Chapter 2 introduces the concept of thinking-in-writing as students learn to plan writing projects. The chapter examines a variety of planning strategies: the use of listing and freewriting in journals to tap memory; ways to speculate about observations; methods for preparing, managing, and recording an interview; and guidelines for selecting and analyzing reading materials. Each strategy is illustrated with examples of student writing, such as Joanie Leisure’s speculations on the computer classroom, Susan Reidenback’s interview notes on the set design for Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman*, and Jim Jones’s reading lists on the Holocaust memorial in Washington, D.C.

We learn that in composition, “planning . . . is primarily a writing activity,” not a thinking activity, and the chapter promotes this notion through the use of the term *thinking-in-writing*, rather than the commonly used term *prewriting*, which suggests that all planning occurs prior to the actual act of getting words onto paper. More experienced writers often plan writing projects while walking, driving, shopping, or performing any number of other daily activities. However, writers learn to do this after years of writing. What student writers need are concrete, identifiable steps that lead them into their projects. Eventually, writers learn to “think like writers,” and mental planning becomes an automatic reaction. Until then, novice writers need a tackle box of strategies to draw from as they begin the process of planning to write. William Stafford’s fishing metaphor (waiting for ideas to write about is for him “like fishing. . . . there is always a nibble”) at the beginning of the chapter helps orient students to the process of planning; brainstorming metaphorical phrases could be used as a warm-up exercise to focus students on examining their own planning methods.

As instructor, you must decide how best to introduce students to the planning practices illustrated in Chapter 2. Although students need to practice diverse
strategies, they must also get on to the business of drafting and revising whole essays. One approach to managing the material here is to ask students to
read the entire chapter as an overview of the smorgasbord of choices available for planning. If you take this approach, you will probably want to follow up the reading with group discussion and practice of selected strategies. To ensure that students actually practice the methods offered, you might ask them to select two or three different strategies to use with each subsequent writing assignment. Students might use journals to evaluate how each strategy worked (or didn’t work). Students can also write a cover memo for each draft of their papers in which they explain what strategies they used for that draft. The main point is to constantly show students that many options are available to them as writers and that some planning methods may work better than others, depending on students’ individual needs and the specific writing assignment. Students should be encouraged to discuss how they produced their drafts, because research shows that students learn more from interacting with one another in a meaningful context than they do from classroom lectures.

Another approach is to divide the chapter into memory, speculation, and research and help students find “one true sentence” as they practice each method. The first section, using memory, might lead to an essay assignment based on personal experience; the second section, using speculation, might lead to a descriptive or analytical essay assignment; and the third section, using research, might lead naturally to a research writing assignment and might serve as an effective introduction to a unit or course on research writing. By integrating memory as personal research and using speculation and the nonlibrary research method of conducting interviews, students acquire a fuller notion of the meanings of research. By requiring some documentation at early points in the term and not waiting until Chapter 13 to introduce it, writing a “research paper” will seem more natural to students and less overwhelming because they will have already seen how their writing is strengthened through research.

STRATEGIES AND YOUR JOURNAL

Students are encouraged to study their own experiences and memories for use in their writing. This section also urges students to take note of the ordinary, everyday, often overlooked activity that occurs around them. The strategies suggested for planning are “flexible enough to use during other stages of the writing process.” The concept of flexibility is reinforced periodically, both in this Instructor’s Resource Manual and throughout the book. The journal, for example, is also recommended for planning the research paper later in Chapter 13. As an instructor, you will want to encourage the use of journals by simply requiring that students keep them because they can provide a safe, private place for students to explore ideas without the fear of a grade hanging over them. You may want to allow class
Teaching with a Purpose

time, at least five or ten minutes, for students to write in journals—and write along with them in your own journal.

