A Short Guide to

Improving Student Speaking And Writing

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A Note to Readers:

This guide was written to assist faculty in all disciplines in using writing and speaking activities to improve content learning and to foster good communications skills.

There are two good reasons for infusing all courses with communication activities. First is the connection between speaking, writing, and thinking. Research shows that critical and creative thinking, as well as content retention, increase dramatically when active learning approaches are used—and the vast majority of active learning activities involve speaking and writing. Second is the importance of effective speaking and writing to both academic and professional success. The University of Arizona is committed to graduating students able "to write and speak effectively in the expression of disciplined thought."

Since speaking and writing are critical to academic success, all faculty can draw on their own experience to teach good communication. Since clear thought and clear expression are closely related, improving student expression is fundamental to teaching any subject.

Chapter 2 focuses on ungraded writing activities that can be used to enrich classes of all sizes. Chapter 3 addresses writing's traditional use as a tool of assessment, offering suggestions for designing and commenting on graded assignments along with ideas for simplifying grading. Chapter 4 provides suggestions and resources for helping students improve, while Chapter 5 deals with graded and ungraded speaking activities.

In attempting to offer something for everyone in the most abridged format possible, I may have omitted topics or concerns of yours, or dealt with them too briefly. Discussion of discipline-specific discourse conventions and interdisciplinary differences among documents have been ignored in the interest of providing generally useful ideas. If you have suggested additions, or would like to provide an appendix relating to writing and speaking in your discipline, please let me know. I hope to include online resources in a future edition, and would particularly welcome information about discipline-specific online resources. I also invite readers to send me information about books and articles they have found helpful, for inclusion in future editions.

At the time this *Guide* was written, I was a part-time member of the University Composition Board. I would like to thank the Board for providing invaluable suggestions and support. I would especially like to thank Board members Marvin Diogenes, Anne-Marie Hall, and Yvonne Merrill for both substantive and editorial assistance. University of Arizona faculty members Elizabeth Harrison, Tom Miller, Ken Mylrea, John Warnock, and others read early versions and contributed greatly to improving the *Guide*.

Many of the ideas presented in the *Guide* have come out of the Writing Across the Curriculum movement of the past several decades. They are widely used and time-tested. Because these ideas are in wide circulation, it is often hard to exactly pinpoint their original sources. I have cited points of origin when I could. If I've inadvertantly failed to acknowledge original contributions, please let me know.

Rena Berman

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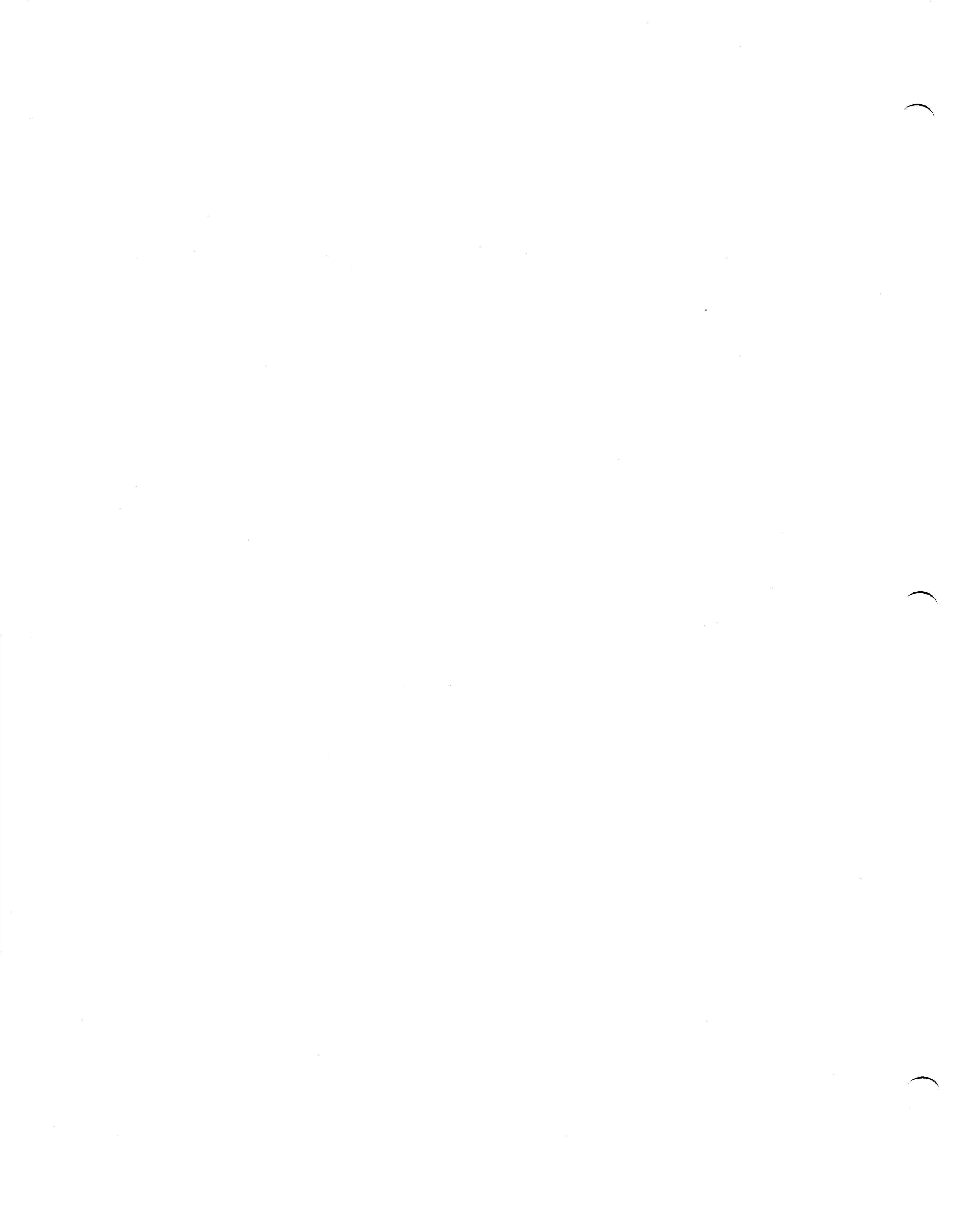
Revised, February 1996.



Chapter 1
Why teach writing and speaking in your classes?

"It's not my job," you say. "I'm here to teach them sociology/classics/chemistry. They should have learned to write in high school/grade school/freshman comp."

The reality is that many students come to our classes with poor writing and presenting skills and we do no one a favor by passing the buck. In fact, professors have complained about students' grammar and punctuation since the last century, which suggests that this is a perennial problem needing to be addressed at this level. Recent studies also show a decline in students' ability to reason in writing, which undoubtedly reflects decreased practice.

Many students spend their formative years watching TV, playing computer games, and talking on the phone. Most have few opportunities to write outside of classes and are clumsy with routine writing tasks as well as ill-equipped for academic research. The first-year writing classes are not enough. Rather than bemoan and ignore this reality, we need to address it squarely.

Writing assignments have dwindled as classes grow larger and as student writing skills deteriorate. A vicious circle sets in where faculty, justifiably refusing to grade large numbers of poorly written essays and research papers, add to the deterioration by failing to provide opportunities for improvement.

