Introduction

Helping students learn to write means helping students understand there are no magic tricks, no shortcuts, no easy lists of twenty ways to write a paper, no substitute for the hard work of sitting down and facing their own thoughts and getting them on paper. It also means that teachers must be writers themselves and must model for students the struggle of writing through mistakes to discover the meaning of what they are trying to say. Helping students learn the recursive processes of planning, drafting, and revising, teachers of writing must be willing to create environments that encourage student writers to trust their own instincts as they engage in their own texts.

Writing with a Purpose, 13th edition, provides writing instructors with ways to help students learn how to break down the activities of composing in order to produce the kind of writing demanded in college. With its many guidelines on planning and drafting papers, Writing with a Purpose allows students the opportunity to try new strategies, to fail sometimes in trying them but still continue, to revise a piece of work, or to let go of writing that isn’t heading anywhere and begin again. Well-informed teachers of writing will recognize the importance of listening and responding as experienced writers to student texts. The reading and writing assignments of Writing with a Purpose encourage collaborative learning in which students respect their own insights and those of their classmates as they work together to read, respond to, and revise their writing.

One way to view Writing with a Purpose is as a three-way collaboration among you, the book, and your students. In this relationship, the book serves you and your students not as surrogate teacher but as a resource of ideas and practices you can tailor to meet the needs of your individual students. Whether you are a graduate teaching assistant teaching freshman writing for the first time or an experienced teacher of writing, Writing with a Purpose can help you structure the course as you guide students through the processes of trusting their own instincts as writers and assessing what they have written.
The flexibility of *Writing with a Purpose* allows you to create the classroom that fits the theoretical aims of your writing program. Whatever your philosophy of teaching, *Writing with a Purpose* offers a rich variety of guidelines, exercises, readings, and writing assignments. Certainly you will want to choose only those assignments most suitable for the needs of the writers in your particular class. Because the text offers more apparatus than you can possibly use to structure a single ten- or sixteen-week course in writing, part of your advance preparation for teaching involves three interrelated decisions: (1) organizing your syllabus, (2) designing and assessing assignment sequences, and (3) using class time. This Instructor’s Resource Manual offers advice on how you can use the textbook most efficiently and provide your students with the kinds of challenges they need in order to acquire writing competency. Although neither the textbook nor the Instructor’s Resource Manual pretends to supply “the answers” to all situations, both are intended to help you help your students most effectively.

**READING, WRITING, AND RESEARCH IN THE VIRTUAL AGE: REVISED FEATURES OF THE 13TH EDITION**

Like earlier editions, *Writing with a Purpose*, 13th edition, emphasizes the basics of planning, drafting, and revising, and helping students make connections between reading and writing. Part Four, “Readings with a Purpose,” offers three new essays. Chapters 13, “Planning the Research Paper,” and 14, “Writing the Research Paper,” have expanded coverage of the uses of computers for research purposes. More detail is offered on the use of the World Wide Web and the Internet in locating sources for research. Also included is help on documenting electronic sources. Of particular interest to students and teachers of writing who use the Internet, this edition of *Writing with a Purpose* includes discussion on how to assess virtual sources. Care is given to help your students understand that traditional print sources continue to be valuable and should not be shunned in favor of exclusive attention to electronic sources. Both play important roles in academic writing.

Users of previous editions of *Writing with a Purpose* will note that the text is now presented in five parts: Part One, “The Writing Process,” includes chapters on the basics of writing (purpose, planning, drafting, and revising); Part Two presents “Writing Structures” (methods of development, argument, paragraphs, sentences, diction, tone and style); Part Three, “Writing for Special Assignments,” focuses on the essay examination, the critical essay, and planning and writing the research paper; Part Four concerns itself with “Readings with a Purpose”; Part Five is a handbook of grammar and usage. This organization makes it possible for instructors
to use *Writing with a Purpose* for a two-term writing course. The first term might concentrate on the writing process and writing structures, the second term on more complex interrelated activities of reading and writing for a special purpose.

Writing assignments at the end of each chapter continue to ask students to concentrate on one task at a time (narrate, observe, investigate, collaborate, read, respond, analyze, evaluate, and argue). Arranged according to a traditionally viewed hierarchy of skills, the assignments allow students to practice reading and writing and to build on what they previously learned.

There are many possible ways to use *Writing with a Purpose* in the classroom, depending on the needs of your particular students and the demands of your writing program. Sample student papers offer models for student writers, while writing assignments present opportunities for students to experience writing for a specific purpose and audience. The combination of materials in *Writing with a Purpose* allows you to choose what you want to use in your class.

