University of Mary Washington

Eagle Scholar

Spring 5-1-2015

Writing Is Learning

Aubrey M. Kennedy

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholar.umw.edu/student_research

Recommended Citation

WRITING IS LEARNING

An honors paper submitted to the Department of English, Linguistics, and Communication
of the University of Mary Washington
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Departmental Honors

Aubrey M. Kennedy
May 2015

By signing your name below, you affirm that this work is the complete and final version
of your paper submitted in partial fulfillment of a degree from the University of Mary
Washington. You affirm the University of Mary Washington honor pledge: "I hereby declare
upon my word of honor that I have neither given nor received unauthorized help on this
work."

Aubrey M. Kennedy
(digital signature)

05/01/15

Aubrey Kennedy

ENGL 491: Why ask students to write?

Professor Rigsby

<div align="center">Writing Is Learning</div>

My first memory of writing involves a yellow legal pad, a red ballpoint pen, and the summer before my second year of preschool. For reasons unbeknownst to me, I had an overwhelming desire to write, regardless of the fact that I did not know how to write. I spent countless hours sitting cross-legged on my living room floor, presumably in pigtails and overalls, scribbling the "words" of my very first "essay" onto the yellow paper. Many years and countless essays later, my writing style has incontestably changed. Other than the fact that I have learned to write actual words and sentences, my writing has evolved from a free-form expression of self to writing that is carefully-organized, meticulously edited for diction and syntax errors, and often devoid of any semblance of self-expression. Of course, I am still that little girl with that same passion for rhetoric, but I propose that my education in composition classrooms interfered with my desire to write.

With this problem in mind, I designed an individual study that would determine the best methods for teaching composition that would foster learning and self-expression grounded in current, relevant research. Although I initially started out with the research question: "Why ask students to write?" my research question evolved to be: "Can writing be taught?" After months of research, I do believe that writing can be taught; however, more importantly, I believe that writing can be *learned*. Specifically, writing *is* learning.

If writing is not taught as learning, then students will generate stiff, boring prose that students don't enjoy writing and teachers don't enjoy reading. In this paper, the reader will see

my learned, stiff prose typed in normal text, and my more interesting and personal writing is written in italics. In writing, I can learn more about myself and am able to make sense of the world around me, and make better sense of writing itself, fostering a metacognitive relationship with composition. For example, writing this paper has taught me that I have become comfortable with a structured environment and that writing personal, albeit messy, prose scares me. What I am comfortable with is easiest, but it is also the most dull.

The way we teach composition is problematic, and this is reflected in how we think of and define composition. In his essay "What is Composition and (if you know what it is) Why Do We Teach It?", David Bartholomae defines composition as "the institutionally supported desire to organize and evaluate the writing of unauthorized writers, to control writing in practice" (11). Furthermore, he articulates that the purpose of composition appears to honor and uphold standards of writing proficiency, rather than question these standards. One of the main goals of teaching writing seems to be writing that uses perfect vocabulary and is flawlessly organized. In contrast, perhaps the most disorderly papers (and papers that are subsequently not deemed "good" by conventional standards) are the best papers and the most authentic measures of student understanding. This parallels the learning process, because learning itself is disordered and undisciplined. Therefore, common standards of composition are not authentic expressions of student learning.

Composition is contrived because we have *taught* students how to learn by telling them exactly what we expect to find in their written work. What we call knowledge is unrelated to experience or experiential learning. Writing is a process of discovery and learning, and it should be taught as such. Students today give up their own knowledge to rely on the knowledge of those who teach them. Personally, I believe that by teaching students to be skeptics of "good writing,"

we can teach students to think for themselves, and they can learn that writing is an alternative epistemology. In his essay "Inventing the University Student," Kurt Spellmeyer asserts that "…we need to ask if education as we now imagine it helps to strengthen our students' sense of agency and self-worth" (43). Teaching students to write flawless papers does not help them learn, rather, it generates lackluster prose that we have already read before by some other student who also failed to learn as well as think and write critically.