Many students are aware that they need help and take advantage of support services like writing centers, Toastmasters groups, and tutors. Some enroll in upper division writing courses. But many students lack time or clear incentive for taking such extra initiative. You can be part of the solution by incorporating writing and presenting activities into all your classes.

This guide gives suggestions and ideas for teaching speaking and writing in ways that enhance learning content. Many of them require little preparation time. Many work well in large classes. They can be used whether or not you yourself enjoy writing or feel proficient as a writer.

The benefits of devoting time in your classes to speaking and writing are these:

- ✔class preparation takes less time
- ✔you get feedback about student understanding
- ✔you're contributing to improved student communication skills (which means easier reading of student writing)
- ✔writing and speaking activities promote active learning—and many studies show that student understanding and retention increase dramatically when active learning approaches are used
- ✔students learn to ask good questions, enumerate alternatives, provide examples, draw conclusions, and state their ideas concisely
- ✔students are better able to assimilate material and locate areas of misunderstanding or uncertainty
- ✔student involvement with the class is greater

Infusing classes with writing and speaking activities may mean that less can be "covered." But studies show that students will understand and retain more of what they do learn, as well as being

more able to apply it in new situations. In fact, learning to communicate is integral to both learning to learn and learning to think, and good communication skills are key to success in life.

The truth is, learning to learn and learning to think are at least as important as learning information. Students will master facts as they need them and forget them just as readily, just as we've all forgotten whole realms of information that we once knew well. The ability to ask good questions, explore alternatives, devise criteria, and make critical judgments will carry over to whatever content areas engage the student. And the prime means of developing these abilities involve speaking and writing.

The good news is that there are many simple techniques you can use to help improve student writing with little or no extra work on your part.

Chapter 2
Ungraded writing activities

People fear and avoid writing partly because so much classroom writing is graded. Put writing in a more positive light by using ungraded writing activities. Sometimes called writing-to-learn activities, these tasks help students learn to ask good questions, enumerate alternatives, provide examples, and draw conclusions. They also give you feedback about how well students understand the course content. Whether or not graded writing assignments are used, writing-to-learn activities can (and should) be a part of every class. Moreover, by providing opportunities for practice, they usually result in students doing better with graded assignments.

Here are some suggestions:

✔***Begin class with a five-minute writing task written on the board or an overhead***. Ask what the most important points in a reading are, what students know about a topic, how they would solve a problem. These tasks neutralize disruptive effects of latecomers and get students actively involved with the course material. Some even show up early for them.

Collect responses and read a few at random. (Or call on students to read them.) On or off the mark, they'll enable you to reinforce knowledge and address areas of misunderstanding.

✔***Get students used to ending a class by writing questions, examples, points of greatest importance, etc***. This allows students to reflect on what they've learned and verbalize what's confusing to them. Many studies show that students retain more if they sum up in writing the main points of a lecture or reading immediately after receiving it. You can collect these responses and get a good idea of what students understand and where they're stuck by reading 15-20 for any size class. (End-of-class response cards can also be used to check attendance if signed, or you can allow them to be submitted anonymously.)

✔***Use in-class writing exercises***. If you think they take up too much time, think again. Studies show that student retention declines dramatically over the course of a lecture, with the most information remembered from the first ten minutes.

This shouldn't be surprising. When people take in new information, they quickly reach overload because they're trying to process what they've just learned while keeping up with the ongoing stream of information. By stopping the flow of information and allowing processing time, you can greatly increase what's remembered from your lectures. In addition, knowing they'll be expected to do this gives students incentive to pay attention.

✔***Ask for one-minute essays***: Lecture for ten to twenty minutes, then pass out index cards and have the students answer one question on each side: What's the most significant thing you learned? What's the most significant question you're left with? At the beginning of a class, ask these questions about homework readings.

✔***Assign microthemes***: have students write brief reviews, summaries, comparisons, and evaluations of articles, theories, etc. Soliciting these on 3x5 cards will force students to be succinct, and you'll have less to read. Learning to "nutshell" or compress ideas helps students get to the heart of an issue and forces them to distinguish pertinent information.

✔***Ask students to provide examples of a concept***. Many times a teacher or textbook will give a number of examples to illustrate a concept and assume its parameters are clear. A better strategy is to elicit examples from students in writing. You'll quickly know whether they've gotten the point and what they aren't understanding.

✔***Ask students to take a position, pro or con***. Have students brainstorm ideas supporting or opposing a position (perhaps one half of the room can take each side). These statements will then form the basis for discussion.

✔***Have students write possible exam questions***. Since many will be usable, this can shorten your exam preparation time. Formulating questions is a good way for students to synthesize what they know, and they're likely to have a more positive attitude toward the exam as well. Learning to ask the right questions is a critical ability for success in any walk of life.

✔***Ask students to describe significant aspects of graphs, charts, tables, etc***. This task ensures that students understand tabular information. Use graphic material in conjunction with writing tasks requiring higher-order thinking skills as well (see page 7).

✔***In math and technical courses, have students describe their problem-solving methods as well as giving solutions.*** Students will learn from each other if they share these descriptions in small groups, as well as giving you clues to where they're getting stuck.

✔***In language classes, have students write words, phrases, and sentences in the target language***. Students will benefit from practicing constructions and trying to express ideas even if they make mistakes.

✔***On the first day of class, and when new topics are introduced, have students write for 5-10 minutes: Everything I know about this subject***. Then have selected students (or everyone, if the class is small enough) offer one idea each, and record the range of their responses. Students can then choose one of the items you wrote on the board and write everything they know about that. This will bring to light possible misconceptions about the subject and enable students to think about how it relates to what they already know.

✔***Share the ways you personally use writing to help you think***. You probably use brainstorming, freewriting, outlining, and other writing strategies as aids to thought. You may not think of these activities as writing, or as practices that need to be taught, but you'll be doing your students a service if you demonstrate them and provide opportunities for trying them. You might also ask students to reflect on and share other writing-to-think strategies.

CAUTION: Don't be disappointed if students don't write good questions/examples/ summaries the first few times you ask them to do it. Help them learn what constitutes a good question by praising good responses and showing how others can be improved. Modeling the appropriate approach and providing feedback to the whole class is often as useful as providing individual responses to student work.

Journals

Journals create an on-going writing activity that has been judged positively by most who've tried them. They're effective because writing helps people think. Many students required to keep journals for courses have been surprised by how much the journal helped them learn, when they looked back over the course.

Journals can be many things, ranging from personal reflections on material related to course content to free-writing on assigned topics to commentary on class notes and problem sets. Students can be told how much to write or left to their own devices. You can use the last five minutes of a class period to have students write their reactions to material presented in class.

Journals can be used a lot or a little in other classroom activities. Journal entries can be a useful source for paper topics, ideas for exam questions, and topics for class discussion. Students usually enjoy sharing journal entries with others. You can comment extensively, occasionally, or not at all on journal entries, and students will still benefit from writing them, especially if you find ways to use them in class. If you write comments, comment on ideas rather than expression or writing mechanics.

