tuesday, August 26<sup>th</sup>

**Lesson Objectives:** To introduce the course, yourself, your policies, the course texts, and your students to one another. Begin to address writing as a “situated,” rhetorical activity (a series of choices made for a specific audience and purpose within a given context). Introduce the writing situation model as a key to effective writing in varied circumstances.

**Connection to Course Goals:** The interview activity establishes communication necessary for peer reviews and classroom discussions. This activity, along with the introduction to course goals, also introduces the idea of how contexts influence our actions. Exposure to the writing situation model establishes initial familiarity with a concept that will be returned to and developed throughout the course, and this model should be connected to the course goal of students becoming increasingly able to write for varied purposes, whether those are academic, cultural or civic contexts.

### A Possible Sequence of Activities for Today

1. Take attendance and introduce yourself and the course
2. Review your policy and everyday expectations (in terms of homework and other assignments, class discussions). Hand out your policy statement and a timeline for at least the first portfolio.
3. Introduce the course goals and skills students will develop.
4. Obtain a small writing sample as well as a sense of their expectations for the course.
5. Have students learn each other's names during an interview activity
6. Begin discussing the role of context in influencing rhetorical choices
7. Introduce the writing situation model
8. Give a first reading and writing assignment—leave at least 5 minutes for this at the end

### Activities

**Write an Introduction to Each Class.** It is important to establish in students’ minds what the goals for each class meeting are. You can provide an overview or forecast of the day’s activities and connect these activities to the class, week, portfolio and course goals. If you do so, students will know what to expect, can begin to connect past and future classes, and can see plainly what you have in mind for the day. There are any number of ways to do this. To start with, you might provide a title or theme and then list the activities you have planned for the day on one of the sides of your marker board, leaving room for other purposes you might have for the board including use of the overhead projector. You can put a check by each item as you accomplish it, or you can just proceed through the list. Doing a forecast can help both you and your students stay on track. Another advantage of this technique, especially in the first few days of class is that your writing on the board provides something purposeful for you to do as students arrive at class. Your materials will already be organized and ready on the table. Writing on the

board, you will appear to your students to be in charge and to have a plan! Then be sure to stop your board writing at the correct start time of class. Doing this will establish right up front that you start class right on time and expect them to be there at the beginning, too.

1. **Introduce the course and yourself (2 minutes):** Make sure everyone is in the right course and section. Putting the course number, name, and section number on the board helps identify students who have wandered into the wrong room. Expect students to arrive late on the first day—many are getting used to a new campus.
2. **Introduce yourself and take roll (5 minutes): Write your name on the board so that they can see it.** Call out names and record attendance on your roll sheet. Also write on the roll sheet any nicknames as well as phonetic pronunciations of difficult names. While you'll probably use some other attendance-taking measure in the future (such as collecting homework), taking the time to call roll in the first few days will help you learn students' names.
  - **Ask unlisted students to stay after class.** Because students may have added or dropped since the time your roll sheet was generated, you will most likely have students who have registered for your class whose names do not appear on the roll. Ask them to stay after class and give you their names and ID numbers. Others will *think* they are enrolled in your section, but that must be confirmed through the registrar. (We have a laptop computer in the main office—Eddy 359—to give you current rosters for your sections.)
  - **Do not promise any extra students that they will be able to enroll.** The add/drop policy requires only students who don't attend the first TWO classes to be dropped. Thus, you might have students who don't come the first day but show up for the second class.
  - **Also emphasize that they cannot drop after the date on the add/drop sheet.** They also cannot withdraw from COCC150, as they might from other courses. If they want out, they must do it by the drop date, which is generally the end of the first week of classes.
3. **Write to Learn (WTL) (5 minutes):** Have students take out a piece of paper and write for five minutes or so about their expectations for COCC150 and also what they hope to contribute. You can put this prompt on the board or on an overhead. However, whenever possible, use the marker board or blackboard to cut down on unnecessary duplicating. Be sure to review these short writing samples later, noting any especially worrisome problems that you see. Also, be sure to give feedback on any and all work that they do in class—if only a sentence or two at the next class meeting as you return items to students.
4. **Collect their writing and explain WTL (5 minutes):** WTL stands for “Write-to-Learn” and is a pedagogical tool that is strongly believed in here at CSU. You might think of the WTL as your first tool in the Activity Bank, an idea that can be use in any number of ways, and can be performed in a low-tech pen and paper method or online, if you are teaching in a computer classroom. Tell students they can expect to frequently do some in-class writing like this to help them collect their thoughts, to

jump-start a discussion, to reflect on a text they read for homework, or to generate ideas for their papers. Let students know that you'll discuss their answers today if there is time or next time if there's not time today. Then make sure that you do address that work at some time! They will quickly catch on if you don't collect or discuss their WTLs; they will cease to participate or will work on other "homework" during the WTL time. Also, let them know whether you will always collect their WTLs on a daily basis or if you will collect it at some later point (at the end of each week or with their portfolios, for instance). (See the "Collecting Homework" section in the introduction to the syllabus.)

**Sample Transition to Next Activity:** Consider using a transition such as the following: "The course syllabus and policy statement will help you understand the expectations for this course. Hopefully, these will address some of the concerns you brought up in your writing about your expectations for the course."

Transitioning from logistics to content can sometimes be tricky so here's an opportunity to use your marker board agenda to get class moving into content. Refer to the list you have on the board for the day's goals and activities and then move right into it.

**Note:** Use these suggested sample transitions as opportunities to connect activities for your students. Your students will benefit from knowing how the activities build on each other. You should construct your own transitions – either before class or in an impromptu fashion – rather than reading a script prepared by someone else. Most teachers write down a few notes on their lesson plans to remind themselves of what they want to say between activities and then weave the transition into the natural flow of conversation during the class session. You will become more comfortable with writing your own transitions when you fully understand the course and its sequencing. We have provided sample introductions, transitions, and conclusions, not because we want you to read them aloud but rather as examples of what a teacher might say during class. We encourage you to start composing your own transitions as early in the semester as possible. By week three you will be responsible for making these transitions on your own. The best way to prepare for your independence is to fully understand the course goals and syllabus.

5. Discuss syllabus and explain policy statement (10-15 minutes):

- Briefly discuss how to read the timeline aspect of your syllabus (especially if you are using a grid). For instance, students will want to know if the assignment is DUE on the date provided in the syllabus or if it is ASSIGNED that day. Generally speaking it is more workable to list the DUE DATE. You may then wish to explain the types of assignments in general terms—but by all means save specifics for later and if a student wants more detailed information, ask him or her to meet with you after class and after reading the syllabus. Otherwise your first day of class could get derailed by a series of unexpected questions.
- Show/Introduce the texts used for the course (the *PHG*, and the *New York Times*)
- Discuss the class SyllaBase page and the CO150 Room in the Writing Studio. You'll also want to discuss access to thematic readings (at least one will be located under "Online Resources/Instructor Provided" on the SyllaBase class

page). Tell students that you'll give specific instructions for logging on to SyllaBase and for locating the CO150 Room in the Writing Studio.

- Explain that the course theme is, "Participating in the Discourse Shaping Public Issues" and tell students that they will be responding to current debatable issues in their writing. Explain that the reading of a national newspaper is one way to begin to understand not only current events and the discourse around publicly debated issues, but also the trends and cultural contexts that these issues are part of. Indicate that reading of the *Times* should begin immediately. Free copies are available for the first week to provide time for everyone to get to the bookstores. Explain how they are to access their copies of the *Times*. Explain to students how subscriptions and delivery will be handled. Quickly show them the summary on page 2 of the *Times* and indicate that a quick skim of the summary is like reading a menu at the restaurant or like viewing the directory at the mall. The summary provides a quick overview, preview, or survey of the material in the entire newspaper and can quickly direct one's reading for the day. Reassure them that most people do NOT read the entire newspaper cover to cover but that quick skimming, scanning, and previewing can be applied to the paper right away. More techniques for reading the paper will be introduced in upcoming class periods.
- Present the course policy statement, emphasizing the policies that you consider most important. Be sure to explain at least the following policies:
  - Attendance
  - Grading (for major assignments and overall class)
  - Grading for homework assignment
- One good strategy is to have a copy of your policy statement on an overhead with essential ideas highlighted or annotated. If not on the overhead, just having your own highlighted copy can help quell those first-day jitters and prevent you from forgetting anything critical you want to convey. Or, delegate some of the responsibility by having students read sections aloud.

**Sample Transition to the Next Activity:** Community is important in a writing classroom (where we hold discussions, work in groups and use peer review with the writing process), so let's take some time to get to know each other.

6. **Interview activity (5 minutes):** Have students pair up and ask each other questions about one another and record their answers.
7. **Ask students to consider what kinds of things people were willing to ask (5 minutes):** Then generate a list of appropriate question categories on the board.
8. **Discuss the interview activity (10 minutes):** Your goal in this discussion is to highlight how context and rhetorical situations define what we can say and how we say it. Our context and rhetorical situation here is a college composition classroom and that affects how we asked questions and what questions we asked. You can use these questions or write your own:
  - What wasn't asked and why do you think that is?

- ! Why are there only certain things that people will ask and will tell?
- ! What does this say about our expectations of social interaction? Of a composition classroom and what can be said there?
- ! How would our questions have differed if you were interviewing your instructor? Or if you were interviewing a classmate's grandparents? Why?
- ! How would your questions and answers have differed if you were talking to someone you met at a fraternity or dorm party? Why?
- ! How would your questions and answers have differed if you were just meeting your host family for a semester in a foreign country? Why?

9. **Introduce the writing situation model (10 minutes):** The goal for this discussion is to illustrate how context shapes the interactions between writers and readers. Writers make choices based on their physical, social and cultural contexts as well as their purposes for writing. In the same sense, readers come to a text by way of their own needs and interests. Thinking about interactions between writers and readers helps to ensure that meaning is clearly communicated.

For this activity then, use the model from, "Understanding Writing Situations: Writing as a Social Act" to show students how readers and writers interact. This model is available on Writing@CSU (<http://writing.colostate.edu/references/processes/writingsituations/>). You can either draw a diagram on the board or use the overhead (you may want to do this before class begins). Explain to students that you will first review the model in general terms, and then they will discuss it with more detail in relation to their homework.



Be sure to cover the following points (in whatever order feels right for you):

- Writers have purposes for writing
- Usually these purposes emerge from the writer's cultural or social context (something happens outside the writer that creates a need to write - something to respond to)
- Writers make choices based on the context they are writing for (writing a letter home to your parents asking for money is a different than writing a letter to an organization to ask for contributions for a good cause). Therefore, different contexts will pose different requirements, limitations, and opportunities for a writer.
- In addition to context, writers also need to think about readers.
- Readers have various needs and interests which are likewise determined by their contexts (their background, environment and experience).
- In order to communicate effectively, a writer must anticipate what their readers' needs and interests are.

**10. Write a Conclusion for Each Class:** Consider closing class with something along these lines: So just as social situations can influence what we say and do, different writing situations can influence what we "say" and "do" with our writing. In this class, "good" writing can only be defined in terms of how well a text responds to a particular purpose and context. We'll continue with this idea next time and connect it more directly to culture and writing.

You might refer them back to the list on the marker board as well, connecting the activities of the day to the lesson, portfolio, and course goals. It's a good idea to establish the precedent of doing an end-of-lesson review such as this for each class. Try something like: "Let's review what we've done today. Consulting your notes, tell me..." [here you can compose your own review list...try drawing it as a concept map...or just review the list on the board. The point is that offering an **on-the-board forecast at the beginning of class** as well as an **on-the-board review list at the end** is a proven method for building what learning theorists call "hierarchical learning" of course concepts]

A sample review might cover these items from today. This list includes easy specifics about the course, essential logistical information, and a brief review of concepts

- how many portfolios we'll have and the due date for the first one
- the name and location of the national newspaper you'll be reading all term
- the name of the classmate you interviewed—perhaps establish this person as a "homework buddy" who can collect handouts, take notes, and be a point of contact in the event that you are absent.
- reasons for doing the interview (course connections)

- the goals of the course,
- explain the Writing Situation model

## Assignment for Next Time

Read PHG on critical reading and summary writing, pages 152-61.

Logon to the SyllaBase Class Page (<http://writing.colostate.edu/syllabase/>), locate the class forum (Communication Tools/Discussion Forum), and post a 250-to-500 word message that addresses the following prompts:

- Part I - Describe yourself as a writer. What kinds of writing do you most enjoy and why? What kinds of writing do you think are most important and why?
- Part II - What influences you as a writer? What in your background or environment might shape your choices about content (what you like to write about) and style or approach (how you write)? When you have finished posting your message, print a hard copy and bring it to class. **Note:** You might find it useful to compose your message in a word processor and then paste the final version of the message into the discussion forum's compose message box.
- Read the postings of a few of your classmates.

**Note to Teachers:** In addition to its obvious value as a first extended writing activity, this assignment is designed to get students up and running with the technology components of the course. You can learn about using online discussion forums in three teaching guides on Writing@CSU: Conducting Online Discussions (<http://writing.colostate.edu/references/teaching/onlinediscussions/>), Integrating Technology into the Traditional COCC150 Classroom ([http://writing.colostate.edu/references/teaching/olwc\\_guides/](http://writing.colostate.edu/references/teaching/olwc_guides/)), and Using Student Peer Review (<http://writing.colostate.edu/references/teaching/peer/>).

Also, you can hasten your students' use of the SyllaBase discussion forum by preparing a handout with instructions for accessing and using your class page. You'll find an example handout in the Conducting Online Discussions teaching guide.

Finally, it's a good idea to make a list of the materials you need for each class. As you type up your lesson plan, make this materials list a header for each lesson you teach. That way you'll generally arrive at class with everything you need.

## Day 2 – Thursday, August 28<sup>th</sup>

**Lesson Objectives:** Review expectations for the course. Review the writing situation model. Discuss WTLs from Day 1 and homework done for today. Discuss strategies for critical reading. Introduce Portfolio 1 and hand out assignment sheet. Introduce summary types and conventions.

**Connection to Course Goals:** The rhetorical model for writing will be used throughout the course to demonstrate how writers use contexts to inform their writing. The homework discussion invites students to consider what influences them as writers in general, but more specifically, it asks them to consider how the context of this classroom helped determine what they wrote about and the approach they used when writing.

### A Possible Sequence of Activities for Today

1. Review expectations for course, pointing out any expectations students articulated that lie outside the goals of COCC150
2. Review the writing situation model
3. Discuss responses to homework - specifically how context shapes our choices
4. Discuss strategies for critical reading
5. Introduce Portfolio I
6. Introduce the concept of summarizing

### Activities

1. **Take roll (5 minutes):** Find out who has added or dropped since the first class. Remember that some students who may not have attended the first class will likely show up today. If you have room (less than 19), you can sign an add form for anyone on your waiting list, and if someone has missed both classes you can dis-enroll them through the form you were given with your roster *after class*.

**A Possible Lesson Introduction:** Today we'll be returning to the idea of how context influences our choices and actions. By understanding how writers are influenced by various contexts, you will hopefully learn to make more confident and accurate choices with your own writing (in both academic and non-academic situations). We will also discuss the first portfolio as well as critical reading and summary writing strategies.

2. **Review expectations for course (5 minutes):** Discuss student responses from the WTLs completed on the first day of class. Address any student concerns that didn't come up on the first day. Also, you can explain the dual focus for the class –
  1. Writing is our primary concern, so we'll spend a lot of time emphasizing things like purpose, audience, and context. (We tend not to focus on skills, such as grammar and mechanics, as much as we do on larger concepts and approaches to writing; however, we will work individually with students who face some challenges with grammar and mechanics and can address whole class concerns in this area when there appears to be a pattern of

error.)

2. Public discourse is our secondary focus (since it is an ideal topic for exploring the complexity of writing situations), so we'll also be looking at important social and political issues.”

You may wish at this point to also address any expectations they've articulated that you believe will clearly NOT be covered by COCC150. This helps to clarify what the course will and will not do and it allows you to legitimize their goals, even if these goals lie outside the bounds of this composition course.

**Here's a Possible Transition to Next Activity, but please write your own! Last time we discussed the writing situation model. Today we'll quickly review that model and then use it to examine the situation you found yourselves in as you worked on your homework for today.**

**3. Review the writing situation model (3 minutes):** Review the key points from the writing situation model discussed on the first day of class. Students will have read the writing guide as homework for today (Understanding Writing Situations: Writing as a Social Act at <http://writing.colostate.edu/references/processes/writingsituations/>). Use this review of the writing situation model as a transition into the next activity.

**4. Discuss homework in relation to the writing situation model (15 minutes):** For this activity it helps to label the diagram with students' responses to reinforce connections and to help keep the discussion on track. Note: possible responses and prompts are listed in parenthesis following the questions.

*Start at the middle of the diagram and ask students the following questions:*

- What was the text you produced? (homework - reflection on self as writer)
- What was your purpose for writing this text? (to complete an assignment, to impress the instructor or class, to learn more about one's self as a writer, to get an "A" in COCC150)
- Describe the context that created your purpose for writing? (the college classroom, the first day of class, a small "classroom community" where participation is likely)
- What requirements and limitations did the context of a college classroom pose? (a deadline for writing, a computer to type the message and to print it out, limitations on language, tone and style, the possibility of having to share writing in class...).
- What opportunities did this context create? (an invitation to call on your own personal reflections, experience and expertise)
- How did the various limitations, requirements and opportunities shape what you wrote? (answers will vary)
- Who did you think of as your readers for this text? (you, the instructor, other peers)
- Did you think of your readers' needs and interests? If so, what were they?

**Sample Transition to Next Activity:** So whether or not you realized it you were probably already thinking about context, audience and purpose when completing your homework. This course aims to help you think about these things more critically, both as a writer and as a reader.

**5. Discuss strategies for critical reading (5 minutes):** This activity asks students to think about how they can become close and critical readers.

Use the *PHG* (pgs. 153 - 154), the Critical Reading Guide on Writing@CSU (<http://writing.colostate.edu/references/reading/critread/>), and the questions below to guide discussion:

- Ask students to identify what it means to be a “critical reader.”
  - What makes an effective critical reader?
  - How does one become a close reader of the text?
  - What can you do to be more active and critical when reading an essay?
- Preview or survey your reading. This means looking over the reading before you begin it. With the NYT that would involve reading the news summary on page 2 before you read articles. Previewing allows you to estimate length/time requirements, activate what you know about the topic, prepare yourself for the content by reading the introduction and conclusion before you read all the way through.
- Apply close reading strategies (marginal markings, notes outside of text)
- Pose questions that challenge the ideas in the text
- Consider the context in which the essay was written
- Consider your context (what you are bringing to your reading and why you react the way you do)
- Consider how cultural context influences your reading (turn the critical lens inward and examine your beliefs and influences)

**6. Introduce Portfolio 1 (7-10 minutes):**

- Pass out the Essay 1 assignment sheet.
- Let them read it over.
- To check for understanding of the general terms, and the essay in particular, ask students to restate the purpose, context, and audience as a class:
  - What is the purpose of this essay assignment?
  - Who is your audience for this essay?
  - What will you have to do to meet the assignment goals?
- Then, move on to discuss how these responses will affect their choices when writing Essay 1. Since the students are part of the general academic audience, include them by asking what type of response they would like to read.

- Given your audience, what will readers want to know?
- What type of reaction would you want to read?
- They should be able to generate such concerns as:
  - a reaction that isn't a rant
  - a reaction that doesn't go off on tangents or try to cover too much (focus)
  - a reaction that has an appropriate tone
  - a reaction I can relate to
  - a reaction that is well supported with evidence

**Here's a Possible Transition to Next Activity:** Even though your audience will mostly be concerned with your response, summary is still an important concept. If your summary is inaccurate or incomplete, your response could be misguided as well.

**7. Introduce the concept of summarizing (15 - 20 minutes):** Use these questions as a guide for this discussion. You may pick and choose from this selection or add some of your own questions to meet the goal of introducing academic summary. (See page 160 - 161 in the *PHG* for summary guidelines, and view the Teaching Guide on Types of Summary and Response

(<http://writing.colostate.edu/references/teaching/summaryresponse/>) when planning this activity). It helps to use the board to focus this activity. You can create two columns: *General Summary* and *Academic Summary*. Then, list generated responses beneath the appropriate titles. Note: possible responses and prompts are listed in parenthesis following the questions.

- What is summary (in general)? When do you use it?
- When was the last time you summarized something that you did or saw (perhaps in an e-mail to a friend or on the phone)?
- What is usually your goal or purpose for summarizing? (to inform or entertain; to give an overall impression without all the boring details)
- Are your summaries objective (fairly representing everyone/everything involved) or are they subjective, colored by your own opinions or point of view?
- How do you think general summaries compare to academic summaries? What are the similarities and differences? (academic summaries are more objective and focus on main ideas rather than events)
- What are the purposes for an academic summary (consider the context for Essay 1)? How is this different from a general summary?

Present an overhead with three types of summaries on it as follows:

1. *Main Point Summary* - is brief and gives an overall perspective on text
2. *Key Point Summary* - represents an author's argument more fully by providing other key points and supporting evidence in addition to the main idea

3. *Outline Summary* - is used to explore the structure of an article or essay. Shortened phrases are used in place of full length sentences.

Read through each type of summary and ask students which one they think will be most appropriate for Essay 1 (Key Point Summary). Then ask them why they made this choice (they are writing to an academic audience who has not read the essay and needs enough information to follow their response). Finally, ask them to imagine other contexts where a main point summary and an outline summary would be more appropriate. The point you want to make is that the content and organization of a summary will vary based on a writer's purpose, audience and context.

**A Possible Conclusion for Today's Class:** Today we began discussing academic summary as a way to prepare for writing Essay 1. Next time, we'll deepen our understanding of summary by using the writing situation model to think critically about a writer's argument.

## Assignment for Next Time

- Read Diana Jean Schemo's article "Head of U of C ..." regarding Dr. Richard C. Atkinson's speech proposing an end to use of the SAT at the University of California. This article is available via the course booklet of NYT articles. Practice the critical reading strategies discussed in class today when looking at Schemo's article. Do you notice anything odd about the timing of Schemo's report on Atkinson's speech? Hint: Pay particular attention to the verb tenses Schemo uses in discussing Atkinson's speech.
- Also read "Understanding Writing Situations: Writing as a Social Act" (<http://writing.colostate.edu/references/processes/writingsituations/>).
- Review the guidelines for writing an academic summary in the *PHG* on page 160 - 161. Using these guidelines, along with our discussion from class, write an academic summary of Diana Jean Schemo's article about Atkinson's proposal, applying the conventions of summary writing and taking care to give the proper people credit for ideas—that is, Schemo is not responsible for all (or arguably ANY) of the ideas that she is reporting.
- In preparation for the introduction of the *New York Times*, assign *PHG* reading on the shaping of journalistic stories using the "inverted pyramid" (page 253), and on the reporter's collecting/investigating heuristic, which utilizes "Wh" questions (pages 245-246).
- Post your summary as a message to the SyllaBase Class Discussion Forum or to your account in Writing Studio.\*
- Bring a hard copy of your summary to class on Tuesday.

**Note to Instructors:** A fundamental decision you will need to make about the summaries (and other pieces of writing) that your students generate is whether you want them to post their writing to the public forum of Syllabase (risk: copying by others; benefit: a public forum of ideas) or whether you would prefer that students post to the Writing Studio where documents are more secure but, conversely, less available for reading and reply.

## Week 2: Tuesday, September 2 – Friday, September 5

### Goals for this Week

- Revisit the concept of summarizing. Review the notion of objectivity versus fairness and discuss the three types of summaries: main point, key point, and outline summaries.
- Strengthen students' understanding of the writing situation model by applying it to an example of public discourse, Diana Jean Schemo's article
- Discuss the importance of purpose, audience and context for writing summaries.
- Assign the full text of the primary source that launched the current debate on the SATs, specifically, Dr. Richard C. Atkinson's speech to the American Council on Education, the transcript of which is available at the following web sites, which should be linked to your class page. You should also have a copy on e-reserve at the library: <http://www.ucop.edu/pres/comments/satpch.html> or <http://www.ucop.edu/ucophone/commserv/sat/speech.html>
- Assign reading of two relatively short and quite distinctive reactions to Atkinson's proposal, specifically Peter Sacks "SAT—A Failing Test" which was published in *Nation*, and Walter Williams "Radicals Undermine College Admissions Criteria" published in *Human Events*. To access these articles, students will need instructions for getting SFX articles from the link on the library home page. (This process is actually pretty simple, but some students will have trouble, so be prepared to deal with their questions by being knowledgeable of how to access the sources yourself.)
- Discuss effective use of paraphrasing and quoting. (See page 194 in *PHG*.)
- Introduce the concept of responding. Describe the three types of response used in this course: agree/disagree, analytic/evaluative, interpretive/reflective. Encourage students to practice the response forms one at a time and then to combine them for the final paper/letter to the editor. You'll find a discussion of these types of response in the teaching guide on summarizing and responding at <http://writing.colostate.edu/references/teaching/summaryresponse/>.
- Introduce the *New York Times*—its layout, features on certain days, productive ways to read it, initial searches for topics/issues of interest. Assignment of News Clip Journal—begin clipping articles of interest on debatable issues—10 total by the end of Portfolio 1. Make sure to record date and section/page. Paste onto notebook paper, perhaps in the same 3-ring binder you use for class notes and handouts. [Instructors: **Consider beginning each class period with a new person in the room briefing the class on one or his or her articles.** Do a News Clip Journal of your own and occasionally share with students some of the items you're finding and clipping. Bring your copy of the *Times* to class every day and encourage students to do the same.]

## **Activities for this Week**

Detailed lesson plans are available for the first four weeks of the course. Beginning in the third week you will be encouraged to take over the writing (or rewriting) of all introductions, conclusions, and transitions. Beginning in the fifth week, you will be expected to choose activities from a set of suggested activities and/or develop your own activities that will help you and your students achieve the course goals for a specific week.

## Day 3 – Tuesday, September 2nd

**Lesson Objectives:** Today we apply both critical reading principles and the writing situation model to Schemo's front-page article—noting that Schemo is functioning as a journalist reporting on the news of Atkinson, a public figure with a significant proposal given in the form of a speech. Who might be interested in this proposal and the debate that it is part of? We discuss the importance of purpose, audience and context not only for these items we've read but also for the summary we have written. We ask: How is summary guided by our purposes even as we attempt to make a fair representation of a document? How does Schemo herself summarize Atkinson's proposal and why does she include other perspectives in her article? How might you characterize the perspectives and the affiliations (values, beliefs, contexts) of the represented voices in the conversation Schemo reports on here? What else do you anticipate that Atkinson may have explained or argued in his full speech? What else do you want to know about his proposal and about Atkinson himself? Today we also work on paraphrasing and quoting.

**Connection to Course Goals:** Applying the writing situation model to Schemo's article will help students think more critically and objectively about both Schemo's report on Atkinson's proposal. By understanding a writer's purpose and context for writing, specifically by sorting through the ownership of the various perspectives suggested within Schemo's article, students are more likely to learn to represent the writer's key points rather than their own interpretation of these points. Introducing types of response aims to meet the goal of responding critically to a text for Essay 1.

### A Possible Sequence of Activities for Today

1. WTL - have students reflect on writing a summary for Schemo's article. What were the challenges of summarizing a journalist's report of another person's proposal?
2. Apply critical reading principles to Schemo's article
3. Apply the writing situation model to Schemo's article
4. Discuss the importance of purpose, audience and context for writing summaries
5. Discuss effective use of paraphrasing and quoting. (See page 194 in *PHG*)

### Activities

**1. WTL (5 minutes):** Type up instructions on an overhead, asking students to reflect on the process of writing their summaries for Schemo's article. What did they find most difficult or challenging? What did they find easy or more accessible? What special challenges are involved with summarizing a third party's report on another person's ideas?

**2. Discuss WTL responses in groups (5 - 7 minutes):** Have students get into groups of three or four and ask them to discuss their responses to the WTL. Then, open the discussion up for the entire class.

**Sample Introduction:** Today we're going to review the guidelines for summary in the *PHG*. Then, we'll use the writing situation model to expand these guidelines. Hopefully, this will help you with some of the difficulties you may have experienced when writing your academic summary for today. At the end of class, we'll begin discussing the different ways you can respond to a text after you've successfully summarized it.

**3. Review the guidelines from the PHG page 160 (5-7 minutes):** Review these with students and check for understanding along the way by asking them to rephrase some of the points in their own words. Highlight important concepts like "objectivity" and "accuracy."

**Sample Transition to Next Activity:** Now that you know the basic guidelines for summary, let's expand on those guidelines by considering the writing situation. To do this, we'll turn again to Schemo, applying the writing situation model to Schemo's report.

**4. Apply the writing situation model to Schemo (15-20 minutes):** The goal for this activity is to help students learn to summarize by considering an author's purpose, audience, readers, and context. The *PHG* suggests that an academic summary should include the main points from a text, but students often have trouble locating these. Sometimes their attempts at representing main ideas result in incoherent summaries that read more like a "list of semi-related ideas." We find that students represent arguments with much more accuracy when they address the writer's purpose (the main points seem to emerge from this).

For this activity then, draw the writing situation model on the board (the same one you introduced on Day 2). Be sure to include texts, readers, writers, and context.

You don't need to worry about limitations, requirements, or opportunities since it will be difficult here to speculate around these things. Ask students the following questions and connect their responses to the writing situation model. Note: possible responses and prompts are listed in parenthesis following the questions. It may be particularly interesting for your students to answer your question regarding the timing of the article and the speech. Which came first?? What does such a phenomenon as *the news preceding the event being reported* suggest about "news" and the reliability and ethics of print journalism? What questions do your students have as readers of "the nation's newspaper" after seeing this article and (in a larger context) knowing the current events (summer of 2003's news) related to plagiarism by feature reporter, Jayson Blair of the *Times*? Why is there such a rush to get "all the news that's fits to print?" When is news being reported and when is news being made by media?