**HINTS TO BEGINNING TEACHERS**

The main goal of *Writing with a Purpose* is to promote good writing practice among students and their teachers. Here are some general teaching practices you might want to try:

1. Write with your students. Do the assignments with them. Sit down in class, and let them see you struggling to respond to the assignment, too. Share your early drafts so they can see that writing does not just happen. Everyone who writes has to work at it. Refer to yourself as a writer; let your students see that you take this activity seriously.

2. As Tim Donovan suggests in his article “Seeing Students as Writers,” view your students as writers first and students second, and refer to them as writers. Doing this will help create a “community of writers” in which writers help each other learn.

3. Encourage critical discussion. Let students tell you which assignments work for them and which do not. Share with them which assignments worked for you and which did not. Try to help students analyze why a particular assignment does not work for them: perhaps they need to read more before writing, perhaps they have not narrowed their focus enough, or perhaps they need more brainstorming and freewriting. Encourage students to talk among themselves about writing.
4. Give students choices whenever possible. Instead of assigning a certain assignment to everyone (which means you have to read the same assignment twenty times), you could ask students to choose their own assignment. You might ask students to choose assignments that direct them toward research on topics in their majors.

5. Occasionally, let students choose individually which readings to work on. Not only will students actually do more reading this way because they must peruse the selections to decide what to read, but the class discussions could also become more lively. Students might work in groups according to which essays they have chosen. For a different approach you could simply assign all the readings from a particular chapter to the entire class and then assign students to groups or lead whole-group discussions. There is no one right way to use the material offered in *Writing with a Purpose*. Whatever works best for your teaching style and for your students is what’s best.

6. Depending on your class, you might want to assign particular writing assignments, especially at first. However, you should not be concerned with trying to “cover” all the writing assignments in the book. You should not even attempt to do this. It is usually a good idea to give students a range of choices and talk about the variety of possibilities available to them. By choosing their own assignments, they are taking a more active role in their own learning. Writing is, above all, an activity that involves choice: of topic, of point of view, of evidence, of word choice. The hardest part for many students is in deciding what to write about. By giving them some parameters that can guide their choices but at the same time allowing them the needed practice in making decisions, you can help students gain confidence and strength as writers. Many students hate to write because they feel they are not given a choice about what to write. Give them a choice, and see what happens.

7. Be open to what students seem to need, and at the same time set limits in terms of deadlines and procedures. If papers are due on a certain day, do not allow students to turn in work late without some kind of penalty (usually a lowered grade). Some instructors do not accept late homework at all. Some may, depending on circumstances. Whatever your policy, make it clear to students what the expectations are as well as what the consequences are for violating class policies. State your policies clearly in your syllabus. This protects you and your students. You can always ease up on policies, but you cannot make students accountable for policies you have not announced. It is better to come across as demanding in the beginning. They will appreciate the clear guidelines, and you will save yourself headaches by deciding ahead of time...
how to respond to problems of chronic late papers, tardiness, lack of participation, and so on.

8. Be willing to say “I don’t know” if students ask questions and you do not know the answers. The best teachers model the process of inquiry with their students by going to the library with them, by locating sources, by problem solving, and by sharing their own experiences. The best class periods are often spent searching for answers and putting planned lessons on hold to respond to more immediate student needs.

9. Be flexible. Come to class prepared with an agenda, but do not feel so invested in the prepared lesson that you cannot stop to respond to the needs of your students. If students are not as ready to go to the next chapter as you thought they might be, take additional classroom time to go back over last week’s chapters. Take time out to see where your students are. Give them time to practice the advice they receive from the textbook. Allow for a question-and-answer period and a “catch-up” day.

10. Use the Writing Center! You are not alone in teaching your students. Refer students to the Writing Center whenever they need an audience, are struggling over topic choice, or are trying to understand a reading selection from the textbook. At all stages of the writing process, Writing Center tutors can help your students in one-to-one tutorials. As a teacher of writing, you are part of a team that includes other teachers, department mentors, and the Writing Center staff. Encourage your students to use the Writing Center whenever they have a writing assignment.

WRITING A SYLLABUS AND A COURSE DESCRIPTION

You will, no doubt, receive advice on preparing your syllabus, especially if you are teaching for the first time. Many graduate students are given a syllabus to follow. If you must write your own syllabus, however, and do not know where to start, the following questions and guidelines may help:

1. What are the primary goals for the students in my writing class? In what writing activities must they learn to engage? What kind of products must they complete? Include a course calendar with due dates for reading and writing assignments.

2. How will I teach these students? What is the format most important to the teaching of writing? Will the students understand what I mean by “writing
process” and “writing workshop”?

Define these approaches in your course description.