Journals used for tracking the progress of a project, theme, or research paper are sometimes called ***learning logs***. Learning logs foster critical thinking and are an effective preventive to the start-the-paper-the-day-before-it's-due syndrome. They're also great sources for ongoing and

future research topics. In a small seminar, they enable you to comment on research progress before the final paper is handed in.

Another variant is the ***dialectical journal***, in which pages are divided into two columns and the second column is used for amplification, questions, and reflections on material in the first column. For example, students can take class notes or notes on library material in the first column, then use the second column for commenting on their notes. This learning strategy encourages active review.

At the end of the semester, ask students to provide an introduction and table of contents for their journals before handing them in. This helps them overview their progress with the subject over the semester.

Icosy and Listservs

Consider using a computer conference to communicate with the class and to enable students to communicate with each other. Icosy is a simple system available through CCIT to students and faculty. You can learn about developing an icosy conference by calling Nancy Penn at 621-6699. Or, you can create a listserv for the class and communicate via email. Call CCIT at 621-HELP for assistance with this.

Because email and icosy arewritten media, students automatically hone their writing by using them. Set a good example by being careful about grammar, spelling and punctuation, and encourage students to edit their communications before sending them. Because their written words will be very public, they're likely to pay attention. Electronic media provide a wonderful way for students to express and share their ideas and problems. Don't worry about having to spend undue time responding—most of the time, they'll answer each other. Many students will get involved who remain silent and anonymous in class.

You can also use ICOSY and email to enable students to share written work, including responses to readings, annotations, proposals for papers or projects, debates on particular issues, continuations of class discussions, etc. A major benefit is that students get to see the work of other student writers. It's also instructive for students to review papers and essay answers that you consider exemplary.

Another use is that after reading rough drafts, you can give students feedback immediately (without waiting for the next class meeting), allowing them to get on with their next drafts (more about this in Ch. 4). You can also respond immediately to in-class writing.

Chapter 3
Designing and assessing graded writing tasks

In most universities, writing assignments are given primarily for the purpose of assessing content knowledge. This is testimony to our strong belief in the connection between understanding something and being able to express it. The most common categories of graded writing assignments are essay exam questions, lab reports, and research papers of varying lengths.

While these assignments require writing, they don't necessarily help students learn to write well, especially when graded only for content. The suggestions in this and the next chapter will make your writing assignments more effective tools for improving student writing, at the same time improving the papers that you have to read .

General Considerations

✔***Design writing assignments appropriate to the level of the students.*** In lower division courses, provide more structure and be more explicit about your expectations. In upper division courses, expect students to delimit topics and demonstrate higher order thinking skills (see opposite). Within a single course as well, progress from simpler and more well-defined writing tasks to more complex and open-ended ones as students develop their understanding of the course content.

Bloom's taxonomy of intellectual activities, opposite, is a well-known characterization of thinking skills we expect of college graduates. It makes sense for classroom objectives to reflect increasing complexity as students advance in their academic careers. Consider the level of your students in deciding what level performance you're asking of them, and examine test questions and paper assignments with those objectives in mind. For example, expecting synthesis in a first-semester assignment might be inappropriate, as would be a senior-level class in which only knowledge was tested for..

An informal review of writing assignments for general education courses showed little difference between assignments given in first-year and senior courses, a situation not conducive to the development of good writing. Reserve lengthy papers for upper division students and provide guidance even then (see Chapter 4). Remember that even in a 400-level class, your required research paper may only be a student's second or third experience in extended, scholarly writing.

Designing assignments that give students successful experiences will improve both output and motivation. This is another reason for assigning several short papers rather than one long one. Another possibility is to have a long paper submitted section by section over the course of the semester, enabling you to monitor progress and avert final disasters.

✔***Be realistic about the time needed for grading and for guidance.*** If you give an essay exam, plan to grade it and give it back in a week. If you assign a paper, schedule time for commenting on it both in writing and in class. This may mean adjusting the scale of your assignments or the amount of information you hope to cover during the semester. The reward will be better written papers and better content understanding and retention.

Students don't come to college knowing how to write research papers—it's one of the skills they learn while they're here, a developmental process that evolves as they advance in their fields. Make assignments meaningful by guiding students through the process (see below and Chapter 4 for suggestions). Show that you consider writing important by returning papers with comments about both form and content. (In large classes, these comments may be collective, see page 14.) Students have a right to expect guidance about what they're doing well and what needs improvement.

Bloom's Taxonomy of Thinking Skills

The terms below reflect an ascending order of intellectual skills delineated by B.S. Bloom in his 1956 classic, Taxonomy of Educational Objectives.[1] *Research shows that typical exams at all levels test overwhelmingly for knowledge and comprehension. Scrutinize your questions and aim higher.*

Knowledge: The ability to recognize facts, terms, concepts, and principles.

Typical tasks: **Name. List. Define. Who? What? How many? Describe.**

Comprehension: The ability to restate or reorganize material to demonstrate that it's understood

Typical tasks: **Give an example. What's the author's most important idea? Compare/contrast. Summarize. Explain.**

Application: The ability to apply facts and concepts to new situations, solve problems, and construct charts and figures.

Typical tasks: **Solve. Apply the principle. Compute. Classify. Demonstrate. Modify. Prepare. Produce. Relate.**

Analysis: The ability to distinguish between facts and inferences, to recognize faulty assumptions, and to identify organizational structure.

Typical tasks: **What reasons are given? Does the evidence support the conclusion? What are the components?**

Synthesis: The ability to form a complex response, propose an action plan, create a new schema, and integrate many ideas into one solution.

Typical tasks: **Combine elements. Develop a model. Write a speech. Compile. Devise. Design. Reconstruct.**

Evaluation: The ability to judge the quality of something based on adequacy, value, logic, or use.

Typical tasks: **Argue for or against. Evaluate that idea. Justify. Assess.**

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[1]Volume 1,: *Cognitive Domain*. New York: McKay. Several subsequent researchers have categorized typical tasks according to Bloom's taxonomy. Some verbs lead to both higher- and lower- order questions. Note also that a question that appears to require analysis or synthesis may be testing only for knowledge or comprehension if the response can be taken directly from classnotes or the textbook.

Having students share their work at various stages will improve motivation as well as output. Just as it's discouraging for faculty to spend time writing comments on papers that are neverpicked up at the end of the semester, it's discouraging for students to spend a lot of time working on a paper that gets read by no one but the teacher at the very end of the class. Debriefing after papers are returned, with excerpts of excellent responses read aloud, can be both educational and inspiring.

Suggestions for making grading easier are given below and in Chapter 4.

✔***Emphasize writing's importance as an aid to inquiry***. You can reinforce this by asking students to write proposals for research papers, progress reports, annotated bibliographies, and outlines for oral presentations. These will keep students on track with larger projects and greatly improve the final results. They also model types of written documents common to many professions.

Proposals generally include a problem statement, discussion of the rationale and significance of the project, list of available resources, and timeline or plan of action. Set guidelines for proposals, limiting length and format, and indicating the criteria for evaluation, as a granting agency might. In your response comments, focus on content relative to your criteria.

Progress reports usually consist of two parts: a "work completed" section and a "work remaining" section. Limiting students to a single page forces them to be concise. A progress report can provide an opportunity for renegotiation of the project if need arises.

