Do Good; Write Well
The CPN 102/103 Writing Handbook Supplement
The Institute for Civic Engagement
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“Why should I hire you?”

“I have my Bachelor’s degree from SUNY Cortland.”
“Do a thousand other graduates this year. Why should I hire you?”

Good question. Why should an employer hire you instead of another recent college grad? What makes you so special? This question raises another one: How well do you know yourself? What skills do you have? What professional experience do you have? How reliable are you? How dedicated are you to exceeding expectations? How respectful are you of other people’s perspectives? What are your values? How can you demonstrate those qualities?

Through service-learning’s use of reflection, you help yourself learn who you are, which is important in working with others, and in how you represent yourself – Your knowledge, skills, experiences, values, and your value.

Do Good; Write Well is designed to help you in this journey of self-discovery by focusing on skills related to relationship-building. Such skills are crucial to effective writing, to successful learning, and to effective and pleasant interpersonal relationships in professional, personal, and civic situations.

Through our approach to relationship-building, we hope that you introduce yourself to, and continue to learn more about, yourself. One feature of this book that should help you do so is the series of prompts, found throughout the book, that encourage you to explore your understanding of yourself as a writer, as a professional, and as a citizen of a democratic republic.

Do Good; Write Well is the vehicle for this “journey.” It explores language-use – especially writing – as a way of creating and refining relationships between ideas and between people. Do Good; Write Well has five main sections:

- Reading Skills
- The Writing Process
- Writing Strategies
- Appendix
- References

The first three sections approach writing as a set of thinking skills that apply to your personal, professional, and civic lives. With your civic life especially in mind, thank you, in advance, for collaborating with our community partners. May you do good and live well.

My thanks to Professor Richard Kendrick, Director of the Institute for Civic Engagement, and to CPN Instructors Geoff Bender and Jack Carr, for help in revising this Supplement.

To use other authors’ information in your own work (which you will do often), you need a spectrum of thinking skills. For example, you must be able to

- **Synthesize** those authors’ information into your own essays, reports, or speeches.
- **Evaluate** that information’s credibility (and, therefore, determine the extent to which you want to base your credibility on that information). However, first, you must be able to
- **Understand** that information.

Notice that these skills become increasingly more difficult. To demonstrate the range of difficulty in such skills, educational psychologist Benjamin Bloom created a taxonomy (a way of categorizing) of six thinking skills, and he arranged them in ascending order of difficulty. Here is an updated version of Bloom’s taxonomy, which is often represented as a triangle, with the skills moving upward in increasing levels of difficulty:

<table>
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<th>Kind of thinking</th>
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<td><strong>Create</strong></td>
<td>design, invent, plan, construct</td>
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<td><strong>Understand</strong></td>
<td>paraphrase, summarize, explain</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Remember</strong></td>
<td>name, list, find, identify (Geisen, n.d.)</td>
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Before you can create an essay or a speech with other authors’ information, you must be able to apply the skills named above, beginning with remembering and understanding the information.

In *Do Good; Write Well*, we will examine ways in which you, as a writer, apply each of these kinds of thinking. Initially, we will concentrate on the Remember, Understand, Evaluate, and Create levels. Then, as we explore different strategies for writing, we will address the other skills.
How can you apply Boom to your career, whether you are a scientist, a business person, speech pathologist, recreation specialist, or teacher?
READING to REMEMBER
One way of reading to remember is to use The SQ3R method:

- Survey
- Question
- Read
- Recite
- Review

Your first thought might be that taking five steps to read an assignment will take more time than the one or two steps that you usually take. Ironically, however, you will probably find that this method saves you time and helps you remember information more effectively because this reading strategy engages your active participation, and because it requires early repetition—rather than the last-minute (before a test) repetition that students do during cramming sessions.

You are an active reader because you take specific mental and physical actions that help you “process” the reading material. Those actions include two that we will use in many ways in Do Good; Write Well: Asking open-ended questions (Who, What, Why, Where, When, and How) and paraphrasing.

Your first step is to “survey” (or “skim” or “scan”) the reading. You have many ways of doing so: To get a sense of the focus of a book, you can read the book’s “outline”: Its table of contents. Within a chapter or section, you can read the headings and subheadings, notice highlighted words or phrases, read the first and last sentences of each paragraph. Now that you have “the big picture,” your second step is to ask open-ended questions.

As you look at Do Good; Write Well’s table of contents for the Reading Skills section, for example, you could ask questions such as, “What is ‘annotation?’” “What is meant by ‘connotative meaning’?” As you skim the section, itself, you could ask, “How do you synthesize information?” “Why should I annotate?” “What?? How is ‘inventing information’ different from lying??”

Now read the selection (step 3); feel free to annotate (refer to page 6) as one way of identifying answers to your questions. In the fourth step, “Recite,” you answer your questions, doing so in your own words (paraphrasing). Finally, review the material by again reading and answering your questions, and by identifying additional important information. Your next move, of course, is to be sure that you understand the information.

- What steps do you usually take when you read a text or other nonfiction material?
- After trying the SQ3R method a few times, what differences do you find in the results of each kind of reading?
READING to UNDERSTAND.
In this kind of thinking, your goal is to understand relationships between information and claims. We usually refer to the development of those relationships as reasoning or explaining. When you understand relationships between information and claims, you can more effectively understand the author’s message, rather than simply remember a minor detail.

Kinds of relationships include

- Similarity
- Contrast
- Space
- Time
- Co-ordination
- Subordination
- Example
- Pattern
- Progression
- Cause and effect
- Problem/solution
- Definition

For two examples, read the following sentence, then answer the subsequent questions.

According to multiple peer-reviewed studies, the professional longevity of a master teacher — someone who has eight or more consecutive years in the classroom — leads to increased student engagement and academic success (Hall and Sipley, 2014).

- What is the relationship of the information in the appositive (the words between the two dashes) to the rest of the sentence?
- What kind of relationship does this sentence develop? (The verb in the sentence’s independent clause gives you a clue.)

Answers:
- The appositive provides a definition of “master teacher.”
- The sentence presents a causal relationship: A master teacher’s professional longevity causes (leads to) improved student performance.

Here is an additional example: In the selection below, what is the relationship of the information in the second to the information in the first one?

Even as enrolment in food stamps, now known as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or Snap, has surged in the past five years, the program and its participants are still haunted by stigmas and misconceptions, according to outreach coordinators from Alabama, Mississippi and Texas.

In Alabama alone, enrolment in Snap has increased by 38.8% in the last five years, reaching 898,898 this past January, according to Food Research and Action Center. In Mississippi, the increase was 35.5%. As of January 2014, 22.3% of Mississippians – about 660,000 people – were enrolled in Snap. Outreach co-ordinators in Texas note a below-average increase in enrolment over the past five years at just 29.7%. In Texas, the second most populous state, only 15.4% of its population is currently enrolled in Snap. And while that translates into 3.87 million people, there are many more who are eligible and have yet to apply (Kasperkevic, 2014).

Answer: The information in the second paragraph offers examples that support the first paragraph’s claim.
One way of demonstrating that you understand a message is by paraphrasing it. (In Bloom’s taxonomy, notice that paraphrasing is one of the skills associated with understanding.) If you cannot accurately paraphrase a particular sentence or a paragraph, then you probably do not understand it. If you cannot summarize the entire piece, you probably do not understand it. We will practice two reading comprehension techniques: annotation and detection by deletion.

**ANNOTATION.** When you annotate, you engage the reading by writing comments or questions, or by drawing diagrams as ways of representing relationships between information, ideas, claims, and your knowledge and experience. Note: Underlining and highlighting, while useful, are not examples of annotation.

**Purposes:** Annotation helps you
1. **Identify and remember** important information.
2. **Understand** the material because you identify relationships between data, ideas, and claims.
3. **Evaluate the reading** by helping you test the credibility of an author’s claims. For example, you could note inconsistencies between the reading’s claims and your own experience and/or from material that you read previously.
4. **Create ideas** as you identify relationships between the reading’s information and your knowledge and experience.
5. **Save time** when studying, because you can note key ideas for future reference.

**Methods:**
1. Paraphrase.
2. Summarize.
3. Label a paragraph’s purpose, such as “example” or “background.”
4. Analyze &/or evaluate the author’s logic.
5. Link information in the reading to information from another source and to your experience.
6. Comment on a claim, detail, or opinion: “put your two cents in.”
7. Ask questions.


But is it really possible to make a living on the kinds of jobs currently available to unskilled people? Mathematically, the answer is no, as can be shown by taking $6 to $7 an hour, perhaps subtracting a dollar or two an hour for child care, multiplying by 160 hours a month, and comparing the result to the prevailing rents. According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, for example, in 1998 it took, on average nationwide, an hourly wage of $8.89 to afford a one-bedroom apartment, and the Preamble Center for Public Policy estimates that the odds against a typical welfare recipient’s landing a job at such a “living wage” are about 97 to 1. If these numbers are right, low-wage work is not a solution to poverty and possibly not even to homelessness.

The Poor get poorer.

These statistics are now 15 years old.

Minimum wage = $5.15? It’s gone up.

Who are the members of the National Coalition for the Homeless? What are their goals? A “living wage” isn’t really a living wage, and a lot of people can’t even earn that. We defined “living wage” in Economics class last semester.