When I attended school, learning to write was the most magical experience. Unlike most of my peers, I learned to write before I learned to read. I was thrilled that I could finally express myself with written words. As a result, I wrote all the time. I would write notes to my family on Post-it notes and scatter them throughout the house. Once I learned to write words such as "macaroni and cheese" and "Jell-O" these items would mysteriously be added to the family grocery list. I felt as though I needed to fill blank spaces of paper with my thoughts and ideas. In learning to write, I learned more about myself; I learned that I had an inherent desire to write, and this desire could only be satisfied by written words.

As I progressed through school, however, this desire slowly waned. I got older, and my writing teachers became stricter with their expectations of my writing. I completed countless worksheets on passive voice and split infinitives, all the while losing my desire to write. I would receive notes in the margins of my papers that encouraged me to "clarify" and "add transition sentences." I was taught, for reasons unbeknownst to me, to structure my essays like a hamburger; the correlation between fast food and composition still confuses me. My teachers gave me formulas to craft introductory paragraphs and thesis statements, and as a result, all of my essays started to look similar and almost undistinguishable from one another. Most importantly, writing in this formulated way was not enjoyable whatsoever. Therefore, writing

these essays would take almost twice as long as they normally would because I would dread attempting to fit my ideas and insights into these contrived formulas.

In my research, I came across one article that perfectly mirrored my revised research question. In her article "Teaching Writing," Lisa Ede states that because students are members of different communities and demographics, the teaching of writing will not always address the different backgrounds of students. Therefore, some argue that writing cannot be taught. If this is the case, then it is not ethical to choose one school of pedagogy to teach writing to students. Rather, I purpose that since writing is learning, we need to teach students to learn through writing rather than write for the sake of writing. Ede concludes that although research has yielded new pedagogical practices in the field of composition, this research may or may not have an influence in the classroom because teachers have limited autonomy. This is one of my fears with teaching writing, and I worry that I will not be able to teach students to be skeptical of "good" writing when I am expected to teach writing in a certain way.

Here, I slipped back into the aforementioned stiff prose that I was taught in elementary, middle, and high school. It is difficult for me to break free of these previously-taught conventions, but I realize that this is necessary for me to do this, particularly if I expect my students to do the same.

Solutions to the "Problem" of Composition

In the aforementioned initial research and evaluation, many of my findings addressed problems in teaching composition, but they never offered a solution to the problem of teaching student writing. For an answer, I turned to Emily Strasser's "Writing What Matters: A Student's Struggle to Bridge the Academic/Personal Divide." Strasser argues that the assignments that will matter most to students are the ones that require them to insert their personal insights and

experiences into their writing. Strasser writes, "Writing and education are useless tools if they fail to speak to a student's life, experience, and passions; therefore, teachers in all settings should value their students' voices, encouraging them to write and claim their won stories and expressions" (200). So, relating back to the question of "Can writing be taught?" writing can be taught, but teachers must teach that writing is personal.

If writing can be taught, then *how* should it be taught so that it is personal? Strasser offers a solution to this, which is that teachers should not only believe in the abilities of their students, but believe that their students have something worthwhile to say. If students are to articulate personal details and experiences in their writing, then they need to feel safe in doing so. Strasser writes, "Teachers of writing in all settings should strive to help their students write what matters to their lives, and encourage them to express their voices and tell their stories" (204). Creating a safe learning environment will encourage students to share their own personal narratives, and in turn improve their writing. An environment that supports learning will support composition, because, as mentioned before, writing is learning. Ultimately, I agree with Strasser's point that: "Students cannot be expected to care about learning and writing if they themselves are unloved and unfulfilled" (202). If teachers believe in their students, their students will in turn believe in their teacher and their teacher's composition pedagogy.