You can either assign specific journal writing topics or leave the choice of topics up to students, asking only for a specified number of entries or pages per week (three one-page entries per week, for example, or four pages) or a certain number of words (four hundred per week). You might provide a list of suggested topics from which students may choose. The suggested list might include some of the exercises, writing assignments, or discussion questions at the end of each chapter of *Writing with a Purpose*. Collect the journals periodically, tally the number of entries or pages, and offer some responsive, supportive comments to the content, especially to those entries that seem promising as potential essay topics. Journal entries, of course, are never marked for error or graded; that would defeat the purpose of the activity. Nevertheless, you should let students know that you have read what they have written, and you should indicate what the consequence is of not keeping a journal if it is a requirement for passing the course. You can often begin a class period by asking students to write in their journals. This focuses the class, gives the message that writing is the central activity, and generates thoughtful discussions if students have had the opportunity to write on discussion questions prior to talking about them.

**USING YOUR COMPUTER FOR PLANNING:**

**KEEPING A JOURNAL, LISTING, FREEWRITING, SPECULATING, AND INTERVIEWING**

Encourage students to use the computer as a planning tool. If a computer lab is available for use by your classroom, you may want to demonstrate and explain how to use the computer for keeping a journal, for listing, and for freewriting. These activities are easily adapted to any software used for word processing. Some instructors ask that students turn in their disks (always maintaining a back-up disk of their work) each week or so. This way, you can write comments directly onto their disks and maintain an ongoing conversation with students as they develop their work. While many students, particularly students in technical fields, are accustomed to using computers, other students may have to be coaxed if they have not had access to computers at home or in their high schools. Depending on the student population you serve and on their level of computer experience, you might pair up computer-literate students with those less experienced in using computers, and promote students teaching students.

If your computer system allows you to write on a master monitor that then appears on the students’ screens, you can easily demonstrate or explain how to use
the computer for freewriting and other planning strategies. Students can then practice in the lab with you. By using the computer, students can easily keep track of the work they are doing, and you can easily review it, either by collecting disks or asking students to provide you with printouts of their work.

Students can also use the computer for peer evaluation. For example, simply write on the board the questions used in Evaluating Lists (p. 28). Students can exchange seats and evaluate each other’s plans by annotating their peer’s list and typing comments and suggestions underneath the list.

As students become more proficient in using computers, they can see how easy it is to shift information around, to import information from other documents, and to rank ideas alphabetically or numerically. You might want to stress that the use of a computer does not in itself produce good writing. It is important that students not only understand how to use computer technology effectively, but also understand the ethical dimensions relating to copyright and authorship of texts. For example, it is relatively easy to import large portions of scholarly articles into a student text; such “borrowings” must be carefully documented. E-mail and other online services can provide sources for student writers, but students must be clear about what they have actually written themselves. Along with the ease of borrowing text and access to sources, which are valuable aids to writers, current computer technology brings with it the danger of blurring the boundaries between student authorship and stolen words or ideas. While students gain more and more control over technology, writing instructors lose a certain amount of control. Discuss plagiarism with your students.

Many of your students will already be proficient in computer technology and fully aware of the information available on the Internet, e-mail, and various special-interest bulletin boards. Encourage them to share what they know with the class, keeping in mind that the course is first and foremost a composition classroom, not a course in using computers.

A particularly useful article on the rewards and difficulties of using the computer in the classroom is “Electronic Mail and the Writing Instructor,” by Gail Hawisher and Charles Moran, College English 55 (1993): 618–43. The article discusses the rhetoric of e-mail and lists e-mail discussion groups related to composition. The article also offers an extensive source list.

Exercise on Evaluating Freewriting (p. 30)

1. After free associating in general about the strains of school, the “lies” involved, and her nervousness, Joanne focuses her second freewriting on “her
little revolt” against one kind of lie. Thus, Joanne restricts her original subject, school, to an incident in which she rebelled against her Latin teacher’s attempt to intimidate all his students. She finds both her unexpected boldness and the teacher’s response surprising. She manages, even in this focused freewriting, to write an effective lead and conclusion, and she manages to re-create a sketchy scene that captures the drama of the event. Nevertheless, certain details are unclear, and the sequence of events in the key moment is hard to figure out. Who said “Cease”? Did she continue standing after she returned to her desk? At what point did Hirschen go to the board? Readers need a clearer picture of exactly what happened in terms of both time and movement.