Another employee stole Lauren’s [a friend’s] tips at the hotel.
This means that just having a job is not always enough to get out of poverty.
DETECTION by DELETION is a method for understanding complicated sentences. With this method, you identify (detect) a sentence’s subject and verb by temporarily deleting certain parts of the sentence so that you are left mainly with the subject and verb. The two main steps are:

- Cross-out many of the sentence’s
  - Prepositional phrases
  - Appositives
  - Dependent Clauses
  - Phrases or clauses that begin with “to,” “that,” or “which”

- In the remaining parts of each sentence,
  - Circle the verb
  - Underline the subject

Remember that the parts of the sentence that you are temporarily deleting are important; you are removing them only for as long as necessary to determine the sentence’s subject and verb.

Here (below) is an example of Detection by Deletion. The selection is presented first without deletions, then with. Each “cross-out” is a deletion, and each is followed by bracketed and italicized comments that name the “part of sentence” that is being temporarily removed. Not all parts of the selection were deleted, only enough to identify the subject and verb.

The selection without comments:
Some years ago – together with Gabriel Kreiman, now a faculty member at Harvard Medical School, and Leila Reddy, now a researcher at the Brain and Cognition Research Center in Toulouse, France – we performed experiments that led to the discovery of a neuron in the hippocampus of one patient, a brain region known to be involved in memory processes, that responded very strongly to different photographs of actress Jennifer Aniston but not to dozens of other actors, celebrities, places and animals (Quiroga, Fried, and Koch, 2013, p. 32).

The selection with comments:
Some years ago – together with Gabriel Kreiman, now a faculty member at Harvard Medical School, and Leila Reddy, now a researcher at the Brain and Cognition Research Center in Toulouse, France – [This section is actually two appositives, one inside the other] we performed experiments that led to the discovery of a neuron in the hippocampus of one patient, a brain region known to be involved in memory processes, [an appositive] that responded very strongly [phrase beginning with “that”] to different photographs [phrase beginning with “to”] of actress Jennifer Aniston [prepositional phrase] but not to dozens [phrase beginning with “to”] of other actors, celebrities, places and animals [prepositional phrase] (Quiroga, Fried, and Koch, 2013, p. 32).

With those sentence parts deleted, you can more easily identify the subject and verb:
**We performed** experiments that led to the discovery of a neuron. At this point, you would begin returning the removed information into the sentence so that you understand it in greater detail.
When you read or listen to evaluate, you are thinking critically. Bloom’s taxonomy names evaluation as the second most difficult kind of thinking. A critical thinker assesses the degree to which information and claims are valid; he or she understands that *information is invented*.

**INFORMATION IS INVENTED**

People create information when they report on an event “first-hand,” and when they synthesize other people’s information into new ideas. Specifically with regard to first-hand reports (which we call *empirical data* – information gleaned from first-hand observation), claims can be inaccurate because of conditions that interfere with a person’s observations. Some of those conditions are “external” to the observer, such as interference in the form of noises, dim lighting, or physical objects that block the observer’s view of the person about whom he is reporting.

Other considerations are internal: The person’s physical condition, such as weak eyesight or weak hearing, can compromise the accuracy of his report. Other internal considerations include the observer’s emotional state and any biases or prejudices that he might harbor toward the person or object that he is observing. Those internal considerations help determine an observer’s word choice, and, therefore, the message that the observer delivers. For example, an observer’s biases could label an individual who is holding up a sign that reads “End the Occupation!” as a protestor, an activist, a radical, an extremist, a traitor, or a patriot.

After the primary (original) source reports his observations, second-hand sources can use those observations in their own messages by quoting and/or paraphrasing the primary source’s words. A second-hand source can quote someone else’s words “out-of-context”: He could use some of that person’s words, but omit other words that more accurately relay the person’s message. For example, an individual could quote the new president of a company as having said that “Employees are already over-paid.” That quote would be out of context, however, if she also said, “Those overpaid employees do not work here, though. Here, our workers are not earning pay that represents their value to the company, so we should pay them more.”

In addition to quoting, you can also paraphrase a source. When paraphrasing, we often replace some words with synonyms. Although synonyms have similar denotative meanings, their
connotative meanings can differ in subtle but significant ways – in effect, changing the message.
**KINDS of MEANING**

Words can have two kinds of meaning:

- **Denotative meanings** – the established meanings of a word.
- **Connotative meanings** – the meanings that we associate with words; these associations often have emotional overtones.

**Denotative meanings.**

Sometimes we think that a word’s definition is obvious, but it might not be. One example, when applied to food, is “local.” In 2008, the U.S. Congress determined that “the total distance that a product can be transported and still be considered a ‘locally or regionally produced agricultural food product’ is less than 400 miles from its origin, or within the state in which it was produced’” (Martinez et al., 2010). This means that a person who sells Cortland, NY,-grown corn in Washington, D.C., (340 miles away) can say that he is selling locally-grown corn.

Here is another example: National Public Radio reporter Julie Rovner (2013) stated that a “full-time worker,” according to the Affordable Care Act (“ACA,” which some people call “ObamaCare”), is a person who works 30 or more hours per week. The ACA requires large employers (defined as companies with 50 or more employees) to provide health insurance for its full-time workers. In the summer of 2013, though, some legislators wanted to redefine the term to mean 40 or more hours. With that change, fewer people would have health care insurance.

Reporter Marie Cusick (2013) provides another example: In the past few years, many land owners in Pennsylvania signed contracts with a particular natural gas company, giving that company permission to extract natural gas from under the land owners’ ground. In return for that permission, the company agreed to send royalty checks to land owners as payment for the gas that it took out. Apparently, the land owners assumed that “royalty” meant money with no deductions.

However, the company sent checks that were for much less money than the land owners had expected. Some checks were for only $39, some for even less money. The company could do so because Pennsylvania law does not define the word “royalty,” so the natural gas company could define the term however it wants. This company defined “royalty” in a way that lets it deduct fees (for the production and transportation of the gas, for example) from the royalty payment...
List 3 “facts” and tell how or from whom you learned those facts. Next, “role-play” the part of someone who disputes those claims. What might that person say? How credible might his/her doubts be? How sure are you of your 3 facts now?

What terms in contracts that you have signed, whether off-campus (dealing with cell-phone service, for example) or on-campus? In those contracts, what terms are you not familiar with? What steps have you taken to learn their meanings?
Connotative meanings

Connotative meanings are the ideas that we associate with words. These associations often have emotional overtones, which can change a person’s understanding of a person or event. Because of this, manufacturers and governments spend fortunes choosing names for programs and products as a way of ensuring that the names connote specific feelings that lead citizens and customers to accept and/or buy those programs and products. Consider, for example, laws such as *No Child Left Behind*, which aimed to improve public education. Or consider *The Affordable Care Act*. This law could have been given any number of names, but the word “affordable” was included as a way of emphasizing one of its stated goals. It could have been given the name, *The Social Health Care Act*, but for many Americans, the word “social” connotes “socialism,” which carries a negative connotation.

Ford Motor Company provides a business example. By 1964, it had decided to give its new sport coupe a name that connotes strength, independence, and a youthful free spirit. It chose the name of a breed of horse with which we associate those qualities. (Yes, the Mustang.)

Euphemisms are words and phrases that are used to connote positive feelings for unpleasant items, ideas, situations, or events. For example, the company did not “fire” a particular individual, it merely “down-sized” him.

GUIDELINES

We can use the ideas that information is invented and that words have different kinds of meanings to create guidelines for evaluating people’s claims:

1. **Understand that “facts” are not necessarily one-hundred percent true:** rather, facts are *claims* that are accurate or true only to a degree. The history of science is a case in point: It reveals competing claims regarding who discovered a condition or who invented a particular product. Ask a British citizen who invented the incandescent light bulb, for example, and he might tell you, “Why, Joseph Swan, of course.” In the US, though, we learn that Thomas Edison invented it (Flatow, 1993, p. 11). The same holds true for the question, “Who invented television?” Science reporter Ira Flatow (1993) explains that part of the reason for the disagreement centers on different definitions of “television” (pp. 89 and 104).

   The history of science is also replete with discoveries and inventions that overturned previously-believed “facts.” Scientists had believed that dinosaurs, for instance, were cold-blooded, but then in the mid 1970’s a paleontologist presented evidence that led him to claim that dinosaurs were warm-blooded.

   Additionally, one or two facts usually provide only a small part of a complicated “truth.” Consider this situation: An eighteen-year-old tells her parents the “fact” that she is planning to stay overnight at her cousin’s house; however, she does not tell her parents the facts that her cousin will not be home, and that her “significant other” will spend the night with her. Another example deals with a news commentator’s claim that the National Aeronautics and Space
Administration (NASA) changed temperature statistics upward so that it could strengthen its demand that we slow-down global warming. However, according to the organization Pundifact
(2014), that commentator neglected to tell his listeners certain details. For example, NASA has changed its process for recording temperatures in the US. One specific change deals with the time of day at which temperatures are recorded: Temperatures used to be recorded at different times of the day, whereas now they are recorded at the same time of the day: midnight.

How does the idea that people invent information match—or conflict with—your beliefs? When have you invented information?

2. Based on guideline number one, we can state that virtually all messages are, to some degree, subjective, and that composing an “objective” message is, at best, extremely difficult. This is because writers must decide, for example, what information to include, what information to exclude, and how to phrase that information. These decisions and others contribute to a message’s degree of objectivity, and they can change the message itself in almost “invisible” ways. (Messages that are “invisible” — below the conscious level — are called subliminal messages.) This idea applies to any topic, from science to history, art, economics, education, and personal e-mails.