In high school, perhaps at the pinnacle of my frustration with composition, I started to keep a journal. I felt as though I absolutely had to put my thoughts and ideas into writing. My journal entries would be almost incoherent due to the myriad of composition errors that punctuated the pages of my notebook. I would free-write for hours (during which I was likely avoiding academic essays), and it was during this time that I felt just like the little girl I once was. I would write narratives, poems, and even experiment with lithography. In the process, I

learned more about myself. I was able to see what I was worried about, reflect on what I learned

in school, and as a result, I learned more about my personality. As mentioned before, I learned

more about myself, and I learned that I need *to write.*

In looking at writing as personal, I turned to Donald Murray's essay "All Writing Is Autobiography" in *College Composition and Communication,* in which Murray states that all writing is inherently autobiographical. First, Murray states that "…all writing, in many different ways, is autobiographical, and that our autobiography grows from a few deep taproots that are set down into our past in childhood" (67). If this is true, then writing is not only autobiographical, but writing has always been autobiographical. Furthermore, Murray underscores the importance of writing in his essay: "Writing autobiography is a way of making meaning of the life I have led and am leading and may lead" (70). Guy Allen echoes this idea in his article "Language, Power, and Consciousness: A Writing Experiment at the University of Toronto" by stating that "Writers use personal essays to explore aspects of self and life that arise as they sit alone before the blank page" (265). If writing can help students make sense of their own life and learning processes, then writing can not only be taught, but it *should* be taught. Autobiography cannot be taught, but writing can be taught as autobiography.

This is all exemplified in the personal statement for my college applications, which is

perhaps the piece of writing that I am most proud of. There was no structure that I was expected

to adhere to, no guidelines, and no rubric to confine my writing. My prose lacked a thesis

statement, transition sentences, and even a concluding paragraph. Of course, my personal

statement was personal; *sharing the details of my personal statement gives me anxiety to this*

day. In my personal statement, I wrote about how my epidermis is a metaphor for my life, in that

marks such as freckles and scars elucidate more about my personality and myself. I wrote about

how I had scars on my knees from falling so much when I was still learning to grow into my size 10 feet, and how I had freckles on my forehead from late-afternoon runs to the Potomac River. I cared about my statement. It was easy to write and it was enjoyable to write. I felt as though my personal statement was a culmination of what I had learned over the years, which is that writing is messy, and personal writing is rewarding.

Similar to Murray's essay, I discovered Linda Brodkey's "Writing on the Bias." What first caught my eye was Brodkey's claim that: "One of the pleasures of writing that academics rarely give themselves is permission to experiment" (527). As mentioned before, writing is messy, and writing should be about taking risks and exploring unfamiliar territory. In fact, this paper is messy, but this is because I, too, am exploring unfamiliar territory. Peppered throughout her autobiographical article, Brodkey makes assertions about bias in writing. Of course, all writers have bias, but Brodkey asserts that all writers should write *with* their bias, rather than try to write unbiased papers. Brodkey writes, "To write is to find words that explain what can be seen from an angle of vision, the limitations of which determine a wide or narrow bias, but not the lack of one" (546). Prose that is unbiased is dry and uninteresting; all writers use their personal experiences to shape their writing.

Brodkey states that one of the reasons students are taught to avoid their own personal biases is because they are taught to limit first person in favor of third-person statements in their writing. Brodkey articulates, "The bias that we should rightly disparage is that which feigns objectivity by dressing up its reasons in seemingly unassailable logic and palming off its interest as disinterest" (547). Brodkey states that the reason for this is that writing "cannot be taught as a set of rules or conventions that must be acquired prior to and separate from performance" (547).

Therefore, perhaps writing has *already* been learned through our personal experiences, and this is why students need to include their own authentic voice and bias in their writing.

I presented this paper and my research at the University of Mary Washington ELC Kemp Symposium. After I presented my paper, Dr. Mara Scanlon asked me how I believe the reader fits into the composition process. In the quintessential composition process, the writer often is concerned with the reader; essentially, writers write to please the reader. I believe that this is because the readers of these pieces of writing are often teachers who assign alphabetical and/or numerical grades to this writing. In writing prose that is personal and biased, the writer is less concerned with the reader. Therefore, writers are more concerned with their own thoughts and ideas, rather than getting distracted by what they think the reader wants to read.