- Can you describe Schemo's text? (a news piece, a balanced report, a primary source or document, a FORECAST of an upcoming speech!, a precursor to the primary source of real interest—the speech itself)
- When do you think this text was written and where did it appear? (*New York Times*—2001.)
- Who was Schemo speaking to? Who were her intended listeners? (Consider the context where it was found. Most likely well-educated New Yorkers)

- What were her purposes for writing this text? What was she trying to accomplish? How does her purpose differ from Atkinson's? Does she give indications (directly or through subtle clues) of her point of view on Atkinson's proposal? [If students see an indication of Schemo's point of view, have them point to specific locations and explain their interpretation/analysis.]
- What cultural phenomena or larger cultural trends, currents, or pressures is Schemo's report on Atkinson's speech a response to? (Possible answers might include: The limitations of standardized testing as a criterion for admission to large, public universities. The ongoing debate over best practices when it comes to college admissions. The emphasis upon testing as a means for demonstrating the "new accountability" in education. Concerns over high stakes testing.) To what extent is the controversy over the SAT a part of Schemo's readers' cultural environment or experience? How might this affect the way they read and respond to Schemo's article?
- What assumptions might Schemo have made about her readers' needs or interests? What did she think they needed?
- Was she right to assume these things? Why/why not?
- Given whom her readers are and what she was trying to accomplish, how effective (fair, accurate, and balanced) is Schemo's report on Atkinson's proposal? Please explain.

**5. Extend the discussion to *anticipate Atkinson's proposal and to discuss the other voices Schemo represents in her article.*** Ask students: Why is it important that we read the original speech rather than rely on Schemo's representation of the speech? It may be wise to return to these questions once students have read the actual speech. [Instructors: See the next lesson and writing situation questions applied to Atkinson. Select questions for each lesson that won't be redundant but that give students an opportunity to both anticipate Atkinson's argument and to later verify and correct their sense of what he was anticipated to say.] Then

- What do you believe will be the essence of Atkinson's proposal and how will he explain why he's making it?
- What may be the immediate repercussions of his proposal, if it is applied?
- What are the possible long-term repercussions if his proposal is followed?
- What are some probable long-term repercussions even if his proposal is not enacted by the California Board of Regents? [People will talk about the appropriateness of the SAT as an admissions criterion.]

Touch on other voices represented in Schemo's article:

- Besides Atkinson's proposal, whom else does Schemo represent in her article and for what purpose? [Instructors: Try to get students to articulate as many of the individual positions as possible.] Why might it be important to get more information about these individuals, their affiliations, and their actual points of view?

- If you were to group the perspectives represented by Schemo, how might you name and characterize them? [Instructors: Aim for three or more shared perspectives or approaches to the discussion of the SATs. Because students may at first be inclined to simplify the debate (a debate that 's only hinted at here, of course) into a mere pro-con discussion, it is essential to the goals of this portfolio and course that we get them to see that the shared perspectives or approaches are more complicated than a simple polarization of views.]
- Can you see more than a pro-con debate emerging here? What motivates people who maintain these differing perspectives? What are their loyalties, beliefs, values, affiliations that contribute to their positions?

**6. Discuss the importance of purpose, audience, readers, and context for writing summary/response essays (15 minutes):** Look back at the list of responses on the board and ask students why it might be important to think critically about the writing situation for a particular text. Why might it be especially helpful to do this before completing an academic summary of and response to an author's argument?

Some possible responses:

- It is important for us to understand the writer's situation in order to treat his/her text accurately and fairly.
- It helps us maintain greater objectivity and represent the *writer's* key points rather than our own interpretation of these points.
- Thinking about purpose and audience helps us find the main ideas and key points in a text.
- Understanding an author's context (his/her relationship to a topic and the cultural need to write about it) helps ward off emotional reactions such as, "I bet Atkinson doesn't understand what it's like to hate your high school! How can people like me ever show that we're smart and can make it in college if we don't have an SAT?"

Then ask students if there is any information listed on the board that they should include in their academic summaries:

- context and audience (where/when it was written and for whom)
- purpose for writing (why the writer has produced this text and what it is responding to)

Be sure to emphasize *purpose*. Tell students that knowing a writer's purpose will help them locate key points and evidence (you might even have them add "State the writer's purpose" to the criteria in the *PHG*). Also, tell them that it is not enough to just *list* key points and evidence when summarizing. They should explain how key points and evidence function in the text (or how they help serve the writer's purpose – See the example below).

**7. Example of how to summarize key points and evidence:** (You may want to have this on an overhead)

- Schemo reports the perspectives of involved parties in the college admissions criteria debate. Her goal is to show that while not everyone agrees on the desirability of Atkinson’s proposal taking hold, nearly everyone is moved to address the issue of the SAT’s role in college admissions.
- To clarify that not everyone sees the end of the SAT as a good thing, Schemo brings in the perspectives of many voices, some who oppose Atkinson’s proposal and some who advocate it, but all—interestingly enough—addressing it. Specifically, Schemo quotes the head of the College Board, Gaston Caperton, who defends the SAT, saying, “it really measures high achievement,” as well as the president of Fair-Test, Bob Schaefer, who “predicted that Dr. Atkinson’s proposal would extend a debate on the validity of the tests.”

**8. Discuss effective use of paraphrasing and quoting (10-15 minutes):** Design an activity where you model effective and ineffective use of paraphrasing and quoting. You might prepare examples beforehand OR have students help generate ideas using Schemo’s article. You might use this opportunity to discuss the differences between quoting from a primary source (the speech) and quoting from a secondary source (Schemo)—not only the mechanics of “quoted in” but the caution a writer must take in relying upon someone’s documentation of another’s ideas/words. Reassure students that they will soon be reading the primary document (Atkinson’s speech). Cover the following points (Use page 194 in the *PHG* as a guide):

- Discuss where and how often students should use paraphrasing and quoting in their summaries. (For example: It is ineffective to string together several quotes, as this infringes on the writer's voice and can become what is known as a “quotation quilt” [see PHG for more explanation of this notion]; but it is also ineffective to paraphrase too often, as ideas need to be supported with textual evidence).
- Explain that quotes need to logically fit into the sentence structure. For example:
  - *Ineffective and Ungrammatical:* Schemo reports that Atkinson says, " that instead adopt evaluative procedures that look at applicants in a comprehensive, holistic way."
  - *More Effective:* Schemo reports Atkinson’s argument that "...these changes will complement K-12 reform efforts."
- Note that it is considered weak practice to quote someone else’s quotation of a source, as done above. But still demonstrate how to do it if it must be done (Caperton qtd. in Schemo—see PHG for more details in the Research chapter)
- Review any other points on quoting and paraphrasing mentioned in the PHG or that you feel are important here at the beginning.

**10. Introduce the *New York Times* (10 minutes)** should be brought to class today. Introduce the layout of the newspaper page (backwards 6) and the story structure (inverted triangle/pyramid) essential story components—the 5 W’s—funneling down to the detailed information so that the story can be cut where space demands.) Students

should be familiar with these features of the newspaper after reading the assigned pages in the PHG. Also point out the news summary on page 2.

Have everyone survey the paper for something of interest (articles, ads, anything). Review the special features of each day. Point out the editorial and Op-Ed pages and the Letters to the Editor.

Explain the notion of the News Clip Journal and how we'll collect a minimum of 10 articles on issues of interest, actually physically clipping and pasting or taping them to notebook paper, culminating in a topic proposal at the start of Portfolio 2, which comes in Week 5. They will submit their clippings as homework at the start of Portfolio 2.

They should aim to collect an article a day. Point out that they will need a minimum of 10 articles and a minimum of 3 issues of interest as suggested by the newspaper by the third week of September or start of Portfolio 2. Bring your NYT to class every day, and if there's time before class, read a section you haven't gotten to yet.

### **A Sample Conclusion (points to cover)**

- Today we reviewed the guidelines for summary and discussed how thinking about purpose, audience and context can help you write a stronger summary/response essay.
- Next time, we'll continue discussing summary, using the full text of Atkinson's speech, and we will introduce the concept of response.
- One of the things we hope you'll pay attention to in these opening days and weeks of the course is the way that **we are following a conversation on a topical debate**, in our case the SAT debate. We are building our knowledge base on the issue and the ongoing discussion, debate, or conversation. Notice that we started with a news article that reported on an event of importance, which led us to understand that a debate exists on this issue. As we learn more about this issue, we will discover that while most people either oppose or support Atkinson's proposal, they do so for a variety of reasons. These differing reasons are at the center of our discussions and will help us to understand how people can essentially agree (be opposed or be in support) while also holding differing positions or differing rationales for their perspectives on a topic.
- Take note of the fact that **the news article by Schemo gave us a fairly good overview of the issue** and its interested parties. Recommend that students refer back to Schemo from time to time to ground themselves in the essential debate, to reflect upon the varying contexts of the involved parties, and to consider how their understanding of the debate has enlarged with reading.
- **Recommend that students use the articles that they're collecting in the same manner, paying attention to not only the debate but the vested interests of the engaged parties.**
- **A final point:** As we develop our understanding of perspectives, we learn what it means to hold a stake in an issue, to have a vested interest, to hold a bias, and we learn of the inevitability of perspective, or what some may call bias. We learn to

respect perspectives, or approaches to arguments, rather than to fear or disdain them.

## Assignment for Next Time

Read about responding in the *PHG* on pgs. 162 - 163. Read Dr. Atkinson's speech in its entirety, available through the link via Syllabase and Online Resources/Instructor Provided. Type a paragraph in which you describe Atkinson's speaking situation (focus on his purpose for making his proposal, but also mention his specific audience and context). Then type out a list of main ideas/key points from Atkinson's speech. (Try focusing on the beginnings of paragraphs to aid in this process.) Post your paragraph and list to Writing Studio. Bring a hard copy of your homework to class.

**Show students how to access online readings from SyllaBase (5 minutes):** Use a variation of the handout you prepared for the first homework assignment or make copies of the "How to Log on to your class SyllaBase Page" handout in the appendix. Explain that students can access the online readings at the Library reserve desk if they have difficulty getting online sources easily from SyllaBase. Make sure to place a copy of your online articles both onto Syllabase and on e-reserve.

## Day 4 – Thursday, September 4<sup>th</sup>

**Lesson Objectives:** Turning to a more lengthy and complicated primary document—Atkinson’s actual speech—we go to some length to master our understanding of summary principles, accentuating the importance of understanding and representing the author’s purpose for generating a text. Additionally, we introduce students to the three types of response developed in this course, and we provide an initial overview of how each response type is developed.

**Connection to Course Goals:** By the end of today we complete the classroom instruction on academic summary writing, and we move to response writing. We introduce the importance of fully developing a narrowed and focused response that is then developed with ample and relevant reasons, evidence and discussion—factors associated with strong writing throughout the course and the university. Introducing the three types of response prepares students to think about the various ways they can respond to a text and develop their ideas with reasons and evidence. Responding is also important for the thematic aims of this course because it allows students to invest their own ideas on issues of public importance.

### A Possible Sequence of Activities

1. Use students’ homework to discuss the rhetorical situation of Atkinson’s speech as well as how to write a summary of Atkinson’s speech
2. Introduce the concept of responding
3. Show students how to develop responses using reasons and evidence

### Activities

**Sample Introduction:** Today we’ll continue discussing summary, applying ideas to Atkinson’s proposal given in the form of a speech. Finally, we’ll look at the different ways you might respond to an essay after you’ve successfully summarized it.

1. Review the Writing Situation as applied to Atkinson’s speech, covering any points that you didn’t cover in anticipation of Atkinson’s speech last time.
  - Can you describe Atkinson’s text? (a speech, an argument, a newsworthy headline ...)
  - When do you think this text was written and where did it appear? (*New York Times*—2001.)
  - Who was Atkinson speaking to? Who were his intended listeners? (Think broadly here, considering the initial audience for the proposal and also the national news/consequence of his published recommendation.)
  - What were his purposes for writing this text and giving his speech? What was he trying to accomplish?

- What cultural phenomenon is Atkinson's speech a response to? (The limitations of standardized testing as a criterion for admission to large, public universities) To what extent is the controversy over the SAT a part of his listeners' (and later his readers') cultural environment or experience? How might this affect the way they read and respond to Atkinson's speech?
- What assumptions might Atkinson have made about his listeners' needs or interests? What did he think they needed? Why might he have chosen his audience?
- Was he right to assume these things? Why/why not?

Given whom his readers are and what he was trying to accomplish, how effective is Atkinson's speech? Please explain.

**1. Use students' homework to discuss summarizing Atkinson's speech:** This activity aims to get students thinking about how they might organize all of the key points and evidence from Atkinson's speech into an academic summary.

**Part I (10 minutes):** Tell students that you'd like them to practice summarizing a complicated text by listing all of the main points and important evidence from Atkinson's speech on the board. Guide this discussion by writing the following template on the board, and have students use their homework to generate responses. This template may be useful for follow-on discussions of summary as well, so get them to write down the template.

<i>Atkinson's Purpose:</i>	
<i>Atkinson's Overall Argument or Main Point:</i>	
<i>Atkinson's Audience:</i>	
<i>Key Points made by Proponents of SAT:</i>	<i>Key Points made by Opponents of SAT:</i>
<i>Important Evidence:</i>	<i>Why Evidence is Important to Writer's Purpose:</i>

**Note to Instructors:** Be sure you've read through Atkinson's entire speech beforehand and have generated your own answers for this activity so you're prepared to deal with various responses in class. If students offer incorrect answers, ask them to refer to the text to show you where their ideas came from. If possible, try to avoid having to take on the role of correcting them yourself. Encouraging students to

respond to each other's ideas will make the class more student-centered and means you don't have to come down on them for being wrong. But, of course, do correct them if the class fails to. A little discomfort now is better than leaving people with a misinterpretation of the essay.

**Sample Transition to Next Activity:** Now that we have some ideas about what should be included in an academic summary for Atkinson's speech, let's think about how we might select and arrange this information.

**Part II (15-20 minutes):** Have students break into groups of three.

Ask them to generate a tentative outline for how they might organize the information on the board into an academic summary. One method for facilitating this activity is to pass out transparency markers (non-permanent so that you can re-use the transparencies) and have them write on overhead transparencies. This way, students can easily present their group work to the class. Or, just have them write on paper. –

Ask students to consider: How would they start their summary? How long should it be? Which information seems most important to include? Which points seem less important? Tell them that they do not have to write out a complete summary for Atkinson's speech; just an outline with a list of ideas is sufficient.

Have two or three groups present their outlines. You might wander around the room as they work and choose groups whose outlines look the strongest (secretly, of course). After they present, ask them to explain why they decided to structure their summary this way. Be sure to point out what you think is effective from their outline and also how it could be improved.

**Sample Transition to Next Activity:** Let's shift our focus now from summarizing to responding. For homework today, I asked you to read about the different types of responses, given on pages 162- 163 in the PHG. If you recall, your audience for Essay 1 will be open and interested in your response. So it's important that we start thinking about the different types of response we can provide. Please open your books to... .

- 2. Introduce the concept of responding (10 minutes):** The goal of this discussion is to briefly introduce students to all three types of response: agree/disagree, interpretive/reflective, analytic/evaluative. Point out that they will practice all three types with upcoming essays. For now, it's only important that they understand the differences between each type. Also, let them know that a combination of responses is possible for Essay 1. If they choose a combination, they simply need to be sure that their response makes an overall, focused point.

Review the points on page 162 in the *PHG*, highlighting important concepts and phrases, and check out the teaching guide on Types of Summary and Response (<http://writing.colostate.edu/references/teaching/summaryresponse/>). Be sure to discuss kinds of evidence and ask students to consider which kinds of evidence would work best for different types of response. Since students will be writing an agree/disagree response to Atkinson's speech for homework, you might focus the conversation here. Remind them that, in addition to giving a response, they must also provide *reasons* and *evidence* to show readers why they agree or disagree with an idea.

**Sample Transition to Next Activity:** Most of us understand what evidence is. But often, writers mistake evidence for reasons. They think that if they simply tell readers why they make a claim, it is enough to support that claim. However, most readers need REASONS *and* EVIDENCE to feel convinced. In addition to telling readers what you think, you need to show them why you think it. Let's look at an example...

- 3. Show students how to develop a response with reasons and evidence (15 minutes):** The goal of this activity is to help students distinguish between reasons and evidence. Another objective is to help them see how reasons and evidence connect back to a writer's response. (Often students interpret evidence as "any personal experience that relates to my topic" which leads to stories and experiences that stray from their original point). See if students can draw connections between the evidence and the main idea from the sample (to reinforce the need for focus in a response). Also, warn them that phrases such as "this reminds me of" can lead to ideas that don't qualify as support.

For this activity, use the sample below or create your own. Put the example on an overhead and read over it with the students. Then, highlight the differences between reasons and evidence and ask students to draw connections between the evidence, the reasons, the response, and the main idea. Pose questions like, "Is the focus effective? Does the writer come back to their main point? Where? Could the focus be improved?" You might use an overhead pen to illustrate these responses. You may also want to spend a few minutes discussing how reasons and evidence might look different for other types of response (analytic or reflective).

*One Key Point from Atkinson's speech:* Atkinson claims that a focus on admissions testing leads to obsessive test preparation in classrooms as early as middle school. He says that such a focus diminishes the important work of education, reducing the time spent on more important abilities such as reading and writing.

*Reaction and Reason*

**"TELL"**

I would have to agree with Atkinson and others who oppose the obsessive SAT preparation that goes on in most competitive public and private high schools. Test prep of this sort keeps students and teachers from realizing their full potential. The tests force them to focus on a narrow aspect of learning, robbing them of other opportunities.

*Personal Evidence to Support Reaction*

**"SHOW"**

I remember my first art class in high school. Mr. Venini was the teacher, and before I took his class I detested school. My grades were poor because I couldn't understand how geography and vocabulary related to my life. But Mr. Venini's class was different.

One day, he asked us to close our eyes and mold a piece of clay into whatever we were feeling. I let my fingers sink into the clay. I twisted it into a tall, slender shape, like a sunflower, that conveyed my theme of "boundlessness." Mr. Venini liked my sculpture,

but he didn't give it a grade. He said it was an activity for our imaginations. After that, I looked forward to art class and I produced many beautiful paintings and drawings. It was the only class I ever received an A in.

There is no clay on a standardized test like the SAT. No place for the imagination or even for many important, standard demonstrations of academic achievement. For me, this fact has meant that I was never allowed to take another art class because my parents wanted me to focus on the SAT and the ACT. I sat through many test-prep classes and still did poorly on the exam. I never received another A in school and never paid much attention in my other classes. To this day I figure that if "learning" means "fill in the right bubble," it isn't worth my time. Surely there must be more to an education than this.

**Sample Conclusion:** Today we considered approaches to summarizing a more complicated essay. Hopefully, you're starting to feel more comfortable with these concepts. We'll continue to practice summarizing, but for the remainder of the portfolio, our discussions will focus on responding. If you're still struggling with summary concepts, you should visit my office hours or drop by the Writing Center in the basement of Eddy.

## Assignment for Next Time

- Choose a key point from Atkinson's speech and write a one-and-a-half to two-page agree/disagree response to that idea. Start this effort by writing out the key point of the speech and relating it to the main idea of Atkinson's proposal, providing author tags to show whose idea it is. Then, respond to the key point and main idea, stating whether you agree or disagree with the overall idea (proposal) and the key point you've selected to focus on. Give reasons for why you agree or disagree and provide specific evidence to show why you feel this way (personal experience, textual evidence, or cultural observations). Post your response to the Writing Studio. Bring a printed copy of your response to class.
- Read Peter Sacks' essay from the *Nation*: "SAT—A Failing Test" and visit the *Nation* on the Web to gain a sense of where his essay was published and who his intended readers are. Also read Walter Williams "Radicals Undermine College Admissions Criteria" from *Human Events*. Again, visit *Human Events* on the Web to gain understanding of the readership of this publication. There is no need to write a summary or response to these essays at this time, but you should be ready to discuss both articles when you get to class.
- Bring in three clipped articles from the NYT related to debatable issues in U.S. culture. Be ready to summarize and discuss them.

## **Week 3: Monday, September 8– Friday, September 12**

### **Goals for this Week**

- Help students understand the importance of reasons and evidence (textual, personal experience, analysis) in a response.
- Connect development of responses (through reasons and evidence that support the specific response types) to the overall portfolio goals and make connections between this portfolio and the larger course goals.
- Provide students with the means and opportunity to revise their agree/disagree responses to Atkinson's proposal.
- Apply the writing situation model to the articles by Sacks, Williams, Bollinger, and the Thernstroms.
- Introduce the second and third types of response – interpreting/reflecting and analyzing the text. Ask students to use the analytic type of response for either Sacks' or Williams' essays. Ask students to use the interpretive/reflective (text effectiveness evaluation) response type for either Bollinger or the Thernstroms.
- Introduce and discuss the concepts of assumptions and implications. Connect these concepts to the use of reasons and evidence in an interpretive response.
- Introduce and discuss development of criteria and making judgments about the effectiveness of texts using sufficient reasons and evidence in support of an
- Start building a set of debatable issues drawn from newspaper clippings and summaries posted to Syllabase.

### **Activities for this Week**

Detailed lesson plans are available for the first four weeks of the course. Beginning this week, you should start writing your own introductions, conclusions, and transitions. Suggestions will be made in the lesson plan, but you will be expected to revise these suggestions. Starting in the fifth week, you will be expected to choose activities from a set of suggested activities and/or develop your own activities that will help you and your students achieve the course goals for a specific week.

## Day 5 – Tuesday, September 9<sup>th</sup>

**Lesson Objectives:** Today we work with the drafted responses (agree/disagree) to the Atkinson speech in order to discuss how to develop better responses through reasons and evidence. We also move on to a second type of response so that students add a differing focusing and developing technique to their repertoire. Throughout these efforts, we check their understanding of the readings and the issues, building their sense of the multiple perspectives and positions on the issue of the SAT, clarifying that the discussion is more complex than a simple pro-con debate. Today we also hold students accountable for their reading of the newspaper by asking them to bring in three clippings on issues they find provocative.

**Connection to Course Goals:** (1) Discussing reasons and evidence helps students develop their own ideas with support. It encourages them to write more focused and thoughtful responses, as opposed to a list of unsupported reactions. Discussion of more than one response type exposes students to the variety of focuses and approaches for developing papers that are available to them. (2) Careful reading and examination of multiple texts related to the issue of the SAT provides a model and illustration for processes students will apply independently to the topical issues they select for Portfolio 2. Distinguishing one article from another and coming to some deep understanding of the perspectives and approaches of the writers being analyzed will prepare students for their application of these principles to their own selected issues in Portfolios 2 and 3

### A Possible Sequence of Activities

1. Show students how to develop their agree/disagree responses (on Atkinson's speech) with reasons and evidence
2. Do a mini-analysis of Peter Sacks' and Walter Williams' writing situations
3. Introduce the second type of response - interpreting and reflecting on the text. Then practice applying this type of response to the two essays.
4. Discuss news clippings and a few of the topical issues they're seeing in their reading of the *Times*.

### Activities

1. **WTL:** Open class today with a WTL engaging students on three clippings from the *NYT*. Have them write a summary (5 minutes) of one of the articles they've brought today as a news clipping. Discuss one or two of their issues for 5 minutes, perhaps focusing on one student and his or her clippings or form small groups to discuss all members articles and issues. You might also create a Discussion Forum for the occasional posting of article summaries and issue clarifications. Have them turn in all the clippings they brought to class today so that you can skim through the issue ideas and give them verbal (whole class) feedback next time.

**Sample introductory points, but please write your own introductory message!**

- review the three types of response – agree/disagree, analytic, and interpretive/reflective.
  - goal: to develop reasons and evidence within a response, (one of the most important writing skills)
  - encourage: the importance of careful analysis (which takes TIME) to not only explain what reactions to issues and positions on those issues, but to also explain and show *why* you think as you do--providing clear reasons and evidence for an audience.
2. **Briefly introduce the idea of the SuperReader Syndrome** and how our discussion of reasons and evidence from last time (and review of it now) seeks to cure it! Explain that most ineffective writers make unwitting assumptions about their readers' ability to "read between the lines." Expecting your reader to fill in the blanks or read between the lines is known as the SuperReader Syndrome. Writers must learn to make reasonable judgments about their readers' knowledge of an issue and must be careful about assuming they can follow a line of thought without careful reasoning and evidence. Explain that while you may, as their teacher, be able to guess at their meaning, you will almost inevitably insist that they provide more reasons, evidence, and explanation of their points. Explain that this is not boorish behavior on your part; it is helping them to develop the internal sense of audience (a complex set of judgments) that will guide all their writing in the future—and not just in the academic setting.
3. **Informal discussion reviewing evidence (10 minutes):**
- What is evidence?
  - What are the different types of evidence (think back to the *PHG*)?
  - Where might you need to use some evidence in your summary/response essay?
  - What kind of evidence might you use in your summary?
  - How might the kind of evidence differ depending upon your response type and focus?
  - What kinds of evidence might you use in your responses?
4. **Have students do a revision plan for their agree/disagree responses (10 minutes):**
- Have students reflect on the discussion you just had and ask them to check for the following (put these on an overhead): Check to see:
- that you've clearly made a point (agree/disagree)
  - that you are responding to a main idea from the essay
  - that you've given a sufficient reason for your opinion (tell us why)
  - that you've provided some well-developed evidence (show us why)
  - that your reasons and evidence are focused - they connect back to the overall point you're trying to make

Ask students to read back through their responses and write a sentence or two of revision planning.

Tell students that others will be looking at their revised responses shortly (this will be incentive to stay on task).

**Transition (Please write your own):** Shift the focus from agree/disagree responses to interpretive and reflective responses. Use Peter Sacks' and Walter Williams' arguments as a means for practicing this type of response.

5. **WTL (5 minutes):** What has your experience with admissions testing (SAT or ACT) been? How did it affect you? Do you believe that developing fair admissions criteria is an important issue? In what way has your position on this issue been influenced by your experiences or by the experiences of others that you know? Support your explanation with reasons and evidence.
6. **Discuss WTLs (5-10 minutes):** Ask students to share their responses to the WTL questions with two other people, forming a triad. Try to group them with people from across the room, perhaps sorting them by birth month, shoe size, or distance from home. (The goal of this informal exchange is to both "hook" students and to develop community.) In order to encourage them to think more critically about issues, it is useful to start with their ideas. Hearing from classmates they don't yet know also extends the knowledge base of students, who may assume that their own experience with testing—or other issues for that matter—is universal. Students will experience the RISK of stepping out of their own shoes and instead of having their opinions RATIFIED may find their suppositions CHALLENGED by their peers. This is far more likely to happen if they meet with classmates they don't know. Mix things up routinely and you'll have a classroom that becomes a community where students trust and depend upon one another for not only support but for challenge to one another as well.)

**Notes to help you write a transition into the next activity:**

- Peter Sacks and Walter Williams clearly take different points of view on this issue.
- You may find yourself siding with one of them immediately, simply because you go into the article holding your own opinions.
- What elements of these articles challenge your beliefs, suppositions, or experience?
- What ideas intrigue you because of their different-ness from your own perspective?
- What news ideas did you get from your group?
- How has reading these two articles enlarged your sense of the debate?
- Look closely at where these two arguments are coming from (contexts) so that we can talk about how you might respond to essays like these - by looking at the main ideas and what these writers assume, what they imply, and what the consequences of their positions may be.

7. **Mini-Analysis of Sacks' and Williams' writing situations (10 minutes):** This activity is designed to prepare students to accurately represent these authors' ideas and to look for assumptions and implications in their arguments. Help students to understand that in order to fully understand a writer's argument, it's important to understand the situation he/she is writing for. Likewise, in order to determine the assumptions which inform a writer's argument or what that argument suggests, it is important to know where the writer is coming from. Finally, it is important to anticipate where arguments take us—or what the implications or possible consequences of a position might be.

Create your own activity (overhead points, class discussion, group work, etc...), incorporating the following questions:

- Where were these essays published? (*The Nation* and *Human Events*)
- What can you tell about these pubs from looking at their online subscription pages? (Perhaps that one is conservative and the other liberal?)
- Who appear to be the target audiences? Who do they hope to reach, affect, or influence?
- What can we infer about the writers (Sacks and Williams) based on these contexts?
- What is the argument Sacks and Williams make for their intended audiences?
- How do the writers support their arguments? (Ask students to refer to specific places in the texts and explain their answers clearly)
- What are the implications or possible consequences of each position? (Ask students to explain how they derived their sense of consequence or what they base that forecast on.)

**Write a Transition to the Next Activity.** Point out that we have built a general sense of where Sacks and Williams are coming from and what their arguments are. Now the goal is to talk about how we might develop a response to the ideas in these essays.

8. **Discuss responding to the essays (15-20 minutes):** The goal for this activity is to reinforce concepts from the agree/disagree response and to introduce a new type of response - interpreting and reflecting. On an overhead, highlight the three kinds of response from the *PHG*:

- Agreeing and disagreeing with the ideas in a text
- Interpreting and reflecting on the text
- Analyzing the effectiveness of a text

Ask students if these essays lend themselves to the agree/disagree type of response (yes). And invite them to elaborate on which ideas they might respond to in an agree/disagree format. Then, explain that you will use these essays to explore another kind of response - interpreting and reflecting. **Note:** Be sure that you explain the following points (include these on the overhead that you used for the types of response above):

- The goal of an agree/disagree response is to emphasize one important idea from a writer's text and support or refute that idea using reasons and evidence. Here, you want to convince a reader that your position is a favorable one.
- The goal of an interpretive response is to look critically at an argument in order to explain what it fully means. Looking critically at a text requires you to inquire beyond what the text actually says. One way to do this is to locate the assumptions that inform a writer's argument and find out what the writer's argument implies. Along the way, you may find yourself agreeing with or refuting the writer's ideas and the assumptions and implications that are tied to these ideas.
- The goal of an analytical response is to determine a text's effectiveness by examining its parts. You might look at the purpose, the intended audience, the thesis, the main ideas, the organization and evidence, and the language and style. Here, your aim is to point out an essay's strong points and/or where it falls short. Analyzing the text's effectiveness allows you to make more informed decisions about the usefulness and credibility of a writer's argument.