Consider the example of many K-12 American History textbooks from the mid-twentieth century. Those texts used to portray US history in ways that minimized the contributions of Blacks and of women. Now, however, they have begun to provide much more information regarding the contributions of minority groups.

Even the organization of a message, an essay, a paragraph, and a sentence can subliminally change a message’s meaning. To demonstrate this idea, conduct the following Organization of Information exercise: Read the “same” information in the two sentences below: Which idea does the author seem to emphasize in the first sentence? … in the second sentence? Be ready to explain your answer.

a. Even though each parent works two jobs, this family of four lives below the poverty line.

b. This family of four lives below the poverty line – even though each parent works two jobs.

Regardless of the degree to which a message is objective, it — as with most other messages — blends three purposes for communicating: To inform, to interest, and to persuade. Many messages might seem to be mainly informative, such as those in news articles and textbooks, but even editors and reporters might try to persuade the reader to change his beliefs or behavior. They can do so in subliminal ways, through decisions regarding which sources to use, which information to include and exclude, how to phrase the information, how to organize the information, and which graphics to use.

We are not saying that all information is false, but rather that information’s validity depends on considerations such those described above. With such examples in mind, we can support the idea that claims are true to a certain extent.
How does this claim (that all messages are, to some degree, subjective) change your understanding of, or belief in, lessons that you have learned in and out of classes?
3. Be wary of words that claim absolute truth, such as *always, never, every, fact,* or *proof.* An author’s use of these words can steer the reader or listener away from information that contradicts the author’s claims.

4. Make sure that messages are clear, coherent, and credible—whether those messages are in a magazine, advertisement, textbook, blog, or a friend’s note. One way in which authors generate clarity, for example, is through the use of active voice (refer to page 29) because active voice—unlike passive voice—routinely lets you know “who did what.” Here is an example of passive voice, followed by active voice. That the active voice sentence clearly states who decided.

   The decision was made to evacuate the hospital.

   The patients decided to evacuate the hospital.

5. Ask *Open-Ended questions: Who, What, Where, Why, When,* and *How?* As an example, refer to this excerpt and to the follow-up questions:

   Children in high-poverty communities tend to go to neighborhood schools where nearly all the students are poor and at greater risk of failure, as measured by standardized tests, dropout rates, and grade retention. Low performance owes not only to family background, but also to the negative effects high-poverty neighborhoods have on school processes and quality. Teachers in these schools tend to be less experienced, the student body more mobile, and additional systems must often be put in place to deal with the social welfare needs of the student body, creating further demands on limited resources.

   Being poor in a very poor neighborhood subjects residents to costs and limitations above and beyond the burdens of individual poverty. Summarized in part below, research has shown the wide-ranging social and economic effects that result when the poor are concentrated in economically segregated and disadvantaged neighborhoods (Kneebone et al., 2011, p. 2).

   A critical reader might (in his or her annotations) ask,

   1. With what organizations are the authors affiliated?
   2. In line #3, what does the word “owes” mean?
   3. What are some other measures of failure? …of success?
   4. What does the term “grade retention” mean?
   5. What might be the benefits of having a mobile student body?
   6. Are less experienced teachers necessarily less effective than experienced teachers?
   7. What “additional systems must often be put in place to deal with the social welfare needs of the student body”?
   8. Who conducted the research mentioned in the last sentence? How might that person benefit from the research?

   Words we use can subliminally change the ways in which people think and act. To demonstrate this claim, practice the power of the word *how:* If some people tell you that particular goals cannot be reached, try asking them, “How can they be reached?”

   The language that we use to discuss critical thinking and effective writing grows largely out of
the field of study known as Rhetoric.
Rhetoric

Definitions
1. Rhetoric is the art of finding all the available means of persuasion. Means of persuasion include the kind of information (such as narratives and statistics), word choice, organization of information, the message’s timing, and its medium (face-to-face or YouTube, for example).
2. Persuasion is the act of intentionally trying to change someone’s belief or behavior.
3. Rhetorical Appeals are “kinds of reasons.”

Elements of Rhetoric
1. Rhetorical Appeals
   a. Logic involves reasoning with various kinds of evidence*
      1) Claims (“facts”)  4) Examples  6) Authoritative Opinion
      2) Statistics  5) Quotes  7) Definition
      3) Narratives
   b. Credibility. Considerations regarding a person’s credibility include the person’s
      1) Knowledge  3) Experience  5) Friendliness
      2) Educational level  4) Reputation  6) Affiliations
      In contrast to what many scientists believed only ten or fifteen years ago (yet another change in the “facts” we believe), recent research suggests that emotion is not divorced from thinking, nor is it simply a spark that leads to thinking or learning. Rather, emotion and thinking might well be inseparable (Felten et al, 2006, pp. 40-41).
2. Rhetorical Techniques are ways in which a communicator delivers his/her information.
   a. Organization of Information.
      1) oldest to most recent, or vice versa
      2) importance (least to most, or most to least expensive
   b. Literary Devices
      1) Diction
      2) Topic / Subtopic Choices (metaphor, simile)
      3) Allusion
      4) Comparison
      5) Parallel Structure
      6) Personification
      7) Irony
      8) Humor
   c. Timing – When the message is delivered.
   d. The Medium through which you deliver your message. For example,
      1) Face-to-face conversation
      2) Posters
      3) Graffiti
      4) Radio
      5) Television
      6) Blogs
      7) Website
      8) Tweets

*We distinguish between details and generalizations:
• Each of the kinds of evidence named above represents a kind of detail.
• Generalizations are conclusions that we reach through reasoning (demonstrating relationships) based on evidence. Kinds of generalizations include thesis statements, topic
sentences, and claims.

RHETORIC
OBSERVING

We place the skill of observing into the category of critical thinking because a good deal of our information is based on people’s observations. The accuracy of observations is determined by considerations such as the observer’s training in observation, the observer’s prejudices and biases, and where that individual was located relative to the item or event that he/she observed.

Observational skills are, of course, important to many professionals, ranging from scientists to news reporters to teachers. Teachers must be alert to their students’ academic, emotional, and social needs; they must also notice and respond appropriately to parents’ perspectives, and to those of other teachers. Remember that, in New York State, teachers are – by law – “mandated reporters”: They must report suspected child abuse to the appropriate authorities.

Guidelines for Observing: Follow the guidelines below as you record your service-learning observations. You will refer to your observations in class discussions and essays. The following guidelines are adapted from Reid, S. (2000, p. 49).

1. Use a multi-sensory approach.
2. Be Specific. This includes considerations such as
   a. Quantify/measure amounts, sizes, length of time.
   b. Using precise language. For example, “The child walked [or ran, ambled, jogged, crawled, meandered, stumbled, or skipped] to the sidewalk.”
3. Compare; create images using metaphors &/or similes.
4. “Describ[e] what is not there.” For example, a classroom might not have current textbooks.
5. Note changes in the subject’s form or condition.
6. “[Focus] on a dominant idea” (a meeting’s theme, purpose, or mood, for example).

The sample below is a selection from a student’s first Service-Learning Reflection.

Today (September 20), the walk to pick up my new little brother, who I am mentoring through the Bridges for kids program at the YWCA, was exciting and scary. I was excited to finally meet my little friend but was concerned about how his life at home was. As I followed the directions to my little buddy’s house, I thought about what I should ask. I walked toward his apartment complex and saw a cement and brick building with graffiti close to the ground. On the wall facing me, only three of the sixteen windows had curtains. The lawn was a jumble of green and faded yellow weeds. The building reminded me of a homeless person who had been living on city streets and in subway tunnels: greenish skin, messy greasy hair, and mismatched clothes.

As I got close to the building, I heard the screeching of metal swing cables and I heard the scuffing of small feet running through gravel. I smelled fresh air, as the complex lies on a more rural side of town. I walked up to the front door. It was covered in fake cobwebs. The doorway was all decorated for Halloween. (Already?) I knocked on the door and the mother of my little buddy, MK, came to the door. She called him over from the playground. From one corner of the building, I saw his small sweaty, dirty face smiling at us. We shook hands, and I felt the callouses
on his palm. He seemed too young to have callouses.
WRITING’S BASIC PRINCIPLE: DEMONSTRATE RELATIONSHIPS

An effective writer demonstrates relationships between his evidence and his claims; he also develops a working "relationship" with his intended readers in that he empathizes with them. Empathy is the ability to understand another person's beliefs, interests, needs, and wants. An author draws on his understanding of his intended reader to tailor his message to that person.

Being empathetic does not mean that you must agree with the other person, or that you must change your message to match what the other person wants to read or hear; it means, rather, that you know how to explain your message in ways that help your reader understand, believe, and stay interested in it. You won't always know your intended readers in a personal sense, of course, but you do have ways of learning about them through primary (first-hand/experiential/empirical) research and through secondary sources.

Five qualities characterize effective writing; we call these qualities The Five C’s:
- Creativity
- Clarity
- Coherence
- Conciseness
- mechanical Correctness

The stages of the writing process move, basically, in the order of The Five C’s shown above, so we could use the names of the 5 C’s as labels for the stages of the writing process. However, we will use the standard terminology for those stages.