Annotated bibliographies can be directed in many ways to foster good reading and summarizing skills. They can also be useful to other students. If they are turned in prior to the time the research project is due, you can add crucial overlooked sources, redirect reading to more fruitful areas, and get insight into your students' approach to the project.

Preparing Essay Exam Questions[2]

Essay exams take a long time to grade and are hard to judge consistently. They are also one of the most difficult academic tasks for many students, requiring both thinking and writing skills under time pressure. Some specialists suggest saving essay tests for higher order thinking skills like analysis and synthesis and using short-answer tests for assessing knowledge. They also suggest assigning essays as take-home exams or graded homework, allowing students more time to hone their answers. This will be especially appreciated by non-native speakers. (To reduce the likelihood of plagiarism, require students to submit working material. Monitoring techniques suggested in Chapter 4 reduce plagiarism as well.)

In preparing essay questions, decide what you want the response to cover and ask for it directly. The verbs you use—*describe, explain, analyze, apply,* etc.—are key to guiding student responses (see page 7). By laying out the structure of the answer in the question, you'll improve responses and make essays easier to grade. For example, if you want students to explain how the normal curve serves as a statistical model,

[2]Ideas and examples in this section come from Ory, J.C. and K.E. Ryan, *Tips for Improving Testing and Grading*, Sage Publications, 1993.

avoid asking: Describe a normal curve.

better: Briefly explain how the normal curve serves as a statistical model for estimation and hypothesis testing.

Another example:

too general: Compare theory X and theory Y (or poem X and poem Y).

better: Compare theory X and theory Y. Include in your answer (a) brief descriptions of the two theories, (b) supporters of both theories, (c) research methods used to study each of the two theories.

Good assignments help students budget their time effectively. Some experts even suggest detailing points for parts of essays. Vague or underspecified questions invite students to write down everything they can remember about the subject, in hopes that the professor will find the desired answer somewhere among all the verbiage. While this strategy is often successful, it rarely makes for good reading. Avoid giving too many choices—this diverts attention from answering to choosing which question to answer (of course, on a take-home exam, you may desire this). Ask students to answer two out of three questions rather than two out of six.

Test an essay question by answering it yourself and/or having a GAT answer it. This may show up weaknesses in the question or ways it could be improved. Time yourself and assume that it will take students approximately three times as long to answer it.

Designing Writing Assignments

✔***Assign long papers as a series of discrete tasks that can be monitored throughout the semester.*** Not only is this a hedge against plagiarism, it also teaches good work habits by reinforcing the process nature of writing and preventing submissions written just before they're due.

✔***Design writing assignments with an audience other than you.*** To see why this is important, jot down the last five items you wrote for others to read. In each case, your document was shaped by a particular purpose and audience. Writing tasks in the workworld, including the academic world, are normally shaped by purpose and audience, yet for much student writing, the only purpose is to convince the teacher that content is understood. Since this is unlike almost any other writing task, it's not surprising that students don't enter into it enthusiastically or emerge from a regime of it able to write effectively.

Assignments requiring meaningful communication with an appropriate audience generate more student involvement and more readable results. Here are some ideas:

- article, abstract, or review for a professional or popular journal
- letter to the editor or op-ed piece
- letter, report, or proposal to a public, corporate, or university official
- letter to the author of the textbook
- letter to a historical figure, literary character, or theoretical forbear
- proposal for a research project
- informational brochure or bulletin
- explanation of a process, product, or concept for an educated non-expert audience

✔***When appropriate, ask for papers with a visible structure***. The chart on the next page compares student, faculty, and business writing. Outside the university, writing tasks are largely shaped by pragmatic considerations. First among these is that every reader is a skimming reader. In business writing, this favors characteristics that make documents easy to skim, such as:

•sections are self-contained

•sections have informative titles

•listable items are listed

•paragraph themes may be visually highlighted

Encouraging students to write this way helps teach critical workplace skills, simplifies grading, and forces students to use writing as an aid to critical thinking. (Of course, this style is not appropriate for all documents in all disciplines.)

✔***Develop a grading rubric.*** Grading rubrics specify the qualities you expect at each grade increment. Once developed, they help students know what's expected of them, while making grading both easier and more objective. If there's enough class time, creating the rubric WITH the class can improve student motivation and avert exhortations that you tell them exactly what to do. Asking students what they think differentiates an outstanding paper from a mediocre one gets them to think in terms of criteria, a generally useful skill. To be effective writers, students must learn to assess their own writing. A sample paper assignment and grading rubric are given on pp. 12-13.

✔***Ask students to evaluate their own papers before turning them in***. In conjunction with a grading rubric, develop a questionnaire appropriate to the assignment and ask students to measure their work against your criteria. Once developed, such questionnaires make it easier to comment on the work students turn in as well as simplify grading. You might also induce them to reflect on their writing process by asking questions like the following:

•What went well in writing this paper?

•What would you do differently next time?

•What parts of the paper are you happiest with?

•What are your writing strengths in general?

•What can you do to improve?

Grading writing assignments

✔***Five ideas for lightening the grading load***:

1. Assign group reports. Cut the grading load dramatically while providing an opportunity for students to work with each other (see page 15).

2. Stagger due dates. If you offer students a choice among three or four due dates spread across the semester, you'll find some want to get the work done fast, others want to drag it out, and others opt for times in-between. Having some control over due dates can improve student motivation.

Comparison of academic writing and business writing

	Student writing	Faculty writing	Business writing
Purpose:	to demonstrate what student knows about topic, in a way that justifies a high grade	to share information and insights with colleagues	to get something done within an organization
Writer's knowledge of topic:	less than the person who evaluates the writing	equal to or greater than that of readers	usually greater than that of the reader
Audience:	teacher who requests the assign-ment, who will read it from beginning to end	primarily researchers in same field who may have different opinions but share a common language and framework.	often several people, none of whom will read it all carefully
Criteria for evaluation:	depth, logic, clarity, unity, and grammar	soundness of reasoning, importance and acccuracy of information	clear and simple presentation of ideas in a document that meets the needs of busy readers

Sample Writing Assignment and Grading Rubric

The writing assignment below was used in a junior-level course on teaching and learning. Higher order thinking skills are needed to decide which materials to include given the specified purpose and audience. Note that the grading rubric, opposite, lists appropriateness to audience second to content in specifying adequacy standards.

* * *

REPORT AND PRESENTATION ON NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENT GROUPS

The demographics of the university student population has changed dramatically over the past thirty years. Nationally, the traditional white, straight-out-of-high-school, middle-to-upper-middle-class, fulltime student now accounts for less than 20% of the university student population nationwide. Adaptation to this changed student body has generally been ad hoc and outside the traditional academic structure.

As a class, we will undertake a major survey of diversity issues in higher education, with the goal of developing a presentation for faculty and other campus groups.

After a discussion in class, each student will choose a non-traditional student group and explore the questions below:

1. In what time periods, and in what numbers, has the group you're studying entered the university? Provide a brief history relating to the university and the group you're studying.
2. What problems or issues has your group encountered in gaining access or being successful?
3. What programs have been successful in alleviating these problems?
4. What issues or problems arise related to classroom instruction methods or faculty behavior in the classroom?
5. What changes in classroom behavior could faculty make that would improve learning for the group you're studying?