3. Include on your syllabus your name and office number, conference hours, required texts, prerequisites (if any) for the course, and a detailed course description that includes an explanation of the class workshop format.

4. Outline your course policies in detail: policies on grading, late work, meeting deadlines, class attendance and maximum number of absences, revisions, portfolios, and presentation of work. Give as much detail as you can. If you require students to present work done on a word processor, for example, let them know in writing that this is a requirement. If you prefer that students staple the pages of their essays together, state it on the syllabus. The more you can tell them in your syllabus about the day-to-day details of the course requirements, the less you will have to repeat yourself, and the more accountable they will be because the requirements will be in writing. Stating your policies in writing prevents misunderstandings and protects you later if problems arise.

USE OF CLASSROOM TIME

Writing classes, like classes in painting or architectural drafting, are essentially studio classes. The central activity in all writing classes is the act of writing. Even if students write only for ten minutes in their journals, it is important that they write in every class period. The instructor’s role in the course is that of coach and experienced practitioner, sharing what knowledge of the craft of writing he or she has learned from direct experience and emphasizing the practice of writing. For many English instructors, it is difficult to take a step back; first-year teachers, especially, often say, “I feel I’m not doing my job if I’m not standing in front of the classroom lecturing.” Part of the issue is one of perception: Who is really in control here? Writing classes, when they are most productive, appear chaotic to visitors. The logic lies in the activity of working together on assignments. Learning theory tells us that students learn from each other, not from lectures delivered by brilliant graduate students.

One-to-One Activities

Although some teachers organize their whole class around one-to-one activities, most use this strategy for occasional student-teacher or peer conferences. The purpose of the student-teacher conference is to respond orally to a student’s plan or draft. Because these conferences allow you to discover a great deal about the
student writer’s approach to a particular piece of writing as well as about his or her overall writing processes and development, it is advisable to schedule at least two of these conferences per term, and more if possible. These conferences may be held during class time or while the rest of the class writes, or they may be scheduled during your office hours or in lieu of a class meeting. It is a good idea to limit the conferences to about fifteen minutes per student. Sign-up sheets allow students to be prepared ahead of time for the meeting.

Conferences are most beneficial when the student’s writing is in progress, and you may wish to hold several conferences on the same assignment, each time focusing on a different level of concern—idea, structure, development, style, mechanics. If you are meeting with a student only once to review a particular rough draft, you may wish to use the general conference format recommended by Donald Murray in *A Writer Teaches Writing*:

1. The student comments on the draft.
2. The teacher reads or reviews the draft.
3. The teacher responds to the student’s comments.
4. The student responds to the teacher’s response. (148)

Another one-to-one strategy you may wish to incorporate into your course is the peer conference, sometimes called “dyad work.” Students in peer conferences work in pairs to respond orally or in writing to each other’s plans or drafts. Most chapters for this Instructor’s Resource Manual include peer response guides that can be the basis for students’ written responses to one another’s work. Also useful are self-evaluations in which students answer similar questions asked of their peers in response to their own essays, thereby allowing them to assess how they feel the writing is progressing. Students can compare their own answers to those of peer readers to see if their intentions are coming across to an audience.

**COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES**

Small groups (three to five students is best) can engage in many valuable group activities, including writing groups, problem-solving group activities, and collaborative writing tasks. Some instructors assign students to groups for the entire quarter. These groups, called Write Groups, develop into tightly knit units. The higher the level of trust is, the more students are able to take chances with their writing. They become more honest with one another.
Setting Up Groups

How do you decide who goes into what group? Here are some suggestions:

1. Try to place an uneven number of students (three or five is a good number) in each group so groups can avoid split decisions.
2. Assign students randomly—by alphabetical order or by seat in the classroom, for example. This can sometimes create interesting dynamics you could not have foreseen.
3. Let students self-select their own groups. They often know their needs better than you do.
4. Assign students to groups according to major—that is, avoid putting all the economics or engineering majors together. Students better understand audience when they see that not every reader has the same background. This placement asks students to avoid the use of technical or special terminology or to take the time to explain completely.
5. Assign students who are most likely to help one another. Put a nonnative speaker with a student who is a strong writer. Put two strong writers with less strong writers: stronger writers can help weaker ones and can usually bring up the overall quality of the group. Cultural and ethnic diversity can bring liveliness to groups. However, be careful about “overusing” more highly prepared students to tutor others. All students should benefit from the groups.
6. Assign students to groups for the entire quarter.
7. Assign students to different groups for different assignments.
8. Assign students to one group for half the semester or quarter; then assign fresh groups.