Inform students that you'll be focusing on the interpretive response for the Sacks and Williams essays. Since locating the assumptions and implications of an argument are an important part of interpreting an essay, you'll want to define the following terms for them as well:

**Assumption** - is what a person believes to be true. However, assumptions are not always true; they are not shared by everyone or supported by unquestionable evidence. Writers make different assumptions based on their background and experience. Assumptions inform a writer's argument. If you look closely at a writer's use of language, tone, and evidence you can sense the assumptions a writer is making about their topic and their audience (their beliefs, their values, and their expectations).

**Implication** - is a suggestion that is not directly stated. Writers may imply something when they are hesitant to write a bold statement or reluctant to make unsupported claims (for example, a writer may not state that the Vice President is too old to be in office, since this could be viewed as inappropriate. But their argument may suggest this none the less). This type of implication is usually driven by the writer's opinions, so it tends to be hidden "between the lines." In order to fully understand an argument, you'll want to locate the implications a writer's argument makes.

Implications can also be the logical ramifications of an argument that the writer may or may not be aware of. For example, one of the implications of making abortion illegal is that back alley abortions would increase and the fatality rate, due to botched abortions, would rise. One way to look for this kind of implication in an argument is to ask, "What does this argument suggest is happening or could happen in the future? Does the argument hint at an escalating problem? Does it suggest anything in the way of "effects" or what could result if a particular action is taken?"

**Practice using the terms "assumptions and implications" (10 minutes):** Use the following questions or devise your own to get students thinking about what assumptions are:

What assumptions might we make about:

- someone who reads the *Collegian*?
- someone who reads the *New York Times*?
- someone who watches *Dawson's Creek*?
- someone who watches *Star Trek*?
- someone who lives in San Francisco?
- someone who lives in Salt Lake City?

Use this activity to reinforce the point that assumptions aren't always completely fair and shared by everyone. Also, remind them that assumptions are shaped by one's own experience and environment. Include the following questions to show students why it is important to examine a writer's assumptions:

- When are readers likely to agree with a writer's assumptions?
- What assumptions do Sacks and Williams make (about the SAT or about their readers' beliefs and values in general)?
- Will all readers agree with these assumptions? Who won't?
- How will looking at assumptions help us to fully interpret these essays?
- How might looking at assumptions help us write an interpretive essay?

**Design an activity** where you get students to practice using the term "implications."

You might use advertisements, look at political cartoons/arguments, or develop sample claims/arguments that contain various implications. Be creative!

At the end of the activity, make sure students understand the distinction between assumptions and implications. If they don't fully understand, inform them that assumptions already exist without the argument. Assumptions inform a writer's position. Implications result from the writer's argument. They might think of implications as the possible or probable consequences of the argument's acceptance and application.

### **Conclusion Points to Emphasize:**

- Today we talked about how you might reflect on or interpret an argument more critically by examining an author's assumptions, and the implications of their argument.
- We will practice this kind of response in our homework for next time, and then we'll move on Thursday to discuss our last type of response – analyzing the effectiveness of a text.

### **Assignment for Next Time**

- Visit the publication web sites for the *Nation* and *Human Events* if you haven't already done so to get a better sense of where these essays were published and who their intended audiences are.

- Write a brief summary and a two-page draft interpretive response to either the Sacks' or Williams' essay. In your summary, represent the author's ideas fairly. In the response, expand on these ideas by reflecting on one or more key passages from the text and interpreting what the argument means. Demonstrate what you've learned about assumptions and implications by pointing out assumptions that the writer is making about his audience or his issue (use textual evidence to support this). Then, reflect on any phrases and passages where the text may suggest or imply something more than what it actually states. Post your response to Writing Studio and bring a hard copy of your draft to class. [Note that it is easier to take issue with the assumptions or implications of an essay with which problems are seen by the writer. It is easier, for instance, to find examples of problems than to find examples of "good assumptions" or "good implications." ]
- Read Lee Bollinger's "Debate Over SAT Masks Perilous Trends in College Admissions" from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and "Admissions Impossible" by Abigail and Stephan Thernstrom. ½ class brings a hard copy list of bulleted key points and an overall main idea stated as a thesis that you draw (or see indirectly stated) from Bollinger's essay. Other ½ class brings a hard copy list of bulleted key points and an overall main idea stated as thesis that you draw (or see indirectly stated) from the Thernstrom essay. One page of material is sufficient. [Instructors: you must decide how to divide the class for this homework. Sometimes the best thing to do is just number off 1-2, 1-2, and have all the ones read the first document and all the twos read the second.]
- Bring three more clippings from the *New York Times*. These can be new issues or a continuation article of an issue about which you already clipped.

## Day 6 – Thursday, September 11<sup>th</sup>

**Lesson Objectives:** Today we go deeper into assumptions and implications (interpretive response), helping students to attach and pin down reasons and evidence for their claims about assumptions and implications. We then introduce the third response type: analysis, which involves understanding the parts of a text and then making an evaluation of a text based upon a limited set of criteria.

**Connection to Course Goals:** Today's class builds on previous exposure to response types and takes students deeper into methods of developing a paper through reasons and evidence directed toward a particular purpose. This class helps students analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the contexts of the writers and their texts, a skill that will be important for Portfolios 2 and 3 as well. With the class discussion of a third response type, analysis, students learn the important skill of text evaluation. Students leave with an assignment to read a few Letters-to-the-Editor (and perhaps other NYT articles as well, as provided in the NYT electronic reserve readings), so that they become familiar with these rhetorical situations and also in order to see that pieces are often edited down to fit the constrained space of the newspaper.

### A Possible Sequence of Activities

1. Give feedback and hold students accountable for their reading of the NYT and their clipping of news on issues of interest.
2. Discuss the assumptions and implications of Sacks' and Williams' arguments
3. Develop interpretive responses by attaching reasons and evidence to assumptions and implications
4. Introduce the third type of response—analyzing the effectiveness of a text

#### Introduction Points:

- Last time we discussed assumptions and implications as a way to develop our interpretive responses.
- Today, we continue with this idea, looking at examples from the Sacks' and Williams' texts.
- Students should use this discussion as a way to reflect on homework responses. They should: 1) try to determine whether their responses adequately identify assumptions and implications 2) try to determine whether their responses are fully developed with reasons and evidence.
- Today we also introduce the notion of text evaluation (the analytic method of response) Students should consider all the ways in which they've criticized the texts we've been reading, as well as the criticisms they've heard voiced by others in the class. By the end of class, they should decide on a limited number of criteria on which to base their evaluations.

## Activities

1. **Trade news clippings** brought in today with a neighbor and skim one another's. Do a two-three minute interview with one another about the issue and why you find it interesting. Ask a volunteer pair to brief one another's article and issue to the class, explaining why the classmate selected it and finds the issue interesting. Have students turn in their clippings so that again you can review their emerging ideas for topics, and provide some feedback at the next class.
2. **Reflect on homework (3 minutes):** Have students begin by refreshing their memories. Ask them to (silently) review their responses to Sacks' or Williams' essay. **Write a Transition to Next Activity. Emphasize the immediate goals of the day, including:**
  - recalling our responses to Sacks or Williams
  - discussing the various assumptions and implications in each argument.
  - critically examining and interpreting the arguments
  - talking about the basics of the third response type
  - talking about how to build better responses for Portfolio One.
3. **Generate assumptions and implications from Sacks' and Williams' essays (20 minutes):** The goal for this activity is to check to see that students are able to pinpoint some of the assumptions and implications in each argument. The interpretive response demands the most critical thinking, so you may need to provide prompts to help students "dig deeper." During this activity, list students' responses on the board and tell them to use their homework as a guide. Here are some of the assumptions and implications in each of the arguments, but Rather than just repeating these, form questions to help students think more critically:
  - What do Sacks and Williams assume about their audiences? What do Sacks and Williams assume about conservatives'/liberals' intentions?
  - What does each argument imply about the fate of alternatives to the SAT?

Sacks' Assumptions	Sacks' Implications	Williams' Assumptions	Williams' Implications
Educators agree that the SAT is flawed	Sooner or later the SAT must be changed or gotten rid of and a replacement measure must be found	Readers will agree that the "diversity lobby" is prone to devious methods, that the end of race-based admissions at U of C was good	Efforts to diversify campuses may be undermined or completely undone. All-white privileged students of alumni may prevail.
Most people see an inherent value in diversity populations in school settings	Allegiance to a diverse population on campuses leads to a number of remedies and a lot of challenges	In time, the end of affirmative action in college admissions will lead to higher achievement among minorities	A belief in the free market as a "fix" for schooling must be efforts to improve schooling in urban and poor settings

Interpretations of the correlation between race and SAT scores will be similar	“Playing the race card” further fractures race relations and fails to redress inequities in schooling	Readers will agree that the SAT is not biased and that his single test question example shows this is so	A refusal to look more deeply at vocabulary q’s & their relation to life experience may lead to heads in the sand
Public universities are for the public, not an elite subset of the public	Public universities so conceived are obligated to teach virtually everyone. Why not just go to open admissions? Will the quality of an education suffer?	Audience will agree that applicants difficult backgrounds are the product of dysfunctional families	Are we to believe that merit is doled out equally? What of the young people who overcome enormous obstacles to achieve in school? No reward?
Readers will be familiar with other experiments, such as the U of Texas “Top 10%” law and will agree on the interpretation presented here	The U of T program Top 10% program has led to serious lowering of average SAT scores at U T and may be just another ill-devised sorting method	Readers will equate “comprehensive review” with “race-based” admissions. Readers will also agree that racial preferencing is condescending toward minorities	If all race-based policies are inappropriate then should the gains associated with Civil Rights legislation go away too?
A critical eye on the value of testing is valuable but not all would agree, given the history of the justification for the SAT	What better methods are there for determining student readiness? Holistic eval is very expensive. Who will pay for it?	The leftist agenda has caused many of society’s ills-- family breakdown, illegitimacy, and low academic achievement	Conservatives blame liberals, and vice-versa. Who has SOLUTIONS?

**Write a transition that moves students from the observations they’ve generated to the development of a better (more successful) response**

4. **Practice developing an interpretive response to each text by developing reasons and evidence to refute assumptions and implications (15 minutes):** The goal of this activity is to help students develop their observations into well-reasoned and well-supported responses. First, explain (or create a mini-outline on an overhead) how a writer can develop an interpretive response by addressing:
- an author’s assumptions/implications
  - why as a responder the student is troubled by an assumption/implication
  - *reasons* why the assumption/implication is problematic
  - *evidence* to prove that the assumption/implication is problematic

Then, practice this process by consulting the list of assumptions and implications. Ask students to consider whether or not they would support or refute the chosen author's assumptions and implications. Then, choose examples from the board to practice developing reasons and evidence.

*Here's how it might look using one of Williams' implications:*

- Implies that there is no place in admissions decisions for acknowledging the obstacles students have overcome to get where they are
- Do students agree/disagree with this? (take one side at a time)
- What reasons can students offer for why they agree/disagree? (reasons must be substantial and something that can be supported – “It’s stupid” won’t cut it)
- What evidence can students provide for why they agree/disagree (i.e. personal experience – “I have a friend whose parents were both disabled and she had to support them financially while tending to their medical needs and going to school for herself. She worked 20 hours a day from the time she was 12. Shouldn’t her remarkable maturity and accomplishment be acknowledged even if her SAT scores were weak?”)

\*\* Explain to students that without evidence, their responses are reduced to a list of opinions or unsupported rants. Also, warn students that they may need to search for textual evidence to support “gut feelings” or reactions.

5. **Reflect on discussion and make plans to revise responses (5 minutes):** Ask students to reflect on today's lesson, then to look back over their homework responses to Sacks or Williams and jot down notes for revision. If they were to revise this essay for Portfolio One, what changes would they need to make to strengthen and develop their response. Point out that the more precise and focused they are with this REVISION PLAN, the more helpful the plan will be as they revise—if they choose to revise this response.
6. **Review the third type of response - analyzing the effectiveness of a text (10 minutes):** Begin by getting students to see that they could write an agree/disagree response an interpretive response, OR an analytical response related to this essay (or the other essays) for Portfolio One. Ask: Could we agree or disagree with Bollinger or the Thernstroms? Could we challenge their assumptions and the implications of their arguments? (The answer to both questions is, of course, yes.) However, for your immediate purposes, you're going to focus on writing an analytic response.

Review the following definition. Put this on an overhead or refer students to the appropriate section in the *PHG*. You might point out that the example of response in the *PHG* is, in fact, a text effectiveness analysis and thus provides a good example of this response type.

The goal of an analytical response is to determine a text's effectiveness by examining its parts. You might look at the purpose, the intended audience, the thesis, the main ideas, organization, evidence, language, and style. Your objective for writing an analytic response is to point out a text's strong points and/or where it falls short. Analyzing the

text's effectiveness allows you to make more informed decisions about the usefulness and credibility of a writer's argument.

**Transition to Next Activity:** Write a transition linking these two activities. (For assistance, look at the section on writing transitions from the guide on “Planning a Class” located on Writing@CSU). The goal here, however, is to check on student understanding of the authors’ points before moving into an evaluation of their arguments. You might want to use a brief WTL to refocus the class on the Bollinger and Thernstrom essays at this point, asking them to write a one-paragraph summary of the essay they read.

7. Check student understanding of these articles by engaging students in an abbreviated JIGSAW reading activity (15 minutes). Form “Expert Groups” of 4-5 consisting of students who have written summary bullets for the same essay (Bollinger or the Thernstroms). Follow the instructions below to obtain consensus on summarizing the text (main and key points), as well as consensus on the contexts and values informing the authors’ perspectives. Then move to a few evaluative criteria—perhaps tone and “case strategy” or the reasonableness of the argument’s logic. Complete the expert group work in 10 minutes and then move students into “Teaching Pairs,” partnering students who worked on different essays. Each partner briefs the other (teaches the other) the summary points and initial evaluation criteria and judgments about the texts. Follow the instructions below for the JIGSAW activity.

### **Expert Group Questions:**

- What is the main idea of this essay? How does this essay distinguish itself from other sources you've read in terms of its position?
- What are three or four key points that are made in support of this main idea?
- Who are the authors? What relationship might there be between who the authors are (roles, jobs, affiliations, etc.) and the positions they take on this issue?
- Where was this article published and what cues does that site provide to the writer's affiliations and/or purposes?
- Where is this author(s) most clear about his or her point? Where do you struggle to follow the logic?
- What is the tone of the article? (Serious, sarcastic, mean-spirited, congenial?) How does the tone overlap with the writer's purposes? Is he or she writing toward friends or toward adversaries?
- Based upon other arguments you've read on the SAT, how does this article's argument hold up? Where would other people we've read disagree with this author—and why? How would someone who disagreed with this author likely challenge this author's ideas or ways of stating his/her ideas? How effective is the author's "case structure" or way of developing his/their argument?

### **Teaching Pairs**

- Select one or two of the above questions to focus on as you indicate to your new group members what they need to know about the article you read and are now evaluating. (Summary of main idea and key points)
- Be specific with your criteria for evaluation.
- Point to specific moments in the text that provide evidence of your evaluation points.
- Based upon your evaluation, how would you judge this article for your new group members? What would you want them to value about this article? What would you caution them to be wary of?

### **8. Begin discussing how to write an analytic response to the Bollinger and**

**Thernstroms arguments (5-10 minutes, as time allows):** Review each of the elements or criteria for analytic evaluation. Encourage students to refer to the text when responding to the following questions. Try to push them beyond giving surface responses (remind them that in their essays they'll need to develop answers with reasons and evidence rather than generalizations). Use the following questions as a guide to review the elements for evaluating a writer's text analytically (feel free to add to these). You may want to focus on just one or two so that the discussion becomes more detailed and penetrating rather than just a superficial itemization of strengths and weaknesses without serious analysis.

- Did Bollinger/Thernstrom effectively accomplish their purposes in the texts? What were the purposes, and why or why not were those goals achieved?

- Will the argument meet the needs and interests of the intended readers? Who are they? What are their values? What are their beliefs? Would they oppose or support his argument? Why or Why not? Is the article truly argumentative (challenging the audience in some way) or is it simply “preaching to the choir”?
- What can you say about the organization of the argument? Was it easy to follow? Did it progress in a logical order? Where did you falter as you read?
- What about the evidence used to support the argument?
- How does the author(s) support the main points? What is the quality of the sources referred to? Are they reliable? Does the writer(s) support all claims? What kind of evidence does the writer(s) use? Which claims are left unsupported?
- What can you say about Bollinger’s or the Thernstroms’ tone and approach in the essay—that is, does it seem fair and reasonable or is the tone somehow off-putting? Pinpoint locations that cause the effect you describe.
- Write a well-constructed analytic claim for the article. How do you judge the article as a whole and based upon what criteria? Are both your judgment and the criteria you used to make this judgment clearly stated in your claim? Write a brief phrase outline for how this essay would be constructed, including broad references to text evidence you would cite in constructing your evaluation of this text.

\*\* Explain that analytical responses can serve to: praise a writer for the effectiveness of their text; point out the problems or shortcomings in a writer’s argument; praise some parts of a writer’s argument and challenge others. In short, however, the task of this response type is to evaluate and judge the text based upon a limited number of criteria that are then fully developed in support of the overall judgment. You might ask students to take a look at the PHG example of a text effectiveness response. You might also note that it is generally more effective for writers to offer some degree of criticism rather than pure praise when doing an analytic response.

**Conclusion:** Write a conclusion for today’s lesson. For assistance, look at the section on writing introductions and conclusions from the guide on *Planning a Class* located in the *Teaching Guides on Writing@CSU* (<http://writing.colostate.edu/references/teaching/planning/>).

## Assignment for Next Time

- Write a short (one-paragraph) summary followed by a two-page analytic response to either Bollinger’s or the Thernstroms’ argument, focusing on just one or two criteria. Once you’ve decided which criteria you’ll look at (eg. use of tone and use of evidence) construct an overall claim to map out your response. Begin your response with that claim, provide an essay map, and follow the order of your essay map, developing your reasons (evaluation based on a limited number of criteria) with some initial text evidence. Post your summary and response to the Writing Studio. Bring a hard copy of your draft to class.

## **Week 4: Monday, September 15–Friday, September 19**

### **Goals for this Week**

- Discuss the role of an overall claim in a response. Explain how an effective overall claim provides focus and clarity for an essay that addresses a specific audience. Explain that an effective claim can help students “map out” a response that is then a matter of development. Your discussion should help students move beyond generalized responses and begin thinking about how an overall claim reflects their purposes and audience needs, focuses their response, and helps shape an organizational structure for their essay.
- Review portfolio requirements for essay one and address student concerns about meeting those requirements. Reinforce student understanding of what is involved in writing an effective summary/response essay.
- Read and discuss a sample essay—perhaps your own?
- Review peer review techniques and conduct a brief workshop on students’ responses to the Bollinger or Thernstrom essay as well as a full workshop on their drafts of the summary/response essay they choose to use for the portfolio evaluation.
- Develop evaluation criteria (rubric) for the portfolio, making sure that they understand that focus (of purpose, audience, and overall point) is the number one evaluation criterion. Clarify that development of the argument is the next concern for you and for them, and that reasons must be accompanied by evidence. Also clarify that better papers will then go the next step to provide a level of discussion and explanation for the connection between evidence, reasons, and overall claim. Make sure that they understand that mechanics (grammar) are a lower level concern but that carefully written, well-edited and proofread manuscripts send a strong message that the writer has taken special care to present a polished product. If you develop a consistent evaluation approach that follows these guidelines, then your expectations will be predictable for your students—and by the end of the course they will have gone some distance toward accomplishing a deepening of the substance of their writing, rather than just focusing on superficial mechanics.  
  
You may want to use the “Evaluating Student Writing” idea from the Activities Bank that accompanies this syllabus. This classroom activity helps students become better evaluators of their own work and familiarizes students with “rhetorical terminology” that composition instructors commonly use, especially when evaluating (grading) student work.
- Review necessary components of Portfolio 1 (what must be included in the folder), and provide students with a postscript that allows them to reflect on their processes during the first four weeks of class. You may wish to prepare a list for

the board or overhead with the portfolio components given, and you may wish to delay the postscript until the beginning of the class when the portfolio is turned in.

### **Activities for this Week**

Detailed lesson plans are available for the first four weeks of the course. Beginning in the fifth week, you will be expected to choose activities from a set of suggested activities and/or develop your own activities that will help you and your students achieve the course goals for a specific week.

## Day 7 – Tuesday, September 16<sup>th</sup>

**Lesson Objectives:** Today we go deeper into the third and final response type. We review the need for sufficient focus and support, as demonstrated through claims combined with reasons and evidence—this time to support an evaluation of a text, or judgment of it, based upon a limited number of criteria that are fully demonstrated. We also do a mini peer review to prepare students for the larger workshop that will take place at the next class meeting.

**Connection to Course Goals:** Today's class links to the first portfolio's goal of helping students write more effective essays—ones that are focused and well supported. Further, as students critically examine texts through this response method, they learn just because a text is in print doesn't mean that it's above reproach. Also, students begin to see that their own arguments are only as strong as the texts they use to support them and conversely that it is important to be aware of and understand (or even empathize with) points of view that don't seem very strong. Where DO those perspectives come from, if not from strong scholarship? How do the backgrounds, values, beliefs, and affiliations of people—even those with strong academic backgrounds--play into their perspectives? How can understanding these context features help us to appreciate persons' perspectives rather than to casually dismiss them? Students should learn should text evaluation methods today that will transfer to their evaluation of texts they'll read in Portfolios 2 and 3. Finally, students should also learn some principles of peer review from today's class.

## Possible Sequence of Activities Today

1. Review the use of claims to shape responses
2. Discuss the development of essays using the analytic response method.
3. Facilitate a peer review activity for responses to the Bollinger and Thernstrom texts.

**Introduction:** Write an introduction for today's lesson. For assistance, look at the section on writing introductions and conclusions from the guide on *Planning a Class* located in the Teaching Guides on Writing@CSU (<http://writing.colostate.edu/references/teaching/planning/>).

## Activities

1. **Give informal, whole-class feedback to students regarding their news clippings that you'll return today.** Tell them that the next time you'll check their clippings is subsequent to turning in Portfolio 1, so they are expected to continue reading the NYT and collect clippings even though you won't be discussing them for the remainder of the week.
2. **Review using claims to shape responses (15 minutes):** The goal for this activity is to help students make an overall point with their writing by considering how claims can "map out" a response. (In the past, students have written analytic responses that read like "generalized lists" - i.e. the author's tone is good... the organization is effective... the evidence could use some work...). Here, we are trying to help students move beyond generalized responses to think more about their purpose/focus and organization.

Use the claims below (or ones that you generate) to model how a claim can help a writer connect their points and create a "map" by which to organize their writing. Put these claims on an overhead and ask students to outline what the paper might look like based on what the claim says. Take the claim apart, phrase by phrase; you might refer to this activity as "*unpacking* a thesis."

*Ineffective claim:*

Williams' essay is pretty good, but I didn't like the tone he used and I doubt whether he is really committed to ridding society of racial discrimination. Overall, I found his attitude to be sarcastic or even a little cynical.

*Why this is ineffective. Have them unpack each section of the claim to reach these conclusions:*

- Williams' essay is pretty good, but I didn't like... "Language is too generalized - what does the writer mean by "good" and "I didn't like" and "attitude"?"
- "I doubt whether he is really committed..." The statement following, "I doubt whether..." is a gut reaction and can't be sufficiently developed with reasons/evidence.

- “I found his attitude”... The writer can comment on tone but it is very difficult to impute attitude where we have no real knowledge of the writer’s internal life.
- Overall: The writer has named too many criteria to develop any sufficiently. As written, the writer needs to prove that: (1) the argument is “good,” (2) Williams doesn’t really believe in racial justice and integration, (3) Williams’ tone is a problem, and (4) Williams’ attitude is sarcastic or even cynical. Proving all of these items is too diffuse (not focused) for a four-page essay that provides sufficient evidence for all of its claims and subclaims.

*More Effective claims:*

“The Thernstroms appeal to readers of the *National Review* by using language that they can relate to and by taking a position they’ll be inclined to agree with, but their argument lacks “teeth” in that it does little more than ratify the convictions of *National Review* readers. One might ask what the Thernstroms have to offer by way of new ideas and solutions.”

Or

“Lee Bollinger makes a good point about the importance of Atkinson’s setting off the SAT debate, but his diffuse and rambling argument obscures the fact that he doesn’t really offer much in the way of substance. It’s not entirely clear what he adds to the discussion beyond his admission that he is dedicated to a diverse campus.”

*Why these are effective:*

- Writers use specific language and make demonstrable claims about the texts
- Writers combine their observations to make an overall point that indicates whether or not the essay was/was not effective (avoids sounding like a list)
- Writers’ focuses can reasonably be handled in four-page papers.

Ask students how each response might look based on these claims. How would the reader develop these points? What examples from the text could he/she use to develop each point? You might draw up an outline for each. Finally, you might ask what would make each claim better. This might also be a good opportunity to introduce the idea of the essay map, if you haven’t already.

3. **Review Use of Author Tags, Quotations, and Paraphrases (15 minutes):** Create your own activity here.
4. **Apply a peer review activity for responses to Bollinger and the Thernstroms (25 minutes):** Have students pair up and exchange their analytic responses to either Bollinger or the Thernstroms’ arguments (completed for homework). Allow them 15 to provide feedback for each other’s response. Then, allow them 5 additional minutes to discuss these in pairs. Use the guidance below or develop your own peer review activity.

*Directions for a peer review activity:*

- Underline the writer’s claim. Is the claim narrow and specific enough? Does it communicate an overall point or main idea? Does the claim accurately represent the points raised in the response? Write down one or two suggestions for how the writer could strengthen their claim.
  - What criteria for evaluation does the writer examine in their response? Are these criteria fitting given Bollinger’s/the Thernstroms’ argument and audience? Does the writer avoid “listing” criteria by limiting their response to one or two well developed observations?
  - Does the writer provide clear reasons and evidence to develop and support claim? Mark places where the writer has provided sufficient support. Then, mark places where the writer could develop their reasons and evidence further. Can you give any suggestions for how the writer could develop these points?
  - How might the writer improve the overall focus and organization of their response? Are there places where the writing strays from the claim? Could certain points be eliminated or moved to improve the organization?
  - Comment on the writer’s use of author tags, quotations, and paraphrases. Suggest strategies, if appropriate, for improvements.
  - Comment on two things that the response is doing well.
5. **Choosing their Summary/Response (15 minutes):** Have students decide which essay they’ll revise for portfolio one and give them time to look over their original essays and jot down plans for revision. Let students know that revisions should be substantial (global, not local; substance-changing, not limited to mechanics). They can use their homework as draft work and take pieces of that writing, but they need to do more than “tweak” or “add on a few lines” to succeed with portfolio one. Ask them to write you a short memo indicating which response type and article they’ve selected with a bit of explanation for their choice. Ask them for an initial revision plan.

**Conclusion:** Write a conclusion that helps students see that the homework they’ve been doing (reading, summarizing, and responding in different ways) is connected to the task they are now facing.

## Assignment for Next Time

- Assign as reading a few Letters to the Editor (*New York Times*). Have them make note of the length of these letters and ask them to imagine how these “abstracts” might have been fully developed in the authors’ original letters. You might also assign other short readings from the NYT electronic reserve readings.
- Reflect on the responses you’ve written as drafts and plan the revision of one of these responses for the context and purposes outlined in the Portfolio One assignment

- Write a draft of your final essay for Portfolio One. Bring a polished draft of your essay to class for workshop (decide how many copies students will need based on group sizes).

**Note to instructors:** You should read the Teaching Guide on *Planning Workshops and Peer Review on Writing@CSU* (<http://writing.colostate.edu/references/teaching/peer/>). Use the guide to help you decide ahead of time how you'd like to facilitate the in-class workshop for the summary/response essay.

## Day 8 – Thursday, September 18<sup>th</sup>

**Lesson Objectives:** Students are exposed today to the value of peer review. They take part in their first, full college writer's workshop. They learn how to be constructively critical rather than blissfully uncritical or arrogantly hypercritical. They begin to develop trust in classmates as readers as they also develop their own abilities as constructive critics. They receive clarification on the requirements for the portfolio and folder.

**Connection to Course Goals:** COCC150 strongly encourages peer cooperation and exchange of ideas. The course also strongly encourages deep or global revision, rather than simple editing or local revision.

### Possible Sequence of Activities for Today

1. Connect the current portfolio to the course goals.
2. Review what makes an effective workshop
3. Review portfolio requirements for essay one, address student concerns, develop grading criteria
4. Plan a full workshop, using *Planning Workshops and Peer Review on Writing@CSU* (<http://writing.colostate.edu/references/teaching/peer/>). This extensive peer review session will help students prepare the final drafts of their summary/response essays
5. Read a sample essay and discuss its strengths and weakness, clarifying that samples are provided for discussion purposes, not as models

### Activities

**Introduce** this final class of Portfolio 1, reviewing the main goals of the portfolio and its connection to course goals. Remember to use the concepts of accountability, understanding the conversation on a particular publicly debated issue (use of the SAT for college admissions), the importance of understanding writing as a “situated” activity engaged in by others and oneself and all for particular purposes and audiences. Remind them that the particular vehicle for this portfolio’s demonstration of all these writing skills is the summary/response done in the form of a Letter to the Editor of the *New York Times*. This letter will necessarily refer to the *Times* article by Diana Jean Schemo (presumably the reason for publishing the letter in this newspaper) while responding to either Atkinson’s proposal (the full speech), or Sacks’, Williams’ or Bollinger’s reply to Atkinson’s proposal. The writer can either revise a drafted response that has already been done or can develop an entirely new paper, using one or more of the response types to develop a focused claim about the article. Point out that the assorted letters-to-the-editor that they’ve read have been excerpts and that their essays should be longer, approximately 1,000 words (or four double-spaced pages) in length. Once they complete their full essays, they should then pare them down to less than 200 words. They will submit both the full letter and its abstract.