Criteria for evaluation of papers on non-traditional student populations

Goal: an informative, readable summary of information on a non-traditional student population, aimed at UofA faculty

	Excellent	Satisfactory	Needs improvement
Content	•Answers all questions fully or explains why a complete answer can't be given. •Provides sources for all claims. •Provides multiple examples of successful approaches that can be applied in the classroom.	•provides reasonably complete responses to all questions, sources for most claims, and two or three examples of successful approaches that can be applied in the classroom.	•questions are incompletely addressed; no sources provided for claims.
Appropriate-ness to audience	•Information and examples are related to everyday experiences of faculty. •Writing is concise; summary statements introduce sections. •Awareness of audiences is demonstrated by highlighting of especially important information. •Tone is positive; assumes good will and interest on the part of readers.	•Information is appropriate to audience and reasonably accessible.	•Paper is not organized for easy access to information. •Paper has faculty-bashing tone.
Expression and format	•Paper has effective sentence and paragraph structure. •Paper looks attractive and approachable; format and headings direct readers to information.	•Most sentences are concise and show good word choice and arrangement. •Most paragraphs are well-organized and appropriately restricted. •Format provides reasonable access to information.	•Paper is excessively wordy with many poorly structured sentences and poorly organized paragraphs. •Paper looks sloppy or crowded, uninviting to potential readers.
Mechanics	•No more than three spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors. (This includes typos, so be sure to spell-check and then to edit.)	•No more than six spelling, punctuation, or grammar errors.	•More than six mechanical errors.

3. Tell students you'll only comment on one section of each paper in depth, but don't tell them which section.
4. Ask for shorter papers. Another argument for short papers is this: while few of your students are likely to be writing extended research papers after college, many will be expected to write one-to-five page memos, reports, proposals, evaluations, etc.
5. Provide collective feedback rather than writing individual comments on each paper. You can offer individual feedback to those who request it, saving yourself the trouble of writing comments for those who don't read them. In any case, a more minimalist approach to commenting on student papers is pedagogically preferable, see below.

✔***Grade essays and reports holistically***: Establish norms by reading through 15-20 papers quickly and sorting them by quality into three or four groups. Then, when you read the papers more carefully, your judgment is less likely to be skewed by the occasional very good or very bad one. If you don't already have one, create a rubric by jotting down group qualities: e.g. excellent papers show clear organization, full explication of particular concepts, detailed examples, etc. Fair papers cover the requisite concepts but fail to show the connections between them, provide generalities rather than clear examples, etc. Choose `one or two papers as "anchors" for each grade increment, and use group features for making comments.

If you have a grader or graders, have them read them each anchor and discuss the rationale for the grade. You might let them read each anchor ungraded, then ask how they would grade it and why. Grading sessions conducted by the University Composition Board for the Upper Division Writing Proficiency Exam model the holistic grading process and provide an opportunity to discuss student writing with colleagues from different departments and colleges. Consider volunteering for one.

Commenting on Papers

The major purpose of feedback is to help students improve. Remember two truths about feedback: first, nobody likes criticism, and second, most people would like to improve their performance.

✔***Tell students what they're doing right***. Many studies show that what you pay attention to increases. Praising their organization, phrasing, grammar will induce them to put more effort into organizing, drafting, and editing future papers.

✔***Choose one or two points to focus on***. Don't try to correct every error and point out every shortcoming; focus rather on patterns of error and direct students toward resources. Students are disheartened by papers with too many red marks; also, they can't tell which shortcomings are the most serious. Instead of noting every mechanical error, circle the first few spelling, punctuation, and grammar lapses, then add a note at the end that improvement is needed. (Consider avoiding red marks altogether by using blue, green, or purple ink.)

✔***Temper criticism with praise***: "I hate to see such good ideas expressed so carelessly," or "By eliminating wordiness, your good ideas will stand out clearly" are softer on student egos. Instead of comments like "awkward" or "unclear," say "I don't understand this. Do you mean..." Refrain from rewriting students' papers; instead, pose questions that help them see the effect of what they've written, e.g. "Are you saying this is/isn't necessary?"

✔***Provide rewards unrelated to grade***. This may seem unscholarly, but gold stars for good spelling, punctuation, and grammar can be effective motivators. Praise, public or private, also works well for many.

✔***Allow students to improve their grades by revising***. You may want to put some stipulations on this as many students will simply correct mechanical errors, but raising grades is the most tangible reward you can offer for putting extra effort into writing. Emphasize that revision typically involves substantial rethinking.

Group Writing Projects

Groups work best with three or four members and tasks that can be easily apportioned among them. The more guidance you provide, especially for first- and second-time group experiences, the better the results will be. Make it clear, though, that you expect the groups to resolve most problems themselves.

In general, group members are best assigned by faculty to ensure diversity and, in some cases, to match complementary skills. You can ask students to submit names of people they do and don't want in their groups, but don't feel bound by their preferences. Weaker students learn much from being in groups with stronger students and all students benefit from working with minority and international students.

Group activities can result in individual reports or one group report, depending on the nature of the project and purpose of the activity. If one report is submitted, it should be graded collectively. (Some suggest that group grades not account for more than 20% of the total grade.)

Individual grading can work against the cooperative nature of the enterprise though it ensures against penalizing individuals for the failings of others. Another way to encourage cooperation is by providing a mechanism for evaluation of individuals by group members, with both positive and negative evaluations impacting the final grade.

As in out-of-class situations, the final draft of a collective report should be written by one person—the best writer—so that the report is seamless, but don't assume that others are doing less work or learning less about writing. Ideally, the group situation should stimulate discussion and learning about communication skills for all involved.

Group projects have pitfalls, but they are outweighed by many advantages. If you'd like to experiment with groups, do seek out more information. The University Teaching Center may offer workshops on collaborative learning if interest exists.

Chapter 4
Improving student writing

As classes get larger, the temptation is strong to avoid essay exams and writing assignments entirely. Reading fifty-plus essays—fifty-plus *poorly written* essays—is a pretty uninviting chore. Since good writing is always the easiest to grade, it makes sense to strive to improve student writing before it gets to you.

✔***Encourage good writing by letting students know that you value good writing.*** Remind them frequently that good writing is important, in your syllabus as well as your class. Studies show that faculty demanding good writing are more likely to get it. (Davis 205)

✔***Where possible, choose well-written reading material*** and discuss with the class what makes it well written.

✔***Talk to students about writing.*** For example, telling them that writing is often hard work encourages them to take it seriously while averting discouragement or a sense that they're the only ones with difficulties. Consider sharing some of your own writing struggles.

✔***Guide students through the writing process.*** Make it clear that writing involves a process as well as a product. This means helping students break the habit of sitting down at the computer the day before the paper is due and cranking something out.

Especially in lower division courses, take time to discuss issues like narrowing down the topic and finding a focus, as well as emphasizing the value of outlines, freewriting, concept maps, and other writing-to-think strategies. Learning logs provide opportunities for you to respond to their ideas while they're still forming them.

Stress the process nature of writing by asking students to hand in outlines, proposals, progress reports, abstracts, and first drafts. You don't have to comment on these individually, and reading 10-15 will let you know where students are having problems. You can then address the issues for the whole class.