2. Because this piece will probably be aimed at either a general audience or an audience of students, Joanne will want to keep her conversational tone and use of student slang (“Latin ace,” “Bridgeman kills”). What she must remember is that her reading audience was not in the classroom with her, so she must create the scene in full detail, leaving no room for confusion. Various details—her blotchy neck, runny nose, watering eyes, inability to decline *femina*—cause a reader to sympathize and identify with her predicament. She needs to flesh out the actions and the dialogue that took place during the actual confrontation.

3. Joanne is trying to show that teachers are sometimes arbitrary in their assertions of authority and that they may appear to want one kind of behavior from students when in actuality they really want another kind. Joanne seems to be trying to demonstrate that students should stand up to intentional intimidation and that teachers’ responses to such defiance are sometimes surprising. Hypotheses that Joanne could use to clarify her intentions include the following: Teachers are sometimes misread by students; students should stand up to teachers who try to bully them; and tough teachers respect tough kids and eat the easily intimidated ones for lunch.

**Exercise on Evaluating Speculations (p. 34)**

1. Some of the specific subjects your class might identify in the three speculations are the following:
   1. a. Teachers’ control of computer classroom
   b. Students’ control of computer classroom
   c. Assignments in a computer classroom—i.e., hypertexts
   d. Role of Internet in composition class
   e. Student/teacher confidence/anxiety about computer use
f. Class discussion versus chat room

g. Local class versus distance learning

2. Students may have a difference of opinion over which is the most interesting, but the computer classroom as a network illustrates, most significantly, how the various electronic sources and networks can be connected. From the students’ local stations, they can search the Net, chat with students in other classrooms near and far, and “publish” their writing in the vast world of cyberspace.

3.a. The potential audience is the multiple academic audience of students, teachers, and researchers.

b. The computer classroom as an object could be particularly useful for students new to the campus or for faculty who have never taught in a computer-mediated environment. The computer classroom as an action could have the same audience, with the added audience of students who have had some experience with computers but little experience working on networked assignments. The computer classroom as a network has a broader audience as it may appeal to general readers who are interested in how the computer classroom enriches the teaching/learning experience as compared with the traditional classroom.

4. There are several possible hypotheses:

a. The computer classroom is intimidating but easy to use once you are comfortable with its tools.

b. The computer classroom is a busy and exciting place where students can make interesting connections.

c. The computer classroom changes the activity of traditional teaching and learning.

5. a. The purpose is to illustrate how the computer classroom differs from traditional classrooms.
b. The thesis statement is this: Students in a computer classroom can share their work with the teacher, their fellow students, and teachers and students in other classrooms far away.

Exercise on Evaluating an Interview (p. 38)

1. Susan’s prepared questions made her feel more confident about the interview and eased her fear that she would “look dumb,” no small matter in preparing mentally for a successful interview. Also, Susan targets certain areas of interest: How does a set designer prepare for his task? What is involved in set design? What is the role of the set in the overall production of a play? She does manage to get all these questions answered, albeit not in the way she expects.

2. She manages the interview by allowing the interviewee’s replies to shape the course of the interview. This is a particularly wise move on her part because she senses right away by her subject’s manner (“real dynamo”) that his replies will lead her to the real story.

3. Susan discovers more interesting and more significant topics—the complexity and creativity of the work involved, the truly creative challenge of designing sets for a modern play like *Godot*. She also finds the interviewee’s enthusiasm contagious, and his enthusiasm is not directed toward the set design for *Salesman*.

4. Her imagined audience at this point in her planning is the play-going public, which knows little about what goes into creating a set.

5. The hypothesis is that the audience, with eyes riveted to the actors on stage, takes for granted a crucial element in the play’s success, the carefully and creatively wrought set.