1. **Review what makes an effective workshop (5 minutes):** Refer to the Teaching Guide on *Planning Workshops and Peer Review on Writing@CSU*

(<http://writing.colostate.edu/references/teaching/peer/>). Use the guide to help you decide ahead of time how you'd like to facilitate the in class workshop for the summary/response essay.

2. **Review portfolio requirements for the summary/response essay and address student concerns about the essay (5 minutes):** Remind students that their essays must be turned in with all draft work and workshop materials in a folder. Inform them of any other requirements that you may have. Prepare a list of the necessary items that go into the folder. Prepare the postscript questions that you would like them to use to reflect on their processes during the first four weeks of class.
3. **Develop grading criteria with the class (5 minutes) Be sure to prepare your own ideas on this before class begins so that you don't find yourself committing to grading criteria you can't ultimately justify/support!**
4. **Workshop activity (30 minutes):** Engage students in a full class workshop that will help students prepare their summary/response essay for submission at the beginning of the next class. You might try the Writer's Triad approach to the workshop. (See the Activities Bank for details).
5. **Review a Sample Paper:** You may be hard-pressed to squeeze in this activity, but it does help students to see a sample paper, so long as they understand that you're not showing them a model but rather an example that lends itself to discussion of both strengths and weaknesses. At a later workshop, or this one if you have moved more quickly through activities than you anticipated, you could try the Cut-'n-Paste Activity with a sample essay.

**Conclusion—please write one!**

## **Assignment for Next Time**

Bring your first portfolio to class. It should include your final drafts—clearly marked--of the summary/response Letter-to-the-Editor and the abstract of less than 200 words, as well as all drafts, homework assignments, and in-class activities you've completed during this portfolio period. It should also include a copy of the formal workshop responses you received in class today, and these should be attached to the appropriate draft. Finally, the folder should include the postscript.\* Please organize all materials so that there can be no confusion about your choices and with the goal in mind of reducing the amount of digging your instructor has to do to find your process materials and final drafts. Organizing from the most recent on top to the earliest draft on the bottom is a good strategy.

**Instructors:** Alternatively, you can have your students do the postscript at the next class meeting as a WTL done immediately before they turn in their folders.

## **Portfolio 2: Introduction to Goals and Essay Assignment Sheets**

## **Overview of Portfolio 2: Developing Accountability. Understanding the Conversation through Critical Reading. Writing a News and Issue Analysis for an Academic Audience**

Goals of Portfolio 2 include our desire to:

- Continue to develop student awareness of texts as ongoing conversations on issues of importance and relevance to themselves and the world
- Continue to develop engagement in the world of both problems and ideas through reading of a major national newspaper and to reassure students of their ability--and indeed their responsibility as adult citizens--to participate in the development of ideas and actions that contribute to improvements and solutions
- Continue to develop student awareness of texts as products of particular purposes, audiences, and contexts (rhetorical situations) and develop student ability to read such texts critically
- Introduce students to the idea that positions on issues are tied to the values, beliefs, attitudes, and affiliations of the people who hold them. Texts are but one outward manifestation of those commitments and associations.
- Work in a focused way on developing student accountability to ongoing conversations by encouraging them to read widely on issues of interest and importance to them, developing their own positions based on knowledge of the ongoing conversation and critical reading of the participant arguments rather than on uninformed and unchallenged opinions
- Enlarge the principles of objective, academic summary of texts to thorough analysis of their contexts, purposes, attitudes and associations.
- Continue to teach students how to focus, develop, and deeply revise their essays for educated audiences
- Continue to teach students how to make choices about the content and development of their writing based on context
- Continue to teach students how to incorporate knowledge gained from other sources (text evidence) into the development of their claims and reasons as well as how to use academic citation methods for such purposes

## Portfolio 2: Analyzing the Conversation Surrounding a Publicly Debated Issue

**Overview:** This portfolio prepares you to write an argument about a publicly debated issue by analyzing the discourse shaping that issue. As you work on this portfolio, you will select a publicly debated issue—one that has been in the news over the past month of class. You will then research what is being written about the issue to identify the positions and general perspectives writers take when writing about it. This process will help you learn about the issue and prepare you to create your own carefully considered contribution to the conversation, which will constitute your work in the third portfolio.

The News and Issue Analysis, which is the final product of Portfolio 2, intends to bring together your growing sense of current texts—both the news and analysis in other text forms—as both a reflection and a creator of cultural context. As you read the NYT during this portfolio, your focus should be on analyzing the larger contexts of the news—the trends in which debates occur, the cultural and social cross currents that cause such debates. Two of the indicators of a newsworthy story are that it is timely and captures a central conflict in the society. Our job will be, in part, to examine the forces that influence such conflicts—the values, beliefs, attitudes, affiliations, and loyalties that inform people’s opinions—and to recognize that in a pluralistic society “contact zones” where these differences collide are inevitable.

Essentially, this portfolio helps you become an accountable member of the conversation you hope to contribute to in your third portfolio. In the same way that you would listen carefully to what is being said before adding your voice to a conversation at a party, you’ll learn what has been written about an issue before adding your contribution to the debate about it.

In this portfolio, you will work on a sequence of four related activities, each of which will prepare you for the third portfolio:

- Topic Proposal
- Personal Position Analysis
- Annotated Bibliography
- News and Issue Analysis

The majority of your grade for this portfolio will be based on the quality of your News and Issue Analysis. Your success on the News and Issue Analysis, however, will be determined largely by the work you do on the three preceding activities, and in particular on the Annotated Bibliography. It might be helpful, as a result, to imagine each activity as prewriting for the next. Taken as a whole, all four parts of this portfolio are designed to help you understand the conversation surrounding your issue.

As you think critically about that conversation, you will look at both individual writers and groups of writers who hold a similar perspective on an issue. Although each writer

will have his or her own individual *position* on an issue, you'll find that groups of writers will typically *share a common perspective or approach* to the issue. For instance, you might notice that several writers agree that the government should enact legislation to reduce the emission of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses from automobiles and electric power generation plants. Despite differences in their individual positions about the type and scope of that legislation, these authors would share a common approach to the issue. You might label that approach the "legislative solution" or the "government intervention perspective." Similarly, another group of authors might argue that the government should take no role in solving the problem, arguing instead that free-market forces will bring about solutions. This approach might be called the "free market" or "laissez-faire" approach/perspective. Thinking about three or four approaches to an issue, as opposed to a dozen or more individual positions, makes it easier to understand and write about a complex issue.

As you analyze your issue, you'll move from defining the positions of individual authors to understanding the shared perspectives or approaches taken by groups of authors. Eventually, you'll begin to analyze the reasons that groups of authors adopt particular points of view. Your analysis of your issue will involve understanding the writing situation in which the debate about your issue takes place. That writing situation involves the purposes of individual authors, the needs and interests of their readers, and the social and cultural factors that shape the attitudes, beliefs, and values of people concerned about the issue. Your efforts at making this analysis will be aided by a Personal Context Analysis for which you will analyze your own perspective and the values, beliefs, history, and context that contribute to your approach to the issue. You will then extend this personal context analysis and apply the methodology to your sources, first as individual sources and later as groups. In general, the literature you collect, while not exhaustive, will characterize a representative sample of varying perspectives on the issue.

By reading the NYT during this portfolio, your sensitivity to issues and their relationship to national questions should become heightened. Collect clippings (10) during this portfolio that suggest those "conflict zones" where people's values come in opposition to each other. As you collect articles during this portfolio, make notes to yourself in the margins about the values, beliefs, etc. that are in question and in conflict.

One of the goals of this portfolio is to help you understand that most important issues involve more than a simple pro/con debate. Indeed, most issues are complex and involve several, fundamentally different or conflicting, approaches to defining, explaining or solving the problem recognized by the debate. By recognizing the many lenses, perspectives, or approaches that writers take on an issue and the various reasons they take them, you will gain a more thorough understanding of the conversation. This, in turn, will prepare you to write a knowledgeable and insightful argument in your third portfolio.

**Due Dates:** See descriptions of the four activities.\*

**Worth:** 30% of the course grade

**Purposes for this Portfolio:** To learn more about a current, debatable issue; to discover why your issue is important to write about for a public audience of college-age readers; to think critically about writing situations; to understand the complexity of your issue by analyzing the various positions people take.

**Audience:** The work you do for Portfolio 2 will be directed toward an audience of your peers and your instructor. You might think of this as a “state-of-the-art” essay in which you clarify for your audience of colleagues what the issue is, why it’s important to them, who is involved in the discussion, how the discussion participants (and their views) might be grouped or characterized, and what/who the individual positions are within the larger perspectives. Think conceptually and thematically here, and then support the discussion of the differing perspectives with evidence and specific examples from each source to amply demonstrate the points of view. Evaluate the expectations and knowledge base of your audience and inform them accordingly. Remember that among other things you will need to capture their attention at the beginning and clarify why an enhanced understanding of your issue is worth their time. Since your audience is comprised of your peers and instructor in COCC150, please conform to MLA in-text citation and Works Cited documentation methods.

**Portfolio Content:** Each of the four parts of this portfolio will be submitted at various points in the portfolio. You will find due dates and a detailed list of portfolio contents on separate assignment sheets. Be sure to keep all draft work in your portfolio (even after it’s been evaluated). These will be re-collected with each new section.

## Portfolio 2: Topic Proposal

**Overview:** To complete this assignment, you will select a publicly debated issue that you've become familiar with via your *New York Times* clippings during the first portfolio. You will choose one such issue to research. The first four weeks of the course and a daily subscription to the NYT should have exposed you to a number of potential issues and have provided a good foundation of knowledge for you to build on through your research. The issue you select should be complex – that is, there must be more than two sides to the debate. For instance, the issue of how to reduce teenage pregnancy is probably a more advantageous topic than the abortion debate, since sides tend to polarize around pro-life and pro-choice positions in the abortion discussion. Ideas about solving the teenage pregnancy problem, on the other hand, are varied and numerous, including (but not limited to) those who believe in the value of sex education, those who advocate strict family and abstinence training, and those who argue for wide and free distribution of contraceptives. Once you've selected an issue, you will begin reading articles on your issue to become familiar with the debate (and the perspectives represented in the debate) and you will decide on a general focus or direction for your research.

**Purposes for this Proposal:** To define a clearly debatable issue that you'll want to write about; to explain why this issue is important to you (why you chose to write about it); and to explain why this issue is relevant to a college-age audience (why they should care about it).

**Audience:** Your primary readers for the proposal are you and your instructor; however, you'll also need to consider your larger classroom audience of peers to help you decide which issues will be of greatest interest to this audience.

**Proposal Requirements:** Your proposal should be between 300 and 400 words in length. In it, you should clearly define your issue, refer to the *Times* article or articles (clipped and included) that prompted your interest in the issue and include a research question to help clarify a specific focus for your topic and its investigation. The research question should be narrow and debatable. It should also lend itself to complicated responses (more than simply pro/con). Also, in your proposal you should briefly describe who is currently debating this issue, and discuss what their general concerns are. Finally, you should explain why you chose to write about this issue, and why you believe it is an important issue for your class and instructor to know more about.

**Proposal Submission:** Post your proposal to the Writing Studio or follow the instructions of your instructor.

**Due Date:**

## Portfolio 2: Personal Position Analysis

**Overview:** To understand the perspectives of those writing on your issue, it is useful to analyze the contexts (background or history, values, beliefs, affiliations, cultural context, etc.) of the writers, who will vary as individuals but may also show similarities to others who hold similar positions. As a way of grappling with the issue of context, begin your analysis of perspectives by examining your own. By applying a series of context questions to yourself, you should be able to see more clearly how context and background influence positions that people take on issues. By acknowledging your own vested interests (affiliations, beliefs, values, background, etc.), you may be better able to see understand other perspectives in the culture and the literature.

**Purpose of the Analysis:** To look closely and critically at your own context and thereby to develop the skills for applying similar analysis to outside sources and their origins.

**Audience for the Analysis:** Your instructor and classmates are the audience for this analysis.

**In Your Folder Include:** Your Topic Proposal, Your Worksheet for this Analysis, and the Final Draft of your Personal Position Analysis

**Analysis Requirements:** Answer the following questions. Then select a few of your responses and write a focused and developed analysis of your own context for reacting to the issue. The final Personal Position Analysis should be approximately 500 words.

**Due Date:**

# Personal Position Analysis Worksheet:

## Part I

As of now, what is your position on this issue?

What is your tentative claim? (State as a complete sentence.)

What are some reasons you'll use to support that claim? (State each reason as a complete sentence.)

## Part II

Consider why you take the position you do—not so much your logic or reasoning but the contextual influences that may have shaped your position.

- 1) Where did you grow up? Describe your neighborhood, school, hometown? How might your local community have influenced the way you view this issue?
- 2) Describe your values and beliefs, your convictions and/or where you get your morals or your sense of right and wrong. What helps you to define what's right and wrong? Where do you think your sense of values came from? How might these values, beliefs, convictions, and morals affect your views of the issue you're writing about?
- 3) What people have been most influential in shaping your views? How do they influence your ideas? How might they influence the way you view this particular issue?
- 4) Describe any biases that you have that may influence how you view this issue. Do you have something to gain personally from taking the position you do? If so, what is it?
- 5) Can you think of any specific personal experiences (event, story, film, book) that may have influenced the way you view this issue?
- 6) How might your education affect your position on this issue? How were you schooled—at home, or in a public, private, religious, charter, or alternative institution? Have you received formal education or training from work or service-related affiliations? Has your education extended beyond the classroom—via travel or unique circumstances? How might your education—in and out of school--have influenced your views on this issue?

## Part III

Now choose two or three of the most significant points from your responses to discuss in a focused personal position analysis of approximately 500 words.

## Portfolio 2: Annotated Bibliography

**Overview:** To complete this assignment, you will read at least 15 sources on the issue you plan to analyze. Then, you will choose at least 10 of these sources to annotate, describing them and justifying their inclusion.

**Purposes for this Bibliography:** To become informed on your issue; to begin considering the various positions and approaches/perspectives writers take in writing about this issue; to demonstrate your ability to evaluate sources for a particular writing situation.

**Audience:** Write your bibliography for yourself, your peers, and your instructor.

**Portfolio Content:** Please submit your annotated bibliography in a folder clearly labeled with your name. Your portfolio should include:

- Your Topic Proposal with my reactions to it
- Your Personal Position Analysis with my reactions to it
- All additional Position Analyses you've completed
- Work you've completed on a Composite Grid
- Your annotated bibliography

**Bibliography Requirements:** There is no required length for the bibliography, but it will most likely range from 500 to 750 words. In it, you should:

- List your sources alphabetically and apply MLA Works Cited conventions.
- Follow each bibliographic entry with three to five sentences summarizing the writer's purpose and the main points from their argument. Additionally, provide a justification for your inclusion of the source, using criteria developed in class
- Your goal is a representative and balanced sample of sources, suggesting a variety of perspectives or approaches on the issue as well as a variety of publication types—news sources, web sites, academic journal articles, trade journals, etc.
- Here's a sample annotated bibliography entry:

Lemann, Nicholas, "The SAT Meritocracy," *Washington Monthly* 29.9 (September 1997), 32-36.

Lemann, a regular columnist for the *Atlantic Monthly*, is author of several notable criticisms of American education. He is particularly concerned about entrenched class-ism in U.S. schooling. Lemann's article presents a stinging condemnation of the SAT's tendency to reward the "mandarin elite." This article was written before Atkinson's proposal and may be particularly valuable as a representative voice for those who criticize the SAT because of its presumed prejudice against the lower classes. This source will provide a healthy additional voice to my sources that analyze the SAT from a "class prejudice" approach or shared perspective.

## Portfolio 2: News and Issue Analysis

**Overview:** To complete this analysis, you will define the shared perspectives or general approaches writers have taken in their writing about your issue. You will also analyze the diverse purposes, audiences, historical events, affiliations, social factors and cultural contexts shaping those perspectives or approaches. Your analysis will build in text evidence to support your analysis and will show sustained awareness of your audience of COCC150 colleagues (classmates and instructor).

**Purposes for this Analysis:** To convince your readers that the issue you are examining is more complicated than a pro/con debate; to compel your audience to think further about an issue that they may only understand superficially; to encourage your audience's engagement with or curiosity about the issue.

**Audience:** Address your News and Issue Analysis to classmates and your instructor. You can assume that this audience, while generally well informed and educated, needs and values the kind of analysis that you're providing and hence will expect full explanations for your analysis. In general, this audience will expect you to explain the points you are making and to demonstrate (using evidence) how you have come to understand the complexity of your issue. They will expect you to clarify reasons for why they should find this discussion worth their time and energy.

**Portfolio Content:** Please submit your analysis in a folder clearly labeled with your name. Your portfolio should include:

- The final draft of your News and Issue analysis, formatted with one-inch margins, double-spaced lines, and a readable (e.g., not in italics or script) 12-point font
- A Works Cited (MLA) page (number the page as part of your paper)
- All drafts of your News and Issue Analysis, including the workshop draft attached to the workshop sheet
- Your final Annotated Bibliography, updated if necessary from the earlier draft.
- Your Personal Position Analysis with my reactions accompanied by additional Position Analyses for Single Sources and the Composite Grid
- A selection of news clippings from the NYT that suggest cultural contexts, briefly annotated in the margins of the notebook paper they're attached to
- Your Topic Proposal and my reactions to it, including the New York Times article that spurred your interest as well as subsequent articles related to your issue
- Any additional process materials you completed as you worked on this portfolio

**Analysis Requirements:** Your news and issue analysis should be between 1,000 and 1,250 words in length. In your paper, clearly identify (following MLA style) the sources to which you refer. Your essay should:

- Define the issue addressed by the sources.
- Explain why it is important to understand the complexity of this issue.
- Show that your issue is complex by describing the general approaches or shared perspectives taken by writers addressing the issue. Cite sources to support your

- analysis. Maintain the focus and unity of the discussion by providing clear connections among the parts.
- Analyze the writing situation shaping these approaches (e.g., writers' purposes, readers' needs, interests, values, beliefs and attitudes, historical influences, social factors, and cultural contexts) to show readers that there are various factors determining the shape of the debate.

# Personal Position Analysis Worksheet:

## Part I

As of now, what is your position on this issue?

What is your tentative claim? (State as a complete sentence.)

What are some reasons you'll use to support that claim? (State each reason as a complete sentence.)

## Part II

Consider why you take the position you do—not so much your logic or reasoning but the contextual influences that may have shaped your position.

- 1) Where did you grow up? Describe your neighborhood, school, hometown? How might your local community have influenced the way you view this issue?
- 2) Describe your values and beliefs, your convictions and/or where you get your morals or your sense of right and wrong. What helps you to define what's right and wrong? Where do you think your sense of values came from? How might these values, beliefs, convictions, and morals affect your views of the issue you're writing about?
- 3) What people have been most influential in shaping your views? How do they influence your ideas? How might they influence the way you view this particular issue?
- 4) Describe any biases that you have that may influence how you view this issue. Do you have something to gain personally from taking the position you do? If so, what is it?
- 5) Can you think of any specific personal experiences (event, story, film, book) that may have influenced the way you view this issue?
- 6) How might your education affect your position on this issue? How were you schooled—at home, or in a public, private, religious, charter, or alternative institution? Have you received formal education or training from work or service-related affiliations? Has your education extended beyond the classroom—via travel or unique circumstances? How might your education—in and out of school--have influenced your views on this issue?

## Part III

Now choose two or three of the most significant points from your responses to discuss in a focused personal position analysis of approximately 500 words.

## Position Analysis Template for Examining a Single Source

Source: author, title, publisher, other sources cited	Claim/Thesis	Influences: Community, Background, & Affiliations	Vested Interests, Biases, & Personal Stakes	Values, Beliefs, Attitudes, & Convictions
These are indicators of affiliation	State claim or thesis as a full sentence	Analyze & Find text evidence to show these here	Analyze & Find text evidence to show these here	Analyze & Find text evidence to show these here
Lemann, Nicholas “The SAT Meritocracy” <i>Atlantic Monthly</i>	“The main purpose of the education system ought to be provision, not elite selection.” He traces the history of the notion of a meritocracy to British sociologist & Labour Party policy maker Michael Young (1958). Lemann traces the notion of the meritocracy to post WWII when the country had slid into being a “hereditary aristocracy.” Harvard Pres. J.B. Conant set up a system of national tests to challenge this aristocracy and to reward the “truly worthy”—those who had high IQs + good school grades	Lemann is a regular contributor to the <i>Atlantic</i> , which is far more liberal than the <i>National Review</i> or <i>New Republic</i> but far less liberal than <i>Harper’s</i> . Lemann describes America’s testing culture as a “series of ruthless educational selections,”but he also indicates that “America does a fabulous job of providing . . . first class university education.” Has several articles on history of the meritocracy	Lemann is committed to ideals of equality and fairness but also is clearly taking a complex view on the subject. He seems to have less interest in debating the correctness of the SAT’s fairness than he does in correcting certain problems in education that lead to unfairness. Notably he argues for “imposing a much greater degree of centralized authority in education policy.”	Lemann believes the real problem with the educational meritocracy is that it has divorced itself from the lofty goals it was originally intended to support— leadership, public service, military service, volunteer service, etc., and instead functions largely to replicate itself and enjoy the benefits of privilege. He asks if we have “unconsciously absorbed” the idea that education would be wasted on U.S. citizens.

# COCC150 – Composite Analysis Grid

Use to consolidate your descriptions and analysis of individual positions into shared perspectives or approaches

Name of Shared Perspective or Approach #1 \_\_\_\_\_

## Part I: The Writers

Sources for this approach	Writer's purpose	Writer's background and biases	Writer's beliefs and values	Writer's knowledge or expertise
#1				
#2				
#3				

## Part II: The Readers

Sources for this approach	Who are the target readers?	Reader's needs and interests?	Reader's background and biases?	Reader's beliefs and values?
#1				
#2				
#3				

## Part III: Social and Cultural Influences

Sources that take this approach	What Historical events shaped this position?	What recent events or experiences shaped this position?	What laws and social codes shape this position?	What assumptions, social norms or cultural beliefs shape this approach?

#1				
#2				
#3				

## Conference Prep Sheet

Please write answers to these questions before coming to your conference.

1. The issue I'm discussing in my News and Issue Analysis is:
2. The reason that I selected this issue is:
3. My Personal Position Analysis revealed that my own views on this issue are probably influenced by:
4. The basic shared perspectives or approaches that I'm seeing and describing in my single source position analyses and composite grid are:
5. Referring to my composite grid and annotated bibliography, I believe that the following sources fit best with the shared perspectives defined above:
6. The values, beliefs, affiliations, etc. that seem to underlie these shared perspectives or approaches are:
7. I believe I'll capture my audience's attention at the beginning of my paper by....
8. My concerns right now about writing the News and Issue Analysis are....

## Week 5: Monday, September 22-Friday, September 26

**Note:** Before beginning this portfolio, decide when you'd like to take your class to the library for research instruction. It's best to schedule a session at the start of Portfolio 2, for either Week 5 or Week 6 before students begin researching their issues more extensively. Call Cathy Cranston at 491-1906 or email her at [cranston@manta.colostate.edu](mailto:cranston@manta.colostate.edu) to set up an appointment. (She would prefer that you call at least two weeks ahead of time).

### Goals for this Week

- Collect, respond to, and grade Portfolio 1
- Create a transition between Portfolios 1 and 2
- Assign Portfolio 2 and review its parts and sequence, clarifying that the sequence of assignments leads directly toward the final essay and contributes toward making it a successful final essay.
- Discuss the audience and context for the News and Issue Analysis. Refer students to *Talking Back* to familiarize them with the kinds of discussion associated with this analysis as well as with the kind of audience they'll write for (their COCC150 classmates and instructor)
- Explore debatable issues for Portfolio 2, collecting and reviewing their ideas and their News Clip Journals.
- Establish criteria for what makes a "good" issue or research question
- Assign a Discussion Forum in which an audience analysis is conducted, requiring the responses of two peers from class and you, the instructor
- Take students to the library or arrange to take them in Week 6
- Assign Part 1 of Portfolio 2 - Topic Proposal (due at the start of week 6)
- Review Tannen's essay, "The Argument Culture" from the *PHG*
- Assign that NYT articles on issues to be considered for Portfolio 2 be brought in for the next class. Assign the continued collection of news clips—10 total by the end of Portfolio 2--now with an emphasis on social and cultural "contact zones" or areas of conflict or debate caused by competing values, beliefs, or contexts.

As you write your specific lesson plan for each class day, be sure to include an overall **LESSON OBJECTIVE** as well as a **CONNECTION TO COURSE GOALS**. Remember also to introduce the plan for your class each day and to review at the end what was accomplished and why. To the greatest extent possible, ask students to conduct the review at the end or perhaps to provide a review at the beginning of the next class. Asking students to do this work instead of doing it all yourself encourages them to take responsibility for making connections. Quite simply, they will learn more by doing it this way. Their direct involvement is also more engaging than simple lecture and summary.

## This Week's Connection to Course Goals

This portfolio marks a shift from focusing on the arguments advanced by individual authors – that is, focusing on individual positions on an issue – to understanding the larger conversation about an issue. This portfolio also shifts the selection of articles from the instructor to the student. Four related concepts, each connected to the conversation metaphor that runs through the course, will help you and your students make the shift from focusing on the ideas articulated by individual authors to focusing on the shared concepts that underlie most publicly debated issues:

*Accountability:* Inexperienced writers might think that developing an argument about a public issue is as simple as stating a claim and supporting it with evidence. Doing so, however, results in an argument that fails to account for what's already been written about the issue. Writers need to be accountable members of a conversation – that is, they should take time to listen to the conversation. They should read what other writers have contributed to the conversation; they should learn what types of evidence are valued by people involved in the conversation; they should figure out what the current topic of the conversation is. Failing to become an accountable member of the conversation not only increases the likelihood that an argument will fail, it demonstrates a lack of respect for the ideas and information that other members of the conversation have brought to the conversation.

*Newness:* The flip side of the obligation to be accountable is the obligation to contribute something new – something of value – to the conversation. Simply rehashing the arguments and rehearsing information that others have contributed to the conversation does not meet this obligation. Newness, fortunately, comes in several flavors. You can offer something radically new – the kind of newness that might win a Nobel prize, such as John Nash's suggestion (popularized in the recent movie *A Beautiful Mind*) that not all situations involve winners and losers, and that in fact there are “win-win” situations. If you see your students providing this kind of contribution to an issue, please let the other members of the composition faculty know about it. A second kind of newness is a new way of looking at an issue, a reframing of the issue, perhaps by suggesting a new analogy or by providing a new analytic framework for understanding the issue, much as cognitive psychologist Herbert Simon did when he suggested that we can understand certain economic decision-making processes by examining them through the lens of cognitive psychology. A third kind of newness involves providing new facts or details that enhance our understanding of an issue, such as new first-hand accounts from victims of a particular natural disaster, a new interpretation of an event or work of art, or results from a scientific study that replicates earlier work. In fact, the third kind of newness is the most common kind of newness found in writing – or in life, for that matter.

*Positions:* When an author makes an argument, he or she is taking a position on an issue. A position is a specific claim made by an individual author. In Portfolio 1, your students defined

the positions of individual authors in their summaries. Students probably noted that each participant stakes a somewhat unique position while sharing essentially similar philosophies with others. For instance, the conservative views of Williams and the Thernstroms are similar yet also distinguishable; the reframed position of Bollinger (whom one gathers is a liberal commentator) is related to and yet easily distinguishable from the positioning of Sacks. Similarly, Atkinson's rejection of some tests (the SAT I) and embrace of others (the SAT II) for admissions decisions demonstrates that he is not opposed to testing as a sorting mechanism, as other more doggedly anti-test participants appear to be. Finally, in regard to positions, remember that students wrote responses in Portfolio 1, which began their apprenticeship in the staking of their own positions.

*Shared Perspectives or Approaches:* When a group of authors have positions that are fairly similar, you can say that they take the same approach to the issue. An approach is an interpretive device that helps you figure out how to make sense of a complex issue. Rather than trying to remember 30 or 40 unique positions on an issue – and make fine distinctions among them – you can define three or four shared perspectives or approaches to the issue. Examples of approaches include the pro-life and pro-choice approaches to the abortion issue. Literally thousands of people write about this issue in a given month, and close analysis will indicate that there are subtle differences among each position. It's easier for us to think about the issue in terms of pro-life and pro-choice approaches, however, even though doing so tends to obscure those subtle differences between approaches.

In this portfolio, your students will be making the shift from focusing on individual positions to understanding the similarities among positions that allow them to generalize about shared perspectives or approaches to an issue. This portfolio begins with identification of an issue that interests them (the Topic Proposal), takes students through an in-class activity focused on determining what potential readers might know about that issue (Informal Audience Analysis), then moves to what students themselves (each individually) bring to the issue in terms of their own contexts, values, beliefs, affiliations, etc. This Personal Position Analysis leads directly to two additional process elements— Position Analyses of Single Sources and the Composite Grid, in which students work to bring sources together. While the Position Analyses of Single Sources and the Composite Grid are not homework that is turned in, students are expected to engage in the processes and to bring their analyses to conference. The collection of News Clips on issues in the “contact zones” will also help students gain a sense of the values and beliefs that underlie different positions and shared perspectives. By conference time, students should have a working Annotated Bibliography that constitutes a representative sample of sources from different perspectives. (In Portfolio 3, they then enlarge upon this annotated bibliography to find additional sources that align with their emerging point of view.)