Responding in a Writing Group

Make sure students understand the assignment and what is expected of them in the group. They usually need to be socialized to the concept of collaborative learning because students are used to working solo. Collaborating on problem solving feels like cheating to them because they are more accustomed to competitive classrooms where everyone is fighting to find the right answer. Learning to see that situations may yield numerous solutions is an alien concept for many students.

TIPS FOR WRITERS
1. Read your piece, twice if necessary, and allow at least thirty seconds of silence after each reading for impressions to become clearer in the minds of your responders.

2. Do not rush the reading of your piece.

3. Avoid defensiveness. Let the writing stand for itself, and listen openly to the responses from your group members. This will help you revise later.

4. Do not quarrel with your group’s reactions. Maybe what you see is truly there, and others do not see it. But maybe what they see is there, too—even if it contradicts what you see. Just listen, take it all in, and then make your own decision about what the writing needs.

**TIPS FOR RESPONDERS**

1. Use active listening. (Do not concentrate on your next comments; concentrate instead on what the speaker is saying.) Tell what you think the writer is trying to say by either paraphrasing or summarizing the gist of what has been written. Read back some of the author’s own words.

2. As the piece is being read, underline words or phrases that catch your attention. What is it about those words that makes them stand out? What parts of the piece do you like best? How do those parts work for you? Respond to specific sections of the writing. A general response such as “I like it” or “That’s good” does not help the writer find ways to improve the writing.

3. Let the writer know if anything in the writing seems confusing, out of place, or unclear. Explain why you are bothered by that particular section or item.

4. Ask the writer “What part of the paper do you like best?” “What part was most difficult to write?” “How can the group help you?”

**RESPONDING TO STUDENT WRITING**

One of the most crucial aspects of writing that students will learn in your class is the importance of revision. Many students come to writing classes with the impression that writers are born, not made, and that if an assignment does not come out right the first time, this is because they are not writers. Students think that real writers “get it right” every time. As writers and teachers of writing, we know this is not true.

When responding to student writing, your approach should focus first on what Thomas Reigstad and Donald McAndrew call higher-order concerns (HOCs) and
then on lower-order concerns (LOCs) (11). As the names imply, some types of problems are more responsible for the low quality of a piece than others are. The four priority concerns identified as HOCs are thesis or focus, appropriate voice or tone, organization, and development. Chapters 1–5 of Writing with a Purpose address these issues and offer guidelines and revision agendas for helping students discover their purpose and meaning.

Reigstad and McAndrew identify the LOCs as sentence-level or word-level issues such as sentence structure, punctuation, usage, spelling, and word choice. These concerns should be dealt with only after the higher-priority items have been addressed. It does not help students to revise sentences if the essay lacks focus or is inadequately developed. Too much premature attention to sentence-level concerns only ensures that students will not revise the piece to their satisfaction or to yours. They are too invested in the small parts of the essay to see the larger issues because they have worked too hard at being correct to be able to view the piece holistically. As hard as it is for English teachers to overlook the misspelled word, the dangling modifier, the noun-verb disagreement, you must overlook these issues early in the drafting process. Later, during the final editing workshops, you and your students can focus on these sentence-level problems.

While you work with students, then, first help them clarify what they are writing and why they are writing it—help them follow the advice of the textbook and write with a clear purpose. Once this is established, students can work on presenting information in an appropriate voice as they explore the details and examples that support their central idea. To produce worthwhile texts, students must find meaningful topics.

Only after the HOCs have been successfully met should students examine the LOCs. Very often sentence-level issues can be cleared up when students identify a thesis. Simply asking if something could be said another way can help students rewrite sentences to satisfaction. Asking students to read the piece out loud also helps them catch mistakes, particularly when you insist that they read what they actually wrote, not what they think they wrote.

Text-specific questions are most effective when you are responding to student texts, especially when you first let students know what you like about their writing. “I like your idea here, Joan, about how women athletes do not receive the attention they deserve, but I need a good example. Could you list a couple of athletes here to show what you mean?” This kind of direct questioning involves students in what they are writing. They are less likely to try to find “the right answer” in a situation like this because you have placed them in the position of the expert. They will be much more likely to work on improving the writing when they know you are reading and responding to it.
GRADING CRITERIA

At some point, your students must stop revising and let go of their writing. And at that point, you must assess the quality of the writing—not the effort that went into it, which is usually substantial. You must assess the quality of the completed draft: Does the writing meet the standards set by your institution and by your department? This is the point at which many instructors, particularly those less experienced, protest that they are then grading product, not process. It does look that way, but the point of process is to guide your students through the making of a written product that belies the struggle of the process. They understand how writing is done so that they can produce clear, logical prose.