If your class uses an electronic conferencing system, you can address your comments to the class immediately after they turn in their papers (before the next class meeting). The time taken to do this will be more than made up for in improvement of the final reports.

Be sure to make formatting and structural expectations clear. Documentation requirements differ from class to class and discipline to discipline, and students are often unsure what's expected of them.

Peer Response

If class time permits, have students critique each other's writing. Ask students to bring two copies of their rough drafts to class, double or triple spaced and with wide margins. Divide the class into groups of three and have students provide their groupmates with copies of the paper. Each student reads two papers, noting areas of misunderstanding or questions. Then each paper is discussed in turn. (Use a timer to keep the class on track.)

It's often helpful to provide a form like the one on the next page to aid students in organizing their responses. Guidelines specific to the assignment help students know what to look for. Good guidelines help students understand your expectations as well as teaching them good editing practice. If possible, involve students in setting up the guidelines.

Eavesdrop on the student groups as they read and discuss the papers, offering suggestions both to single groups and to the class at large. This enables you to provide a lot of feedback in the space of one class meeting.

One reason groups became popular in business is that they tend to produce better products than individuals. You might ask the class if the group exercise enabled them to produce a better paper than they would have written on their own. Many say that reading the papers of others is as helpful to them as the feedback they receive about their own papers.

Encourage peer respondents to make positive comments on usage as well as content and organization. This increases student awareness of these aspects of writing.

You can also encourage peer response by directing individual students to the Writing Centers or other campus resources (see below). Consider providing a strong incentive for using these services—like allowing only those who do to rewrite papers if they're unhappy with their grades.

(Already in existence, though not yet at the University of Arizona, are software programs that support distance peer critique. Expect to hear more about this in the future.)

University Resources

Many resources are available on campus to assist students with writing. Encouraging students to use these services eases your task while reinforcing the importance of writing well.

- ***Writing Centers***: A program of the University Composition Board, writing centers offer peer assistance from trained undergraduate consultants, both by appointment and on a walk-in basis. If your class requires a lot of writing, you can have a Writing Center consultant tell your class about their services.

  The Composition Board is also working to develop writing centers where students can get peer assistance with the writing conventions specific to their disciplines. Currently, the College of Engineering and Mines, the College of Nursing, the College of Architecture, and the Women's Studies Program have Writing Centers, with plans for others. Writing Center consultants are also available in the library, the residence halls, and other locations around campus. Information about hours and locations can be obtained by calling 621-3182.

- ***Writing Skills Improvement Program*** A free tutoring service for minority and economically disadvantaged students, the program also offers two semester-long workshop series on college writing and writing about literature. The workshops are free and open to all students. Contact Dr. Donna Rabuck at 621-5849 for more information.

- ***English 397:*** Developed as a supplemental writing review for students receiving Unsatisfactory on the Upper Division Writing Proficiency Exam, Eng 397 is now offered in several formats, including sections geared to individual disciplines, an honors section, and an open enrollment. It's a five-week, one-credit course available to all students who've taken the UDWPE, offered through the University Composition Board office, ML 378 (621-5428). Separate sections are available for non-native speakers.

Sample Peer Response Worksheet

Be sure to add questions relating to the specific assignment

Author ____

Title ____

Reviewer ____

Begin by reading the whole text quickly and forming a general impression. Is the report readable and interesting? Did you get bogged down anywhere? Does it seem to contain about the right amount of information for a paper of that size? Jot down your responses on a separate sheet.

1. What do you like most about the piece you just read? What do you like most about the way it's written?
2. What's its focus? Is it clear what position the writer is taking?
3. Did the first few paragraphs grab your attention and make you want to read on? If not, how could the writer make the beginning more interesting?
4. Does the writer's argument build to its most important point?
5. Are the ideas logically arranged?
6. Do any claims seem poorly documented or argued?
7. Does the writer use quotes, statistics, and/or tables effectively? If not, what would make them more effective?
8. Is the conclusion effective? Has the writer done what he or she set out to do?
9. Are any parts of the report unnecessary or repetitious?
10. Does the paper follow conventions of the discourse community regarding footnotes, title heading, paragraph length, style, etc.?
11. Did you notice any mechanical problems or spelling errors?
12. Did you get any good ideas for your own writing?

An Outline of the Writing Process

Encourage students to view writing as a threefold process, as outlined on the next page. Point out that the "writing" part of a writing assignment is only a small part of the total task. At least as important are thinking it out first, and revising and editing it afterwards. Because these activities are essential, students who always write at the last minute generally don't improve their writing.

In planning any written document, the most critical dimensions are the situation, purpose, and audience. Encourage students to brainstorm ideas, freewrite (i.e. write uninterruptedly and without editing for a timed period), and do other activities to delimit the content given these factors. Use class time and group methods if possible. Writers must decide what information should be included and experiment with alternative expressions to best satisfy the demands of the task. After collecting information and making rhetorical decisions (designing for user friendliness), they draft their text. (Of course, many planning activities also involve writing.)

Then come the tasks of revising and editing. Revising is a higher-level task having to do with honing the content and organization. Editing involves more mechanical skills like checking grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Many people believe that editing skills are the province of remedial or first-year writing programs, after which student writing should forever be error-free. That errors persist is largely because these skills are rarely taken seriously once first-year English classes have ended. If faculty adopted a requirement that inadequately edited written work be rewritten, these skills would improve quickly. (Though not sufficient, conscientious use of spell-checks and grammar-checks will take care of many mechanical errors.)

Although student writing is often characterized by many technical errors, most faculty find the most serious problems to be weakness in expressing ideas and exploring theoretical relationships. This is where students need your guidance. Model clear structure by providing well-framed writing assignments, especially for lower-division courses, and force students to revise by checking in with them at various stages of the process. Read rough drafts and provide collective feedback on common misdirections. Editorial problems often diminish as writers gain greater control of the ideas they're trying to express, so early guidance will be repaid by better end-products. In addition, ungraded writing exercises of the type described in Chapter 1 provide needed practice: students who do them regularly tend to become more fluent and confident writers as the semester progresses.

The process as outlined on the next page should not be thought of as a linear or chronological description. Many studies show that good writers are always involved in several stages of the process simultaneously, moving back and forth from concern with usage and mechanics to questions of priority and sequence as they rework their materials and refine their ideas.

Caution graduate and advanced students against the following widely-used strategy for writing up projects and research reports: do the work, write it up, get it published. Writing up a research project as the research is carried out is much preferable for the following reasons: first, after you've finished your project, you're ready to move on to the next one (in the workworld, you're often already engrossed in the next one). If you write as you go along, your writing will reflect your enthusiasm for the topic. Second, since there's often significant lag time between submission and publication, having the report finished when the project ends cuts lag time to the minimum. Third, writing up your results as you go along keeps you on track about what you need to do. You're far less likely to discover you forgot to collect some information after you've closed your equipment down or returned the books to the library.

Overview of the Writing Process

Writing is a dynamic activity.
Planning, drafting, and reworking all go on simultaneously.

1. PLANNING

☞ clarify your purpose
- what do you want the reader to know or do?

☞ analyze your audience
- what questions will readers have?
- how can you help them get the message?