The key in this first week of the portfolio is helping students understand what a debatable issue is and how they can explore it. By encouraging your students to select a debatable issue that interests them, you'll increase the likelihood that they will produce better

writing, since students are more likely to write well about issues they care about. We want students to be invested in their issues so that they will think critically about them and so that they revise their writing more willingly. We also want students to apply concepts involving the writing situation (context, audience and purpose) to their own thinking about writing. This goal is achieved by having them write for an academic audience—you, the instructor, and the students in your class. Even in the initial stages of their research, students will need to consider and choose topics that are most relevant to their audience and their audience's understanding of the goals of the assignment—that is, to represent the complexity of the issue by sampling and characterizing the positions and generalizable approaches to the issue. The library instruction will help students hone their research skills and teach them to seek out current, credible, and valid sources.

## Required Readings and Assignments

- Read, "Narrowing and Focusing Your Subject" on pg. 570 - 571 in the *PHG*.
- Read Deborah Tannen's essay, "The Argument Culture," on pgs. 401 - 405 in the *PHG*. Annotate her points in the margins and carry on a dialogue there, indicating which points you agree/disagree with and which points raise questions or concerns.
- Return to the News Clip Journal. Bring it with 10 sources and at least three interesting issues identified. Bring the newspaper to class as well, of course. Identifying at least three issues that interest you, briefly and informally summarize them on the class forum for others to read.
- Visit *Talking Back* online journal at <http://writing.colostate.edu/gallery/talkingback/> and read at least three of the student issue analyses published there last year (school year 2002-03). As you read the essays in *Talking Back*, think about the way that the issues are discussed in terms of grouping the perspectives of those involved in the discussion and then fleshing out the discussion with specific text references. Also look at the articles in *Talking Back* as addressing an audience similar to the audience required in Portfolio 2. This audience is similar because the publication is an online journal intended for college students and their instructors. The level of formality, the clarity of focus and degree of development, as well as the application of style guidelines is similar to what will be expected of you in Portfolio 2. Also, familiarity with *Talking Back* may also help you decide whether to submit your Portfolio 3 argument to this publication.
- Post answers to the mini audience analysis survey done in groups in class.
- Complete the Topic Proposal.

## Potential Activities for this Week

- **WTL - Postscript for essay one (10 minutes):** You can use this activity to encourage students to reflect on their writing for Portfolio 1—or develop your own postscript that reflects your emphasis over the course of the first month of classes. Have them address questions such as: What part of this writing process was most valuable to you and why? Which parts of this essay were most challenging? How did you overcome these challenges? What did you learn about writing or about yourself

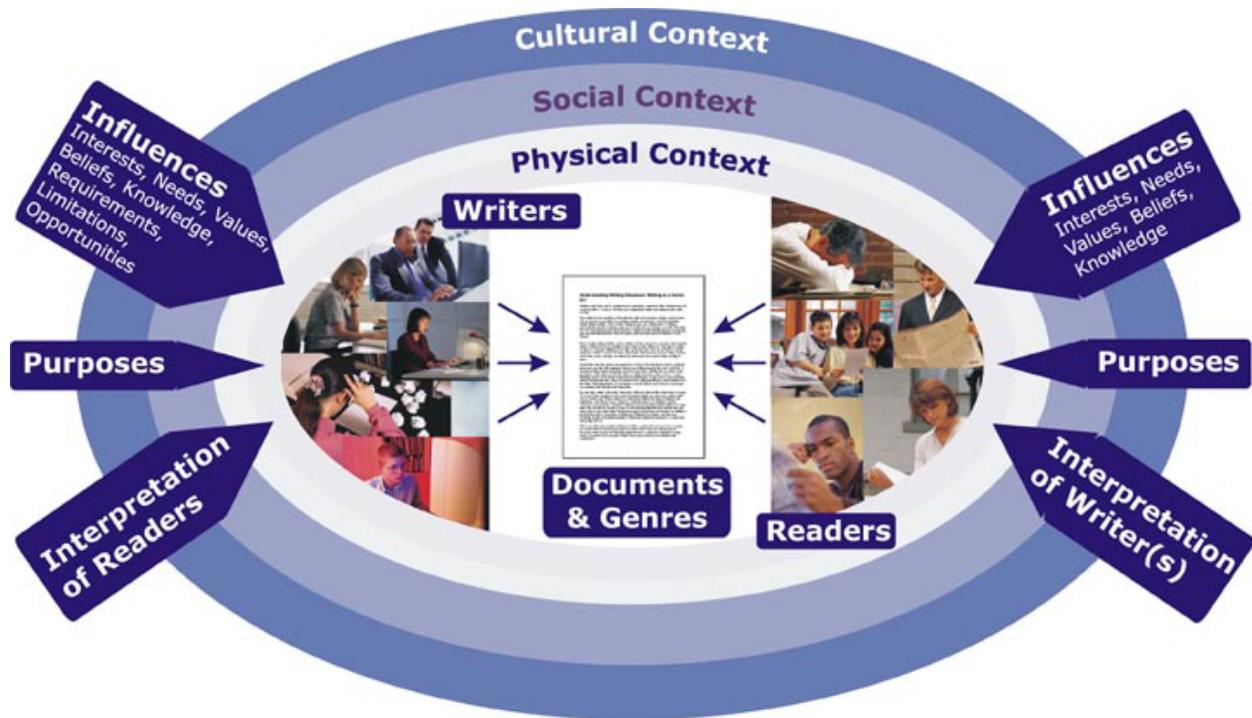
as a writer while completing Portfolio 1? What is one piece of advice from the peer review that you used and one that you discarded or chose to ignore? The postscript can be done on turn-in days or can be included among the required pieces in the portfolio and done before class. You may wish to establish a precedent for how you will handle postscripts and then apply it consistently.

**Note to instructors:** Postscripts are useful when evaluating student writing because they provide students with the opportunity to recognize and identify their own struggles. This recognition frees you from labeling such struggles as "problems" within your comments. Rather than directly stating that a student needs to develop a claim, state that you agree with the student's own observation that development is something that needs more consideration. This approach creates a tone of, "I'm here to help you" as opposed to, "I'm the expert." It also helps students to develop their abilities at critically examining their own writing. Such liberation from the necessity of obtaining the expertise and supervision of teachers is a desirable, but too often unstated, goal of the college composition course, which may well be one of the last formal writing courses students ever engage in. We want to encourage the enhanced ability of students to "write without teachers" to use a phrase coined by Peter Elbow.

**Transition between Portfolio I and Portfolio 2 (10 minutes):** Revisit the writing situation model from Portfolio I to explain the transition between Portfolio I and Portfolio 2. This will help students see where the course is heading.

You can draw the model on the board or on an overhead and use it to explain that:

- We begin as readers who encounter texts (starting, perhaps with the newspaper, and working outward from that) as a way to learn and explore what is happening culturally and socially.
- Then, we become informed readers - drawn to certain specific issues that we want to learn more about.
- We read and research various texts to locate the "conversation" that surrounds one issue we're interested in (find out what groups or individuals, who are active in writing about the issue, are saying).
- Then, we analyze these texts to figure out how they are shaped by cultural and social influences. In turn, we consider how the texts that get produced are shaping society and culture.
- Once we've critically examined the existing viewpoints on an issue, we become critical thinkers and informed writers. We then use our observations and critical thinking skills to construct new arguments—as we will do in Portfolio 3.
- We write our own arguments for public discourse (that is, for a specific group of readers in society who are arguing about an issue publicly) in the hope that our opinions and views will influence that argument.
- Through this process, we become active participants in society and culture.



Please also now review the reason for having students collect clippings from the *New York Times*. Those collected clippings should reveal a variety of categories of public discussion, as well as specific issues for further research. You might divide the newspaper and class into sections/groups to discuss some of the areas of public discourse that emerge from coverage of current events—aka the News. Examples of categories (with innumerable subcategories), could also be drawn from the news summary on page 2. Topical areas illustrated by news coverage in the *Times* include, but are not limited to, education, science, technology, geography, finance, the arts, international relations, foreign policy, the environment, religion, government, the Armed Forces. The class’s brainstormed list could be placed on the board.

Write a transition that moves the classroom discussion from topics/issues to the contexts that form and explain participant views on those topics and issues. Point out that students will be reading the *Times* with this new focus in mind during Portfolio 2. Specifically, students should continue to clip articles but now with the idea in mind of capturing both dominant and conflicting values, beliefs, and attitudes in U.S. culture. For instance, articles on educational issues suggest that there is a dominant belief in the essential right and obligation of all U.S. citizens to obtain at least a high school diploma—a “right” long protected by law and taxation. At the same time, “reform” movements are currently challenging the efficacy of public education and the current trend seems to be toward the privatization of education.

Design a discussion of contexts, the goal of which is to explore factors which contribute to shared values, beliefs, and attitudes—what one might be inclined to call, in a derogatory way, “bias,” but what might be thought of more constructively (and less judgmentally) as an “explicable point-of-view.” For instance, you might lead a discussion on a recent student effort to allow pets in the dorms. What context factors would lead students to hold various positions on this proposal?

## Cultural Contexts

- Language / Media
- Government
- Shared cultural values and beliefs
- Common traditions and documents that support that tradition (the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, for instance)
- Large historical events (e.g. "Roe V. Wade")

## Social Contexts

- Organizations, universities, schools, churches, businesses, environmental groups and other affiliations...
- Family, friends and neighbors
- Shared values and beliefs among smaller groups
- Local events and traditions
- Community concerns (e.g. planning for growth along the front range)

### **Write a Transition that explains the shift students must make from readers to writers as they move through the portfolios:**

In Portfolio 1 - you began as critical readers exploring an issue and examining different positions

In Portfolio 2 - you choose your own issue; then you research this issue, reading and analyzing the various approaches to writing about it

In Portfolio 3 - you become participants, writing arguments based on the research and critical thinking you've done in Portfolios 1 and 2

**Introduce Portfolio 2:** Distribute **all** assignment sheets--Topic Proposal, Personal Position Analysis, Annotated Bibliography (with Position Analyses of a Single Source and Composite Grid as process pieces), News and Issue Analysis--and let students read through them. Fill in due dates, highlight key points, and address student concerns along the way. Try to help them understand the sequencing of these assignments; and emphasize that all parts lead up to the News and Issue Analysis, which is intended for an educated audience of college readers—the class and their instructor. You may need to make a special case for the helpfulness of completing the Position Analyses for Single Sources and the Composite Grid, since these are process elements of the Annotated Bibliography. (For more assistance with planning this activity, read the section on "Planning to Introduce an Assignment" in the teaching guide, *Planning a Class*, on [Writing@CSU](http://writing.colostate.edu/references/teaching/planning/) (<http://writing.colostate.edu/references/teaching/planning/>).

**Discuss Topics and Issues:** The first step in writing for Portfolio 2 is to have students choose issues to work with. Emphasize that students will be sticking with the issue they choose for the remainder of the course (9 weeks) so they'll want to pick something they're interested in and can sink their teeth into. The goal for this activity is to help students

think about choosing topics and narrowing their topics into specific issues. Inform students that topics are *too broad* for the issue analysis and that they'll need to narrow their topics to *issues* in order to focus their writing for Portfolio 2. Use the grid below (or one that you develop) to illustrate the differences between topics and issues. Also, point out that issues are often defined in the form of a debatable question.

Topic	Issue	Issue	Issue
Nuclear Waste	Where should we store it?	How should we transport it across the country?	Should we continue to use nuclear energy when we don't have a reliable solution for storing its waste?
School Violence	What is the cause of the recent school violence?	What should teachers' role be in managing school violence?	Should the government fund more counseling programs in schools to reduce violence?

**Brainstorm possible topics and issues:** Have students generate a list of potential topics on the board, drawing upon the *New York Times* clippings they have collected. Then, practice narrowing these topics down to specific issues. Again, students should be able to find narrowed issues by looking more closely at the news clippings they have collected.

**The goal of this activity should be for students to formulate focused debate questions, such as those shown in the table above.** If you want to assign this as a homework activity, consider using the brainstorming, freewriting, or looping activities covered in the PHG (pages 131-32) and in the CO150 Room in the Writing Studio on [Writing@CSU](#). Also consider having students post their ideas to a discussion forum, perhaps labeling it “Debatable Issues Forum” or “Questions for a Debate Focus.”

**Develop criteria for what makes a "good issue":** Since writing situations (purpose, audience, and context) determine what makes an issue "good" - begin this activity by asking students to consider their audience and purpose for writing their issue analysis. You may review the various audiences and purposes (as listed below). But emphasize that while students may have various audiences and purposes in mind, their primary audience for their news and issue analysis should be their COCC150 class and you. Their primary purpose should be to show this audience that their issue is complex.

Audience	Purpose
COCC150 Peers	To show that an issue is complex

and instructor	
You (the writer)	To analyze your issue as preparation for writing an argument in Portfolio 3.
COCC150 Instructor	To prove that you can think critically about the writing situation (drawing connections between readers, writers culture) and show awareness of a specific audience

Here are some criteria to include for what makes an issue "good":

- Your issue should appeal to college students like yourself.
- It should be complex enough to move beyond a simple pro/con debate.
- It should be popular enough to find a range of opinions on (informative sources such as news reports from the *Times* are useful for learning about the issue, but convincing or persuasive sources, those that take a position, are needed for the analysis portion of the writing).
- It should be fairly current or it should represent an ongoing concern. This should follow from the fact that the issue is present in a recent news article.
- It should build off of existing arguments. For example, you wouldn't want to research an issue that has already been explored over and over (e.g. "Does the media negatively affect a woman's self image?") This question lends itself to no surprise since it has already been asked many times. Rather than "reinventing the wheel" find out how an ongoing conversation has evolved. See what direction it has most recently taken. Then, build on that recent thread of conversation (e.g. "Much research has already shown that fashion magazines have a negative effect on a woman's self image, but little work has been done to see how magazines affect men. With the production of men's magazines on the rise, perhaps we should begin to consider these effects.")

**WTL - Practice narrowing topics down to issues:** Have students list two or three topics that they might be interested in researching. Then, have them narrow these topics into 3 - 4 specific related issues. Ask them to form these issues as research questions. Since you've already modeled this activity as a class, you probably won't need to thoroughly explain it. Verbal instructions or instructions on an overhead should be sufficient.

**Conduct a Peer Review Session:** Have students exchange their WTL's in groups of three. Ask them to read each others' topics, issues, and research questions and then decide which ones would best meet the criteria for what makes a "good" issue. This peer review session could be conducted in groups over email or on a discussion forum. If the peer review is done over email, have the students cc to you, the instructor.

**Conduct a mini-Audience Analysis for the News and Issue Analysis:** Staying in their groups, students now can generate a description of the audience for the News and Issue Analysis by polling one another on their issues, getting some initial feedback from their peers. At the conclusion of this activity, students should be assigned to post their

responses to a discussion forum so that you, the instructor, can also add your responses, too. [Set a date and time by which these postings should occur so that you can add your information to their poll which will help them in writing the topic proposal.] Here's a potential list of questions that might be used to obtain information about this classroom audience, including the instructor:

1. What do you know about the issue?
2. What would they like to know about the issue?
3. What is their degree of interest in the issue?
4. What are their opinions as of right now, or without the benefit of full reading?
5. What questions or concerns they have about the issue?
6. Who do they think is most involved or impacted by this issue?
7. What implications or possible outcomes do they see to the way this issue gets resolved?

**Transition:** Advise students to hold onto this informal audience analysis for inclusion among their Portfolio 2 process materials.

**Introduce the Topic Proposal:** Review the assignment sheet with students and answer any questions they may have. Remind them to include their understanding of their audience's needs as revealed by the Audience Analysis Postings. Also remind them to do some preliminary searching (talk with people about their issue and read two or three sources) before completing this assignment. Tell them that they do not need a bibliography page, but they should use author tags to credit ideas in their proposal.

**Review Tannen's essay, "The Argument Culture" from the PHG:** Facilitate a discussion for Tannen's essay. The goals for this discussion should be: to help students understand what is meant by the "dialogue" or "conversation" surrounding an issues, as opposed to a debate; to discuss the importance of looking at all sides when seeking "truth" on an issue in culture; and to explain the connection between Tannen's essay and the Issue Analysis Essay for Portfolio 3. For more assistance with planning this activity review the teaching guides on *Planning a Class* and *Leading Class Discussions on Writing@CSU*.

**Assign the NYT News Clippings** emphasis for this portfolio, as explained earlier in the introductory materials for this portfolio.

Review the day's activities, taking special care to make clear their connection to both Portfolio 2 and larger course goals. Take care to provide some sort of conclusion to each class.

## Assignments

See the information at the beginning of this description of week-long activities. Make sure that students read *Talking Back* to start getting a sense of audience and of the focus and depth expected of their issue analyses.

## **Week 6: Monday, September 29 - Friday, October 3**

### **Goals for this Week**

- Take your class to the library for research instruction if you haven't done so already
- Share topics and issues in class—establish a routine way of doing this for the next several days
- Collect Topic Proposals
- Assign (early in week) and Collect (later the week) Part 2 of Portfolio 2 – the Personal Position Analysis (due by Thursday, October 3 or Friday October 4)
- Connect their Personal Position Analysis to the analysis of other sources and writers--their positions, and their contexts, as done in the Position Analysis of a Single Source. Develop the importance of understanding the contexts (social, cultural, etc.) of writers as they stake their positions. Scaffold this learning by
  - (1) beginning with a personal analysis of the relationship between your position and your context . . . then . . .
  - (2) applying similar analysis to sources you collect
- Reinforce their collection of *New York Times* articles that touch on issues in the “contact zones” of differing contexts, values, beliefs, etc.
- Start collecting outside sources (beyond the *Times*) with the goal in mind of having a representative sample of perspectives on your issue and with a set of evaluation criteria in mind that will help you make good choices. Write a satisfactory Annotated Bibliography that will lead to a solid News and Issue Analysis essay.

### **Connection to Course Goals**

- Introducing students to a university library such as Morgan Library is a hugely important activity. Students in COCC150 gain immediate and practical working knowledge of the essential features of college library research, becoming knowledgeable of the online card catalog, sharing functions between libraries (Prospector and Interlibrary Loan), database searching, browsing of shelves, use of basic reference tools, and that most essential of skills—the ability and courage to ask questions of library personnel.
- Sharing topic/issue ideas in class fosters a sense of writing community. Students learn that writers exchange ideas in public spaces and they gain insight from what others are exploring. They also learn that writers can share sources in a collaborative environment as a means to create new texts. This process draws students' attention to other students and away from the instructor allowing for a

more comfortable atmosphere - and one that is more conducive to peer review and workshop.

- Generating a discussion and a subsequent analysis of the forces and influences implicated in the development of one's own position on an issue can help students to see that even their own points of view come from somewhere, do not exist in a vacuum, and are full of "bias" and context-connection. Bridging this personal analysis to a subsequent analysis of the sources they find through their research—prompted by the Position Analysis Grid--can facilitate their critical (yet fair) analysis of others' perspectives.

## Required Reading and Assignments

- Read about Collecting and Evaluating sources from the library and Internet, pgs 571-590 in the PHG. Read also about keeping a Research Notebook, pages 564-567, as well as the introduction to MLA and APA documentation styles at the bottom of page 568 and the top of page 569.
- Read and discuss NYT articles that suggest dominant and conflicting values and beliefs in the culture.

## Potential Activities for this Week

As always, remember to introduce and conclude your lessons with previews and reviews. Use transitions to maintain a connection between daily classroom activities, assignments, and Portfolio and Course goals.

**Share topics and issues in class and/or outside of class via a forum:** First, decide on a way to conduct this activity so that it will be useful to your students without dominating all your class time. For instance, you might discuss a few issues each class day while having everyone post to one or more discussion forums. You could form group discussion forums for the discussion of similar or related topics/issues. If your students are uncertain about their issue, a discussion activity (either in the classroom or on the forum) can help them learn more about their issues (it's okay if several students are working with the same issue) and can encourage students to collaborate more and to share their sources. Another idea: Allow each student 1-2 minutes to answer the following questions in a group discussion. The "Round Robin" approach works well:

- What is your topic?
- What is your issue within that topic or your research question?
- Why did you choose this issue (personal and social relevance)?

**Collect Topic Proposals:** You'll need to evaluate these quickly—probably by the next class meeting--so students know if they're on the right track before proceeding with the other parts of the portfolio. Let them know that you'll be looking to see that their issue is narrow, debatable, current and relevant to their audience. You and classmates have already provided some feedback on these ideas in the previous week's classes and perhaps a forum, so hopefully you won't have too many problematic issue ideas to deal with.

**WTL on audience and purpose for Portfolio 2 :** Having completed their mini audience analysis in class last time and via forum postings done subsequently (instructor replies included), what did you learn about your audience of classroom peers and your instructor? Specifically, what does your audience know or think they know about your issue? What do they appear to not know or to misunderstand? Where are the gaps in their understanding? Tallying the responses, report the majority opinion on your issue. Then speculate about why the majority of your peers may take this position. What background, context, values, beliefs, and attitudes underlie this position? In what way would you characterize this audience generally in terms of the breadth of their background or exposure to the issue? Are there exceptions among your audience—that is, people who seem to know more or to take a less popular point of view? What explains this differing perspective? What might your audience need to learn about your issue? What has your newfound knowledge of your audience suggested to you about potential focus for your research direction?

**Assign and Discuss Part II of Portfolio 2 – Personal Position Analysis:** Ask students to read over the assignment sheet and address any questions or concerns they have. This analysis is due by the final class meeting of this week (Week 6).

**At the end of this week, collect the Personal Position Analysis:** Also, use classroom discussion time to dig deeply into personal convictions and where they come from. You might try using small groups to discuss the factors or influences that students surmise have contributed to the formation of their own positions on an issue. Students might be urged to think of this as a “coming clean” exercise, in which each student acknowledges the forces that have shaped his or her opinions.

**Use the NYT to help make a transition from personal positions (and their associated values and beliefs) to others’ values, beliefs, and affiliations. Select several articles to demonstrate a few issues that are only issues (debatable) because of the clash of values and beliefs. Ask students to do the same with their articles. A WTL with a news clipping attached would be a good way to obtain a sense of how all students are doing with this analysis.**

**Then establish the framework for applying the Position Analysis to outside sources:** applying the same sorts of context questions to sources and their authors. (Use the Template for Position Analysis of a Single Source located among the materials at the start of this portfolio.) Using the board or the overhead, make a template of this grid for students to draw on notebook paper and devote a few pages of their notes to. They can use the grid to explore the relationships between the contexts and positions. As students find sources and evaluate those sources’ contributions to the discussion, they can use the grid to analyze the factors that influence the positions represented. When students begin to see multiple sources with similar convictions, guided by parallel values, beliefs and affiliations, or motivated by similar purposes, then they are ready to start moving their Position Analysis information into the Composite Grid, which is also included among the introductory materials to this portfolio. Students should obtain at least 15 substantial sources, which can be pared down to a minimum of 10 sources and a minimum of 3 approaches for the Annotated Bibliography. The Position Analysis of a Single Source can be applied gradually to sources over the course of a few weeks in class, and students should be encouraged to include all such work in their process materials for Portfolio 2,

to return to it frequently in upcoming classes, and to bring it (along with the Composite Grid) to the student-instructor conference in Week 9. It is not necessary to give the grid as a formal homework assignment. Instead, encourage students to use it as an independent thinking tool. See the sample below as well as the expanded one in the introductory pages of Portfolio 2:

Source: author, title, publisher, other sources cited	Claim/Thesis	Influences: Community, Background, & Affiliations	Vested Interests, Biases, & Personal Stakes	Values, Beliefs, Attitudes, & Convictions
These are indicators of affiliation	State claim or thesis as a full sentence	Find text evidence to show these here	Find text evidence to show these here	Find text evidence to show these here

Create a transition into discussing the evaluation of sources. Among other things, you might point out that one of the ways that college research distinguishes itself from high school research is in the evaluation and selection of sources. College professors expect students to seek out “better” sources instead of settling on the first ones they bump into. Each piece of academic writing will require a careful examination of the appropriate criteria for the task and purpose of the written assignment.

**Discuss source evaluation**, using the criteria of scholarship, relevance, and representativeness to help students critically examine and judge their sources—both library sources and Internet sources. Engage students in a discussion of possible criteria for judging sources and why the three selected here make sense for the News and Issue Analysis for an educated Audience of COCC150 peers and teachers (You might also review PHG on source evaluation here—see pages 584-589.)

**Ways to establish the scholarship of a source:**

- Scholarly sources versus popular ones
- Author credentials
- Articles peer reviewed
- Evidence of research or serious inquiry
- Evidence of use of footnotes or bibliographies
- Tone and level of formality/seriousness

**Ways to establish the relevance of a source:**

- Degree of relationship to the question posed by the Topic Proposal
- Degree of currency (most sources publishes in the past 10 years are OK)
- Evidence of knowledge of other positions, sources, awareness of ongoing debate or conversation—that is, reference to other sources perhaps through an extensive bibliography
- References to current events

**Ways to establish the representativeness of a source:**

- To what degree does this source represent a particular, and important, perspective in the debate? How would you describe or characterize this perspective?
- To what degree does this source overlap with others in your set? Which ones? Where are they similar? Where different?
- To what degree does this source offer something new, however small, to the discussion as it represents and perhaps overlaps with other sources representing this perspective?

**Transition:** Explain to students that for their descriptive and evaluative annotated bibliographies that will be Part III of this Portfolio and assigned next, they will need to consider these evaluation criteria. As they collect sources they should keep these criteria in mind.

**Discuss the use of the Working Bibliography tool for assembling the bibliography.** Develop a list of instructions for the overhead or distributed via Syllabase to help students get started with this useful tool available through Writing Studio.

**Assignment:** Collect and read sources on your issue. Assemble **a first draft of your annotated bibliography**, including a minimum of six sources and post to the Working Bibliography function of the Writing Studio. The bibliographic entry should be followed by an annotation that is both descriptive and evaluative of the source. [Instructors: For an example of such an annotation, see the list of optional readings for Portfolio 1.]

## **Week 7: Monday, October 6 - Friday, October 10**

### **Goals for this Week**

- Instructors should read the posted “Working Bibliography” or first draft of Part 3 - Annotated Bibliography - of Portfolio 2, including approximately a half dozen sources. [Instructors: Read and provide immediate and substantial whole-class feedback on this homework. Provide quick feedback to individuals in Writing Studio. Award simply a check for completion (or whatever mechanism you have for recording homework).]
- Continue to discuss the evaluation of sources
- Continue to discuss issues in the news (NYT) that represent “clashes of values and beliefs”
- Using the Position Analysis for a Single Source template developed last week, continue to define distinct positions. Also work on the naming of shared perspectives or approaches through the Composite Grid. Focus on the contexts that contribute to the formation of positions and shared perspectives.
- Discuss their use of the Working Bibliography tool in the CO150 Room in the Writing Studio to create the Annotated Bibliography
- Assign the completion of the Annotated Bibliography
- Continue to collect news clips of issues in the contact zones

### **Connection to Course Goals**

Collecting sources for the annotated bibliography will help students learn about the recent conversation surrounding their issue. Students' previous experience with research may have involved collecting and simply regurgitating information on a topic. Here, we are asking them to think critically about a) their role as researchers and b) the choices they make as writers, by evaluating their sources for a specified purpose. We hope that this approach gives them a better "real world" sense of how and why writers research and respond to public issues.

### **Required Readings and Assignments**

- Continue reading sources on your issue
- Continue to work with the Position Analyses and Composite Grid
- Plan for next week when you will complete your final annotated bibliography and post it to the Working Bibliography (by the beginning of Week 8 or the last class before the Reading Days and conferences)

## Potential Activities for this Week

Remember to write a Lesson Objective, a Connection to Course Objectives, an Introduction, Conclusion, and Transitions for each day of class planning.

### **Assign the completion of Part III - Annotated Bibliography in Alphabetical Order:**

Give students a few minutes to review the assignment sheet and address any questions or concerns they may have.

**Integrate the NYT:** Discuss one or more issues that students are seeing in their newspaper reading— focusing again on the values, beliefs, affiliations, etc. that inform the varying perspectives. Can they identify “camps” of belief or groupings that might be similar to the shared perspectives or approaches that they’re naming in their position analyses?

**Return to the concept of Positions and Shared Perspectives or Approaches:** Since the words “shared perspectives” and “approaches” are used interchangeably in the lessons and the annotated bibliography assignment sheet, students will probably raise questions about what this notion means. Use the following explanation to distinguish the individual positions from the shared perspective or approach (or one that you construct) to introduce students to this new concept. We acknowledge that others may define “positions” and “shared perspectives or approaches” differently outside this class, but for the purposes of COCC150, students will need to learn and use these concepts

The following is just one example intended to illustrate the difference between positions and shared perspectives or approaches. Feel free to substitute “legalization of drugs” with your own model topic. You might also find it useful to refer to Deborah Tannen’s essay “The Argument Culture” from the PHG when running this discussion. For more assistance with planning this activity, see the “Introducing a New Concept” section in the *Planning Class Discussion* guide located on Writing@CSU.

Develop an interactive way of presenting the following additional information on Positions and Shared Perspectives or Approaches perhaps by applying it to the issue of marijuana legalization (see below).

In high school most of us learned to simplify shared perspectives or approaches into two categories, “pro” and “con,” in order to examine a debate. However, approaches typically run much deeper than “pro” and “con” since every person’s views are complicated by various social and cultural factors. Here’s an example: Let’s say we reduced the issue of legalizing drugs (specifically marijuana, perhaps) to “pro” and “con”—then it could be said that both government officials and members of religious groups take the same approach or share a perspective about legalizing drugs, since both groups oppose making these substances legal. A closer examination of the arguments made by members of each group indicates, however, that they do not share the same views. Government representatives are likely to oppose legalization because they claim that drugs are harmful to society as a whole. In contrast, authors who oppose legalization because of

their religious beliefs might do so largely because it goes against the teaching of their faiths.