Reading

This section presents students with options for how to use the words of others in their own essays. An important caveat for students is that to use the writing and research of other writers effectively, they must learn to select, analyze, and evaluate the material. To do this is to become a critical reader. Instructors often find that students use outside research by simply stringing together series of quotations, with little or no introduction or analysis of the texts they have chosen. As a result, outside research fails to support the student’s own ideas on the subject. The advice in this chapter shows students how to take charge of the reading material to
incorporate it effectively into their own work in order to support their own arguments. The sample questions on page 39 help students preview, read, and review the research they have found. Jim’s responses to these questions on the following pages provide a good model for students to see how they might use the prompts to interpret their own reading.

You might use these research review questions for a workshop on using sources both here and later during Chapter 13, “Planning the Research Paper.” Students could bring in the reading they are doing for their projects and discuss the reading and their evaluations in groups, in pairs, or with the class as a whole. Students who are writing on similar topics can help one another by sharing their sources and comparing their responses, even if they are presenting different angles of the same subject.

Selective reading and careful analysis of source material is especially important as students use the Internet. The process of finding information on the Web is only the beginning. You might stress to your students that while the Web provides enormous access to information, not all the information is equally good or equally useful. As with all outside source material, students must learn to use it, rather than allowing the material to overwhelm them. What’s important is not what they find, but how they use it. Many students get so caught up in the retrieval process that they fail to pay adequate attention to analysis and writing. Help them by setting deadlines for turning in such short assignments as a list of electronic sources. It is also a good idea to ask students to provide you with downloaded copies of their source material. The point of this is not to overwhelm you with documents, but to make students accountable for the sources they cite in their paper.

A FINAL WORD ABOUT PLANNING

Chapter 2 warns students that “the most important thing to learn about planning is to know when to stop.” For this, as for all other steps in the writing process, there is no magic formula. Because many of the planning strategies explained in Chapter 2 are so engaging, students can become caught up in the “play” of planning and can postpone the more serious business of drafting. The evaluation suggestions for each thinking-in-writing strategy are particularly instrumental in pushing student writers toward decision making and drafting. So that students know when to stop planning and begin drafting, urge them to assess the requirements of the writing assignment, what they must do to prepare themselves to do it, and how much time they have to do it. Remind students of the deadline, and set up preliminary deadlines for the various planning activities. Require a written timetable for each essay. Students can present it as part of a proposal. Here are some sample questions for such a proposal:
1. What general topic have you chosen (or what angle will you choose)?

2. What thinking-in-writing strategies have you used? What others do you plan to use?

3. What personal memory will you study for this paper?

4. Whom do you plan to interview?

5. What additional print sources do you intend to examine?

6. When do you intend to stop planning and begin drafting?

Finally, continue to encourage the use of available technology in planning papers: the use of computer searches on the Web and the use of personal computers for thinking-in-writing. Rather than writing out drafts by hand and later typing them into a computer, students should use their computers directly for listing, brainstorming, evaluating, and drafting.

READINGS

The three readings at the end of Chapter 2 illustrate various approaches to the creative processes of writing and photography and how the mind works to process information. To get students to make connections among the various authors, you might use the following questions to stimulate discussions, journal entries, or short in-class essay practice.

- Imagine you are sitting at a café or bistro with Henry David Thoreau, Virginia Woolf, and Joan Didion. What do you think they would say to one another about keeping a journal? What would you say? In your groups, write a brief dialogue to illustrate the various approaches to journal keeping.

- Now think about Richard Saul Wurman’s breakdown of the five “rings” of information. What might Thoreau, Woolf, and Didion have to say about these five rings, based on what you know about these writers from the journal entries you have read? Imagine the conversation at the café continuing on the issue of information rings, and on information anxiety. Who do you think among these writers would have experienced the greatest “information anxiety”? Why do you believe this? Give reasons.