☞ organize your material
- brainstorm, freewrite, use concept maps and other techniques to assemble your ideas and arrange them in a logical order

2. DRAFTING

Drafting usually involves several stages, from rough outlines to full development of all the major parts of the document.

3. REWORKING

☞ check the content and organization
- Is the main idea clear?
- Is it well-supported?

☞ check the tone and style
- Is the document appropriate to its intended audience?
- Are the sentences and paragraphs clear and readable?

☞ check the grammar, spelling, and punctuation

Chapter 5
Improving student speaking skills

As with writing, both graded and ungraded opportunities for speaking can be created in the classroom. In large classes, you'll probably want to stick with ungraded speaking activities, which include class discussions, group work, personal conversations, and question asking and answering. Create opportunities for students to speak informally in class and use techniques that equalize participation whenever possible.

Consider asking a friend to sit in on a class and keep track of how much time you speak and how much time students speak. If you're speaking more than 75% of the time, make extra efforts to get students to participate more. (Studies show that many university teachers speak for more than 90% of class time.)

In fostering student participation, be attentive to how you respond to student comments and responses. If you welcome all contributions, more students will start responding. If your typical response suggests that the comment is wrong or inadequate, few students will risk participating.

Ungraded speaking

✔***Divide students into small groups***. People who won't speak up in a large class are more likely to offer opinions in a group of three to five. Ask groups to begin by having each person read a previously written response. (This tactfully gets everyone talking.) Journals, learning logs, and in-class free-writing provide good source material for groupwork.

✔***Invite panels of students to the front of the room to discuss an issue***. Ask panelists to answer the same question or questions as a prelude to class discussion, giving panelists a few minutes to think about their answers before starting. In small classes, try to make sure everyone is on a panel at least once. In large classes, you can ask for volunteers or select panelists using an arbitrary characteristic (e.g. those whose surnames begin with *J* or those born in October).

Panels are useful for processing or debriefing major assignments. Ask panelists to address such questions as:

How did you approach the assignment?

What are you most satisfied with about your report (or inquiry process)?

Where did you get stuck (if anywhere)?

What would you do differently?

✔***Give students time to think before calling on someone for an answer.*** You'll have more volunteers and more students will have the opportunity to speak in public.

✔***Elicit several answers to a question before responding to any answer.*** Students will quickly learn that your lack of response to the first answer doesn't mean the answer is wrong and will enjoy coming up with alternatives and additions.

✔***Ask students to read in class from their journals or learning logs***. This gives the journals value even if you don't have time to collect and comment on them frequently.

✔***Have students give brief oral progress or status reports on extended projects***, either in small groups or to the class at large.

✔ ***Learn more about collaborative learning***. Collaborative learning approaches involve having students teach other students parts of the material. If you're interested, the University Teaching Center hopes to offer workshops on collaborative learning. Sources listed at the end of this guide will also guide you to further references.

Graded presentations

Student presentations are great for faculty because they free up class preparation time while promoting active learning. They're great for students, since good presentation skills are a requisite for almost any job of importance. Unfortunately, they're often unsuccessful because students are provided no guidance in giving presentations, nor feedback about anything except content.

As with writing, you'll improve the chances for student success by guiding students through the presentation process. Suggestions for presenters and criteria for evaluating presentations are given below. For each presentation, choose five students to fill out a simple response form like the one on page 25, based on the criteria listed on page 24. (You can also have a student provide oral feedback right after the report.) Most students recognize that professional success requires good presenting skills and will appreciate the opportunity for practice and feedback.

Structure presentations with tightly focused topics, strict time limits, and standard presentation formats. Students should also be expected to respond to questions as part of their presentations.

When students are given information on how to present, and feedback on how their presentations go, student presentations improve dramatically. Since presenting information well requires understanding that information, presentations not only provide students with opportunities to practice speaking in public, but also help them learn and remember material.

A short guide to presenting

How oral communication differs from written communication

- Voice, gestures, and mannerisms are major communicators, transmitting enthusiasm (or the lack of it), emphasis, confidence, and competence. Listeners respond to these elements at least as much as to content.
- The audience provides constant feedback, both verbal and nonverbal, allowing for adjustment in the length and content of the presentation if needed. Greater audience involvement is often possible and desirable.
- Oral presentations usually have a fixed time-slot (and definitely should in classes). Presenters are responsible for making sure the topic is covered and that there's time for questions and answers.

- The attention-span of a listening audience is shorter than that of a reading audience. This is why good speakers avoid trying to cover too much, and avoid overlong sentences or overly complex explanations.
- Listeners are unable to look backward for clarification or direction. Therefore, good speakers create redundancy by reminding listeners of what they've said and alerting listeners to what they plan to say. Visuals also create redundancy.

How oral and written communication are similar

- Situation, purpose, and audience are primary. As with writing, assignments with hypothetical audiences other than teacher and class can increase student interest and performance. Considerations of purpose and of prior audience knowledge, expectations, and likely objections should be explicitly discussed.

Suggestions for presenters:

ORGANIZING THE CONTENT

- Structure the presentation with a clear beginning, middle, and end. In general, expect to get across no more than three main points in a short presentation.
- If you're using visuals (see below), consider their integration into the presentation from the beginning.
- Begin by clarifying the purpose of the presentation, telling the audience what will be covered and anticipating the main conclusion(s).
- Organize information by importance (relevance to purpose) and relate topics with explicit transitions and summaries. Introduce each main point with a single thesis sentence that summarizes it.
- Conclude with a concise summary of each point and a reminder of your overall purpose.
- Connect your presentation with the interests and concerns of the audience.
- Decide whether to answer questions throughout the presentation or only at the end and make that policy clear at the beginning. It's up to the speaker to open and close a question-and-answer period. (Another effective strategy can be to begin by soliciting questions from the audience. Don't try this unless you're sure that your presentation will answer them.)

POLISHING THE DELIVERY

- Start strongly—listeners lost in the first minute may never be recaptured. A good introduction catches the attention of the audience and leads easily into the main subject matter. An anecdote can relax the audience and make them more receptive, but speakers uncomfortable with anecdotes can get to the point immediately. It's poor practice to begin with an apology or statement about being nervous.
- Make the presentation easy to follow by using forward and backward anchors.
- Stop when you're done! A good conclusion is short, forceful, and conclusive. Plan it carefully and stick to it. False endings and rambling finales undermine audience confidence.

Criteria for Evaluating Presentations

Content:

Is solid information presented?
Is it the right amount of information?
Is the information appropriate to the assignment?
Are topics and examples related to everyday interests of the audience?

Organization:

Is there a clear beginning, middle, and end?
Is the opening strong, with a clear statement of the topic and overview of the presentation contents?
Are the main claims well-supported?
Are forward and backward anchors used?
Is the ending strong and conclusive?

Delivery

Does the speaker stand straight and not fidget?
Does the speaker make eye contact with the audience?
Does the speaker appear prepared?
Does the speaker seem enthusiastic about the topic?
Does the speaker project competence and confidence?
Are visuals used effectively?

Visuals

Can visuals be seen easily from everywhere in the room?
Do visuals use key words instead of sentences?
Do the visuals help the audience follow the presentation?
Does the speaker discuss the visuals without simply reading them to the audience?
Does the speaker maintain contact with the audience while discussing visuals?