The Stages of the Writing Process:
- Invention and Planning stage – Design a unique message as a way of providing a benefit to your intended readers, and as a way of capturing their interest.
- Drafting and Revising stage – Strengthen your message’s clarity and coherence as a way of helping your readers understand and believe your message.
- Editing stage – Polish your message so that it is as concise as possible; doing so helps keep your readers’ interest because they get the most information from the fewest words.
- Proofreading stage – Reinforce your message’s credibility – and, therefore, your credibility – by making sure that your message’s "mechanics" (spelling, punctuation, grammar, and formatting) are correct.

Note: We are not claiming that each stage of the writing process addresses only one quality and/or purpose; we are, however, saying that each stage deals mainly with a particular quality as a way of developing a certain writing purpose.
Name the steps that you have usually taken when writing an essay, report, or speech. In what ways are those steps different from the stages named above?
The stages of the writing process, and the qualities related to each, are

**Inventing and Planning Stage:**
- Creativity
- Helps develop readers’ interest

**Drafting and Revising Stage:**
- Clarity and Coherence
- Help ensure readers’ understanding

**Editing Stage:**
- Conciseness
- Helps ensure interest

**Proofreading Stage:**
- Mechanical Correctness
- Helps persuade readers to believe message

A writer is not necessarily done with one phase of the writing process after he moves on to the next. Imagine, for example, that during the invention phase of an essay, you decide to explain ways in which malnutrition hurts a child’s ability to learn.

However, while in the revising stage of the essay, you remember that your mentee’s younger sister eats cocoa powder as a dry snack, but the child *never* brushes her teeth, nor does she visit a dentist, even though many of her teeth are rotted. You realize that this observation could lead to a more interesting topic, such as the relationship between dental care and, specifically, academic performance; as a result, you return to the invention stage so that you can research information relevant to this new topic. This was a CPN 102 student’s experience a few years ago.

The rest of this chapter describes each of the stages of the writing process in greater detail.
THE INVENTION/PLANNING STAGE focuses on creativity as a way of developing reader interest and as a way of demonstrating benefit to the reader.

In the Invention and Planning stage, you create a unique idea for your intended audience. By doing so, you respect your readers’ desire to not read about something that they already know. The Invention and Planning stage requires you to do more than simply “regurgitate” someone else’s ideas and information; rather, it demands that you use your understanding of your readers’ beliefs and needs to prepare a focused message that is valuable to them.

If, for example, you are preparing a message about drought conditions in the Midwest U.S. for students who are economics majors, you could focus your essay on the role of the drought on unemployment. On the other hand, if your intended audience is composed of nonprofit agency supervisors, you could describe the effect of the drought on the increased demand for services that the drought generates. In either case, you are delivering a useful message that you have tailored to your readers’ interests and needs.

Remember that creativity is the most difficult skill in Bloom’s taxonomy. That difficulty often means that authors spend a good deal of time on this stage. The student who composed the dental care essay returned to this stage after having worked at the drafting and revising stage. Naturally, after she designed a more unique message, she then went into the drafting and revising stage again. Her dedication led to an insightful essay.

You could begin generating unique ideas by thinking of a unique thesis statement, or you could start by considering relationships between a collection of details. Annotations from readings and from your Service-Learning Journal can provide those details. You could also outline those details. In comparison to paragraphs, an outline helps you identify innovative connections – relationships – between ideas; it also helps you determine how effectively you have organized that information in a way that strengthens the readers’ understanding of, belief in, and interest in your message, and it helps you to quickly ensure that you have enough quality evidence to support your thesis statement.

Your thesis statement
1. Presents a unique or controversial idea, claim, or call to action.
2. Is a claim, so it must be a statement, not a question.
3. Is one sentence. It provides your readers with a clear and concise message.
4. Is not a statistic or a quote.
5. Is supported and explained by all the information that you provide in your essay or speech.
6. Might not be polished until you’ve finished revising.

Sample thesis statements
• One non-medical way of helping a hyper-active child to focus is by helping him or her learn through physical activity.
• Children as young as eight years-old can learn academic and social lessons by volunteering.
• Please promote a culturally-relevant education for our children by proposing foreign
language education that begins in third-grade.
THE DRAFTING AND REVISI NG STAGE focuses on developing the qualities of Clarity and Coherence as a way of generating reader understanding.

Drafting takes work, of course: You use your outline as a framework from which you draft your essay, being sure to build coherence within and between paragraphs. Because the revising portion of this stage can be more challenging, and because it is one of the most important aspects of writing, we will concentrate on it.

When you revise an essay, you focus on content, clarity, and coherence. With regard to content, you ensure that you meet an assignment’s main requirements regarding topic, audience, and purpose, and that you provide a clear and cohesive message.

Outline of the Revising Stage:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REVISING</th>
<th>Clarity</th>
<th>Coherence</th>
<th>The Revising Process</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>..... reader cues</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>..... paraphrasing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>..... sentence structure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CLARITY. Clarity is the quality of being quickly understood. Here are guidelines for clarity:

1. Ensure that your sentences are grammatically correct. Refer to pages 36-41.

2. Phrase sentences to clearly identify who did what.

To meet this guideline, use active voice as much as possible. In active voice, the subject acts, whereas, in passive voice, the subject is acted on. (Refer to page 29 for additional explanation.)

Often, the passive voice does not state who or what is taking the action:

Passive voice: The chemical reaction was started. (Who or what started the reaction?)

Active voice: The sun’s rays started the chemical reaction.

Another way of writing clearly is to carefully phrase your information. In this next example, the phrasing suggests (incorrectly) that the students to whom the author is referring were teaching a lesson on cuisine

While teaching a lesson on cuisine, most students had not seen some American foods…

This sentence should have included words such as, I learned that (most students have never…)

In this second example, a different author suggests that “we” provided the quote –

By giving us this quote, we are able to feel the emotions…

This sentence could have been phrased as, By giving us this quote, the author helps us feel…

3. Use statistics to develop clarity and precision. In your Service-Learning Journal, for example, be sure to provide statistics that you generate from your observations. Notice the difference in the degree of understanding generated by the following two sentences

After our tutoring, “Aaron’s” Math grades went up a lot.

vs.

After three months’ of tutoring, “Aaron’s” quiz grade average rose from 55.3 to
76.1, a 27% increase.
The rest of this section focuses on word choice.

4. Sometimes, the most precise word is specific to a particular field of study (a particular “discipline”). Words in this category are called “jargon.” For example, Conley (2011) claims that a child’s socio-economic background can strengthen or weaken his “social capital” – which is a sociological term that refers to the “information, knowledge, of people, and connections that help individuals enter, gain power in, or otherwise leverage social networks” (p. A.9).

5. Use words that your readers understand; define those with which they might be unfamiliar. In the selection immediately above, the author used jargon from Sociology (“social capital”), then, because his intended audience probably would not know that term, he defined it.

6. Avoid pretentious phrasing. Many college freshmen seem to think that by using such phrasing, they appear scholarly; unfortunately, they merely sound pompous. For example, “We utilized technologically-enhanced devices that were concurrently reachable.” vs. “We used the available technology.”

7. Choose words carefully for both their denotative and connotative meanings.
   a. Denotative meanings.
      1) Denotative meanings are the established meanings of a word.
      2) Different sources, including different dictionaries, can define words differently.
   b. Connotative meanings are the meanings that we associate with words; these associations often have emotional overtones that can change a messages’ meaning. For example, the word “initiate” often has a positive connotation because of its link to “initiative,” a quality that we respect. In contrast, the word “instigate” connotes trouble, so someone who instigates is a trouble-maker.
      Haley initiated the program.
      vs.
      Haley instigated the program.

When have you chosen words for their connotative meanings? What was your reason for doing so? How ethical were you in your decision to do so?
8. Avoid everyday words that weaken your essay’s precision. Some examples are...
   a. *And*—People often use the word “and” even though a different word would more
      precisely demonstrate the relationship between ideas. For example,
      The neighbors were unhappy with the new policy, and they signed the petition.
      The reader is not sure if the neighbors signed the petition because of the policy, *in spite of* the policy, or if signing the petition was unrelated to the policy. Two options for more precisely representing that relationship are
      The neighbors were unhappy with the new policy, *so* they signed the petition.
      The neighbors were unhappy with the new policy, *yet* they signed the petition.
   b. *Thing*—A more specific word, depending on context, for *thing* could be (for example)
      - Item
      - Idea
      - Condition
      - Situation
   c. *Number vs. amount:* “Amount” refers to volume, so
      Do *not* write, The amount of people...
      Rather, *do* write, The number of people...
   d. *Less vs. fewer.* “Less” also refers to volume, so
      Do *not* write, Less people...
      Rather, *do* write, Fewer people...
   e. *Impact and Effect*—These words are vague: They could mean “improve” or “weaken.”
      This new policy could impact our quality of life.
      A more specific alternative is
      This new policy could negatively impact our quality of life.
      While this phrasing is clearer, it is unnecessarily long: in contrast, the words “hurt” and
      “worsen” are more specific:
      This new policy could worsen our quality of life.
   f. *Talked about and discussed*—These are also vague. In the sentence below, for instance,
      we do not know what the source claims about the *relationship* between sleep and
      success:
      The author talked about sleep and success in school.
      We can be more precise by using other words, such as *explained, described,* or *praised*.
      The author explained that getting enough sleep contributes to success in school.
   g. When you quote someone’s words, *you* are the person who is quoting; the person whom
      you quoted did not “give the quote.”
   h. Use prepositions. Some student writers have been ignoring prepositions (words that
      show relationships.) Recently, for example, a student wrote
Your first year at Cortland, you will…
Does the student author mean *before, during, or after* that first year?
COHERENCE

Overview: Coherence is the quality of clearly showing relationships between ideas and information.