Composition Assessment

After looking at various ways that composition should be taught, I decided to research composition assessment, so that the composition methods included in the curriculum would align with writing assessments.

As a tutor at the University of Mary Washington Writing Center, I feel as though I am qualified to reflect on the subject of composition rubrics. Oftentimes students will bring their papers alongside the rubrics provided by their professors, in order to make sure they meet all elements of the rubrics. More often than not, students are concerned with writing conventions rather than the overall message or argument of their papers. I am at fault too, however, because these are the elements of students writing that I am often on the lookout for, perhaps because I know that students will receive lower grades if they do not comply with these wishes. Once writing is about learning, grading things like punctuation seems silly. Learning is more important than punctuation. Furthermore, teaching students that writing is only about grammar

and mechanics discourages writing. When students are worried about following composition conventions, their papers are devoid of their own original thoughts, which defeats the entire purpose of writing.

In order to further understand assessment, I researched two omnipresent elements in the secondary English writing rubric: voice and clarity. I turned to Ian Barnard's "The Ruse of Clarity" and his analysis of the values of "clarity" in student writing. Clarity itself is enigmatic, as well as ubiquitous in composition rubrics. Barnard writes, "In all this deferral to clarity, however, there is no discussion of what clarity means or how one knows if something is clear or not" (436). Barnard continues, "There is often a contradiction between the writing we enjoy reading—and expect our students to acquire a taste for—and the writing we insist our students produce. The former might be full of ambiguous and complex content and convoluted, difficult, unconventional prose" (443). Attempts to clarify writing often lead to simplifications which inhibit revolutionary ideas or methods of composition. Barnard concludes, "My response, in addition to insisting on the importance and productiveness of recognizing students as real writers, is that even for students as students there is value in working with interesting language as a means of coming to language and coming to ideas" (445).

The next rubric element I chose to examine is voice in student writing. According to Peter Elbow, author of *Writing With Power: Techniques for Mastering the Writing Process,* "we seldom use the power of our real voice, and we know it because of the surprising difference we feel on the few occasions when we do—when we get power into our words" (295). To understand voice in composition rubrics, I turned to "Subjectivity, Intentionality, and Manufactured Moves: Teachers' Perceptions of Voice in the Evaluation of Secondary Students' Writing" by Jill V. Jeffery to garner a better understanding of voice in student writing. Jeffery

conducted a study to determine what teachers are looking for when they assess voice in student writing. Jeffery found that "Teachers associated literary techniques, rhetorical techniques, evaluative language, adolescent language, and structural features with voice. The only voice-associated code that was identified for all 19 teachers, as might be expected given its aural reference, was tone" (105-6). When students adopt an authentic voice in their writing, according to Peter Elbow, "Students begin to like writing more, to write about things that are more important to them, and thus to feel a greater connection between their writing and themselves. I think that this process leads not just to learning, but to growth or development" (284). With this in mind, it is clear that as a future educator, I need to clearly articulate what voice is in my teaching. I wholeheartedly believe that voice is a crucial component of composition, but I believe the ambiguity of voice in composition rubrics can be avoided if students are aware of what is expected of them in their own writing voice. Furthermore, I hope to give students an opportunity to *explore* their own voice in their writing.

Since I focused on assessment in my research, I found it fitting to also look at composition revision, particularly because revision is typically absent from composition conversation. While her article is somewhat dated as it was published in 1980, Nancy Sommers addresses this in her article "Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers" by stating that the reason for the limited conversation on revision is that the accepted model of the writing process is linear and mimics rhetoric, and because rhetoric cannot be revised once spoken, revision does not typically play an important role in the writing process.

Nancy Sommers utilized a case study approach to glean a better understanding of what students typically revise in their papers, and learned that students essentially revise for word choice, rather than looking at the essay as a whole. Sommers also found that more experienced

writers "describe their primary objective when revising as finding the form or shape of their argument" (384). The more experienced writers understand that their writing will affect the reader, and their revisions are geared toward creating conditions that will best engage readers.