Let's consider another group--parents. Some of these individuals may oppose drug legalization because their children have become victims of drug abuse. These positions would differ from those advanced by members of the previous groups due to different experiences that have shaped parents' lives. However, depending on the specific argument they make, a parent who writes a text protesting the legalization of drugs might share the approach or perspective taken by a government official or member of a religious group. Thus, although a parent will have his or her own position on this issue, he or she would take the same perspective or approach as that taken by certain government officials and members of particular religious groups.

Yet another group weighing in on the issue of legalization is the civil libertarian voice. Civil libertarians believe that individuals should be free to make decisions about drug use free of regulation by the government. These authors argue that drug use is an individual choice and, even if it harms the individual, is nonetheless something that the individual should be free to do. This argument is similar in many ways to arguments about mandatory use of seatbelts in cars and helmets on motorcycles and even to some arguments that "risky" sports such as skiing should not be regulated by the government.

Two additional groups interested in this issue adopt economic approaches. One group argues that the amount of money the government is spending in its attempt to combat drug use has largely been wasted. Since drug use has declined only somewhat since the government began fighting the drug war, the government should reconsider its tactics and, as it did when it lifted the prohibition on alcohol, legalize drug use. The core of this argument is that the money now spent on the drug war would be better spent on societal needs. The other group taking an economic approach – albeit a very different approach – includes companies that would view the legalization of drugs such as marijuana as a threat to their viability. This group might include representatives of alcohol and tobacco companies. It's fair to say that alcohol and tobacco companies don't oppose drug use solely because drugs are harmful to people (after all, the consumption of both results in many deaths per year). It's also fair to say that these authors would be unlikely to come out and say, "Don't legalize drugs because it will cost us money." As a result, while representatives of tobacco and alcohol companies might oppose legalization of drugs for economic reasons, they would probably avoid couching their arguments in those terms.

Given these examples, clearly it would be inaccurate to clump these very different arguments into "pro" and "con". If we did, much of the meaning or truth behind the issue would be lost. The goal for a "good" writer of public discourse should always be to

produce texts that seek to fairly represent the issues (for the betterment of society). Thus, it can be viewed as dishonest for writers to reduce the complexity of an issue unnecessarily. In part, this is why you (student writers) are being asked to think critically about these different positions and approaches.

After you've first skimmed, selected, and then more closely read your sources, look for common threads that cut across sources as a way to group them into different approaches. Here's what it might look like for the example above.

**Topic: Legalization of Drugs (or specifically apply to marijuana)**

**Shared Perspective or Approach 1:** Oppose legalization because it is harmful to society as a whole

**Shared Perspective or Approach 2:** Oppose legalization for moral reasons because it is against religious teachings

**Shared Perspective or Approach 3:** Advocate legalization for individual rights reasons

**Shared Perspective or Approach 4:** Advocate legalization for economic reasons because the war against drugs has been ineffective

**Shared Perspective or Approach 5:** Oppose legalization for economic reasons

Of course, you could argue that the government is also economically motivated and that representatives of alcohol and tobacco companies may legitimately believe that drugs are harmful to society. If the support for these claims outweighs the others, you'd need to group the positions of authors arguing about differently. Keep in mind that grouping positions into approaches is far from an exact science; you'll need to read various arguments before generalizing views into approaches in order to represent each group fairly.

**Mini-Debate on marijuana legalization (or another issue):** If you would like to reinforce the concept that approaches to an issue run deeper than pro/con, try using this activity or incorporate the ideas addressed above into this exercise. The goal of this activity is to have students understand and practice the process they'll need to go through in analyzing their own issue. One of the most effective ways to reach this goal is to have students generate a debate on a familiar issue. If you're having trouble coming up with an activity or want ideas, see the sample activity in the appendix that asks students to analyze the positions and values of different authors involved in the issue of the legalization of marijuana. This debate activity can be done with any issue, but the question of whether marijuana should be legalized has worked well in the past because it lends itself to easily describable groups and some interesting alliances that help distinguish between approaches. Whatever activity you plan, be sure to emphasize these key concepts:

- People take different positions because they have different values and concerns.
- There can be different positions within a particular approach (i.e. parents and government representatives might both be against legalization of drugs because it

harms society, but parents are likely to make different – most likely more personal – arguments than government officials).

- When we talk about approaches, we're not referring to *pro*, *con*, and *something in between*. It's much more complicated than that.
- In making an academic argument, you have to consider and address the audience's values and concerns (possibly their opposing arguments) in order to be effective.
- We research an issue to get a sense of what approaches exist (e.g. legalizing marijuana lends itself to easily distinguishable groups who would take different opinions).
- For your own issue, you'll need to find research to show that each approach you identify is actually valid.

By way of transition into the students' own sources, ask them to take out their Position Analysis template and review the entries they've made so far. This is a reflective activity that is intended to transfer the learning from the legalization of drugs/marijuana discussion to their issues. Ask them to spend a few minutes adding analysis and characterizing/naming the shared perspectives or approaches that they're beginning to see in the literature on their topic. They can pull out their Composite Grids for this analysis. ***The transfer of the skills implied by the marijuana debate and legalization analysis is essential. Students need the transfer to be directly linked to their own analysis of the issue they've selected for Portfolio 2.***

**Return to evaluation of sources:** The goal for this activity is to reinforce student selection of effective sources for their issue analysis, which was initially addressed last week. Remind students that they'll save time researching and writing if they know how to determine which sources will be most useful to them later on. Refer to pg. 588 - 589 in the *PHG* to guide this discussion and include the following points:

#### **What kinds of sources are appropriate for Portfolio 2?**

- Informative sources (facts, dates, news reports, etc..) will help you in the beginning stages to gain background knowledge on your issue.
- Opinionated sources, written by reputable individuals and groups will be most useful in helping you meet your purpose for writing the issue analysis. These will provide a range of different positions and approaches to help you show that your issue is complicated.
- "Objective" reports from news sources will not "take a position" on an issue, but they can lead you to more argumentative sources if you follow up with research on names mentioned in the report.

#### **How current should sources be for Portfolio 2?**

- This will depend on the issue you're researching but it's probably safe to say that some issues are newly emergent while others have been with us for some time.
- Discuss this question using some of your students' issues as examples. Extremely current issues will have less written about them, while old issues may be so

overdone as to require great effort to avoid complete predictability. Many issues that have been around for a while will have “seminal” publications or judgments (perhaps from the Supreme Court) associated with them. Point out to class that good students of any issue try to make sure that they’ve identified and included essential documents among their sources.

### **Which sources are reliable for Portfolio 2?**

- Many of the sources you'll need for Portfolio 2 will contain biases. One of the goals for this portfolio is to examine the ways that beliefs and biases shape a writer's approach to writing about an issue. Therefore, you'll want to collect opinion-based texts so that you can analyze where these viewpoints come from and how they affect the conversation surrounding your issue. However, you'll also want to use credible sources. This is where some evaluation of the scholarship of the sources can come into play. Don't be misled to think that "Robby Republican's" personal web site can accurately represent the views of all Republicans. On the other hand, as long as you understand the limitations of Robby's web site you can use it to represent a certain way of thinking or shared perspective (approach) to an issue.

**\*\*Note to instructors:** One technique for making text evaluation concrete and engaging is to bring in a range of sample texts (on a debatable issue that you choose). Students would then practice evaluating texts for the purposes outlined in the assignment. You might use editorials, political cartoons, chat room scripts, personal web sites, government documents, scientific texts, and research. Add 20 minutes to this activity if you decide to practice evaluating sources in class. Try putting these sample texts on an overhead in an effort to save paper.

Ask students about their use of the Working Bibliography tool. How is it going? Do they like using this tool? Point out that some re-formatting of entries may eventually be necessary for the Works Cited page that they'll include with the News and Issue Analysis. Students should refer to the PHG pages 601-608 for help with MLA conventions associated with the Works Cited page.

**Conclusion: Write a conclusion that connects shared perspectives/approaches, text evaluation, and the Annotated Bibliography to the News and Issue Analysis they'll be writing next as the final product for Portfolio 2.**

### **Assignment**

Complete your Annotated Bibliography using the Working Bibliography function of Writing Studio and then transfer this information into standard annotated bibliography form, reformatting to MLA standards as needed. Be prepared to turn in the completed Annotated Bibliography in a folder containing your graded Topic Proposal and Personal Position Analysis (as well as the individual Position Analyses of a Single Source you've completed and progress you've made on the Composite Grid) next time.

## Week 8: Monday, October 13 - Friday, October 17

**Note to instructors:** The English Department's "Reading Days" are on Thursday, October 16 and Friday, October 17. Meeting for class during this time is optional. As a result, fewer activities are planned in the syllabus for this week. Since students will have completed Part 3 of Portfolio 2 - collecting sources for their annotated bibliography - you should point out to students that this is a good time to work on their drafts of the News and Issue Analysis. During this week you will also meet with individuals or small groups of students to confer about their progress with Portfolio 2. If you are teaching a T/TH section, you should cancel your Reading Day class for this purpose. If you are teaching a MWF section, you can cancel an additional class beyond the Reading Day. Plan to meet for 10 minutes with each student or for 20 minutes with small groups of students working on similar issues. You may choose whichever approach you prefer. Detailed instructions for what to cover during conferences are provided in the activities section for this week.

### Goals for This Week

- Complete the final draft of the Annotated Bibliography and prepare the other materials required as part of this portfolio. [Instructors: Discuss these with students at conference time.]
- Review positions and move into shared perspectives or approaches, if not done already. Refer to the single source Position Analyses and the Composite Grid. If helpful, pull the NYT discussion of topics/issues back into this review.
- Continue to collect news clips in the “contact zones”
- Sign up for individual or group conferences
- Meet for conferences outside of class
- Assign students to read and analyze the introductions to three Issue Analyses in *Talking Back* as homework to be completed by the start of Week 9.

### Connection to Course Goals

The work they have completed with the Annotated Bibliography will set them up for their News and Issue Analysis and will help them to meet the goal of showing that an issue is complicated and that perspectives on an issue are guided by contexts and values. Reviewing positions and shared perspectives or approaches will encourage students to think critically about their issue, specifically about the reasons why authors take certain positions on their issue and why it's helpful to think about similar groups of positions as either shared perspectives or approaches. The discussion of these shared perspectives and the illustration of them through specific text evidence will provide the substance of the students' papers. Conferences reinforce the idea that writing is a process involving collaboration and revision. Exchanging ideas with their instructors, students learn that college is a collegial environment and that professors can and should be approached. They also learn that writing is a process involving careful choices (in regards to purpose,

audience, and context) and continuous, deep revision. They learn as well that they are responsible for integrating classroom learning and formulating plans for integrating their new knowledge into their revision plans, as evidenced in their conference discussions.

**Be sure to maintain your efforts at connecting each lesson to the larger goals of the portfolio and course. Also, continue to anticipate the transitions in your lesson plans so that you can properly signal them as you proceed through a class day.**

## **Reading and Assignments:**

Students who complete the Position Analysis for several sources and bring them to conference will facilitate discussion. Encourage them to work on their analyses of sources and ask them to bring them to conference. You can assist them at that time with the Composite Grid or look over what they have done on the Composite.

[Instructor reviews annotated bibliographies before conference and has considered the shared perspectives or approaches implied by each student's list and description of sources] Student brings a hard copy or, if previously arranged, refers to the Working Bibliography in Writing Studio while in conference

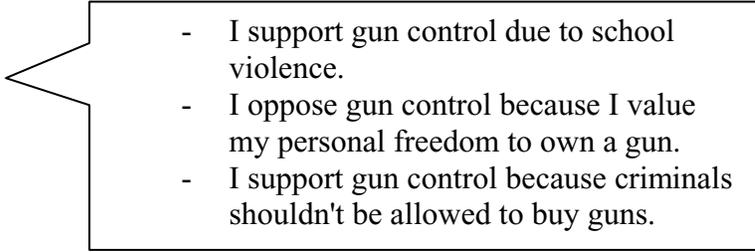
Meet for individual conferences. Remind students that they must come prepared—with all sources, process materials accumulated so far, for instance the position analyses, the composite grid, the annotated bibliography, and the news clippings that deal with issues in the contact zones. They should arrive ready to brief you on their analysis plans—how they see the individual positions clustering into shared perspectives and approaches and suggesting any additional research they think they need to do.

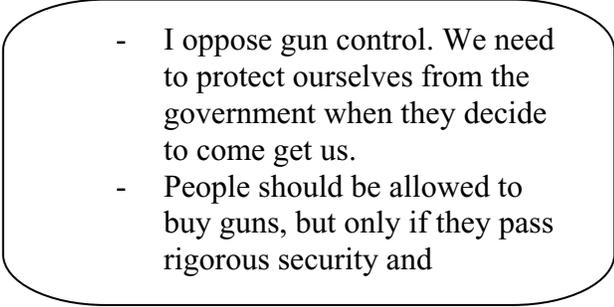
## **Potential Activities for this Week**

**Review positions and approaches:** Most likely, despite the fact that you have now demonstrated the shared perspectives/approaches analysis at least three times in class, some students will still be confused about how to move from their analysis of individual sources (the Position Analyses) into an analysis of shared perspectives or approaches as aided through the Composite Grid. The goal for the activity today is to guide their thinking by providing an illustration of the process of arranging individual positions into shared perspectives or approaches. This activity will prepare students for the analytical thinking that we ask them to do in the issue analysis portion of this portfolio.

Use the board and follow these steps:

- a.) Choose a large topic such as gun control and ask students to write down what they think about this topic. Which arguments do they support and oppose around this topic?
- b.) Write students responses on board. Try to generate a large list of maybe 8-10 possible responses or reactions to this topic, e.g.,

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- I support gun control due to school violence.
  - I oppose gun control because I value my personal freedom to own a gun.
  - I support gun control because criminals shouldn't be allowed to buy guns.

- 
- I oppose gun control. We need to protect ourselves from the government when they decide to come get us.
  - People should be allowed to buy guns, but only if they pass rigorous security and

- c.) If students don't include reasons for their positions, ask them *why* they take these positions. Explain that positions and perspectives are located inside the “why” or “because” statements associated with reasons. Include a reason to support each view.
- d.) Then, ask students to look for common threads or themes that cut across each response. Have them group the many responses into common approaches (maybe 3 or 4). Encourage them to create narrow categories (beyond pro and con). As you group positions into approaches, ask them to be attentive to what factors determine how positions get grouped (writers with common purposes, audiences, beliefs, values, background experiences, etc...)
- e.) Once you've arranged positions into 3 - 4 approaches, label each group with a phrase that accurately represents each the group. Explain to students that this is what they'll need to do with their own issue to complete the News and Issue portion of Portfolio 2.
- f.) Then, tell students that you're going to use this arrangement to illustrate what they'll need to think about for the issue analysis. The issue analysis will ask them to critically analyze the social and cultural factors that have shaped these positions and approaches. Students will need to consider *why* people take the positions they do. What has influenced their viewpoints? This is an essential step in the writing process, because in order for a writer to make an effective argument advocating his or her own views, he or she needs to understand where others' views come from. Also, in understanding others' views a writer is encouraged to look beyond personal (sometimes limited) views, and seek a fuller understanding of an issue. Often, a writer will change his or her original position based on new understanding of the origins of other writers' positions.

### **Now move into a discussion of explanations for shared perspectives/approaches**

Ask students to discuss the social and cultural factors that have informed the approaches they're seeing in the gun control debate. Use the following questions to guide the discussion:

- What historical events might have influenced these approaches? (terrorist attacks, Columbine shooting)
- What personal events/experiences? (a robbery at home or a break in)
- What laws may have influenced these approaches? (background checks, safety locks)
- What values are associated with each approach? (safety, freedom, choice,)
- What are the goals or purposes for each approach? (to allow guns but make them safer, to eliminate gun sales, to allow gun sales for all...)
- If each approach became an argument, who would be the target audience for that argument? Why?
- How might purpose and audience shape the way those who take this approach present or “spin” the issue?
- In turn, how might the various presentations of the issue affect the way readers react to it and thus affect the course of the debate? (Emotional appeals involving Columbine may create overly sympathetic readers who ignore rational arguments for gun use *or* scare tactic used by the NRA may frighten readers into supporting gun use.)

Finish by asking students why it might be important to think critically about the social and cultural forces that shape a conversation about an issue. Why might this be worthwhile for a writer to consider as he/she constructs an argument?

**Discuss the analytic tool known as the Composite Analysis Grid (provided in the introductory pages of Portfolio 2).** Show students how to take information from their individual Position Analyses and analyze them for similarities to produce a Composite Grid. [Obviously as part of this effort, you must locate the Composite Grid among your course materials and decide how you will present and disseminate it—perhaps they can copy it from the overhead or you can download it to Syllabase and have them copy it from that location.]

**Independent Work on their own Composite Grids (20 minutes):** After completing the activity above, allow students to work on grouping their own bibliography entries and Position Analyses into shared perspectives or approaches on the Composite Grid. They will need to have produced several copies of the Position Analysis template, of course, but they will only need one Composite Grid. In addition to grouping their sources, students should refer back to their individual Position Analyses to **EXPLAIN** the relationship between perspectives and the social and cultural influences. Students might also be asked to *find specific text evidence* to show these perspectives and to connect them to the values and beliefs that underlie them. As students work, circulate around the room and address their concerns and questions individually. If you are teaching a T/TH section, you might allow some extra time for this activity. Or you might have students peer review their grids in pairs or groups if they finish early.

**Sign up for individual or group conferences (5 minutes):** Tell students that instead of meeting for class, next time you will meet with them individually (or in groups). Pass

around a sign up sheet specifying dates and times for conferences. Tell them to bring all their process materials, including their sources, their annotated bibliography, their Position Analyses, and the Composite Grid they worked on in class today and will continue to work on before coming to their conferences. Explain the reason for meeting with them, which is essentially to check on their progress toward completion of this portfolio. Your goals for the conference should include

1. seeing how students are progressing on Portfolio 2 and clearing up any questions about the first three parts of the portfolio.
2. easing anxiety by addressing their individual projects. Students may be somewhat worried about the final essay for this portfolio (the News and Issue Analysis) and may express this concern as “I’m confused about what I’m supposed to do with this paper.” Acknowledge their feelings, but remember that you’ve had them do a lot of things to get ready for this paper and that all these items lead directly to that product. There is no need for you to repeat the material you’ve covered in class. Remind them to look at the examples in the *Talking Back* online publication, and remind them that we have another week to work on the paper itself and to review its objectives. Remember that they’re paying us to challenge them; don’t apologize for asking them to work.
3. Then move their focus (quickly) to the analysis they’ve done so far, using their Position Analyses, their Composite Grid, and their drafted Annotated Bibliography. Since you will have examined their draft Annotated Bibliographies already—you might want to have their bib in front of you on the computer when they come to your office. You will be in a position to guide their clarification of shared perspectives or approaches, but allow them to first try to articulate some groupings themselves. Also ask them to connect the perspectives they’ve identified to the values, beliefs, cultural influences, background factors, and affiliations that they’ve named in their Position Analyses and Composite Grid.
4. Remember that jumping in and solving the intellectual problem of this analysis for them (here in conference or on work that they turn in for feedback) robs them of the very analytical task this portfolio requires. On the other hand, it will help them a great deal if you hand out a conference prep sheet for them to prepare before they come to conference. (See introductory materials to Portfolio 2.) Ask them a few simple questions that get to the heart of their ability to group their sources and provide meaningful analysis of the shared perspectives and clear distinctions among their collected sources. Remember that the goal of the conference is NOT for you to provide them with answers or the analysis they need to do; rather the goal is for them to try out (verbally, with you) their ideas.
5. Finally, the more prepared they are, the better, and the deadline of a one-on-one meeting with you, accompanied by their organized materials, may provide the exact incentive they need to get this work done. Don’t be too casual about this. After all, if they’re not prepared for the conference, they’re not far enough along in the process to do well on this portfolio. Convey your concern very clearly. They do not have a lot of time to get their acts together at this point. [Note: you will need to move in a business-like fashion to accomplish the goals of the

conference in only a few minutes. Welcome students at the beginning, but don't spend more than a minute chatting or you'll delay the next student's conference.]

## Assignment

- Come to your assigned conference with all process materials, as discussed in class. Also come to conference with the answers prepared on your conference prep sheet.
- Preparation for next week should include reviewing the introductions to issues analyses published in *Talking Back*. Also read PHG on Explaining, pgs. 274-282.
- Continue working with your sources to name their shared perspectives or approaches. Start locating specific text references that will support your analysis of the sources and the perspectives associated with them.
- Also, bring your SAT sources from Portfolio 1 back to class next time.  
[Instructors: You may want to send an email reminder of this the day before class meets since conferences and several days will have intervened between this set of instructions and the next class meeting when they'll need to have their SAT sources with them.]

## Week 9: Monday, October 20 - Friday, October 24

### Goals for This Week

- Assign Part 4 – News and Issue Analysis- of Portfolio 2 (due at the beginning of Week 10)
- Discuss the purposes for the News and Issue Analysis and reassure students that all the processes they've been involved in the past four weeks will contribute directly to their success with the final paper.
- Model how to analyze the "conversation surrounding an issue" by reviewing sample essays they're familiar with, applying them to the Composite Grid, and making a connection to writing the final essay.
- Review with students what they saw in the student introductions of issue analyses published in *Talking Back* as well as what they learned from the chapter on "Explaining" in the PHG. Work in class to write the overall claim for the paper and to launch the paper with a solid introduction. Put a few examples on the overhead to working on crafting these to a higher level.
- Continue to collect news clips about issues in the contact zones.

Remember to connect daily lessons with portfolio and course goals. Remember also to provide an introduction (preview) and a conclusion (review) for each lesson and to make clear transitions between activities and themes you're developing.

### Connection to Course Goals

Experienced researchers and writers learn to draw connections between sources and make choices when organizing ideas for their writing. The Composite Grid helps students think in more complicated ways (like these researchers and writers) by asking them to critically examine their sources and synthesize ideas. Transferring this analysis to a full paper may be new to first-year college students, so modeling the process will prepare them for drafting their final papers for Portfolio 2.

### Required Reading and Assignments

Instructors: Carefully read through the major activity that is shown in today's lesson plan and decide how best to prepare your class for this activity.

### Potential Activities for this Week

**Assign Part 4 – News and Issue Analysis - of Portfolio 2:** Give students a few minutes to read over the assignment sheet and address any questions or concerns they may have. Review the purpose for writing the News and Issue Analysis. Have students brainstorm a list of reasons that support the purpose for writing this report. Ask them:

- Why is it important to show that an issue is complex (based on what you've learned so far from researching and writing in Portfolio 2)?
- Why is it especially important for an academic audience such as the college students in your class to see the complexity of an issue?

Tell students that they should use this discussion as a way to think about how they'll introduce their issue in the analysis. Ask them to consider how they will appeal to their audience (or peers and their teacher) and give them a reason to read their analysis. This conversation will help students understand their purposes for writing this essay (beyond completing an assignment). In turn they will produce essays that are more successful in meeting their purposes and being responsive to their audience. Reassure students that at the end of class today, we will discuss and practice thesis statements, introductions, conclusions, and transitions so that they can visualize what their papers will look like.

**Model how to analyze the "conversation surrounding an issue":** Since the news and issue analysis will pose a new challenge for students, begin this portion of Portfolio 2 by modeling how writers critically examine their sources. Many students have never been asked to think or write analytically, so they'll need to see some examples in order to succeed with this assignment. This activity could take 30 minutes. Consider using the following outline for this activity:

1. Go back to the SAT discussion. You might supplement the discussion and your understanding of the issue by reviewing the optional readings given in the Portfolio 1 assignment information and by making sure that students have read the additional readings provided in the NYT electronic reserve readings.
2. Tell students that you'd like to use the SAT discussion as a class model before having them analyze their own issues. (Try pitching it as if you're writing on the SAT debate for Portfolio 2 and you need their help). Let them know that this process will clear up their confusions and also set the standard for your expectations.
3. Identify that the SAT sources used in Portfolio 1 represent a range of sources on the issue and that the optional readings extend this discussion even further.
4. After students have noted the authors and titles of all the articles, apply each of the articles to the Composite Grid. Do this activity as a whole class (at the board or on an overhead) so that you can model the process.

Suggestions for modeling the grid:

- Encourage students to look closely at the texts when filling in responses.
- Define phrases such as "readers' needs and interests" and "cultural norms and beliefs" along the way (suggest that they take notes).
- Construct questions that ask students to "read between the lines" looking at reader and writer assumptions, cultural influences, historical events, etc...
- Ask them to do further research. For example, if a writer doesn't come out and say, "I believe that Mickey Mouse is the axis of evil..." some students will be quick to respond with, "This writer has no values, beliefs or biases." Try not to let them get away with surface responses without doing some digging first.

5. Be sure that you've filled in the grid before doing this activity in class, and that you've done some research and digging yourself. Having done so, you can set a standard and model your expectations in class (e.g. "Since I couldn't tell from this article who Walter Williams was or what he believed in, I looked him up on the Web. It turns out that he's a Black conservative who is a professor of economics at George Mason University. He writes a regular column on a variety of issues, publishing his conservative views in a conservative publication. This information helped me decide which approach to group him with).
6. Explain that your model is only a small sample to illustrate the process of thinking critically about texts. Let them know that the grid aims to help them organize viewpoints so that they can write a focused News and Issue Analysis for their target readers.

**Address introductions, organization and development (10 min), and transitions:**

Recommend that students read the PHG on introductions, essay maps, transitions and hooks in the Explaining chapter, from the bottom of page 314-318.

**By this point, students are probably asking, "What should my analysis look like?"**

In COCC150, we generally try to avoid prescribing forms for writing. We tell students that purpose and audience should guide the choices they make; and that they should focus on questions like, "What am I trying to accomplish in writing this? Who are my readers? What are their needs and interests? How can I best reach them?" Yet, many students have only been taught to write using forms, so they feel lost at sea when writing for a purpose. Here are a few points to address for those who need more direction. Explain that this is only *one* way to approach this assignment. Creative individuals with a strong sense of purpose may develop variations and still write a successful essay.

Suggest that students do the following in their introductions:

- Address your target readers, gain their attention and respect, show that you know who they are
- Briefly introduce the issue, providing as much background as they will need, as suggested by your mini audience analysis that was done way back in the first week of this portfolio. Engage readers and demand their attention
- Address the purpose for writing and explain why this purpose should interest readers (this will serve as your claim or essay map)

Have students plan their introductions right now with the idea in mind of making the paper of interest to their audience of classmates and instructor. Do a whole class examination and discussion of one or two introduction plans. (10 min)

**Have students write a transition into the "discussion of the conversation."** This transition will serve as a thesis and essay map for the rest of the paper. As with the introductions, "workshop" a few of the transitions students write. (10 min)

**Organization/Development:**

- When writing about shared perspectives or approaches describe each perspective/approach and who holds/takes it; then explain what their purpose is, who their readers are, and what social, historical and cultural factors have shaped their views on the issue.
- Overall, your goal is to attempt to describe the situation as whole, rather than to focus on the particular situations shaping each approach. You may distinguish among approaches and use specific positions as examples to illustrate the differences, but the goal is to look at the conversation as a whole. Use the details of your analysis to serve this larger purpose, rather than getting caught up in the analysis (and losing sight of the purpose).

### **Transitions**

- Help your reader by creating smooth transitions between the shared perspectives/approaches, reminding the reader of the your overall focus as often as seems reasonable. (You might prepare an overhead on common transition phrases, such as “*In contrast* to the economic approach, the social welfare approach...” or “*Unlike* the environmental focus, ...”)
- Help your reader follow your development of each perspective’s discussion by providing connectives that maintain unity and coherence (“For example,” “An example,” “To illustrate,” “Another piece of evidence”)

**Discuss the application of MLA** in-text citations as discussed in the PHG pages 594-601 and Works Cited conventions, pages 601-608.

### **Assignments:**

**Assign students to draft their News and Issue Analysis** and to bring two copies for the class workshop next time, reminding them of the models located at *Talking Back*, 2002-03 volume. Also you can make available to them the example of a finished product provided in this course’s appendix.

### **Last Class of Week 9 and Portfolio 2: Workshop the News and Issue Analysis Reports.**

- Give students nearly a full class period to exchange and read drafts in groups of three or four. For assistance with this activity, read the guide on *Planning Workshops and Peer Review* located on Writing@CSU.
- If possible, allow students to read an example of the News and Issue Analysis—perhaps yours.
- Reserve 15 minutes at the end to (1) provide time for students to write a revision plan and (2) to develop the grading criteria for Portfolio 2.
- Make sure to have an overhead prepared on the necessary inclusions to the Portfolio 2 folder so that you’re not rushing to list these items at the end of class. Here’s a list you could use for that purpose:

1. News and Issue Analysis (drafts, including workshop draft, and final)
2. In-class audience analysis (posted)
3. Topic proposal (graded and returned)
4. Personal Perspective Analysis (graded and returned)
5. Position Analyses of Single Sources (process work done independently)
6. Composite Grid (process work done independently)
7. Annotated Bibliography
8. News Clippings about issues in the “contact zones” with brief marginal annotations
9. Any other process materials

# **Portfolio 3: Introduction to Goals and Essay Assignment Sheets**

## **Overview of Portfolio 3: Entering the Conversation. Staking a Claim in the Discussion. Becoming an Active Participant in Public Discourse. Writing an Original Argument.**

Goals of Portfolio 3 include our desire to:

1. To add the student's voice to the ongoing conversation on the issue selected by each student.
2. Continue to develop student awareness of texts as ongoing conversations on issues of importance and relevance to themselves and the world
3. Continue to develop engagement in the world of both problems and ideas through reading of a major national newspaper and to reassure students of their ability--and indeed their responsibility as citizens--to participate in the development of ideas and actions that contribute to improvements and solutions
4. Continue to develop student awareness of texts as products of particular purposes, audiences, and contexts (rhetorical situations) and develop student ability to read such texts critically
5. Develop students' positions based on knowledge of the ongoing conversation and critical reading of the participant arguments rather than on uninformed and unchallenged opinions
6. Continue to teach students how to focus and develop their own texts (essays) for educated audiences
7. Continue to teach students how to make choices about the content and development of their writing based on context
8. Continue to teach students how to incorporate knowledge gained from other sources (text evidence) into the development of their claims and reasons, especially to learn how this is done variously in publications.
9. Teach students how to do deep (global rather than merely local or stylistic) revision of their writing

## Portfolio 3: Making Your Contribution to a Publicly Debated Issue

**Overview:** This portfolio culminates in a pair of Arguing Essays that contribute to the publicly debated issue you analyzed in Portfolio 2.