Kinds of relationships include
1. Similarity
2. Contrast
3. Space
4. Time
5. Co-ordination
6. Subordination
7. Example
8. Pattern
9. Progression
10. Cause and effect
11. Problem/solution
12. Definition

As an author, you have certain tools for developing coherence, such as
• Reader cues
• Paraphrasing
• Sentence structure.

Reader Cues. “Reader cues” are words and phrases that specify certain kinds of relationships. Examples include
1. unlike
2. in contrast to
3. but
4. yet
5. as a result
6. therefore
7. after
8. before
9. such as
10. for example

Here is an example and an exercise: Note the reader cues (in bold) in the selection below, then determine the kind of transitions that those cues signal. Feel free to refer to the list above.

Some of the new volunteers expected their mentees to lack manners. “Nora,” for instance, was ready to coach her mentee to say “thank you.” However, she discovered that the child often expressed her appreciation for Nora’s companionship by saying “thanks a lot!” Because of the child’s behavior, Nora was more inclined to be with her.

Paraphrasing. A major skill in developing coherence is paraphrasing (putting someone else’s comments into your own words). Paraphrasing steps include combinations of the following:
1. Cite the source (always).
2. Completely reword the original selection.
3. “Collect” details under one term. For example, if an author describes the experiences of children in Boston, New York City, Washington, D.C., and Miami, you could write that the author describes the experiences of children who live in large east-coast U.S. cities.
4. Combine two or three sentences, or split a long sentence into two shorter ones.
5. Change a sentence’s focus by changing its subject and/or organization.
6. Use synonyms for
   a. individual words
   b. multi-word terms
   c. statistics.
Caution: Simply changing a word or two, or merely re-organizing a sentence, does not constitute paraphrasing; worse yet, by taking only such basic steps, you could be charged with plagiarism, a serious offense. Be sure to take multiple steps when you paraphrase. Recently, some people have lost pay or – as in the case of a school superintendent in Massachusetts – have been forced to resign their jobs because they plagiarized (Schworm, 2014).

You should usually paraphrase more often than you quote; however, when an author’s phrasing is so dramatic or concise that you want to quote him or her, use paraphrasing to integrate his words into your message. In this case, your paraphrase develops coherence in two ways:
1. It tells your reader that you are about to quote a particular source.
2. It states the importance, the relevance, of that quote to your message.

Notice the differences in the degree to which a quote is integrated into the following selections, each of which aims at demonstrating the extent of poverty among America’s children:

a. Many children in the U.S. are living in poverty. “Students in families with incomes up to 130 percent of the poverty level — or $29,055 for a family of four — are eligible for free school meals” (Dillon, 2011, par 6).

b. So many children in the U.S. are living in poverty that the U.S. Congress is helping to feed those children by providing financial support for children’s school meals. “Students in families with incomes up to 130 percent of the poverty level — or $29,055 for a family of four — are eligible for free school meals” (Dillon, 2011, par 6).

c. So many children in the U.S. are living in poverty that the U.S. Congress is helping to feed them by providing financial support for their school meals. Dillon (2011), for example, reports that Congress is also helping children who are near the poverty line, noting that “students in families with incomes up to 130 percent of the poverty level — or $29,055 for a family of four — are eligible for free school meals” (par 6).

Selection “a” merely crams the quote into the essay, while “b” does provide some context. In contrast to the first two selections, however, “c” shows the relationship of the upcoming quote to the idea that the essay’s author is trying to establish.

Note: Be sure that you do not suggest that an authority reported on you (unless she or he did so, of course). For example –

Belafonte (2009) notes a generational difference, stating that children who have been “born with cell phones in their hands seem to be ‘wired’ for electronics” (p. 51), and are reluctant to play outside (p. 50). “Jerry,” my mentee, is a member of “the i-Generation, as comfortable on the i-pad as the Boomers were on the [baseball] diamond” (p. 53).

The “(p. 53)” in the selection above suggests that the source is familiar with the student author and his mentee. A more accurate version of the selection’s last sentence would be,
Belafonte (2009) would consider Jerry, my mentee, to be a member of “the i-Generation, as comfortable on the i-pad as the Boomers were on the [baseball] diamond” (p. 53).
An additional way in which paraphrasing can strengthen your essay’s coherence—and its conciseness—is by paraphrasing (and sometimes quoting) two or more authors in the same paragraph. Notice how this student shows relationships between her sources’ information:

Bullying’s effects can interfere with a child’s academic, social, and emotional development. More specifically, Marini et al. (2006) found that interrupted emotional development can cause problems such as social anxiety, poor self-esteem, bad temperament, and unbalanced peer relations (p. 551). To that list, Patterson (2005) adds “long-term parental arguing, abuse,” and financial problems (p. 28). Both Patterson (2005, p. 28) and Marini et al. (2006) name depression as another problem.

How comfortable are you with downloading other people’s creative work, such as music or a movie? Is that an example of plagiarism? Why (or why not)?

Two special cases regarding paraphrasing: Statistics and visuals.

Statistics provide a special case for our consideration of both paraphrasing and critical thinking. First, though, some background information: A statistic is

- A number that measures something, and that is
- Phrased as a complete sentence.
  - 2225, for example, is not a statistic because (even though it is a number) it does not measure anything, and because it is not a sentence.
  - 2225 Maple Road is not a statistic for the same reasons

Here, below, is a progression that develops a number into a statistic (at letter “e”) –

a. 1,500
b. 1,500 counties
c. more than 1,500 counties
d. So extensive was last year’s drought that more than 1,500 counties
e. So extensive was last year’s drought that more than 1,500 counties were declared national drought disaster areas.

For the purpose of demonstration, letter “e” (above) was condensed from this sentence:

So extensive was last year’s drought that more than 1,500 counties — about half of all the counties in the country — were declared national drought disaster areas, and 90 percent of those were hit by heat waves as well (Nabhan, 2013).

Notice that the sentence incorporates three statistics, including one in the form of an appositive.

The way in which you paraphrase statistics can subliminally change your audience’s thinking. Remember this idea as you paraphrase and as you read and listen to evaluate. Consider, for example, ways in which we can represent this statistic: The program costs $497,617 annually.

- The program costs less than $498,000 dollars.
- The program costs almost half a million dollars each year.
- The program spends almost one thousand, four hundred dollars every day.
- The program spends almost one thousand, four hundred dollars every day – that’s almost a
dollar a minute.
Visuals. Visuals can provide a paragraph’s worth of data in a relatively small space. However, this quality intensifies the need to integrate visuals into your essay. Do so in ways that are similar to those in which you integrate paraphrases and quotes into your essay:

1. Cite the sources from which you developed your visuals.
2. Keep visuals simple.
3. Design visuals that build understanding of, interest in, and belief in your essay.
4. Provide background information, as necessary.
5. Explain the visuals’ relevance to your message.
6. Name each visual properly by using the appropriate label: chart, graph, or table.
7. Give each visual a title.

Sources of information for visuals – You can:

1. Design visuals on the basis of data that you’ve collected from your own observations (empirical research).
2. Create a graphic from information that you learned from other sources; cite those sources.
3. Combine your data with data from other sources; cite those sources.

Examples: This is an excerpt from a student’s essay; she created the graphics using Excel.

McGreggor (2009) also pointed out that Cortland County’s unemployment rate is 9.8% (p. A. 4); this high rate complicates the battle that the county’s community agencies and government are fighting against child obesity, which (on average) is higher than the rest of the state and country.

The graph below shows the extent of obesity in 10- to 17-year-old children in three areas (across New York State, across the U.S., and at Cortland County’s Family Counseling Services’ Homework Help and Group Mentoring programs); it shows that, on average, children in Cortland County are more likely to be obese than children in NY State or in the country as a whole.

Note: The numbers for the state and the country come from The Seven Valley Health Coalition’s July 2009 Cortland Counts: An Assessment of Health and Well Being in Cortland County; the number for children at Family Counseling Services comes from observations made by this author. These observations are, admittedly, not scientific, but they do offer an idea of the state of obesity in Cortland County’s children.
One reason for our children’s high rate of obesity may be their sedate lives. The graph below presents information from an informal survey of children at Family Counseling Services’ 
*Homework Help* and *Group Mentor* Programs; it shows that our children do not engage in as much vigorous exercise as they should.

**Comparison of children’s degrees of exercise (10- to 17-years-old)**

The student author integrated data from a published source (Seven Valleys Health Coalition) with data she generated while volunteering at her community agency, Homework Help. Her personal research is an example of *empirical* research because she generated the data through her own observations.

At what point does plagiarism become paraphrasing?

A service-learning student tutoring children at an after-school program in Cortland, NY. Fall 2012.
Here is an outline of this, the third, portion of the “Coherence” section of the chapter on revising. We have already covered the sections in grey.

The Revising Process

Coherence

…… reader cues
…… paraphrasing
…… sentence structure
………… sentence components
………… kinds of sentences

Sentence Structure

A sentence is a group of words that presents a complete thought; a sentence tells “who (the subject) did what (the verb).” In this section, we will examine three key sentence components: the appositive, the phrase, and the clause. In a way, these are “tools” (in addition to words) that you use to construct messages that meet The Five C’s. After examining sentence components, we will explore four kinds of sentences. The kinds of sentences with that you construct with these tools are critical to the development of clarity and coherence.