Sommers continues, "But these revision strategies are a process of more than communication; they are part of the process of discovering meaning altogether" (385). Furthermore, Sommers asserts that the writing process is a process of discovery, and that such discovery can be disruptive. Good writing *discovers,* and because writing can be dissonant, therefore, even the best writing needs revision.

Designing the Composition Curriculum

When I was designing this curriculum, two composition scholars that helped me shape my curriculum framework were Elizabeth Wardle and Doug Downs. Downs and Wardle set out to revise introductory college writing courses in their own composition careers. Although my curriculum is designed for a high school English composition class, I believe that the information I gleaned from the article directly applies to any composition classroom. The authors propose an "Intro to Writing Studies" first-year composition (FYC) pedagogy. Oftentimes, students write for various disciplines, colleges, professors, classes, and assignments, and yet they are taught to write for these in the same way. "Academic writing" can be anything, and yet students are taught this as one finite subject. Downs and Wardle write:

> …the course is forthcoming about what writing instruction can and cannot accomplish; it does not purport to "teach students to write" in general nor does it purport to do all that is necessary to prepare students to write in college. Rather, it promises to help students understand some activities related to written scholarly inquiry by demonstrating the conversational and subjective nature of scholarly texts. In this course, students are taught

that writing is conventional and context-specific rather than governed by universal

rules—thus they learn that within each new disciplinary course they will need to pay

close attention to what courts as appropriate for that discourse community. (559)

The course includes: students brainstorming questions to explore ideas and generate

curiosity about a topic, students conducting library research on their research question, writing

formal proposals about their research questions and research methods, completing research

activities that teach students how to best incorporate sources into their writing, writing

interpretative summaries so that students can engage in the conversation of research, writing

annotated bibliographies to organize their research, writing a literature review to interact with

research, and eventually writing a research paper. The final three weeks of the course are

dedicated to revision workshops and presentations. The purpose of these activities is to teach

students that there is more to writing than simply sitting down and writing the paper. At the end

of the course, students will have an increased self-awareness about writing, as well as a better

understanding of research skills and their importance.

Conclusion

As I wrote this paper, I was uncomfortable incorporating the personal and first person

into my writing. Even now, as I have completed my individual study, I am still uncomfortable

utilizing the first person in an academic essay. If I believe that this is the best composition

pedagogy, I need to be comfortable doing this in my own writing. However, I am now more

aware of why it is important to make visible that writing is autobiographical, always. Not only

does this make writing more interesting and easier to write (if we write about what we hope to

learn, and explore our ideas alongside others', then writing will be easier), but writing this way

helped me make sense of what I learned over the course of this independent study. Essentially,

there is no conclusion to the quest for the best composition pedagogy. This is the spark for a career and the beginning of an ongoing search. Even now experts have not come to one conclusion for the best way to teach composition; the agreement in the field is on the identification of the problem.

It is important to note, that even though I have attempted to break out of previously-learned composition conventions, my paper is still formulaic. These organizational habits have been engrained in my writing, and it is my hope that as a future composition teacher I will subvert these conventions so that my students will be able to write prose that is personal, biased, and an authentic measure of their learning and personal growth.

Curriculum Draft

This curriculum is designed for a high school English classroom. The curriculum is designed to be taught over the course of a calendar school year. The curriculum can be adjusted for different grade levels.

1. Students will write an autobiography at the beginning of the year. The teacher will explain that this is "research on the self," and this will scaffold the students' research projects. The teacher will emphasize that students should use first person in their autobiographies.

2. Students will develop their research question. These research questions can start with: How do other individuals see this issue? This will reinforce the idea of perspective, and how every writer writes with a different perspective. Furthermore, students will understand that their research projects will be a compilation of different perspectives.

3. Students will write formal proposals about research question/research methods. Students will write about why they are interested in their research question, which will require students to write personally.

4. Students will complete research activities that teach students how to best incorporate sources into their writing.

5. Students will write interpretative/analytical summaries so that students can engage in the conversation of research.

    a. This will require students to play different roles within a rhetorical context; for example, students will play the role the author(s). This will be another perspective exercise, and can even be a physical role-play in the form of tableau.

    b. Upper grade levels will research the biographies of the author(s), which will help

       students not only gain perspective, but reinforce the idea of autobiography.