If you have made it clear in your syllabus and in your daily classroom practice that the reason for the process approach is so students can learn how to shape a finished product, you will not feel a conflict and your students will not feel betrayed. It is important that your students understand what is being evaluated and how. There is no question that the most difficult part of teaching writing is the assessment of the writing that students produce. Part of the difficulty arises from the “contrariness” of being both ally and judge, mentor and examiner, as Peter Elbow points out in his essay “Embracing Contraries in the Teaching Process.” Another contribution to the difficulty is our awareness of the intensity of student anxiety about evaluation. Inexperienced writers, Mina Shaughnessy explains, see their writing as “a line that moves haltingly across the page, exposing as it goes all that the writer doesn’t know, then passing into the hands of a stranger who reads it with a lawyer’s eyes, searching for flaws” (7).

With these considerations in mind, here are some criteria (a combination of published standards for freshman writing from Ball State University and Northeastern University) that might help you in grading.

The “A” Paper (Excellent)

The “A” paper is a memorable paper that not only responds to the assignment but also offers fresh, perceptive insight. The writer presents a strong argument that is tightly focused and fully explained. The writing is clear, the ideas are logically organized, the transitions are appropriate, and the details are concrete, substantial, and relevant to the central argument. The writer’s voice is strong and guides the reader through a carefully planned text that analyzes and offers creative, original solutions. The ideas emphasize major issues and allow the reader to see the relationships among the points raised. The writer anticipates audience needs. There are almost no problems with language. Sentences are forceful and skillfully crafted,
with good variation. Words are well chosen, simple, and direct. The writer is in complete control. The paper is consistently compelling to read.

The “B” Paper (Very Good)

The “B” paper also responds to the assignment competently and adds a new angle to the problem, although the paper lacks the consistently high-level delivery of the “A” paper. The writing is carefully focused on its central argument and progresses logically from point to point, allowing the reader to see the issues and the important relationships among them. The writer has anticipated probable arguments and questions and offers a convincing point of view. The details are concrete and substantial but occasionally irrelevant. There are very few, if any, problems with language. Sentences are well crafted but lack the forcefulness of the “A” paper. The writing goes beyond the minimum and creatively analyzes the situation. The writer is in control. Occasional lapses in logic or syntax are a result of attempts to stretch beyond the writer’s present level of competence.

The “C” Paper (Fully Competent)

The work addresses the assignment and shows that the writer understands how to formulate an idea, organize the supporting material, and present an argument. The central argument is trite or too general and needs further refinement and focus. The purpose is not entirely clear to the reader. The writing is generally clear, although transitions are often abrupt or nonexistent. Ideas are not as logically organized as they might be. Details are predictable and monotonous, are sometimes irrelevant, or are in need of further explanation. The writer does not always anticipate audience needs. The paper completes the assignment, although the solutions are predictable. The paper contains no new ideas. There are no serious problems with the usage and conventions of written English, although the language could be more controlled. The paper contains occasional deviations from standard usage. Sentences need more variation. Words are needlessly repeated and limited in range. The voice is generic, conveying no sense of the person behind the words. The paper is correct but lacks distinction. Work with a Writing Center tutor could help the student on the next assignment.

The “D” Paper (Weak)

The writing responds vaguely to the assignment, and it is difficult to see the point the writer is trying to make. The paper lacks a clear, central argument. There may be several inadequately developed points instead of one strong focus. Details are
inadequately explained; the reader has difficulty understanding the relevance of the examples. The logic of the rhetorical plan is mysterious and hard to follow. Errors in syntax, spelling, and punctuation interfere with the reader’s ability to understand what the writer is saying. The writing does not make connections for the reader; the paper shows little awareness of the needs of the audience. It is clear that the writer was not entirely sure what he or she was trying to say. More time needs to be spent planning and writing. A trip to the Writing Center would be helpful. The writer may have had something to say but did not present the ideas in a way that a reader is able to understand. If the writer is to continue work on this paper, she or he could either develop the work through subsequent drafts or abandon the ideas and begin again.

The “F” Paper (Inadequate)

The paper ignores the requirements of the assignment. The reader is totally lost because the writer has not provided any orientation. The paper lacks a purpose, central idea, or argument and does not explain anything. Ideas are confused and illogical. Details are vague and puzzling. The writing does not observe the conventions of Standard Written English, and the reader cannot decipher the message. The writing shows no evidence of involvement from the writer. The writer needs to spend more time planning, drafting, and revising the assignment. In addition, the writer needs to discuss the work with the instructor and a Writing Center tutor to set realistic goals for the writing. The writer also needs to develop time-management skills and arrange a personal writing schedule for the next assignment. Finally, the writer needs to examine his or her own hierarchy of needs as a writer.