- Think about what Sven Birkerts has to say about the difference between the way texts appear on the page and on the screen. What are the pros and cons of print and screen information? As writers and researchers, should we give up
on the old technologies (throw away our books) or negotiate between old and new technology?

“On Keeping a Journal,” Henry David Thoreau
“A Writer’s Diary,” Virginia Woolf
“On Keeping a Notebook,” Joan Didion

Discussion questions (p. 43). How would you characterize the different ways these writers use their journals? Which writer’s remarks seem to approximate best how you feel about keeping a journal?

The exercise gives students practice in analyzing what the three journalists say about journaling. Students should identify the differences among the writers. Thoreau is methodical and careful and wants to find his “loftiest thoughts,” often addressing the reader directly. The impact is less of a private activity than of a collection of public essays intended for someone else to read. Woolf is more impulsive and writes “faster than the fastest type-writing,” sometimes finding unexpected “diamonds” in the “dustheap” of her diary. Woolf’s theory, surely influenced by twentieth-century psychology, is that slower, more self-conscious writing might uncover fewer “diamonds.” Her journal suggests freewriting. Didion isn’t sure why she writes but remains convinced that her practice will pay off on some “bankrupt morning” when she needs to see her past on the page. Her attitude is similar to Thoreau’s, as she uses the journal to record a view of the world rather than the world itself. Thoreau’s journal strengthens his approach as philosopher and moralist. Didion’s journal reflects her tendency to speculate about the world around her.

After students have talked about the various reasons for and approaches to journal writing, they can discuss their own reasons for keeping a journal. (Students will say everything from “I keep it because it’s a class requirement” to “I just always keep a journal, especially when I’m traveling or going to a new place” to “It helps me think.”) What’s important here is that students consider reasons behind the practice of journal keeping and begin to see it as meaningful in itself, even when it does not yield the brilliant insights they hope it will. Some bits and pieces from their journals might find their way into essays, but not everything they write in their journals will be incorporated. This can generate another discussion of the nature of the planning process as thinking-in-writing and of the composing process as revision. They may be surprised at the honesty.
and disappointment expressed by the three writers in their journals as they look critically at their private writing and even wonder why they do it. Also significant for students to consider is how journals are kept—how quickly they should write, what they should record, what the pages should look like. Instructors can encourage students to define their own methods and interpretation for keeping journals, within the parameters of the journal requirements. Journals are rich depositories of discovery and surprise, and they demand a fair amount of trust in one’s own words and in what one might find. This may be difficult for students who want predictable answers.

“The Five Rings,” Richard Saul Wurman

The excerpt from Wurman’s book classifies five types of information, which Wurman feels are “rings” that “radiate out from the most personal information that is essential for our physical survival. . . .” The five types he identifies (internal, conversational, reference, news, and cultural) are briefly defined as information systems, all of which carry potential for anxiety and all of which overlap in personal, cultural, and sociological areas. Wurman then outlines five general situations that are likely to produce anxiety and that range from not understanding the information to uncertainty over whether the information exists or how to find it. He discusses the importance of naming: “How do you ask for something if you don’t know how to spell it or you don’t know what it’s called?” The state of being without a language to identify what it is you seek is what Wurman calls “information anxiety.”

Discussion questions (p. 44). What types of information are missing from your planning? Why does the omission of this kind of information cause information anxiety? How can you use one of the thinking-in-writing strategies described in this chapter to overcome this anxiety?

The discussion questions provide students with a way to go beyond reading to experience Wurman’s theory about information. The questions ask students to consider their own work and to apply Wurman’s theory to it. Students are also asked to employ the thinking-in-writing strategies presented in Chapter 2 (listing, freewriting, speculating, and interviewing) in order to make sense of the reading. These activities promote writing-as-experience from a personal perspective and provide students with the opportunity to gain practical experience sorting out the various levels of information Wurman identifies. Working with the essay can also prepare students to handle the frustrations of library experience when they begin to try to locate articles for their papers. You might encourage them to discuss problems they have had using the library and how they solved their own
“information anxiety” when they lacked the language for identifying what they were looking for.