6. Students will write annotated bibliographies to organize their research. Each bibliography

   entry will include personal reflections on the research.

7. Students will write a literature review to interact with research.

8. Students will write a research paper on their research topic.

9. Students will engage in revision workshops with their peers.

10. Students will present their research projects.

11. Students will write another autobiography, but this time they will write about how they

   have changed since the beginning of the year.

12. Students will be assessed based on their work.

Assessment:

1. *Formative assessment:* Students will be assessed formatively throughout the year.

   Students will have to write short papers that answer the question: How did this work

   change your perspective? The teacher will keep a folder of these assessments.

2. *Self-assessment:* Students will assess themselves periodically throughout the year.

   Students will assess their own work, as well as assess their own writing processes. This

   will help students develop problem-solving strategies for writer's block, experiment with

   physical writing conditions, and raise consciousness about conditions in which they write

   and how they feel about their writing. This will help students take a metacognitive look at

   their own writing processes, as well as their own learning processes.

3. *Summative assessment:* At the end of the year, students will receive an evaluation of their final research paper. Their formative and self-assessments will be taken into consideration for this final assessment.

Assessment Rubric
Students will be assessed using Vicki Spandel's "Six-Point Writing Guide."

Ideas	Organization	Voice
6 -Clear, focused, compelling, holds reader's attention -Strong main point, idea, story line -Striking insight, in-depth knowledge of topic -Takes reader on journey of understanding -Significant, intriguing details paint a vivid picture	6 -Thoughtful structure guides reader through text -Provocative opening, satisfying conclusion -Well-crafted transitions create coherence -Balanced pacing-slows or speeds up as needed -Easy to follow-may have a surprise or two	6 -As individual as fingerprints -Writer AND reader love sharing this aloud -Mirrors writer's innermost thoughts, feelings -Passionate, vibrant, electric, compelling -Pulls reader right into the piece
5 -Clear and focused -Evident main point, idea, story line -Reflects thorough knowledge of topic -Authentic, intriguing information -Important, helpful, well-chosen details	5 -Purposeful organization, sense of direction -Strong lead, conclusion provides closure -Thoughtful transitions connect ideas -Good pacing-time spent on what matters -Easy to follow-stays on track	5 -Original, distinctive -A good read-aloud candidate -Reveals writer's thoughts, feelings -Spontaneous, lively, enthusiastic -Shows sensitivity to readers
4 -Clear and focused more often than not -Main point, idea, story line easily inferred -Sufficient knowledge for broad overview -Some new info, some common knowledge -Quality details outweigh generalities	4 -Organization supports message/story -Functional lead and conclusion -Helpful transitions keep ideas flowing -Balanced-most time spent on key points -Easy to follow-sometimes predictable	4 -Stands out from many others -Share-aloud moments -Writer seems "present" in the piece -Earnest, sincere -Shows awareness of readers
3 -Some undeveloped text-or a list -Reader must work to get the message -Gaps in writer's knowledge of topic -Mostly common knowledge, best guesses -Generalities, broad brush strokes	3 -Organization somewhat loose-or formulaic -Lead and/or conclusion need work -Transitions sometimes needed-or overdone -Too much time spent on trivia -Not always easy to follow without work	3 -Sporadic-voice comes and goes -Not quite ready to share, but getting there -Needs more voice-or a different voice -Restrained, quite cautious -Reader awareness? Sometimes, perhaps…
2 -Writer still defining, shaping message -Main idea or message hard to infer -Writer struggles to fill space -Broad, unsupported generalities -Repetition, filler, minimal support	2 -Order more random than purposeful -Lead/conclusion missing or formulaic -Transitions unclear or missing -Hard to tell what points matter most -Requires rereading to follow writer's thinking	2 -Writer not really "at home" in this writing -Hint of voice-or we could be reading in -Reader cannot tell who the writer is -Distant, encyclopedic-or wrong for the purpose -Not yet "writing to be read"
1 -Minimal text -Topic not defined yet in writer's mind -Reader left with many questions -Notes, first thoughts -Writer needs help choosing/defining	1 -No clear sense of direction -Stats right in (no lead)-just stops (no ending) -A challenge to follow the writer's thinking -Everything is as important as	1 -No sense of person behind the words-yet -Writer is not ready to share this piece -Writer's thoughts/feelings do not come through