Sentence components

The Appositive:

1. Description – An Appositive
   a. Is a word, phrase, or clause that can be a kind of modifier or a synonym.
   b. Usually appears after the item to which it refers.
   c. Can condense information from full-sentence form into single-word or phrase form.
2. If an appositive is “non-essential… [it] must be set off from the core of the sentence by punctuation marks” (Koprince, 2013).
3. Use the following kinds of punctuation to indicate appositives
   a. Commas
   The mother, who was only 15 years old, applied for the one available job.
   b. Parentheses
   This Skype discussion (the first of its kind for these groups) served as a unique way for people in different countries to meet.
   c. Brackets, which are especially appropriate when indicating that you are adding information to information that you have quoted.
   Rheinholdt (2007) reinforces this idea when he writes that “children [of single-parent families] are more likely to engage in criminal activity” (p. 51).
d. Dashes – The dash is a long line that is bordered on either side by a space. Example –
   The manager – **who was in her first day on the job** – dealt with the problem.

Note: The dash and the hyphen serve different purposes. The hyphen is a short line that is not bordered by spaces. It is used to connect words as a way of avoiding confusion.

   The chefs watched the man eating chicken.
   The chefs watched the man-eating chicken.

The second sentence, immediately above, mentions a creature that we should avoid.
**A Phrase** is a group of words with neither a subject nor a verb.

*Example—* the meeting (Neither of these two words is a verb)*

Grammarians identify many kinds of phrases; for our purposes, however, we will focus on the **prepositional phrase** because it is especially important in constructing clear and coherent sentences.

**The Prepositional Phrase**
1. **A Preposition** is a word that shows a relationship in time, place, or ownership.
2. A prepositional phrase begins with a preposition and ends with one or more nouns.
3. Prepositions include:
   a) Before  
   b) After  
   c) During  
   d) Until  
   e) Toward  
   f) Through  
   g) On  
   h) In  
   i) Under  
   j) Across  
   k) Among  
   l) Behind  
   m) Off  
   n) Of  
   o) About  
   p) Again  
   q) As  
   r) At  
   s) By  
   t) For  
   u) From  
   v) Except  
   w) With  
   x) Without  

4. **Guideline regarding the Prepositional Phrase:**
   The subject of a sentence cannot be in a prepositional phrase; this is an important consideration regarding clarity, especially when ensuring subject/verb agreement. When a singular noun that immediately precedes a prepositional phrase is also the subject in a clause, conjugate the verb for its singular form, as in this example:

   The **organizer** of the fund-raising events needs to write a newspaper article.

   (In this sentence, “events” is in a prepositional phrase, so it cannot be the subject of the sentence; if it were, then the **events** would need to write the article.)

**A Clause** is a group of words with a subject and verb. We have two kinds of clause—

a. **A Dependent clause** is not a complete thought, so it cannot “stand on its own.”
   *Example—* When the meeting begins at 8:00 p.m.

   In this example, the words “the meeting begins” are the subject and verb, but the word “when” indicates that more information will follow this subject and verb. (What will happen at that time?) This complete message depends on that information, so without it, the clause is incomplete.

b. **An Independent clause** is a complete thought; it does stand on its own, so it is a complete sentence.

   Examples, with each sentence’s independent clause underlined—
   
   The meeting begins at 8:00 p.m.

   When the meeting begins at 8:00 p.m., the secretary will review the minutes.
**Sentences.** Use different kinds of sentences as tools for developing clarity and coherence. In the sentences below, subjects and verbs are in bold; verbs are also in bold, and they are double underlined.

1. **Simple sentence** - A simple sentence is a single independent clause with no dependent clause. Examples
   
   - *Zip codes predict* academic success.
   - *Precise definitions*, especially for complicated concepts, *are* important in critical thinking and decision-making processes. [Notice the appositive in this sentence.]
   
   A simple sentence can have more than one subject and/or more than one verb. Examples –
   
   - *The students and their teachers assembled* on the school’s front lawn.
   - *The students and their teachers assembled* on the school’s front lawn and *unfurled* their banner.

2. **A Compound sentence**
   
   a. A compound sentence has two or more independent clauses.
   
   b. Separate independent clauses with an appropriate conjunction and a comma, or with a semi-colon.
   
   - *Many people are concerned* more with the economy than with the environment, *so the governor is promoting* environmental concerns as economic ones. [Note the use of the connector “so,” which indicates a causal relationship.]
   
   - *Some legislators want* to cut subsidies to the poor; *others prefer* to cut subsidies to oil companies.
   
   - *Some legislators want* to cut subsidies to the poor; *however, others prefer* to cut subsidies to oil companies. [Note that the word “however” emphasizes a relationship of contrast between the two groups’ desires.]
   
   c. **A Complex sentence**
      
      1) A complex sentence has an independent clause and one or more dependent clauses.
      2) Separate the dependent and independent clauses with a comma.
      3) Example –
         
         - Although the price of fresh fruit had fallen, *these parents were unable* to afford such healthy food.
         
         Notice that the word “although” helps develop coherence by predicting a relationship of contrast between the first and second parts of the sentence.
         
         Remember that authors can change their readers’ thinking subliminally through the arrangement of information. The example above can be re-organized to emphasize a different part of the sentence:
         
         Even though these parents were unable to afford such healthy food, *the price*
of fresh fruit had fallen.
d. A Compound-Complex sentence—A compound-complex sentence combines a compound sentence with a complex one.

By providing parents with math and English tutoring, the school district was able to raise children’s grades; in so doing, the school district won additional funding.

e. Review: The following set of examples demonstrates the development of a simple sentence into compound, complex, and compound/complex sentences.

1) The U.S. poverty rate recently climbed to almost 16 percent.
2) The U.S. poverty rate recently climbed to 16 percent; more than 49 million Americans are now living below the poverty level.
3) Although the U.S. poverty rate recently climbed to almost 16 percent (almost 40 million Americans are now living below the poverty level), many Americans are financially surviving this recession.
4) Although many Americans are financially surviving this recession, the U.S. poverty rate recently climbed to almost 16 percent; this number means that more than 49 million Americans are now living below the poverty level.

Active (vs. Passive) Voice

1. In the active voice, the subject of the sentence takes the action (or is “in the state of being”); in the passive voice, however, the subject is being “acted on.”

2. Reasons for avoiding passive voice:
   a. In passive voice, the reader is often given incomplete information regarding who acted.
      The letter was sent on Thursday. [Who sent the letter?]
   b. Passive voice sentences that do give more complete information are usually longer than they would be, if they were in the active voice:
      The letter was sent on Thursday by the homeowner. [passive voice] vs.
      The homeowner sent the letter on Thursday. [active voice]

In the following sentence, one two-letter pronoun serves as a clue that the sentence might be in passive voice. What is that word?

It is known that mindfulness training can improve an athlete’s performance.

The clue is the pronoun “it.” Independent clauses that begin with “it” are often in the passive voice. One way of turning this passive-voice sentence into an active-voice sentence would be to replace “it” with the source of that claim:

Gardner and Moore (2012) present a wealth of evidence that demonstrates the effectiveness of mindfulness training in improving athletes’ performance (p. 316).
Organization. Organize information in ways that create an “organic,” a “seamless,” development of ideas. You can do so when arranging the information at the essay level, the paragraph level, and at the sentence level. At the paragraph level, for example, you can end one paragraph with a sentence that “evolves,” or transitions, into the next paragraph. Example:

People in this low-income working neighborhood face health problems because many have no health insurance, or because their health insurance co-pay is so high that they could not afford it. Some of the residents do have Medicaid or Medicare, but no doctors have offices nearby, and most residents did not have their own transportation that could get them to a doctor’s office. Making the situation worse is a lack of public transportation. However, there is one increasingly common kind of transportation that hurts people’s health: trucks.

These heavy trucks are ruining the roads and they are dumping hazardous waste into the “Safe Waste Repository” that the state recently opened. This waste includes….

In the example above, the last word in the first paragraph, “trucks,” serves as the transition into the next paragraph, in which the author describes the problems caused by those trucks for the residents of that neighborhood.

A note about The Paragraph
1. A Paragraph is a team of sentences that develops a single idea.
2. Essential features: A paragraph is
   a. Unified, focused – A paragraph has a topic sentence.
   b. Well-Developed – The topic sentence is supported by evidence, details.
   c. Designed to show relationships between
      1) Evidence and topic sentence:
      2) The paragraph and
         a) the preceding and subsequent paragraphs.
         b) the essay’s thesis statement.
3. A body paragraph can
   a. Begin to explain a new main point.
   b. Be organized on the basis of kinds of relationships named under “Coherence.”
   c. Develop a specific example, narrative, or definition.
   d. Break-up a long description into “bite-size chunks” (usually about 7 sentences).
   e. Serve as a transition from one main point to another.

One effective way of revising is by developing a productive relationship with an editor. The last section in our discussion of revising explores a way of developing such a working relationship.
THE REVISIONING PROCESS
In high school, revising might have involved an editor—usually your teacher—telling you how to change your essay. In college, however, we expect you to keep control, to keep “ownership,” of your work. Our revising process allows you to do that.

An effective editor does not tell the author how to change his or her message; rather, an effective editor uses active listening skills to help the author refine his message for himself. In a writing situation, active listening is a process through which the editor “interviews” the author by asking open-ended questions and then paraphrasing the author’s answers back to him.

