

Strategies for incorporating and documenting Explicit Writing Instruction Satisfying Q5 for WI designation

Explicit instruction in discipline-specific writing is a required component of an upper division writing-intensive (WI) course. Assigning an end of term paper and copy-editing it for a student's revision would NOT meet the WI requirement. Similarly, designating a "writing day" on a course schedule or "discuss feedback" does not provide enough information about the specific activities of direct instruction used in the course. Below are a list of topics for including meaningful writing instruction and a variety of strategies to incorporate in your course.

Discuss strategies for (and engage students in) locating, honing in on, and developing compelling arguments and counterarguments.

Activities an instructor might consider include modeling search strategies and information gathering, familiarizing students with the best resources in your field, modeling active reading strategies involving claims and evidence, or brief workshops asking students to identify core claims and evidence.

Take time to describe the design, rationale, and grading criteria you're using for current writing assignments. If students are unable to summarize the gist of an assignment and recognize the relation of the grading criteria to course objectives and content, chances are they won't do as well as you want them to do on the assignment.

Activities could include asking students to identify the important grading considerations associated with a writing assignment, reviewing or building a rubric for the assessment of written work, providing annotated examples of organizational patterns or expectations, or asking students to identify how particular criteria for evaluation might be accomplished or exemplified in written work.

Discuss and model effective commenting practices with students and then structure opportunities in which they can comment on peers' drafts or sections of drafts.

Activities can include modeling draft feedback on a sample document, designing a rubric for formative peer response, and a variety of peer review activities. The Teaching with Writing Program can offer additional assistance on [peer response strategies](#).

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Assign analysis of discipline specific-text in order to assist students in noticing organization, use of precedents, tone, level of analysis, address of target audience, etc.

Activities could include a comparison of specific features characteristic of disciplinary literature (introductions, methods sections, reporting results, illustrating impacts or significance) or an examination of tone across disciplinary writing for multiple audiences.

Elicit students' views on the strengths and weaknesses found in writing done by past student papers (used with permission and without names).

This activity could involve students responding to a piece of writing on moodle or face to face, or asking students to model a revision strategy to improve a draft.

Go over common and problematic patterns you're finding in the drafts students are turning in (wordiness, redundancy, lack of focus, lack of development...).

Activities could include examples of problematic patterns, opportunities to identify and revise common errors, or class discussion on the the potential sources for common errors. Students will benefit from workshops on sentence level or paragraph level issues that ask them to engage with these topics in the context of their own writing.

Model expected formats and sequences, for example the structure of a scientific article; or tactics for effectively reducing content into an abstract or summary, or for writing fluid process descriptions, or for transforming a paper into a PowerPoint or poster presentation.

This modeling activity can be done in class or as a supplemental activity using moodle.

Discuss ways to avoid inadvertent plagiarism, effectively paraphrasing, summarizing, and citing sources, determining what information needs to be cited and what information is considered common knowledge.

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Exercises on this topic may be as simple as identifying the appropriate citation for commonly used materials (Academic articles, transcripts, government documents) or as complex as examining the purposes and organizational strategies for literature reviews.

Engage students in discussions of usage norms expected by the discipline (and the rationales for these norms). Examples include use of active and passive tenses, use of present and past tenses, citation and bibliographic formats, use of graphs and other visuals, and so forth.

Providing examples of specialized disciplinary writing, noting the formal features of writing in your field, and comparing differences in formal strategies for documents serving distinct purposes can highlight those sometimes unspoken norms of disciplinary writing.