topic	everything else -Writer needs help sorting/organizing ideas	-Something (topic choice?) is stifling the voice -Writer needs help with topic-or voice

Word Choice	Sentence Fluency	Conventions & Presentation
6 -Clear, fresh, original language adds voice -Quotable-the right word choice at the right moment -Every word counts-any repetition is purposeful -Powerful verbs, unique phrasing, memorable moments -Words create vivid message, striking images/impressions	6 -Easy to read with inflection that brings out voice -Rhythm you want to imitate-poetic, musical -Striking variety in sentence style, structure, length -Fragments or repetition rhetorically effective -Strong sentences make meaning instantly clear	6 -Only the pickiest editors will spot problems -Creative use of conventions enhances meaning, voice -Complex text shows off writer's editorial control -Enticing, eye-catching presentation -Virtually ready to publish
5 -Natural language used well, confidently -Engaging-moments to remember or highlight -Concise yet expressive-a good balance -Strong verbs, striking expressions -Words create a clear message, image, impression	5 -Readable even on the first try -Easy-on-the-ear rhythm, cadence, flow -Variety in sentence style, structure, length -Fragments or repetition add emphasis -Readily understandable	5 -Minor errors that are easily overlooked -Correct conventions support meaning, voice -Shows writer's control over numerous conventions -Pleasing, effective presentation -Ready to publish with light touch-ups
4 -Functional, clear language used correctly -Understandable-sometimes noteworthy -Minimal wordiness or unintended repetition -Strong moments-few clichés, overwritten text -Words help reader to get the "big picture"	4 -Readable with minimal rehearsal -Pleasant, rhythmic flow dominates -Some sentence variety -Fragments or repetition are not a problem -Sentences are clear and connected	4 -Errors are noticeable but not troublesome -Errors do not interfere with the message -Shows control over basics (most spelling, punctuation_ -Acceptable presentation -Good once-over needed prior to publication
3 -Vague words (*special, great*)-OR thesaurus overload -An occasional stand-out moment -Moments may need pruning-or expansion -Writer rarely stretches for individual expression -Images/impressions still coming into focus	3 -Readable with rehearsal and close attention -Sentence-to-sentence flow needs work -More sentence variety needed -A few moments cry out for revision -Sentences not always clear at first	3 -Noticeable errors may slow reader -Reader may pause to mentally "correct" text -Some problems even on basics -More attention to presentation needed -Thorough editing required prior to publication
2 -Words may be unclear, vague, or overused -Writer settles fro first words that come to mind -Fuzziness, wordiness, unintended repetition -Words lack energy, life, vitality -Reader must work to "see" and "feel" the message	2 -Hard to read in spots, even with rehearsal -Many sentences need rewording -Minimal variety in length or structure -Problems (choppiness, run-ons) disrupt the flow -Reader must pause or reread to get meaning	2 -Distracting or repeated errors -Errors may interfere with writer's message -Shaky control over basics-reads like a hasty first draft -Immediately noticeable problems with presentation -Line-by-line editing needed prior to publication
1 -Getting words on paper seems a	1 -Reader must pause or fill in to read	1 -Serious, frequent errors make

| struggle
-Word choice feels random-not a real "choice"
-Writer says very little-or repeats a lot
-Overworked words-*nice, good, fun*-flatten voice
-Writer needs help with message or wording | this aloud
-Many sentences need rewording
-Hard to tell where sentences begin or end
-Sentence problems may block meaning
-Writer needs help revising sentences | reading a challenge
-Reader must "decode" before focusing on message
-Writer not yet in control of basic conventions
-Writing not yet ready for final design or presentation
-Writer needs help editing |

Works Cited

Allen, Guy. "Language, Power, and Consciousness: A Writing Experiment at the University of

Toronto." *Writing & Healing Toward An Informed Practice.* Eds. Charles M. Anderson

and Marian M. MacCurdy. Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English, 2000. 249-

290. Print.

Bartholomae, David. "What is Composition and (if you know what it is) Why Do We Teach It?"