**To complete work on this portfolio, you will:**

- carry out a series of homework activities
- read the PHG chapter on arguing (Chapter 10) in its entirety
- choose a target publication for your first Arguing Essay
- write a brief Context and Audience Comparative Analysis (or simply Context Comparison from here on) comparing and contrasting a selected publication and its readers to the readership/context of the *New York Times* Editorial page
- continue to read the NYT, now with an emphasis on the Editorial and Op-Ed pages as well as on visual/graphic forms of communication and argumentation (collect 10 of each)
- write rough drafts of your first Arguing Essay
- submit an Arguing Essay that is written and designed to conform to your target publication.
- Revise your first arguing essay for submission to the Editorial page of the *New York Time* and submit it for a grade

Evidence of participation in all these items will be compiled in your folder, turned in, graded and returned to you before your second arguing essay is due—this one for a new audience of readers, specifically the Editorial page of the *New York Times*.

For the first essay and folder, if you targeted your article for *Parents' Magazine*, you would write for a general audience of parents of young children. Similarly, if you were writing for a journal or magazine published on a Web site, such as *National Review Online*, you would write for the readers of that publication. The first arguing essay, written for an audience and publication of your choosing, can also be submitted to the CSU online student journal, *Talking Back*, for possible publication after a competitive selection process. The final draft of this first argumentative essay must include a cover page that clarifies the audience and purpose you have in mind for your essay. This first arguing essay is worth 20% of your final grade.

The second argument, which is a revised version of the first and directed toward the Editorial page of the *New York Times*, will be turned in after the initial folder is graded and returned to you. Here you will demonstrate your understanding of the *New York Times* as a distinguished national and international news source, show evidence that you are familiar with its readers, and demonstrate that you understand the differences between the rhetorical situations of your selected publication's audience and the *New York Times*

Editorial page, only the simplest of which is a difference in length requirements. This second arguing essay is worth 15% of your final grade.

Essentially, this portfolio helps you add your voice to the public conversation you analyzed in your second portfolio. Now that you have learned what other members of that conversation have been saying about the issue, you are qualified to make your own contributions. The first essay, targeting a publication of your choosing, and the second one (a substantial revision) targeting the most read newspaper opinion page in the world, will allow you differing opportunities to stake your claim as well as two distinct opportunities to showcase your talents as a flexible writer—that is, one who is adaptable to differing contexts. In making your own contribution to the conversation on your selected issue, your goal will be to add something new to the discussion while also acknowledging the contributions of authors who have already contributed ideas and information. You may wish to go back to your notes on the idea of “newness” from the beginning of the course to recall the range of ways a paper can stake new ground.

Your grade for this portfolio will be based on the quality of your first and second Arguing Essays (20% + 15% of your overall grade in course). Your success on both Arguing Essays, however, will be determined largely by the work you do on your homework assignments and especially the Context Comparison. It might be helpful, as a result, to imagine the homework assignments (including the News Clippings) and the Context Comparison as prewriting for the Arguing Essays.

**Worth:** 35% of the course grade (20% and 15%, respectively)

**Purposes for this Portfolio:** To learn how to contribute to a debate about a public issue; to learn strategies for designing effective documents; to think critically about writing situations and to strengthen your understanding of writing for specific audiences, to demonstrate your flexibility in writing for differing contexts.

**Audience:** Your arguing essays will be directed toward two differing audiences, first the audience of a publication (magazine, journal, newspaper, Web site) that you propose in your Context Comparison. This first paper will be a minimum of six double-spaced, typed pages or 1500-1800 words. The second, an opinion piece for the Editorial page of the *New York Times*, will be of a length appropriate for this newspaper—probably 650-800 words. Your instructor must approve your choice of target publication for the first arguing essay.

**Portfolio Content:** When you turn in your portfolio folder after the first paper for 20% of your grade, your portfolio will include homework assignments, the Context Comparison, rough drafts of your first Arguing Essay, comments you receive from your classmates on your rough drafts, the final draft of Arguing Essay #1, and a collection of 10 editorial and op-ed pieces as well as 10 examples of visuals/graphics from the NYT. This portfolio will be graded and returned to you prior to your revision for the Editorial page, which constitutes the final portion of Portfolio 3 for an additional 15% of your grade. When you submit your Editorial, you must resubmit all previous Portfolio 3 materials.

**Pick Up of Final Portfolios:** You can pick up your portfolio at the beginning of next semester (after contacting your instructor ahead of time). Alternatively, if you would like

to have your portfolio returned sooner, you must include with your final folder a self-addressed, stamped envelope that has been metered for the full weight of your completed folder.

## Portfolio 3: Audience and Context Comparative Analysis

**Overview:** This assignment (which we will refer to as the context comparison) serves as prewriting for your arguing essays by providing an opportunity to analyze the audiences and contexts for your arguments. Understanding your two audiences is important since you need to know who your readers are before you can effectively convince them to consider your arguments. Examining your contexts is equally important because your argument will only be taken seriously or be considered for publication if it meets context expectations. Since you are examining two contexts, the assignment implies that you'll need to think about how you would compare and contrast these writing situations, even though the format of this written analysis doesn't require the formal use of the comparison/contrast mode of writing.

**Purposes for this Analysis:** To distinguish the audiences and contexts of two arguing essays.

**Audience:** You and your instructor.

**Length of the Analysis:** Your analysis should be roughly 750-1000 words (or 3-4 pages) in length.

**Format of the Analysis:** You need not think of this assignment as a paper. Your analysis will consist of three parts. You may use headings. You may also number your responses. You do NOT need to think of this as a comparison/contrast paper even though your thinking will compel you to consider the similarities and differences between two distinctive publications.

### Part I - Purpose

1. What will you argue? What is your position on this issue? How might your position need to be adapted or modified for the differing contexts?
2. Will both of your arguments be intended to convince or will one or both be persuasive in purpose?
3. What do you hope to accomplish with each argument? What might you reasonably hope to achieve with these audiences? (Note: your answer should be quite different for each publication. Also, be as specific here as possible.)
4. What else might you hope to accomplish by entering this discussion/conversation in the context of these two publications (make a name for yourself, challenge authority, etc.)
5. Write the main tentative claim for each of your arguments.

### Part II - Context Analysis

1. Where will your readers encounter your first argument? Please name the specific person, journal, magazine, or organization that you will write to for Argument 1.

- In general how does this publication compare and contrast with your assigned audience for the second arguing essay, the Editorial page of the *New York Times*?
2. Describe your contexts for writing. In order to sufficiently complete this section, you'll need to familiarize yourself with the publication context you've chosen and reacquaint yourself with the *New York Times* Editorial page. Research and read two or three existing copies of your selected publication to learn what the expectations and requirements are. Please also continue to read the Editorial page of the *Times*. When you are ready, use the following questions to guide the development of your comparison, and develop your response to at least a few paragraphs to provide sufficient detail for my understanding.
    - What is each publication's general purpose?
    - Who are the target readers of each?
    - What type of content is most suitable for each publication? What kinds of topics and issues are typically addressed within them?
    - What is the appropriate length of a text written for these publications?
    - What do typical pieces of writing for these publications look like? (Describe fully.)
    - How would you describe the tone, style, and register (level of formality in word choice, use of jargon, etc.) used by writers whose work appear in these publications?
    - What patterns can you note? (i.e. Do all articles or columns begin the same way? Are most arguments well supported? Are they highly opinionated?)
    - Are there specific requirements of which you should be aware, such as guidelines for citing sources?
  3. What are the two or three most important things you'll need to keep in mind about the expectations and requirements of these publications when you're writing your argument?
  4. What are the most important differences between the two contexts you'll be writing for?

### **Part III - Audience Analysis**

1. Who will your target audiences be? Define them specifically in terms of age, economic status, social class, gender, education, and so forth.
2. Why did you choose the first audience? How is it distinguishable from the audience for the *New York Times* Editorial page?
3. What can your readers in each publication already be expected to know about your issue? What will they want or need to know? What are their typical attitudes or viewpoints toward your issue? How are their views similar to your own? How do they differ? How are the views of readers of the two publications similar and different from each other?

4. What social and cultural factors might account for the similarities and differences in the readers of these two publications? How might your own social and cultural background account for the difference in your perspective from either or both of these publications?

## Portfolio 3: Arguing Essay #1

**Overview:** To complete the first portion of this portfolio, you will construct a source-based argument for the issue you chose to work with in Portfolio 2. You will define an appropriate audience for your argument and shape your writing to meet the needs and interests of your readers. You will also define a context for writing and modify your argument to meet the demands of this context (For example: an argument written for *Harper's* should read like other texts found in this publication).

**Purposes for this Essay:** To write for a specific, public audience arguing your viewpoints on the issue you explored in Portfolio 2; to convince your audience to agree with your viewpoints or to persuade your audience to act on your viewpoints.

**Audience:** Address your arguing essay to the first audience outlined in your Context Comparison. In general, your audience is likely to expect you to thoroughly explain the points you are making and to support your argument using appropriate forms of evidence. Your readers are also likely to expect you to acknowledge and cite your sources in a manner consistent with other sources published by your target publication. If your publication does not apply a formal citation method, then you must refer to your sources and their authors by name in the text of your paper. Consider whether the use of visuals and graphics would be useful and appropriate for this publication. The first arguing essay must be accompanied by a Works Cited list, identifying the sources that are actually cited in the paper, even if that page would not appear in the publication; if the publication would not call for a bibliography, simply enclose it loose in the folder rather than attaching it to the essay. The Editorial does not need to be accompanied by a Works Cited page.

**Portfolio Content:** Please submit your report in a folder clearly labeled with your name. Your portfolio should include:

- The final draft of your first arguing essay, formatted in a manner consistent with the design of your target publication. If appropriate for that publication, you should include illustrations, tables, charts, and other design elements, such as columns, pullquotes, use of color, and so on.
- A cover page that outlines the purpose, audience and context for your argument
- A works cited (MLA) or references (APA) list of all texts referred to in your argument. This page can be attached to your essay if such a page would be included in the publication or it can be enclosed separately and not numbered as a part of your essay if such a page would not be included in the publication you've selected.
- Rough drafts of your argumentative essay
- The workshop comments you received from your classmates on drafts of your argumentative essay

- All homework assignments completed during this portfolio
- A printed copy of your Context Comparison with my responses attached
- A completed submission form, for those interested in being considered for publication in *Talking Back*

**Essay Requirements:** Your first arguing essay should be between 1,250 and 1,750 words in length. Support your argument with *at least* six sources and relevant personal experience, if appropriate.

Subsequent to the return of your portfolio, you will revise your argument for the second context, the Editorial page of the *New York Times*.

The first arguing essay, complete with all elements of the folder, is worth 20% of your course grade. The revision, or the second arguing essay for the Editorial page, is worth an additional 15%. Total value of Portfolio 3 is therefore 35% of your final grade in the course.

## Portfolio 3: Arguing Essay #2—An Editorial for the *New York Times*

**Overview:** To complete the second portion of this portfolio, you will revise the first argument from Portfolio 3. You will shape your writing to meet the needs and interests of your readers. You will also modify your argument to meet the demands of this context (For instance, readers of the *New York Times* can be expected to be more varied than readers of the *National Review*.)

**Purposes for this Essay:** To write for a specific, public audience arguing your viewpoints on the issue you explored in Portfolio 2 and argued in the first essay for Portfolio 3; to convince your audience to agree with your viewpoints or to persuade your audience to act on your viewpoints.

**Audience:** Address your arguing essay to the second audience outlined in your Context Comparison, specifically readers of the *New York Times*. In general, your audience is likely to expect you to thoroughly explain the points you are making and to support your argument using appropriate forms of evidence. Your readers are likely to expect you to acknowledge other participants in the conversation, although you would not cite sources in the newspaper. You can efficiently and effectively refer to other important participants in the conversation by naming them in the text of your paper. It is not necessary to accompany this revision with a Works Cited page.

**Portfolio Content:** Please submit your final essay in a folder at the time of the final exam clearly labeled with your name. Your portfolio should include:

- The final draft of your first arguing essay
- Rough drafts of your second argumentative essay
- The workshop comments you received from your classmates on drafts of your second argumentative essay
- All homework assignments completed subsequent to the first argument
- A printed copy of your Context Comparison with my responses attached
- A postscript to be completed at the time of the final exam—substance to be announced at that time

**Essay Requirements:** Your second arguing essay should be of a length appropriate for the *New York Times* Editorial page.

The first arguing essay, complete with all elements of the folder, is worth 20% of your course grade. The revision, or the second arguing essay for the Editorial page, is worth an additional 15%. Total value of Portfolio 3 is therefore 35% of your final grade in the course.

## Week 10: Monday, October 27 - Friday, October 31

**Note:** The beginning of Portfolio 3 marks a new stage in your lesson planning. You are now responsible for creating nearly all of your own activities to accomplish the course goals. To support your efforts to accomplish this task, we have provided detailed discussion of teaching goals. Also, you may consult the “Activity Bank,” which is offered as a supplemental source in the materials for this course and also will be available (and continuously enlarged upon) in the Teacher Resources of the Online Writing Center. We encourage you to integrate the course texts, the *PHG* and the *New York Times*, as well as technology components--the Online Writing Center, Writing Studio and Syllabase--into your lesson planning. If you have any questions about developing your lesson plans, please see Mike, Steve, Kate, Sarah, Kerri, Paul, Liz or Sue.

Please remember to provide lesson and course connections each class day and to introduce and conclude your lessons along with providing helpful transitions between activities.

### Goals for this week:

- **Create a transition between the second and third portfolios.** Consider asking students to complete a WTL/postscript for Portfolio 2 before you collect the portfolios.
- **Get students reading nearly all of Chapter 10 of the PHG.** Start with pages 441-455.
- **Engage students in reading and collecting the Editorial and Op-Ed pages from the *New York Times* as well as examples of graphics, photos, and other visual forms of story and argument development as demonstrated in the *Times*.** Here you are continuing the News Clip Journal, with an emphasis on (1) argumentation and (2) the use of visuals or graphics for story/argument development.
- **Review the Writing Situation Model** (see Resources, below) **and introduce the “Great Circle of Writing” model** (see Resources, below).
- **Introduce Portfolio 3 and the Context Comparison.**
- **Review techniques for Writing Arguments** (consider assigning pages 442 - 443 in the *PHG* and the Argument writing guide on [Writing@CSU](#)).
- **Brainstorm arguments, claims, readers and contexts for Portfolio 3** (see Resources, below).
- **Review types of claims on pages 444 - 448 in the PHG.** To accomplish this, introduce different types of claims from the reading by designing a discussion that highlights the need to have a claim that is debatable and to understand the expectations that come with different types of claims they might use. Have students identify the types of claims addressed in the *PHG* reading (fact, cause-

effect, value, solution) and how each type implies certain expectations for supporting it.

- **Discuss what claims imply about development, reasoning, and evidence.** Ask students to consider the types of evidence they'll need based on the types of claims they might have. For example, a claim of value would necessitate a list of criteria, while a claim of solution would likely require evidence to prove both that a problem exists and that this solution would work or is better than other possibilities. Also, remind students that types of claims will suggest different types of proof. The *PHG* is set up to focus on different types of claims in different chapters. Ask students to review the chapter that deals with their type of claim.

- **Type of Claim:**

Value: See "Evaluating" Chapter

Solution/policy: See "Problem-solving" Chapter

Cause-effect: See "Cause-effect" Chapter

Fact: See "Informing" Chapter

- **Practice unpacking claims.** To accomplish this goal, consider preparing sample claims that you can unpack as a class to prepare students for the group activity. For instance, a claim of solution – such as *Grades do not accurately represent a student's intelligence; therefore portfolios should be used instead* – may work well because typically it will imply a claim of value as well. To unpack this claim, a writer would need to address all implied claims, including:

- the criteria for intelligence (value)
- grades fail at representing these criteria (fact)
- portfolios will do a better job of meeting the criteria (fact)

Your discussion of a claim will depend on the audience and existing research. For example, if research has *already* shown that grades don't reflect intelligence, a writer could quickly support this sub claim and then focus on the solution -- using portfolios instead. However, if there is no evidence to support the claim that grades fail to represent intelligence, the focus for the argument should be on proving this claim.

- **Workshop claims in class.** A typical workshop might involve asking students to determine what type of claim is being made (fact, cause-effect, value, solution), then “unpacking” the claim to determine how many sub-claims are involved in it, identifying the types of evidence needed to support the sub-claims, considering how readers might react to the claim and sub-claims, and offering suggestions for revising and narrowing the claim.
- **Provide students with an example of a single Context and Audience Analysis (see appendix) and review it in class.** Suggest the differences involved when analyzing two differing contexts.

- Work on the Context Comparison in class (due at the beginning of Week 11 - Mon., November 3 or Tuesday, November 4).

## Connection to Course Goals

After creating a transition between Portfolios 2 and 3 and connecting these to course goals, the two main objectives for this week are to have students construct their claims and arguments and to have students think critically about how their target audience and context will influence the choices they make when writing their arguments. Use the *PHG* to introduce students to classical forms of argumentation, but also emphasize that audience and context are as important as "forms" when making choices about content and organization. To write successfully, students will need to think about their readers' needs and interests and shape their arguments accordingly. The Context Comparison is designed to help students analyze writing for two different, real-world audiences. It serves the overall goals of encouraging students to be active participants in culture and enabling them to write for audiences beyond academia.

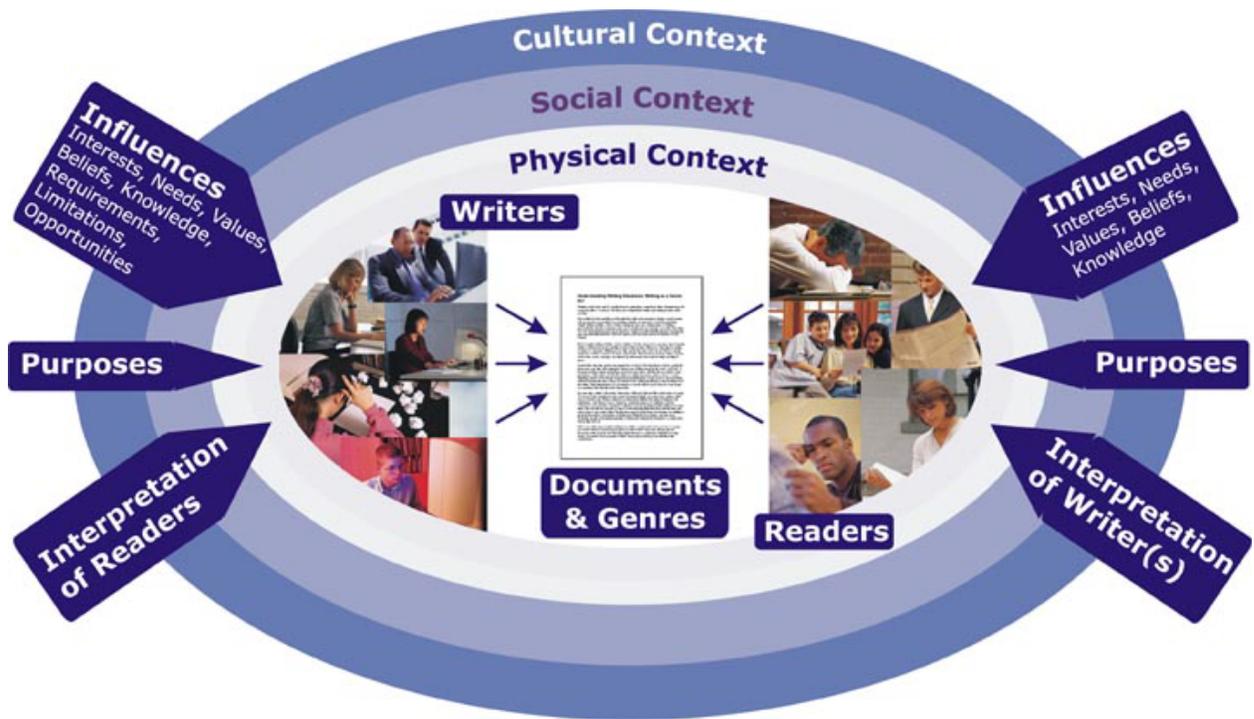
## Required Reading and Assignments

- Read the beginning of the Arguing chapter in the *PHG*, pages 441-455
- Read the Arguing writing guide on Writing@CSU
- Draft a claim for your argument and post it to the SyllaBase Class Discussion Forum
- Read and respond to the claim posted above and below your own. Is it clear narrow and debatable? What advice can you give to improve the writer's claim?
- Read a sample (from the appendix) of a Context and Audience Analysis applied to a single publication. As a class or in groups, have students discuss the effectiveness of the sample and ask them to explain how it would need to be altered for the demands of the comparison they're being asked to do. The goal is to set a standard for the Context Comparison (since too many students will skim over the questions without enough thought if you don't set a high expectation). Emphasize that students will need to do substantial research in order to succeed on this assignment. Their efforts here will contribute to their success with the final argumentative essay.
- Do investigation into publications for the Context Comparison (due Week 11).
- Read and clip editorials and op-ed pieces as well as graphics and visuals from the *Times* with a goal of including 10 Editorials/Op-Ed pieces and 10 examples of visual storytelling or argumentation. Begin analyzing the editorial/op-ed pieces for argumentative elements and structures. Also, as you search the *Times* for examples of visual argumentation and story development, ask yourself: How does this visual enhance or alter my understanding of the story? What message do I take from it? How does my interpretation differ from others' interpretations? Connect visuals to the current assignment, asking yourself whether tables, graphs,

photos, etc. would be useful and appropriate argumentative tools for the publication you have in mind.

## Resources

### Review The Writing Situation Model:



Key points from the Writing Situation Model: Be sure to cover the following points (in whatever order feels right for you):

- ! Writers have purposes for writing
- ! These purposes usually emerge from the writer's cultural or social context (something happens outside the writer that creates a need to write - something to respond to)
- ! Writers make choices based on the context they are writing for (writing a letter home to your parents asking for money is a different than writing a letter to an organization to ask for contributions for a good cause). Therefore, different contexts will pose different requirements, limitations, and opportunities for a writer.
- ! In addition to context, writers also need to think about readers.
- ! Readers have various needs and interests, which are likewise determined by their contexts (their background, environment and experience).

- In order to communicate effectively, a writer must anticipate what their readers' needs and interests are.
- Cultural and social contexts shape the writing situation, acting on both writers and readers. Key elements of cultural context include language/media, government, shared values and beliefs, historical events. Key elements of social context include organizations, universities, schools, churches, businesses, environmental groups; family, friends, and neighbors; local events and traditions; community concerns (such as planning for growth along the Front Range).

**Introduce The “Great Circle of Writing” Model:** This model helps students see the shift in their roles as writers that takes place as they join, learn about, and now contribute to a conversation about a publicly debated issue.

1. We begin by reading individual texts and understanding the ideas and information within them.

3. Eventually, we offer our own contribution to the conversation. Our text becomes something that other members of the conversation read and attempt to fit into their larger understanding of the conversation.



2. As we learn more about the conversation – as we read more and more texts – we begin to understand the conversation in terms of approaches and the purposes, readers' needs and interests, and contexts and events that shape them.

Points to bring up about the Great Circle of Writing Model:

- We begin as readers who encounter texts as a way to learn
- and explore what is happening culturally and socially. (Portfolio 1)
- Then, we become informed readers - drawn to certain specific
- issues that we want to learn more about. That is, we became accountable members of the conversation. (Portfolio 2)
- We read and research various texts to locate the "conversation" that surrounds the issue we're interested in (find out what groups or individuals, who are active in writing about the issue, are saying). (Portfolio 2)

- Then, we analyze these texts to figure out how they are shaped by cultural and social influences. And in turn, we consider how the texts that get produced are shaping society and culture. (Portfolio 2)
- Once we've critically examined the existing viewpoints on an issue, we become critical thinkers and informed writers. We then use our observations and critical thinking skills to construct new arguments. (Portfolio 3)
- We write our own arguments for public discourse (a specific group of readers in society) in the hope that our opinions and views will influence society and culture. (Portfolio 3)
- Through this process, we become active participants in society and culture. (Portfolio 3)

**Sample Brainstorming Activity for Developing Claims and Arguments:** The goal of this activity is to help students formulate possible arguments and claims for their issue. This activity takes place in front of the class using the white board. Lead students through one of the following strategies.

**Strategy 1:** Answer the question that you explored in Portfolio II to form an argument for Portfolio 3. For example:

If your research question for Portfolio II was:

> *Who is responsible for intervening when child abuse is suspected?*

Your argumentative claim for Portfolio III might be:

> *The government needs to impose stricter laws to deter child abuse.*

OR

> *Teachers need to play a more active role in preventing child abuse.*

**Strategy 2:** Brainstorm possible arguments by describing which parts of your issue you feel most strongly about. Then, imagine that you were involved in a conversation surrounding these aspects with some friends; what viewpoints might you offer? Which positions would you agree/disagree with? What overall arguments would you make?

**Discuss Audience and Context for Arguments:** Use this activity to model approaches to choosing a context and audience for the first arguing essay. Ask two or three students to put their claims up on the board (ask for volunteers - try pitching it as "free help" with their essay). Then, check to see if these claims are narrow and debatable. If they aren't, have students revise them to meet this criterion. If they are, use them as models for argumentation. Ask the class to brainstorm a list of possible audiences for each claim.

Use these points as a guide for this discussion:

- Look at the claim and ask - who needs to hear this argument?
- Who would be most interested in this argument?
- Who would be the most realistic audience to target (those who would actually read it and be affected by it)?

- Discuss how the argument would look differently based on each group of readers and their various needs and interests.
- Where might these different readers encounter this argument? Where would they be likely to read about it? (If students have difficulty generating specific contexts, tell them they'll need to do more research in this area to find out which contexts are available. One way to do learn about contexts is to look back at the journals they encountered when researching their issues in Portfolio II. Also, tell them to do some topic searches to find out where their issue is being talked about).

After discussing these points, shift the discussion to an analysis of the Editorial page of the *New York Times*.

- Bring in a few examples of the editorial and op-ed pages and discuss them
- What shifts in thinking will you as a writer be required to do when considering the well
- educated, often urban, but largely inclusive audience of the *Times*?
- What portion of this argument is most relevant to the population of tax payers, informed citizens, educated adults, and active voters such as generally read the *Times*?
- Why is it important that such an audience be made to understand the issue as you do?
- What kind of background information might this audience require that the first audience did not?
- What kind of result might you hope to accomplish with this audience—to convince them of some principle or to persuade them toward some action?

**Help students understand how to analyze a target publication.** They will need to select a publication to target for their argument (If possible avoid general news sources such as *TIME* and *Newsweek* as well as *the Coloradoan*, and the *Collegian*. A scholarly publication such as *College English*, various professional or trade publication, even Web sites, would be better. Emphasize that you want them to showcase their talents by selecting a publication that is unlike the *Times* Editorial context they'll use for the second arguing essay). To select an appropriate publication, they should review and, ultimately, subject likely candidates to a careful analysis. The results of the analysis will provide them with enough information to help them determine whether the publication is appropriate for their writing situation. A good place to start would be to examine sources cited in the News and Issue Analysis. Analyzing the targeted publication will also provide students with insights into the typical organization, layout, and types of evidence used by articles in the publication. When you assign the activity to help students conduct this analysis, stress that they should also be aware of the use of visuals in the publication, since graphics often play an important role in conveying information and ideas to readers.

## Assignment

- Read the “Analyzing a Publication Tutorial” in the CO150 Room on Writing@CSU .
- Assign “Comparison and Contrast” in the PHG, pages 254-55 and page 370. Note that you DO NOT need to follow the development of a typical comparison/contrast paper to complete the Context Comparison successfully. However, it is helpful to see how comparison analysis is conducted.
- Assign each student to select and analyze one graphic that’s used in the PHG and one graphic they find in the *Times*. Have them bring their examples to class, ready to explain them.

## **Week 11: Monday, November 3 - Friday, November 7**

### **Goals for this Week**

- Collect the Context Comparison
- Help students understand the basics of structuring an argument by assigning the *PHG* reading on structuring arguments on pages 484 – 488. You might consider creating an overhead based on pages 486-487 and leading your students in a discussion of the pros and cons of each organizational strategy. You can emphasize that arguments take many shapes and that there is no single "correct" way to structure an argument. A thesis or a "map" helps readers see where an argument is heading. Acknowledging and responding to opposing arguments shows that a writer is more credible and informed on their issue. Using narration provides a context or background to illustrate what the writer is responding to in society or culture. All of these elements are important aspects of argumentation, but the writer must decide where and when it is best to use them. You may also want to reinforce that a writer needs both reasons and evidence (research) to support their claims. Providing specific evidence accounts for much of the development of an essay.
- Discuss research strategies and organization. See Resources, below.
- Review sample arguments about publicly debated issues. Here's a good opportunity for students to pull out those Editorial and Op-Ed pieces they're collecting. They should also look at different kinds of arguments as well, however. During the review, ask students to identify the writer's overall claim, to break the argument into parts and describe what the writer is doing in each part of the argument, to identify and evaluate (in terms of the writing situation model) the overall organization of the argument, and to evaluate the writer's use of evidence. In carrying out this review, you might decide to use a "Backwards Outline," a technique designed to help us dissect arguments and examine their parts or structure. Many students complain that this activity "hurts their brains," but don't forget they're paying us to make them think. (To learn more about backwards outlines, see Resources, below.)
- Review the use of graphics at the start of chapters in the *PHG* and share photos and graphics collected from the *NYT*.
- Sign up for conferences

### **Connection to Course Goals**

The objective this week is to help students think about organizing and developing their arguments. By looking at sample arguments and discussing such things as claims, reasons, evidence, narration, and opposing arguments, students will begin to see that there are many approaches to writing arguments. (Remember that you have a steady supply of arguments in the Editorial/Op-Ed pages of the *Times*.) We want to show

students that there is no single correct way to organize or develop an argument. Rather, the effectiveness of an argument depends on the choices a writer makes in response to his/her audience and context. The integration of analysis of graphics from the NYT also helps students to see that visual rhetoric is an important tool for developing stories/arguments, although an overall message is not easily controlled.