The questions could be used as an in-class collaborative exercise to help demystify the process of finding information. Often students overlook two of the information rings Wurman writes about: “internal” information and conversational information. As Wurman states, “Conversation is a prominent source of information, although we tend to play down or ignore its role, perhaps because of the informality of its nature.” Just as the “expert” is usually thought of as the person from out of town, so do students perceive knowledge as outside of themselves. The experience of exchanging what they have learned from their own experiences and the experiences of others can help students reconstruct themselves as authorities.

“Into the Electronic Millennium,” Sven Birkerts

Discussion questions (p. 46). What reservations does Birkerts have about the uses of interactive video? How has the shift from print to screen changed the way you search for and produce information?

These two questions ask that students read Birkerts’s essay critically and pick out the details of his argument. At the same time they are asked to assess their own processes in reading print media and screen media. Some students may embrace the new technology enthusiastically and, like the professor, throw away their books. Other students may be wary or even intimidated by the new technology. Students should be encouraged to find some sensible middle ground where they can assess the strengths and weaknesses of each media.

Birkerts’s comparisons can spark some lively debate on the nature of learning and knowing, especially if students from different fields are present in your class. Students may also want to debate what has been lost and what has been gained by the drive for greater information efficiency.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

The writing assignments provide flexible parameters for use in planning writing projects. You might want to select those assignments that help students develop a larger research project rather than respond to each individual assignment. Another approach is to ask students to choose an assignment and write a defense for why the choice is a good one.
1. Narrate: This assignment mixes memory and observation strategies and could be used as an in-class journal writing activity or as an icebreaker early in the course so students can get to know each other better. The personal research involves digging around in family history and learning to transcribe visual impressions. If students have difficulty identifying what is “familiar” or “unsettling” to them, you might tell them instead to assess their emotional reaction to the photograph—what most pleases, scares, or disturbs them—to find a way into the picture. Looking at the information through the eyes of the relative gives them practice in speculating—seeing what might be familiar in a different light. This could stimulate a discussion of voice and persona. Students will also have to imagine a certain amount of detail because they don’t really know what their relative may have felt. One way to stimulate this kind of imagination is to ask students to consider the impact of technology (computers, cars, medicine) since the photograph was taken. This can generate insights into perceptions the relative may have had at that age and can help students see how the contexts in which we live shape our thinking.

2. Observe: Perceptions are sometimes dulled or rendered inaccurate through familiarity, although some memories, particularly of “place,” remain crystal clear and easily accessible. Writing them out helps recover buried memories, though the question of “truth” in memory is always problematic: Which is more “real,” the place as they remember it, or the place as it now appears? The further removed in time they are from the experience of a place or event, the less the likelihood for accuracy and the greater the need to speculate on just what this place may have meant then and now. Students will probably find that their perceptions of the place will have changed as much as the physical place itself. Speculating on a special place as object, action, and network, as described in the textbook, provides a frame for guiding students through the process of making meaning out of an earlier time in their lives.

3. Investigate: The physical engagement with the details of this assignment will allow students to experience how writing begins before they sit down at the computer to compose a draft. Students may be surprised at how much time it can take to set up an interview: identifying the person to interview, scheduling the interview, thinking about appropriate questions to ask, recording the information accurately afterward, and analyzing it for significant data. Finally, linking this assignment to Wurman’s essay, “The Five Rings,” provides students with an issue to help them define their purpose for writing. They might incorporate into their interview the five “rings” of information outlined...
by Wurman, as well as the five general situations he identifies as being likely to produce “information anxiety.” An obvious angle for them to consider is a comparison with Wurman’s findings of how the person they interview identifies and approaches “information anxiety.”