Composition in the Twenty-First Century: Crisis and Change. Ed. Bloom, Lynn Z.,

Donald A. Daiker, and Edward M. White. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University

Press, 1996. 11-28. Print.

Barnard, Ian. "The Ruse of Clarity." *College Composition and Communication.* 61.3 (2010):

434-451. Web. 20 Feb 2015.

Brodkey, Linda. "Writing on the Bias." *College English.* 56.5 (1994): 527-547. Web. 20 March

2015.

Downs, Douglas and Elizabeth Wardle. "Teaching about Writing, Righting Misconceptions:

(Re)envisioning 'First Year Composition' as 'Introduction to Writing Studies.'" *College

Composition and Communication.* 58.4 (2007): 552-584. Web. 20 March 2015.

Ede, Lisa. "Teaching Writing." *An Introduction to Composition Studies.* Ed. Lindemann, Erika,

and Tate, Gary. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991. 118-134. Print.

Elbow, Peter. *Writing With Power: Techniques for Mastering the Writing Process.* 2nd ed. New

York: Oxford University Press, 1998. Print.

Gallagher, Chris W. "Being There: (Re)Making the Assessment Scene." *College Composition

and Communication.* 62.3 (2011): 450-476. Web. 20 Feb 2015.

Hillocks, Jr., George. "At Last: The focus on Form vs. Content in Teaching Writing. *Research in*

the Teaching of English. 40.2 (2005): 238-248. Web. 20 Feb 2015.

Horner, Bruce and Min-Zhan Lu. "Working Rhetoric and Composition." *College English.* 72.5 (2010): 470-494. Web. 2 March 2015.

Huot, Brian, Peggy O'Neill and Cindy Moore. "A Usable Past for Writing Assessment." *College English.* 72.5 (2010): 495-517. Web. 3 March 2015.

Jeffery, Jill V. "Subjectivity, Intentionality, and Manufactured Moves: Teachers' Perceptions of Voice in the Evaluation of Secondary Students' Writing. *Research in the Teaching of English.* 46.1 (2011): 92-127. Web. 20 Feb 2015.

Lindemann, Erika, and Gary Tate. *An Introduction to Composition Studies.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1991. Print.

Murray, Donald M. "All Writing Is Autobiography." *College Composition and Communication.* 42.1 (1991): 66-74. Print.

Palmerino, Gregory. "Teaching Bartleby to Write: Passive Resistance and Technology's Place in the Composition Classroom." *College English.* 73.3 (2011): 283-302. Web. 3 March 2015.

Schuster, Charles. "Theory and Practice." *An Introduction to Composition Studies.* Ed. Lindemann, Erika, and Tate, Gary. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991. 33-48. Print.

Sommers, Nancy. "Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers." *College Composition and Communication.* 31.4 (1980): 378-388. Web. 20 March 2015.

Spellmeyer, Kurt. "Inventing the University Student." *Composition in the Twenty-First Century: Crisis and Change.* Ed. Bloom, Lynn Z., Donald A. Daiker, and Edward M. White. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996. 39-46. Print.

Strasser, Emily. "Writing What Matters: A Student's Struggle to Bridge the Academic/Personal

Divide." *Young Scholars in Writing 5* (2007): 146-50. Web.

Tate, Gary. *Teaching Composition: Twelve Biographical Essays.* Fort Worth: Texas Christian

    University Press. Print.

Wardle, Elizabeth. "Considering What It Means to Teach "Composition" in the Twenty-First

    Century." *College Composition and Communication.* 65.4 (2014): 659-671. Print.