## Required Reading and Assignments

- Read "Outlines for Arguments" and "Developing Arguments" page 487- 488 in *PHG*.
- Design an assignment where students read two or three arguments (from the *PHG*, from the Web, and/or from the NYT). Use these samples in class to discuss how each writer makes different choices about structure and development based on their purpose, audience, and context. Most of this can be covered during class, but assign two or three questions for students to think about or respond to when reading each essay. This will encourage critical thinking and promote more discussion. The questions on page 482 in the *PHG* can be adapted for just about any essay to meet the goals of this activity. The arguments available in the *PHG* include: "The Internet: A Clear and Present Danger?" by Cathleen A. Cleaver page 458; "The Damnation of A Canyon" by Edward Abbey page 464; the capital punishment series: "Death and Justice" by Edward Koch page 472; "Death Be Not Proud" by Robert Badinter page 477; and "Death and Justice" by John O'Sullivan page 479. If you are using two or more of the "Death Penalty" essays, consider also assigning the introduction on page 471. Also, in the questions section following the readings, you can find Internet addresses for other related arguments.

## Resources

**Review strategies for developing introductions, conclusions, and “middles” of arguments:** Prepare a lecture, discussion or activity where you review the following strategies for developing and organizing different parts of an argument. If you prepare a lecture, we suggest that you ask students to take notes.

### Writing Introductions

Review the types of strategies for creating introductions (also, see page 314 - 316 in the *PHG* for additional help with writing lead-ins and introductions):

- **State the Topic:** Come right out and say it. Tell your readers what your topic is, what the issue/conversation is you are focusing on, and what your argument aims to do.
- **Define Your Argument:** If your readers are familiar with disagreements among authors contributing to your conversation, you can get right to your main point—what you think should be done about the issue or what you think they should know about it. In other words, you can introduce your argument by leading with your thesis statement. By using your thesis statement in your introduction, you can let your readers know, for example, whether you are explaining something, making an argument to convince them of your points, offering a solution to a problem, etc...

- **Define a Problem:** Depending on how you define a problem, you'll call attention to different solutions. There's a tremendous difference, for instance, between saying, "We have a problem with education: our teachers are not prepared to teach the skills needed in the 21st century" and "We have a problem with education: our students can't learn the skills needed in the 21st century."
- **Ask a Question:** Asking a question invites your readers to become participants in the conversation you've joined by considering solutions to a problem or rethinking approaches to an issue or problem. **Tell a Story:** Everyone loves a story, assuming it's told well and has a relevant point. Featured writer Patrick Crossland began his research project with a story about his brother Caleb, a senior in high school and a star wrestler who was beginning the process of applying to colleges and universities.
- **Provide a Historical Account:** Historical accounts can help your readers understand the origins of a particular situation, how the situation has changed over time, and how it has affected people.
- **Lead with a Quotation:** A quotation allows your readers to hear about the issue under discussion from someone who knows it well or has been affected by it. You can select a quotation that poses a question, defines a problem, or tells a story. You can also use quotations to provide a historical perspective.
- **Review the Situation:** You can provide a brief review of the situation, drawing on other sources or on your own synthesis of information about the issue. A brief review can be combined with other strategies, such as asking a question, defining a problem, or defining your argument.

### Writing Conclusions

Introduce strategies for concluding an essay:

- **Sum Up Your Argument:** Offer a summary of the argument you've made in your document.
- **Offer Additional Analysis:** Extend your analysis of the issue by offering additional insights.
- **Speculate about the Future:** Reflect on what might happen next.
- **Close with a Quotation:** Select a quotation that does one of the following:
  - sums up the points you've made in your document
  - points to the future of the issue
  - suggests a solution to a problem
  - illustrates what you would like to see happen
- **Close with a Story:** Tell a story about the issue you've discussed in your document. The story might suggest a potential solution to the problem, offer hope about a desired outcome, or illustrate what might happen if a desired outcome doesn't come to pass.

- **Link to Your Introduction:** This technique is sometimes called a “bookends” approach, since it positions your introduction and conclusion as related “ends” of your document. The basic idea is to turn your conclusion into an extension of your introduction:
  - If your introduction used a quotation, end with a related quotation or respond to the quotation.
  - If your introduction used a story, extend that story or retell it with a different ending.
  - If your introduction asked a question, answer the question, restate the question, or ask a new question.
  - If your introduction defined a problem, provide a solution to the problem, restate the problem, or suggest that readers need to move on to a new problem.

### Using Illustrations/Graphics/Visuals

Find a few examples (from the NYT, magazines or Web sites) to illustrate how some writers use illustrations to support their arguments. Pass these around in class:

- Images (photos, drawings, animations, video, audio)
- Tables
- Lists
- Charts and Graphs

Ask students to bring in examples from the *Times* that they’ve collected, plus other examples of graphics. Refer to the PHG intro-to-chapter pages and discuss their possible meanings/interpretations. Ask students to brainstorm options for incorporating visual elements into their papers. They might think of something as complex as creating a table to display data or something as simple as a bulleted list to simplify a complex set of solutions, for instance, for a reader.

### Writing Narration

Consider where your argument fits into the larger, ongoing discussion about your issue. Then, provide some setting to show readers what you're responding to so that your essay isn't floating in space. The narration can be personal (a story that you've experienced) cultural (recent trends in society, or a speech or text that you're responding to) or political (recent government-supported actions). By connecting your issue to a something concrete, readers will realize its significance and see the reason for your argument.

### Organizing Research

- Label and group your notes and sources using one or a combination of these methods:
  - chronological order
  - cause > effect
  - beneath multiple approaches or viewpoints
  - compare and contrast

- strengths and weaknesses
- problems and solutions
- Brainstorm connections between your purpose, your claim, your reasons and your evidence and group these ideas accordingly
- Cluster or create a visual scheme where you sketch out the relationships between your claim, your reason and your evidence.
- Consider your audience. What reasons and evidence should they hear first? What reasons and evidence should you save for later? Will they be able to follow your organization given what they know about your issue? How much narration or background will they need? What structure lends itself to the greater focus and coherency?
- Write out a very rough draft and then read through it, drawing lines between related ideas. Use scissors to cut up your draft and try rearranging paragraphs in various orders on the floor. Also, try looking at the argument from the POV of your readers and ask, which order seems most logical and fitting to their needs and interests?

### **Finding Substantial Evidence**

You have already completed research to gain an understanding of the ongoing "conversation" about your particular issue, and to identify the range of positions on the issue. Now you'll need to do further research to 1.) consider the range of opposing arguments for your own argument and 2.) find substantial evidence to support your overall claim and sub claims. Use the following strategies to locate further research.

- Review the library handout (on your own time) and continue to search online databases.
- Find periodicals: Here are some of the magazines (beyond more general-audience magazines such as *Newsweek* and *U.S. News and World Report*) that may offer articles on important current issues:

*Harper's*

*Atlantic Monthly*

*New Republic*

*National Review*

*Utne Reader*

*The Humanist*

*Independent*

*The Economist*

*The Nation*

*Business Week*

*The Christian Science Monitor*

*Scientific American*

Note that this list is by no means comprehensive

- Consult reference texts: Reference texts provide statistics, facts, definitions, demographic, and other useful types of information. You may find them useful especially early in the process of researching your topic.
- Use live sources. Talk with friends, family, and teachers but also think of ways to use the web to find live sources (i.e. discussion forums, chat-rooms, using schools' web sites if the research involves schools, etc.). Also, briefly consider how live sources

might be useful as evidence for the paper, given the target audience and context for your argument.

### **Using different Arguing Approaches** (from PHG - more traditional vs. Rogerian)

This discussion should give students more of a sense of the different approaches or strategies available to them beyond traditional argumentative methods. Emphasize to students that their argument doesn't have to be completely traditional or Rogerian. Instead, they might use Rogerian techniques for the most sensitive points in an argument that is otherwise more traditional.

**Engage Students in a Backwards Outline Analysis:** This activity can easily be applied to the newspapers they brought with them to class. On a sheet of paper, (or on the board) write down the author's main claim or the controlling idea in the essay. Divide the rest of the paper (or board) into three columns. Then complete the following tasks, one by one:

- In the left-hand column, write a brief summary of the content and purpose of each paragraph (e.g. Suzy Q example to support argument about body image). If there are two distinct ideas or purposes in the paragraph, write a brief phrase for each.
- In the middle column, write a sentence that explains the connection between what this paragraph says/does and the overall claim at the top. If you don't know or it isn't clear, write a question mark.
- In the third column, write a sentence that explains the connection between the paragraphs (i.e. paragraph one and paragraph two; paragraph two and paragraph three, and so on). If there is no clear connection, put a question mark in the third column.

\*This backwards outline activity could easily be applied to an editorial from the *New York Times*. Have students bring yesterday's (or today's--if you're not afraid to take on a "brand new" article) newspaper and apply the concept. The advantage here is that everyone will have the document and everyone will have more or less the same amount of time to prepare—which is to say, not much time at all! This may be an excellent opportunity for students to see that they can readily apply their new skills (at analyzing arguments) to current articles.

## **Week 12: Monday, November 10 - Friday, November 14**

**Note:** As you design your lesson plans for this week, consider how best to help your students prepare for the final few weeks of writing the first arguing essay. Mix work with pleasure by emphasizing key points about argument while integrating engaging activities such as the appeals activity described below. You are encouraged to use your creativity to design an interactive activity regarding logical fallacies (or see the Activity Bank for ideas) as energy may be low; you can expect that the cumulative effects of the semester will begin to take their toll now (if they haven't already) on both students and instructors. Urge students to see it through and to get as much work done now as possible; after they return from Thanksgiving break, not only will their attention have been diverted but other final requirements in courses will begin to kick in.

Keep connecting lesson, portfolio, and course goals.

### **Goals and Options for this Week**

- Help students understand the implications of their publication analysis activities for their selection of a target publication and for the writing and design of their arguments
- Discuss the use of argumentative appeals
- Discuss logical fallacies
- Keep discussing *New York Times* editorials and op-ed pages, use of visuals, as well as any current events of particular interest or (especially) related to student topics. Keep student engaged in the issues of our day.
- Meet with students in conference or arrange for online or email conferencing so that you can gauge their progress and thwart any impending paper disasters

### **Connection to Course Goals**

The activities this week continue to build student understanding of argumentative principles while keeping them focused on the publication/context analysis.

### **Required Reading and Homework Assignments**

- Read about types of appeals on page 448 - 452 in the *PHG* and Rogerian arguments on page 452 – 455. For additional information on appeals, consult the Arguing writing guide on Writing@CSU.
- Write a 2 - 3 paragraph appeal for your argument. This can serve as the introduction to your argument, or as draft work to be incorporated into the argument later on. At the top, write down who your audience is and post your appeal to the SyllaBase Class Discussion Forum.

- Read the appeal posted above and below your own. Provide a paragraph response telling the writer what is working with their appeal (be sure to consider their audience) and what improvements could be made.
- Read about logical fallacies on page 492 - 494 in the *PHG*. One idea for getting fallacies on the table is to ask students to write the most outrageous examples they can imagine (the worse, the better). Require, for instance, the writing of 4-5 highly unlikely examples that *could* occur in an argument on their issue. These might also be posted and responded to on Syllabase—or you could have students role play an argument in which one or both parties scripted such fallacies into their debate with one another. Have fun with this one.

**Schedule Individual Conferences:** You may wish to spend 10 minutes or so with each student this week. During the conferences, focus on these main concerns:

- Do they have a focused, debatable overall claim?
- Do they have a clear sense of why they're writing on this issue in the first place?
- Do they have a clear sense of purpose in why they're writing their argument for their defined audiences? Does the claim fit the purpose?
- Are the audience, purpose and focus they've identified for arguing essay 1 coherent?
- Do they understand what evidence they'll need to support their sub-claims? What types of evidence do they plan to use? What evidence do they already have that can work?

**Assign Work on Appeals and Logical Fallacies:** Learning to write appeals and to avoid logical fallacies will help students construct effective arguments. Such learning also serves the larger course goal of developing critical thinking skills.

To use appeals effectively, writers must have a strong sense of who their readers are. Encourage students to read and analyze the use of appeals in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter From Birmingham Jail," located on pages 451-452. Discuss with students why "persuasive" argument (requesting action) requires much more use of appeals than does "convincing" argument (requesting only that readers "entertain or accept the idea").

To avoid fallacies in argumentation, writers must critically examine their claims to ensure that they are being thorough, thoughtful, and fair. Students should understand that a writer shows respect for his or her readers by avoiding prejudice and preposterous reasoning. A certain way to demonstrate disdain for a reader is to interject fallacy.

## Resources

### Where to Look for Appeals:

- Product labels (from shampoo bottles, skin creams, hair products, fancy beverages like Odwalla, food items, etc...)
- Letters asking for donations (environmental groups, politicians, local clubs...)
- Advertisements and full-page coupons\*
- Bribe mail from phone, internet and credit card companies

- Web-sites
- Arguments found on line or in texts

Note: *The New York Times* is a good resource for ads. Students may enjoy analyzing the advertising that is done by a national newspaper whose readership is largely located in a well-heeled and quite provincial urban center like New York City.

**A Group Activity for Helping Students Analyze Appeals:** Have students break into small groups (3-4) and give each group one or two sample appeals to look at. Put the following questions on an overhead for each group to address:

- What is the writer's purpose?
- Who is the target audience?
- What types of appeals do they use?
- Are these appeals effective? Why or why not?
- Do these appeals accurately represent a product or a situation? Are they fair to use? Why or why not?
- What could the writers do to improve their use of appeals?

Allow each group 3 minutes to share their sample text and present some of their findings to the class. After all groups have finished presenting, emphasize that writers *should* use appeals to make effective arguments, but that they should also respect their readers and use the appeals fairly to represent their points (not to distort reality).

**A Role Play Activity to Practice Using Appeals:** Use this activity to get students thinking about how to appeal to an audience to meet a specific purpose. First, prepare five different tasks that require students to develop appeals. Print the tasks out and cut them into separate strips to distribute in class.

Sample Tasks:

- Persuade your parents to give you \$3,000 to start your own T-Shirt business
- Persuade your landlord to let you have a pet goat
- Persuade your best friend to go on a date with your 34 year old cousin

Then, break students into small groups (4 - 5) and have each group choose one strip at random. Once students have their strips, explain the following:

"Your group task is written on this slip of paper. Your group will have 10 minutes to develop an argument to persuade the rest of the class to act on. Someone from your group will then read your task to the class (the class will role play the designated audience) and you will have 5 - 7 minutes to present your argument as a group.

Afterwards, the class will decide if your use of appeals was strong enough to persuade us to act on your argument. Be sure to anticipate opposing arguments along the way (as some of your peers may raise questions and objections to your claims). While developing

appeals, also consider what your audience will value most. What are their needs and interests and how can you respond to these?"

Give students 10 minutes to prepare arguments before presenting. Tell students that they are free to add some inventive material to their situation (e.g. your cousin just got out of jail and he's feeling very low about himself - he needs a girlfriend to make him feel better). After each group presents, ask the class which parts of the argument were most effective, and which of the appeals worked best. Tell students to keep these observations in mind when writing appeals for their own arguments.

**Finally, develop an activity to demonstrate logical fallacies** or to test their understanding of the differences between the fallacy types. In addition to the ideas stated at the beginning of this lesson, you can find additional ideas in the Activity Bank. Letters to the editor often provide remarkable (often, remarkably awful) examples of logical fallacies. Perhaps review the *Collegian* or *Coloradoan* letters for fallacies.

## **Week 13: Monday, November 17 - Friday, November 21**

### **Goals for this Week**

- Provide students with an opportunity to evaluate sample argumentative essays, including examples from the NYT.
- Discuss sample essays. As you do so, ensure that students understand that sample essays are not models for writing, but that they serve as vehicles for discussing the choices writers make in response to their writing situations. You can use:
  - samples from the NYT Editorial and Op-Ed pages
  - samples from the PHG
  - sample essay(s) from the appendix
  - find/create your own—perhaps providing an online link via Syllabase so that students print out their copies at home and read them before class

To facilitate the discussion, you can place the arguments on an overhead or have students examine the essays in groups and report back to the class with their findings. You'll find an expanded discussion of strategies for meeting this goal in "Planning to Model or Critique Student Samples" located in the teaching guide *Planning a Class on Writing@CSU*.

- Use Backward Outlining (see Week 11 class plans or consult the appendix for clarification of backward outlining) to examine the structure of the sample arguments
- Review the goals and expectations for the arguing essay.
- Spend time in class writing argumentative briefs
- Peer Review of argumentative briefs
- Discuss the optional use of illustrations to enhance arguments and to conform to a target publication. See the discussion of this issue under Connection to Course Goals, below.

### **Connection to Course Goals**

As Thanksgiving and the end of the course begin to loom, try to keep your students as much on task as possible. Many a student has “flaked out” at this late stage, and that tragedy can often be prevented by your attentiveness at this stage to signs of resignation, exhaustion, and withdrawal. While you are under no obligation to provide “mothering,” you expend little and possibly avoid a lot of later complications by simply indicating your concern and awareness of their attendance and conscientious completion of assignments. Often, for instance, a sudden pattern of sloppiness on the part of an otherwise good student can be called to their attention (and corrected) with just a simple question. Also, a quick whole-class email that provides a little cheerleading at this point can do some good.

You might point out that the more they get done now, the less they'll have to do over the break. Some will be delighted to have the break to work on their papers, while others will resent having any work at all. Remind them that the Portfolio is due at the end of the week they return from break. Also, since you are preparing them to work independently over the break, you'll need to make sure that they have a solid argument plan before they leave. The argumentative brief is an effective way of ensuring that every student has (at least) an outline of the essay before leaving campus. Among other things, this outline is a good hedge against writer's block, tendencies to procrastinate, and even the kind of forgetting that can occur when students make a break from campus and academics for over a week.

The activities for this week emphasize

- the importance of ongoing revision during the writing process
- the development of an argumentative brief
- the use of illustrations (charts, graphs, images, animations, video, etc.) as persuasive and informative devices

**In terms of revising**, your overall goal is to help students understand that writing continues even after they've completed their first draft. It would be ideal if they began to see and value the improvements made during this process of rewriting.

**In terms of argumentative briefs and doing a peer review of the brief**, your goal here is to help students see that they can block out their arguments (and play with organization and development) before they draft. The brief makes an argument visible while also offering high levels of flexibility for easy revision before whole paragraphs are committed. Argument briefs are most effective if written in full sentence form, compelling the writer to assert his or her argument points (thesis, reasons, and evidence). At the conclusion of this lesson plan, please find an example you could use with students.

**In terms of illustrations**, your goal is to expand students' understanding of "evidence." Students should understand that, in addition to such devices as paraphrases and quotations, they can draw on a wide range of illustrations, tables, charts, and so on to support their arguments. If they have been collecting samples of graphics from the NYT during this section of the course, they should be in good shape to understand and discuss the role of visuals in making points and supplementing arguments. Have them bring examples to class and bring your own as well.

## Required Reading and Assignments

Students should be working hard to supplement their sources, to plan their arguments, and to integrate all they've learned about argumentative principles and writing for specific contexts. Their homework over the Thanksgiving break is to return with a solid draft that is ready to be workshopped on the first day back. No further reading, beyond their own research, the sample essays and their peers' argument briefs, should be assigned at this point. The NYT will not be delivered during the fall break.

## Sample Argumentative Brief

**Essay Title (Working):** Return the Right to Forego Treatment of Neonates to Parents and Their Physicians

**Thesis:** The decision whether to treat or not treat a neonate with a serious medical condition, when combined with significant handicaps and abnormalities, should be left to the parents' discretion—supplemented by consultation with a family physician and an ethics board.

- I. Introduction/Background: Neonatology has resulted in remarkable advances in the care of very ill newborns, but the costs of such care are not fully recognized.
  - a. The most significant development in neonatal care after WWII was the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), the capabilities of which have grown steadily since its inception.
  - b. Advancements in medical technology have resulted in babies surviving at ever smaller birth weights.
  - c. The costs associated with care of the very small neonate are often not considered, either from the point of view of immediate family costs or long-term society costs.
  - d. The costs of such care are also measured in terms of the long-term prognosis of surviving babies, which in general is not particularly good since care and illness do not end when sick babies go home.
- II. Legalities and Ethics: Both legal and ethical dilemmas are associated with advances in neonatology.
  - a. It is illegal to deny treatment to any infant.
  - b. However, it is unethical to require treatment for newborns whose prognosis is poor and for whom suffering is inevitable and without end.
  - c. Without reliable data about the long-term effects of many treatments currently available, vegetative “new species of human beings” are being created—at great cost to society, which absorbs the expenses of such care through increased insurance and medical care costs.
- III. Ethics Committees: Ethics committees may offer a reasonable way for hospitals, parents, and physicians to make logical decisions about ill neonates' lives.
  - a. In many places, ethics committees have been developed for helping with decisions about ill neonates.
  - b. Such committees, made up of religious counselors, physicians, nurses, social workers, and legal counsel, exist for the sole purpose of informing parents and usually are without institutional affiliation.
  - c. There is little data (research) to suggest how well these committees are working, and many hospitals do not employ them.

- IV. The Courts: Legislation has eroded local decision-making regarding neonate life decision.
  - a. The 1982 Baby Doe case was a landmark Supreme Court ruling in which The National Right to Life Association petitioned the Courts to allow Baby Doe to be adopted rather than allowed to forego surgery and die, as requested by the parents. Baby Doe died before the case reached conclusion.
  - b. Regulations followed the Baby Doe petition specifically seeking that parents not be allowed to deny their children treatment.
  - c. The receipt of federal funding would be jeopardized if hospitals failed to comply.
  - d. The U.S. Court of Appeals replied saying that Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act was “intended to assure the disabled equality such as housing and employment” and was not intended to address the medical treatment of newborns.
  - e. On October 9, 1984, President Reagan signed a Senate bill which amended the Child Abuse regulations to include non-treatment of neonates as child abuse and neglect.
- V. Physicians and Parents: Both parents of ill neonates and their physicians are frustrated by current laws that prevent their decision-making.
  - a. A survey of pediatricians showed that most doctors believe that current regulations “encourage or require the over-treatment of infants.”
  - b. A survey of parents of ill neonates showed that most believe current regulations cause unnecessary pain and suffering to both neonates and their families.
- VI. Conclusion: Decisions about newborns with poor prognosis should be returned to families and their physicians. Hospitals should seek legal protection by instituting ethics boards comprised of persons without hospital affiliation.

## Week 14: Monday, December 1 - Friday, December 5

### Goals for this Week

- Help students assess the effectiveness of their drafts. Although there are a number of strategies for meeting this goal, consider the “backwards outline” activities found in **Resources**, below.
- Provide students with peer responses to their drafts.
- Help students develop a plan to revise their drafts for submission. To accomplish this goal, ask students to take notes on what they'll need to revise based on the feedback they received from their peers. This will encourage them to think critically about their peers' responses to their writing.
- Provide students with updated information about when to be ready to submit Portfolio 3, specifically at the end of this week. Be sure to remind students that they need to include a cover page with their final essay (describing the writing situation for their essay). Tell them that you will evaluate their argument with their declared writing situation in mind.
- Remind students to include their NYT clippings with their first submission of the portfolio.
- Provide a submission form for students who are interested in publishing in *Talking Back*. Explain that the selection process is competitive.

### Connection to Course Goals

The ability to analyze rhetorical situations and to plan essays that meet the needs of contexts is central to effective communication. Revising or the re-seeing our writing is as much a crucial attitude as it is a skill set, and we hope that students will embrace the notion of revision as they move on from COCC150.

### Required Reading and Assignments

Revise and proofread your first arguing essay draft. Be prepared to hand it in with all process work and portfolio contents on the assigned due date at the end of this week.

### Resources

**Backwards Outline Activity:** The backwards outline activity encourages students to look closely at the organization, focus, and coherence of their essay by considering how each paragraph functions in relation to the overall claim. Students can complete a backwards outline on their own draft or on their peers' drafts. Since the directions for this activity can seem complicated, you might try to lead students through each step verbally (announcing each task and waiting five-to-ten minutes for students to complete the step). However, students should be somewhat familiar with the idea since they have applied it

to a sample essay before the break. The outline below for conducting the Backwards Outline Workshop is a guide. Revise it as you see fit.

### **Backwards Outline Workshop**

Read through your draft once without making any marks. Then re-read it while completing the following steps:

1. On a separate sheet of paper, write down the main claim of the essay. Quote directly from the essay and/or put it in your own words.
2. Then, divide the sheet into three columns.
3. In the left hand column, number and summarize what each paragraph says. If there is more than one idea in the paragraph, list the ideas as separate points.
4. Review the list in the left-hand column and see if similar things show up in different parts of the draft. (e.g. Are both #2 and #8 examples that prove the same point? Do #4 and #7 bring up the same example?) If so, suggest some possible reorganizations on the reverse side of your outline (and/or on another sheet of paper).
5. In the middle-column, write a sentence that summarizes the connection you see between what each paragraph does and the overall claim at the top of the page. If you can't see a connection, put a question mark in the column.
6. Look back to see if each connection is made obvious in the draft itself. Under each connection you've written, make a note of "obvious" or "not obvious".
7. In the third column, write down connection you see between each paragraph (e.g. between paragraph one and paragraph two, between paragraph two and paragraph three, and so on). If you can't see a connection, put a question mark in the column.
8. For those paragraphs where you could see a connection, go back and examine the draft to see if the author has provided a transition for the reader explaining this connection. Mark each connection you listed with a note of "transition" or "no transition."
9. Based on your analysis of the organization and coherence of this essay, make suggestions about how to re-organize and where stronger connections are needed. In your suggestions, be sure to consider whether any lack of clarity in organization, coherence, or evidence may result from the claim itself (i.e. ask whether the organization is hard to follow because the claim is trying to prove too much).
10. Finally, re-examine the draft one more time for evidence and provide suggestions about where more examples or proof are needed to support the argument.

## Week 15: Monday, December 8 - Friday, December 12

Return the Portfolio 3 folder not later than the last class day, and explain at the beginning of this week that the final requirement for the course will be turned in during the assigned final exam period but worked on in class during this last week. Clarify that students will be expected to bring their folder and complete a substantial postscript for the portfolio and the course at the time of the final exam.

The second arguing essay will be worth 15% of their overall course grade, completing the 35% associated with Portfolio 3. To complete the second argument they **MUST** deeply (*globally*) revise their first arguing essay. Week 15 should be devoted to in-class drafting. Treat the last week as a writing lab. Expect students to attend.

Their final essay for the course, turned in at the time of the final exam, involves a revision of the first Portfolio 3 argument to make it suitable for a new context—the Editorial page of the *New York Times*. First, remind them of what the Editorial columns do. Just as the Op-Ed page doesn't mean “the opposite page” but rather constitutes an argumentative piece in opposition to a published editorial so too “editorial” is not the province of the editor of the newspaper. Rather, people who are “in the know” are invited to write editorials. Pretend that you have been so invited to write on this issue because you've become quite knowledgeable about it. Your assignment from the *New York Times* is to write an editorial that meets the interests and needs of that audience, while also meeting the *Times* Editorial length and style conventions. **Remind students to submit their whole Portfolio 3 folder at the final exam.**

Class time this week should focus on the development of revision plans, on seeing texts as flexible documents, and on using their skills at analyzing the audience and conventions of the Editorial page. They should make their final product as much like a *New York Times* Editorial piece as possible.

Find some time each day this week to discuss some news item from the *Times* and develop an activity that encourages students to continue to read a national newspaper, as opposed to relying solely on TV news. Be sure to allow 25-30 minutes for a review of course goals and completion of student evaluations of the course.

## The COCC150 Final Examination

**Date and Time:** December 16, 11:20 a.m.-1:20 p.m.

Locations to be arranged with Sue Russell approximately mid-term. She will contact instructors by email.

Please note that university rule prohibits graded events of value greater than 10% of the course grade conducted during the last week of classes. Therefore, this examination **MUST** be given during the final exam period.

The final examination asks students to write an extensive postscript to both the final arguing essay and the course. Remind students that they must submit (resubmit) their entire Portfolio 3 at the time of the final.

First, students will write a postscript to Portfolio 3 by annotating their Editorials. The annotations should identify and explain the changes they have made from the first arguing essay. Indicate to students the number of annotations you expect (probably not fewer than a half dozen) and the level of discussion or explanation.

Second, students should answer a reflective question or two about the course theme of writing as a “situated” or context-bound activity. These questions should probe their understanding of the importance of purpose and audience to effective writing.

Third, students should be asked to reflect on an especially controversial national news issue they saw emerging over the past 15 weeks as they read the *New York Times*. This topic should be a different issue than the one they discussed in Portfolios 2 and 3. Ask them to discuss the ways that this national debate exposed differences in values, beliefs, affiliations, attitudes, and/or perspectives held by U. S. citizens.