HINTS FOR EVALUATING STUDENT WRITING

1. Avoid assigning letter grades until later in the semester or quarter, after students have had the opportunity to revise one or two assignments.
2. Give students a “ballpark” rating figure so they have an idea of how they are doing. You can do this by assigning numerical ratings rather than letter grades. Even though students will translate these numerical ratings into letter grades, the rating does distance them from what they fear the most: a poor grade. You can explain that the numerical ratings are only to give them an idea of how they are doing during the early part of the course. Some students need this more than others, so it’s a good idea to let students know roughly where they stand if they appear to need it. (Examples of numerical gradings are A/B = 3; C = 2; D = 1; F = 0. Any variation of this system will work.)
3. Ask students to assess themselves. They are usually aware of the areas they need to work on most. Ask students to write a letter or memo to you in class on the day papers are due. This gives students the experience of writing for you in class under time pressure, which is what they are often asked to do in other courses; it also gives you a record of their in-class writing. Although plagiarism is not generally a problem, it does occur. In-class writing samples that differ widely from work written outside of class might be useful in helping students understand the importance of learning how to write on their own.

Questions to ask students to answer in the cover letter for their final-draft essays are the following:

1. What is the major argument of your paper?
2. Why did you choose this topic?
3. What did you learn about your writing/the topic by writing about it?
4. What part of the paper do you like the most? Why do you like it?
5. What part of the paper was hardest for you to write? Why?
6. How did the draft change as you worked on it?
7. How would you change this paper if you had to revise it one more time?
8. How would you assess this paper? Defend your assessment.

You may want to vary the questions from assignment to assignment and add questions that are particularly pertinent to the particular assignment. For instance, if you are working on developing ideas (Chapter 5, “Common Methods of Development”), ask students to explain what methods of development they used in writing the paper and why they chose those methods.

4. Assess writing by the hierarchy of writing needs. Quickly read all essays through once to get the whole picture. Next, place essays in piles according to your scale of “good,” “better,” and “best.” Then you can return to the papers to add end comments and grades. Because you will have seen the papers at least once previously and responded to them as they were being written, it is unnecessary to spend hours and hours writing comments. It is more effective to comment directly on one aspect of the paper than to try commenting on everything. Remember, overall rhetorical plan first (what are the ideas here? how well are they addressed?), then organization and development, and, finally, sentence-level concerns (sentence structure, spelling, grammar, and so on).
5. Grade especially those issues emphasized by the assignment. Early in the course, you might want to ignore certain factors such as development and instead concentrate on how well the individual student responded to the assignment’s request for planning. Later, as the course progresses and assignments demand more from the students, the grading also becomes more demanding. In other words, the “C” earned early in the course is more difficult to earn later because expectations expand as students progress through the course.

6. Emphasize portfolios rather than individual essays. Does the writing change or show more involvement by the end of the course? Do you expect more at the end of the course? Do the essays in the portfolio show that the student is meeting the higher expectations as he or she progresses through the course? Look at the overall quality of the writing. Not all essays will show the best that the student is capable of; allow for some experimentation.

7. Do not grade everything. Ask for assignments that only count positively. (In other words, not doing the assignment can penalize a student, but doing the assignment will count.) Give students the opportunity to write without assessment.

8. Use journals to encourage students to explore ideas. Think about requiring a journal; give students credit for keeping one; but do not grade it, because you are trying to encourage more writing in a safe environment.

9. Look for strengths, not weaknesses. View the student first as a writer, then as a student. Ask yourself what the writer is trying to say. Try to uncover the logic in unusual usage, punctuation, or sentence patterns.

**LET THE WRITING CENTER HELP YOU TEACH YOUR STUDENTS**

Your institution probably has a Writing Center, a Writing Lab, or a Learning Center where students can receive free one-to-one tutoring with trained writing tutors. If you have not met the director of the center in your school, make it a point to go and introduce yourself. Most Writing Center directors are happy to meet instructors who care about how their students write. The director can tell you what kinds of programs are available to your students. Some Writing Centers offer more than one-to-one tutoring. If your Writing Center has “traveling tutor” programs, find out at the beginning of the semester or quarter how to apply for a tutor to visit your classroom to help you read and respond to student writing. This is very useful on days when students are working on drafts.
The goals of Writing Centers are to help students with their writing and to do so in ways that are enabling, not crippling. The kinds of activities Writing Center tutors will engage in are these:

- Work one-to-one with student writers
- Provide nonevaluative assistance to students (reputable Writing Centers do not “grade” student writing or assess the quality of teachers’ assignments)
- Encourage students to use their own ideas
- Introduce students to new strategies for all levels of the writing process
- Help students with whatever they want to work on (that is, tutors can help students brainstorm for ideas, develop ideas, organize the material, edit for clarity, proofread, and document sources; tutors can also help with résumés, cover letters, technical reports, and creative writing)
- Listen and respond to student writing
- Offer a menu of suggestions for revision (tutors do not supply answers)
- Help students isolate errors to work on them
- Help students create their own hierarchy of writing needs
- Leave ownership of the writing in the students’ hands
- Show respect for and interest in student writing

The kinds of activities Writing Center tutors typically will not engage in are these:

- Write papers for students
- Tell students what to write
- Proofread papers for students
- Evaluate writing
- Assess writing assignments
- Give answers
- Revise papers
- Take ownership of student writing

Because Writing Centers are generally available for all students regardless of what course they are writing for, students are often encouraged to make appointments ahead of time to work with tutors. This is true even when Writing Centers offer walk-in appointments. You can help the Writing Center help you work with students by finding out where your Writing Center is located and what its hours and policies are and announcing them frequently in class as your students
work on writing assignments. You can also help the Writing Center by being specific about what you want students to work on if you request that students seek tutoring. There may be a special form for you to fill out so tutors can follow your instructions. If not, write a note to the Writing Center director; it is always helpful for tutors to know in as much detail as possible what your expectations are for your students.

It is especially important that classroom instructors help students understand that Writing Centers are not just for freshman students who have trouble with writing. Upper-level honors students use university Writing Centers, and graduate students who are writing master’s theses also come for assistance. Even with a small staff, Writing Centers are able to help students improve their writing regardless of the task, regardless of the level. Writing Center tutors are ready to work with you to help students master the writing tasks required of them in your class.

Students often come to the Writing Center expecting tutors to proofread their papers for them. Let students know that Writing Centers are not proofreading centers! Writing Centers can help students learn to identify their own errors, but tutors will not proofread papers for students. Students sometimes will return to instructors complaining that the Writing Center did not help them because the tutor would not proofread for them. Explain that the Writing Center is an extension of the classroom, where the emphasis is on teaching students how writing is done. The Writing Center can provide students with valuable assistance and practice in writing. Writing is never easy, and Writing Center tutors are available to help students learn to write, not to do the work for students. Once students understand the function of the center, they can make full use of the services available. Many students return each week to work on their writing.

All writing can be revised and improved, regardless of the assignment and the level of writing competency. Encourage your students to go early and often to the Writing Center. Let them know that Writing Center tutors are also writers who struggle with the writing process themselves and understand how difficult writing can be. Most of all, let your students know that Writing Center tutors respond to each student as a writer with individual needs and strengths.

USING COMPUTERS IN THE CLASSROOM

The 13th edition of Writing with a Purpose keeps pace with developments in computer-assisted instruction in composition. It integrates ideas and suggestions for using computers throughout the book, with boxes highlighting information about using computers for writing at various stages of the writing process. Chapters 13
and 14 have expanded discussions on the use of the Net and the Web for academic research. Samples from search engines such as Yahoo have been included, along with instructions for beginning electronic searches. Chapters 13 and 14 include a student paper on the relative merits of coffee, which makes extensive use of electronic sources.

Emphasis remains on the practice of writing and the activities of research, but the 13th edition offers students and writing instructors ways to think about electronic sources that can enhance students’ critical thinking abilities as they learn to evaluate electronic sources. For students with little hands-on experience conducting computer searches, computer-assisted instruction in your composition classroom will be especially important. While most students by now have become computer literate, it is wise to remember that access to the Net remains an issue for many students. Before assuming that all your students have their own computers, you might want to keep in mind what Deanne Harper learned when she noticed that one of her students, who had routinely turned in three or four typed pages of analysis began to turn in two-page, hand-written responses to assignments. When queried, the student said that his roommate had left school, taking his computer with him and leaving Harper’s student without access to a computer. What Harper noticed was a difference in the student’s final products. The student was working as hard as ever but finding it more difficult to write without a computer. The question Harper asks, which is important for all writing teachers, is, How does the computer shape the way we respond to work turned in by students? Are we, like our students, prone to the enticements of how nice computers can make things look? The question is at the very least a sobering reminder of how technology has changed the ways we use and define literacy and even how we read and assess student work.

Regardless of how much or how little access our students have to computers, as Harper has noted, writing as a process must remain the controlling idea of our courses. Computers are tools. They do not replace teachers; they do not replace the critical acts of reading, thinking, and assessing. Having access to such tools can clearly help students do better work. Our job as writing teachers is to help students use computers to improve their reading, their research, and their writing. Writing with a Purpose works to engage students with these practices using computers. The 13th edition recognizes the potential for computers in the writing classroom. At the same time, we must help students understand the limitations of technology. The new essays included in this edition debate the impact of electronic media in writing, research, and thinking. Such debates are important and belong in our classrooms.