4. Collaborate: Most young college students have been raised on interactive learning, so the concept will not be new to them. However, you might ask that they begin by defining what interactive means to them. Working as a team, students can assist each other in generating and sharing ideas. This assignment could be used as a single, beginning exercise for introducing students to the practice of working together, or it could be linked to the larger project suggested below in writing assignment 5 (“Read”). Either way, each group member needs to contribute. A written report of the group process can help the group explain how it worked together and what each member contributed. After the individual freewriting, the group might research in preparation for writing a draft proposal for an interactive museum exhibit. This collaboration provides students with a forum for discussing the student example and what Jim Jones learned about the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

5. Read: Ask students to reconstruct what it was like to live in a different time period. This assignment not only requires them to interact imaginatively with a written text but also encourages them to talk to people from a different generation who were there when it was different.

6. Respond: This assignment helps students increase their level of self-conscious reading strategies. Some students may get caught up in simply recording how many e-mails they receive and how many times they browse the Web. Explain that this information, like all data, is subject to interpretation. Ask them to place this information in the larger context of their academic work. Help them theorize about their patterns of electronic engagement. As they begin their essays, raise the issue of connotation of the word junkie. Is the term more positive when applied to electronic learning than to opium? Why? In what ways does electronic culture create meaning?

7. Analyze: This is an excellent way to research the stories in history. Old textbooks, films, and witnesses present fascinating data about how people lived before the technology we now take for granted was present in the world. The signs that signal the shift from “proto-electronic” to all-electronic are evident everywhere. Ask students to write a profile about a job that was once
central to our daily business—telephone operator, bank teller, stockbroker, salesman—that has been eliminated by technology.

8. Evaluate: All three journal keepers use their journals and diaries for purposes of musing and thinking about their writing, although each diarist saves a different type of information. Thoreau concentrates on what he calls his “loftiest thoughts” as a means of finding “wholes of parts,” a feature of Romantic thought. Virginia Woolf, in contrast, records the Modernist pace of her writing and the “accidents” or discoveries it leads to, which are the “diamonds of the dustheap.” (This phrase, “diamonds of the dustheap,” is arguably the most quoted phrase from Woolf’s diaries.) Joan Didion suggests a Postmodern discomfort with the idea that one can keep an “accurate factual record” and instead concentrates on how things feel to her: “That is getting closer to the truth about a notebook.” The truth she nudges here is not truth about the writer of a notebook, or the life of the writer, but about the purpose of a notebook.

Students might identify similarities in how these writers used ideas to generate other ideas. This could be a group project, in which each group member provides insight into thinking-in-writing by keeping a journal, including a computer journal. Students generally enjoy talking about their journals. This exercise opens up the writing experience, showing students that ideas emerge from seeming chaos, but that getting something down on paper, however disconnected it may seem, will lead to ideas for writing papers.

9. Argue: The prospectus provides an outlet for exploration of a topic and demands a close look at all of the “five rings” outlined in Wurman’s essay. Isolating one of the concepts allows for a concentrated examination of what the identified “ring” is and how it can be further explained and understood. At the same time, students may discover how difficult it is to explain one concept without placing it in the context of the others. Students may want to begin by listing ideas and freewriting in their journals on several of the “rings” outlined in Wurman’s essay, then develop one of the journal entries into the prospectus. If students are using a computer, they can experiment with shifting text around and copying parts of the journal into the prospectus. As a planning activity, the prospectus is another thinking-in-writing exercise that represents an additional stage in the process of developing a more sustained piece of writing. Students might want to refer to some of the advice offered in the text for evaluating, listing, freewriting, and speculation, all activities that may help them think about the “rings” identified by Wurman.
10. Argue: Students may be tempted to argue with Birkerts based solely on their own enthusiasm for electronic technology. Ask them to outline the process by which they locate journals online and to relate their own research process to the argument. Students might begin by outlining Birkerts’s main points (“their side”) before setting up their argument (“my side”). The assignment can be used to reinforce why students must understand both sides of an issue before taking a stand.