Open-ended questions usually begin with words such as who, what, where, when, why, and how. For example: “What is your thesis statement?” “How is this claim important to your intended reader?” “In what way [or “How”] does this thesis statement address the assignment’s requirement of [for example] analysis?” Notice that open-ended questions prompt more informative answers than closed questions, such as, “Does this sentence serve as your thesis statement?” or “Is your message important to your reader?” These questions ask for only yes/no responses.

After the author answers, the editor paraphrases the answer. In doing so, the editor acts as a kind of mirror, “reflecting” the author’s comments back to him. Just as with the image that a mirror reflects, a reflected comment could be accurate or distorted. In either case, the paraphrase can be very useful because, as the author confirms or corrects the editor’s paraphrase, he explains his thinking to himself and develops his message for himself. The author, not the editor, does most of the talking, and he keeps control of his essay by revising it himself.

Guidelines for Editors
1. Use active listening skills to help the author develop his/her own ideas—
   a. Ask open-ended questions.
   b. Paraphrase the author’s answers.
2. Do not give advice.
3. Focus on major considerations such as thesis statement, attention to audience, strength of evidence, and meeting major assignment guidelines. Consider “mechanical” issues (spelling, punctuation, grammar, and usage) only if they interfere with understanding; mechanical issues are usually addressed in the proofreading stage.

When someone tells you that they have a problem, how often do you offer advice—even if they have not asked for it?
How might active listening be useful in tutoring situations?
How might active listening and Bloom be useful together in tutoring situations, regardless of subject matter?
Paraphrasing: Uses. You have used paraphrase as a way of restating someone else’s comments in your own words for your own essays. In our course, you will also use this skill as a way of
1. Developing an understanding of someone else’s ideas.
2. Demonstrating your understanding of that person’s ideas.
3. Helping another person develop and refine his own ideas as he revises his essay.
In your class, you might revise essays in peer teams that consist of author, editor, and observer. The observer identifies specific times during the editing session in which the editor practiced (or ignored) active listening skills. Each student will have a chance to serve in each role.

Here are the steps for active listening in our revising process:

**Preparation**
1. Each of the three students brings two copies of his/her draft.
2. The three students decide who will be the Author, the Editor, and the Observer for each editing “round.”
3. The Author gives the Editor a draft. The Observer does not receive a draft.

**Reading**
1. The Editor reads the Author’s draft *aloud*; doing so helps the author identify sentences that might be confusing to his intended reader.
2. The Author and Editor can annotate their copies of the draft.
3. The Observer listens to the reading.

**Revising**
1. After reading the draft, the Editor draws on his notes to prompt the Author’s thinking: He
   b. Paraphrases the author’s answers.
   c. Does *not* give suggestions or advice.
2. The author
   a. Responds to the Editor’s questions and paraphrases.
   b. Does *not* ask for advice.
   c. Writes notes to himself regarding revisions that he wants to make, based on his responses to the Editor.
3. The Observer, sitting apart from the Author and Editor, writes notes regarding the Editor’s use of active listening questions and comments, and/or his non-use of active listening.

**Revising Review**
4. The Observer describes ways in which the Editor did, and/or did not, use active listening. The three members of the revising team discuss the extent to which the Editor’s questions and paraphrases helped the Author
   a. Keep ownership of the essay.
   b. Identify ways in which to revise the essay.
5. The editor returns his copy of the author’s draft to him.
6. The team members decide who will take which role for the second round, then do so again.
for the third round.
Here is an example of part of a peer revising session that used active listening. The “action” begins just as the Editor finished reading the Author’s essay aloud. While the Editor and Author discuss the essays, the Observer writes notes regarding the extent to which the Editor uses active listening techniques.

- E (Editor) – What is your thesis statement?
- A (Author) – “Students with disabilities face unknown problems.”
- E – You’re saying that children who are, let’s say, ADD or blind or deaf or in wheelchairs, you’re saying that these children don’t know the challenges they’ll face as they grow-up.
- A – Sort-of, but not exactly. I’m saying that their teachers—the teachers of children with disabilities—do not know what problems these children face. Guess I’ll write, “Teachers of students with disabilities face…” No. “Teachers of students with disabilities do not know what kinds of problems those children will face.”
- E – What evidence do you give to support your thesis statement?
- E – Which of those articles deals with teachers’ knowledge about disability issues?
- A – None, but I’m thinking of including information from teacher-education programs.
- E – Ah—going directly to “the source.” Are you going to talk with professors?
- A – Probably.
- E – Which ones?
- A – Well, my Foundations courses. So I guess I’ll have some idea. But I want to be sure that we have more than book learning about the topic.
- E – What other kind of learning would there be?
- A – I’m thinking about hands-on learning. Working with children with disabilities. Volunteering with them.
- E – Is that important?
- A – Yeah.
- E – Why?
- A – So that they know how to work better with those children.
- E – You’re saying that students with disabilities learn differently.
- A – Of course, and kids with different disabilities learn differently.
- E – Sounds like it’ll be a long essay; you should shorten it.
- A – Okay. What should I take-out?
- E – Well, you’ve already got a lot of information up to this point, so just end it there.
- A – Okay, sounds good.
- E – Okay, “Observer,” how did I do?”
- O [Observer] – How do you think you did?
- E – Okay, I guess. I kept asking questions and giving-back what I heard.
- O – Okay, I guess. I kept asking questions and giving-back what I heard.
- E – You did, like with your first question, when you asked what the thesis statement is. That was an open-ended question. You also paraphrased … There were a couple of times, though, when you asked closed-ended questions. Also, toward the end, you gave advice: You said that Edie [the Author] should shorten her essay.
• E – Yeah, ’cause it’s too long.
• O – So, even if it is, Edie should just cut-out the last part of the essay?
• E – Sure; that’s the easiest thing. That’s what I would do.
• O – Edie, what would you do?
• A – Well I was thinking that maybe I’d narrow it.
• E – How?
• A – I’m going to focus on kids who are ADHD.
• E – You want teachers to know how to teach children who are ADHD. So you’re saying that we are not yet teaching teachers how to do that.
• A – Well, we are, but I think that we do not teach teachers how to teach ADHD kids who are from another culture; I want teachers to appreciate the problems that foreign ADHD students face.
• E – Then how would you phrase your thesis statement?
• A – “Teaching students who are ADHD, especially those from another culture, takes a great amount of empathy and understanding.”

Although the author’s thesis is still evolving, it is now much more focused and unique.

How comfortable are you in letting another student read your essay drafts? What are the reasons for your level of comfort?

A service-learning student tutoring a child at an after-school program in Cortland, NY. Spring 2013.
THE EDITING STAGE focuses on developing conciseness as a way of maintaining reader interest. Conciseness is the quality of providing the most information with the fewest words; conciseness helps your readers understand and stay interested in your essay because, with a concise essay, readers do not need to wade through long sections before “getting” your message.

Techniques for developing conciseness include, but are not limited to, the following –

1. **Condensing sentences into appositives, then integrating those appositives into other sentences.**
   - Original – The committee chairman called for order. Roy Greenfield is the chairman.
   - Revised – The committee chairman, Roy Greenfield, called for order.

2. **Eliminating**
   - a. Passive Voice
   - b. Information that the intended reader already knows (unless you have a specific purpose for including that information). Example – Deaf people cannot hear.
   - c. Redundancies, repetition. Examples –
     - The village’s water supply will poison people; it will make them sick or kill them.
     - The village’s water supply will sicken or kill them.
     - The agency’s funding does not pay for transportation. The agency’s funding also does not cover training of personnel.
     - The agency’s grant funding does not pay for transportation or training.
   - d. Synonyms used as (supposedly) different ideas. Example –
     - Some people arrived by car; some people came by automobile.
     - Some people arrived by car.

3. **Using words as different parts of speech.** (A word’s part of speech often depends on how it is used in the sentence.) This strategy could include eliminating some words. For example…
   - a. Transform nouns into verbs.
     - Committee members took a break for lunch.
     - Committee members broke for lunch.
     - (Turn the noun “break” into a verb, and remove the words “took a.”)
   - b. Transform a noun into a modifier
     - That building is made of cement.
     - That is a cement building.
   - c. Create gerunds. A gerund is a word that ends in “ing” and that is used as a noun. (We usually think of words that end in “ing” as being verbs.)
     - By letting the employees decide the timetable, it made them more invested in the product’s success.
     - Letting the employees decide the timetable made them more invested in the product’s success.
In the revised sentence, “Letting” is the sentence’s subject; “made” is the verb.
THE PROOFREADING STAGE focuses on mechanical Correctness as a way of developing the credibility of your message and of you as an author.

As a professional, you proofread to ensure that spelling, punctuation, grammar, and formatting are correct. The importance of this step was reinforced in May 2013, by the then-Executive Director of the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cortland County, Dr. Eduard Kossman. Dr. Kossman and service-learning English Composition students at SUNY Cortland were discussing tutoring, teaching, and professionalism. At one point, Dr. Kossman, a former school principal, described his reaction to cover letters or résumés that had just one mechanical mistake; he said, “I rejected those applications and moved on to the next one.”

Proofreading is important.

This next section focuses on the role of two areas of mechanical correctness (parts of speech and punctuation) in the development of understandable, interesting, and convincing messages.