Current composition research in computers continues to attempt to understand what Cynthia L. Selfe has called the “grammars” of virtual text, the fluid, evolving text we see on the computer screen as we are writing online. Despite the enthusiasm...
for computer technology, Selfe, Gail E. Hawisher, and others see reasons to approach the use of computers in composition with some caution. Computers are powerful tools that carry with them a double-edged sword: used well, computers offer new possibilities for research and writing; used incorrectly, computers can create classrooms where students learn by rote, write according to prescription, and become victims of a “big brother” who controls their movements. The challenge for teachers of writing is to make use of the technology without being used by the technology—to teach writing even while our concept of what constitutes writing is changing. Computer networks have broken down the boundaries between text and author, raising questions about plagiarism. Students inexperienced with the methods of documenting sources in traditional print texts are even more vulnerable to plagiarism in the ambiguously defined spaces of electronic authorship. Who owns ideas when they are easily transferred electronically between texts? Teachers often know less about computers than do their students, and their relative ignorance shifts the balance of power and has the potential to create discomfort in the classroom. These are all reasons to learn more about computers and to explore their potential in writing classrooms as tools for writers.

The array of computer services available to researchers has expanded to include a worldwide network, available through the Internet. There is e-mail. There are special-interest bulletin boards seemingly on every possible topic. There is hypertext. The information superhighway is here to stay, with all its advantages and all its problems. Not every student has equal access to the technology, nor are all composition classrooms equipped with computer networking capabilities. Gail E. Hawisher and Cynthia L. Selfe discuss a number of issues relating to problems of access, as well as problems of prescription and control, in their article “The Rhetoric of Technology and the Electronic Writing Class,” cited in the references at the end of this introduction.

Beginning exercises for getting students to think about writers’ habits and the stages of the writing process can easily be done on a computer. Here are some simple short projects that can be done in conjunction with reading Chapter 1:

- Ask students to write a profile of their writing processes before and after using a word processor. Ask students just beginning to write with a word processor for their initial impressions. How has the use of word processing changed their reading and writing experiences?
- Instruct students to turn the brightness control on the monitor all the way down so they can’t see what they are writing as they freewrite or work on a first draft. Insist that they write a page or two this way. Afterward, ask them to
write about or discuss in class what this “blind” writing was like. How did it affect their process?

• For the first essay assignment, ask students to print out copies of each draft so they can maintain a record of all the work for the assignment: freewriting, notes, plans, and numbered drafts. Then ask them to review the data and describe, in either an essay or a computer journal entry, the development of each draft. As a variation of this activity, ask students to exchange composing data, analyze each other’s stages of writing, and write a mini–case study of their partner’s writing process. Discuss the findings in class. Write on the board the various strategies students identify. Ask them to assess where they might change or add to their personal cache of strategies. Are they in need of more varied or more productive strategies? In what ways does composing at the computer affect the way they write? This project can lead to a discussion about literacy and how your students define it.

Whether your class has access to a computer network that allows electronic conversations, a single computer for twenty-five students, or no computer at all, you can help your students learn about the capabilities of computers for reading and writing. But even with the most sophisticated network available, your students will continue to need what you as a writer and teacher of writing have to offer them: interest in their work and their lives, expertise in understanding and explaining how texts evolve, and a personal response to what they write. Electronic conversations cannot supplant classroom discussions and small groups, where students learn to listen to others and to articulate their own thoughts as they respond to readings, arguments, and writing. The social component of the writing classroom continues to need attention, in both electronic and traditional configurations.

CONCLUSION

Just as students learn to write by writing, teachers learn to teach by teaching. A strong theoretical background will inform the practices you adopt and can help you find your own way through the maze of learning to learn from your students. But writing and writing theory are constantly evolving processes, and this very liveliness gives teachers energy to teach and teach again. As Ann Berthoff tells us in The Making of Meaning,

Theory can help us figure out why something works so we can repeat it, inventing variations. A theoretical understanding of cognitive development in this case, of how learning involves forming, can help us figure out our
sequences of assignments. The centrally important question in all teaching is, “What comes next?” We must learn continually how to build on what has gone on before, how to devise what I. A. Richards calls “the partially parallel task.” Of course, we follow something with something like it, but we can’t do that authentically unless we can identify the first something: What is really going on? Theory can help us see what act we’re trying to follow.

SOURCES AND ADDITIONAL REFERENCES