Questions

Did the speaker announce a policy about questions at the beginning?
Did the speaker initiate and terminate the question and answer period?
Did the speaker repeat and clarify all inaudible or confusing questions?
Did the speaker listen to the whole question before responding?
Did the speaker respond to the whole group rather than just the questioner?
Did the speaker use the question period effectively to further the purpose of the presentation?
Were questions plentiful and interesting?

Presentation Feedback

Presenter:

Title of presentation:

	poor				excellent
Content	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Organization	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Delivery	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Visuals	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Questions	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Overall	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Comments:

•Face the audience, stand straight, don't move your arms too much or keep your hands in your pockets. Don't speak too fast.

•Make eye contact with members of the audience.

•Be enthusiastic. Enthusiasm is the single most important quality to project in effective public speaking. If the speaker doesn't seem to care, no one else will.

Responding to questions

•Anticipate possible questions and be prepared to answer them. Being able to respond well to unrehearsed questions enhances credibility. Respond to questions enthusiasticly: a lack of questions suggests an unengaged audience.

•Listen to the whole question before answering, even if you think you know what the question is.

•Repeat or paraphrase the question unless it's clearly audible and comprehensible to everyone. Questioners often ask multiple questions or questions with more than one component; it's a good idea to separate these clearly and answer them one by one.

•Avoid engaging in dialogues with individual questioners. Assume that others have the same question and address the entire audience when you respond.

•If you don't know the answer to a question, say so and offer to find it out. If someone else can answer, direct the question to that person.

•Don't panic if you need time to think or check your notes. The moment will seem longer to you than to anyone else.

Using visuals.

Both within and outside the university, many presenters use visuals routinely. Some subjects can hardly be conveyed without them. Visual aids range from handouts and chalkboards to transparencies, slides, and sophisticated computer-generated presentations. Encourage interested students to explore possibilities.

Using visuals has three big advantages: the audience remembers more, complicated information is made easier to grasp, and the presenter's organization is reinforced.

The basic "rules" of using visuals are:

•Keep them simple. Use key words rather than sentences. Anything not referred to will distract the audience's attention, as will unnecessary detail.

•Give each visual a title.

•Make sure visuals are clearly visible from all parts of the room. (If they aren't, ask people to change seats before you begin.)

•Know your equipment. Make sure in advance that it's positioned right and working and that you know how to use it.

•Address the audience. In discussing transparencies, point to the screen rather than the transparency and look at the audience. Point to the screen from the side, without reaching across it or across your own body. A pointer helps.

- •Beware of diminished audibility while changing slides or overheads, or when looking at and pointing to material in visuals.
- •Cover information until you're ready to display it and don't leave a visual on the screen after it's been discussed. Turn the projector off to focus attention when making a strong point or concluding.

DEALING WITH STAGEFRIGHT

- •Know that you're well prepared. Rehearse at least twice, before a live audience if possible or in front of a mirror. You can also record your presentation to review and revise. But don't rehearse to the point of memorization. At most, memorize key lines and phrases.
- •Remember that the first minute is usually the worst. Once you get going, your nervousness will probably disappear.
- •Think well of the audience. Assume that they're interested in the topic and want you to do well. Your nervousness is probably not apparent to them. (They think you're the expert.)
- •Dress comfortably and conservatively. How you look affects your confidence and the audience's perception of you.
- •Have a long-term strategy. Seek out non-threatening opportunities for speaking (provided by many campus and local organizations). Consider joining Toastmasters—a low-cost, non-profit support group for people interesting in improving speaking skills. There are dozens of Toastmasters groups throughout Tucson, meeting at all hours. There may even be one on campus. Call Toastmasters International at 889-3329 for more information.

Chapter 6
Getting on with it

Writing and presenting are integral to the success of all faculty members. Many find writing one of the most satisfactory aspects of their jobs. If you're like that, share your personal pleasure in writing with your students. Share your processes and works in progress. Model writing as an enjoyable and satisfying activity.

Many other faculty members, some of them excellent writers, find writing difficult, tedious, an always somewhat dreaded enterprise. If you're like this, help is available. There are many techniques for alleviating writing anxiety and for making writing easier and more enjoyable. If this interests you, email me for more information (eberman@aruba.ccit.arizona.edu).

Whether or not you personally enjoy writing, make a commitment to assist your students. Write down three ideas for writing activities and set dates for using them. Consider keeping a teaching log for recording how they worked. Talk to other faculty interested in writing and share your discoveries. Contact the University Composition Board to arrange a workshop for your department. And keep us informed of your successes and problems. Bon voyage!

Sources and References

The three books cited below will get you started and lead you to other references. We'd like to add sources that readers have found helpful: if you have suggestions, please send them to the University Composition Board, ML 382, with a brief annotation.

Davis, Barbara G. ***Tools for Teaching***. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993.

An excellent, easy-to-use, overall source for creative teaching ideas, with good bibliographies on writing, testing, and collaborative learning, among other topics.

Fulwiler, Toby. ***Teaching with Writing***. New Jersey: Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc., 1987.

A readable book intended to "clarify how writing across the curriculum improves learning across the curriculum," using exercises and excerpts from extended writing workshops offered to faculty at a variety of universities.

Griffin, C. W., ed. ***Teaching Writing in All Disciplines***, New Directions in Teaching and Learning, no. 12, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1982.

A collection of articles with ideas about using writing in such diverse disciplines as math and finance, with useful bibiographies for people looking for discipline-specific writing ideas.

Useful Writing Web Sites

Resources for Students

Here you can find a wide range of services, from online reference works like dictionaries and style guides to personalized help from online writing labs. Many of the sites also have lengthy catalogs of links to other useful sites.

http://owl.english.purdue.edu
http://www2.colgate.edu/diw/nwca.html
http://uwc-server.fac.utexas.edu/resource/index.html
http://www.missouri.edu/~writcwp/resource.html
http://www.uark.edu/depts/comminfo/www/study.html
http://www.cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs.cmu.edu/user/mleone/web/how-to.html
(This site is especially directed at people writing in computer science or mathematics)

Resources for Teachers

These sites offer suggestions for incorporating writing into your class's structure. You will find advice on writing syllabi, constructing and timing writing assignments, responding to student writing, and many other useful topics. Many sites also contain extensive catalogs of useful links.

http://owl.english.purdue.edu
http://ewu66649.ewu.edu/WAC.html
http://www2.colgate.edu/diw/nwca.html
http://falcon.cc.ukans.edu/~writingc/index.html
http://uwc-server.fac.utexas.edu/resource/index.html

Resources for ESL

These sites might be useful to both students and faculties working with ESL. Many of the sites allow you to single out the language you want to deal with, and some are sophisticated enough to offer oral instruction in English over the web. And again, many provide catalogs of other links.

http://www.lang.uiuc.edu/r-li5/esl/
http://deil.lang.uiuc.edu/
http://uwc-server.fac.utexas.edu/esl/index.html
http://eslcafe.com/
http://www.tcom.ohiou.edu/OU_Language/teachers.html
http://www.tc.umn.edu/nlhome/g239/babi0011/english/esl.htm
http://www.linguistic-funland.com/tesl.html
http://humanities.byu.edu.elc/Cybercenter

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