USING THE WRITING CENTER

Writing Center tutors can help student writers develop what Emily Meyer and Louise Smith call “concepts” for their writing in the planning stage. Encourage students to continue listing, freewriting, mapping, or assessing their reading and writing at the Writing Center. Tutors can guide them through the process of deciding what to write about by asking specific questions about student texts. Some students simply need the additional support of talking to or writing with someone. As part of their planning process, encourage your students to get in the habit of making appointments to work with Writing Center tutors. Let your students know they are welcome at the Writing Center.

Tutors will sit with students as they write. Or they can help students get started, give them time to write, and come back in five minutes or so to discuss the freewrite. Tutors can help students identify patterns—recurring words, phrases, or images—and “gloss,” or label, these patterns (Meyer and Smith, The Practical Tutor 94) so students can begin to plan their papers. Reassure your students that tutors are nonjudgmental and will be happy to read and respond to student writing. Writing Center tutors are usually students themselves, or teachers of writing, and have experienced the same frustrations that students face in trying to plan papers. It helps to get a second opinion, particularly from a trained writing tutor.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR THE COLLABORATIVE CLASSROOM

Any of the writing assignments could be used to promote collaborative activity: students can work in “write groups” or set up a system of “writing buddies” or “research buddies.” Depending on the length of your term, students can be asked to design their own group writing projects in a series of work sessions. During the first session, for example, if students are working on assignment 6, they might decide
how to collect the information they will need to write the essay “Why I Am/Am Not an Internet Junkie.” During this session, you could ask each group to draw up a list of three research questions to use as they write, three methods of finding information, and a description of which students will be responsible for what tasks (getting an outside article, typing a draft of a questionnaire, and so on). Each student would be responsible for keeping track of his or her own television viewing, writing up a report for the group, and contributing insights into the drafting of the group essay. The next session would involve the students in assessing what they had been able to do since the first meeting and finding ways around problems that arise. The point is for students to learn how to discuss their work methods and find amenable ways to proceed in the project.

Here are some additional collaborative suggestions:

• Rather than asking students to answer the various exercise questions individually, you may wish to ask them to answer the questions collaboratively. For example, to complete the exercise on page 38, you might divide your class into small groups and give them the following instructions:
  1. Appoint someone in the group to act as a scribe. That person will jot down the group’s answers and report them to the rest of the class.
  2. Recruit two others to read Susan’s preinterview and interview notes.
  3. Discuss the five questions on page 38, and compose a consensus answer for each question.
  4. Report your findings to the class. How did Susan’s interview questions help her?

• Ask students to bring in their own preinterview and interview notes and answer these questions for their own material:
  1. To what extent did your list of questions prepare you for your interview?
  2. How did you manage your interviewee’s replies to your questions? Did anything surprise you or catch you off guard? What did you do about it?
  3. Does the interview change your ideas for your paper? How?
  4. What new hypothesis can you formulate from the material you gathered from the interview?

• You can design peer evaluation sheets to help guide student responses to essays. Here is a sample:

  Peer Evaluation
1. What subject dominates the writer’s list?
2. Can you identify other subjects in the list?
3. Underline or star items most interesting to you.
4. Circle and connect those that seem related.
5. What subsequent planning strategies would you recommend for this writer?
   Another list with new focus? Freewriting? Mapping?

Student writers might also respond to those questions to evaluate themselves.

**SOURCES AND ADDITIONAL REFERENCES**

In addition to the term *prewriting*, the terms *invention* and *heuristics* are often used to describe the strategies discussed in this chapter. Richard Young’s bibliographic essay “Invention: A Topographical Survey,” *Teaching Composition: Ten Bibliographic Essays*, ed. Gary Tate (Fort Worth, TX: Texas Christian UP, 1976), offers a comprehensive survey of invention methods and a historical perspective on the subject to 1976. In *Research on Written Composition: New Directions for Teaching* (Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1986), George Hillocks reviews recent research on invention (169–86).


For an analysis of writing as a cognitive activity, along with both theoretical and practical ways to approach the teaching of writing, see Frank Smith, *Writing and the Reader*, 2nd ed.