In which of the writing stages do you usually spend the most time? Why?

PARTS OF SPEECH.

One of the reasons why an understanding of parts of speech is important is that parts of speech often confirm relationships in information, whether that relationship is between subject and verb or noun and pronoun. Confirmation of information is important. When people schedule meetings, for example, they often state the calendar date and the day of the week; if the day and date do not match, then the people involved will correct the information as necessary. For example, the next few sentences have grammatical inconsistencies that could cause a lack of clarity.

The girls is visiting the planetarium. The subject and verb are inconsistent: The subject indicates a plural (more than one girl), but the verb indicates only one girl.

A photograph of the ten team members are sitting on the table. The subject and verb are inconsistent: The photograph, not the team members, is sitting on the table.

Those test tube is too hot to touch. The article those and its noun are inconsistent: “Those” indicates more than one test tube, but this sentence specifies only one.

That is the officer who stopped the fight. The article that and its referent, the officer, are inconsistent: The word that indicates something that is not human. In addition, it omits information – Is the officer a man or woman?
Parts of speech guideline: In English, a word’s part of speech is often determined by the way in which it is used.

“Fly,” for example, can be used as a noun, modifier, or verb –

1. Harold, a biologist, uses a fly to carry his miniature camera. Here, fly is used as a______.  
2. He called the camera his “fly cam.” Here, fly is used as a______________________. 
3. In a way, Harold can fly into the field. Here, fly is used as a______________________. 
This guideline can help us develop conciseness, as noted on page 33.

Specific Parts of Speech

1. Verb: a word that shows action or state of being. Examples –
   She is a committee member; as such, she reviews employment applications.

2. Noun
   a. A word that represents a person, place, or thing
   b. A noun can be identified in a variety of ways:
      1) A noun can be turned into a plural. One fly buzzes; two flies buzz.
      2) A noun can be preceded by an article and/or by one or a series of modifiers:
         The fly circled. The noisy fly circled. The incredibly noisy fly circled.
      3) Certain word endings indicate “nounism”:
         -tion (education) -ist (activist) -ism (capitalism)
   c. Note: By “noun phrase,” we mean a noun and its article and/or modifiers, if any. For example, “a leading authority” is a noun phrase that includes the noun (authority), its article (a), and modifier (leading).

3. Gerund:
   a. A word ending in “ing” that is used as a noun: Running strengthens your heart.
   b. Is useful in improving clarity, coherence, and conciseness—especially when dealing with pronoun reference and with passive voice.

4. Article:
   a. An article is a word that indicates the presence of a noun. Examples – a, an, and the.
   b. Some students omit articles even though articles would add clarity. For example,
      Majority of parents would support a longer school day.

   The reader does not know if a majority of parents would support a longer school day, or if the majority would support it (or, for that matter, if no majority would support it). Although the difference between a and the might seem insignificant, it can be very important.

5. Pronoun:
   a. A word that takes the place of a noun.
   b. A pronoun almost always follows the noun to which it refers (its referent), whether that noun is in the same sentence as its pronoun, or in the preceding sentence.
   c. Pronouns must match their referents in
1) Number
2) gender
3) “humanness”
Examples of pronouns include *I, me, myself, you, yourself, he, himself, she, herself, it, itself, we, use, our, ourselves, they, their, them, themselves, who, whom, which, that, these, and those.*

Personal pronouns are pronouns that refer to people (*I, you, and who,* for example). Note: The pronoun “that” does *not* refer to people.

Examples

1) After the geologist led the children into the cave, *she* then let *them* turn off *their* lights so that *they* could see certain micro-organisms’ bioluminescence.

2) The youngest child is the person *who* asked the first question.

3) That child is the one for *whom* the geologist carried a folding chair.

4) The scientist gently reminded the children of *their* visit’s purpose, saying, “The plants’ glow reminds *you* and *me* that nature is full of beautiful surprises!”

In the examples above, notice that the author

1) Used the singular pronoun *she* to refer to the geologist, not the plural pronoun *they.*

   The pronoun
   a) Confirmed that the event included *one* geologist, and it
   b) Told the reader that the geologist is a woman.

2) Used the personal pronoun *who* to refer to one of the children; the author did *not* use the pronoun *that,* which is not a personal pronoun.

3) Used the personal pronoun *whom.* One way of remembering when to use *whom* instead of *who* is by noticing words such as *for, to, at,* and *by:* When you must choose between *who* or *whom* in such a case, use *whom.*

4) Use the pronoun *me* instead of *I or myself,* as appropriate.

   The pronoun “*I*” is almost always used as the subject of a sentence.

   *Me* is not used as the subject of a sentence

   *Me* is used in the same way as *whom:* Put it after words such as *for, to, at,* & *by.*

   *Myself* is another pronoun that is not used as the subject of a sentence; rather, it is used only after you have used the pronoun “*I*” in the sentence.

   I planned the route myself.

   The principal allowed *myself* me to visit the classroom.

   In this second sentence, no noun or pronoun that refers to the author precedes *myself,* so the correct pronoun is *me.*

Be sure that your pronouns clearly refer to *specific* nouns.

For example, in the following sentence, the pronoun *she* could refer to author Stolberg or to Minnesota Representative Michele Bachmann (to whom Stolberg refers).

   In the article by Stolberg, she mentions the federal government’s requirement of energy efficient light bulbs.

   A more accurate way of designing this sentence (among other ways) is—

   Author Stolberg (2011) refers to Minnesota Representative Michele Bachmann’s objection to the federal government’s requirement for energy-efficient light bulbs.
6. Modifier
   a. A modifier describes a noun or a verb
      1) An adjective is a modifier that describes a noun or pronoun.
      2) An adverb describes a verb or an adjective.
   b. To develop conciseness, we can sometimes replace modifiers and the words that they
      modify with a single word that serves as a synonym. Example –
      The storm that brought heavy rain and hundred-mile-an-hour winds devastated the area.
      Instead, we could write, The hurricane devastated the area.

7. A Preposition shows a relationship of time, place, or ownership. Refer to page 27.

8. Conjunction, or Connector
   a. A connector joins parts of a sentence.
   b. Connectors play a major role in developing coherence, but some writers weaken their
      essays' coherence by paying little attention to conjunctions. For example, many people
      often write the word and when a different conjunction would more accurately represent
      the relationship between ideas that the person is trying to develop. Contrast the use of
      connectors in the two selections below; notice that the words “or” and “but” (in the
      second sentence) more clearly demonstrate a relationship of contrast.
      The candidate could have denied the accusation, and he could have changed the
      subject. He admitted his actions, and he denied any wrong-doing.
      The candidate could have denied the accusation, or he could have changed the
      subject; instead, he admitted his actions, but denied any wrong-doing.
PUNCTUATION

Guidelines for using punctuation as a way of developing clarity and mechanical correctness:

1. Put punctuation between adjacent noun phrases and between a noun phrase and a pronoun.
   In the following two examples, solid ovals indicate two adjacent noun phrases:

   a. Resting on a makeshift cot a pair of children huddled against the cold.

   b. By combining physical education with math tutoring the volunteers designed a lesson that
      helped children learn ways in which movement and math interact.

2. Use a comma to separate a dependent clause from an independent clause.
   One way of identifying a sentence that begins with a dependent clause is to look for
   sentences that begin with words such as after, as, although, because, and when. Determine
   where the comma should go by remembering the noun/noun (and the noun/pronoun and
   pronoun/pronoun) guideline.
3. As you transition into a quote,
   a. Put a comma after the word that “introduces” your quote—
      Baez (2007) hinted at the importance of personal relationships when starting
      volunteer efforts, saying, “I felt awkward and thought about leaving, but when a
      friend showed up, I felt a little more comfortable” (p. 1).

   b. If you seamlessly integrate a quote into your essay, do not use a comma—
      Baez (2007) hinted at the importance of personal relationships when starting
      volunteer efforts; he said that he “felt awkward and thought about leaving, but
      when a friend showed up, [he] felt a little more comfortable” (p. 1).

   Notice that in the example immediately above, you need to change some words to develop
   consistency. In this case, the words I was changed to he, otherwise, the reader would not be
   sure to whom the word “I” refers. When you change words in a quote, be sure to encase those
   words in brackets; in this way, the reader knows that you changed words.

   c. When citing a quote that ends a sentence, put the end quotation marks at the end of the
      sentence’s last word, and put the period at the close of the parentheses. For example,
      Loeb (2005) reinforces Bain’s sense of defeat, claiming that “we often feel
      powerless, incapable of moving forward” (p. 43).

   d. Quoting a quote: If the author you are quoting is, him- or herself, quoting someone else,
      use an apostrophe within the quotation marks…
      In one situation, a youngster told Jeung that his (the child’s) brother is someone
      who is so crazy that “You don’t want to mess with him” (Jeung, 2007, p. 7).

4. Put a comma after each item in a list. Although a comma after the next-to-last item in a list is
   optional, your instructor might ask you to use a comma in that place because Items in a list
   occasionally have names consisting of two or more words, so a comma can add clarity:
   She sent her book to publishers such as Penguin, Viking, Allyn and Bacon.
   The mall’s stores include Fossil, Fashion Bug, American Eagle, Lord and Taylor.
   How many items are listed in each one of the sentences above? Four? Five? If the reader is
   unfamiliar with the names listed, how would he know the answer to this question, or the actual
   names of the organization. For example, do the words Allyn and Bacon refer to one or two
   companies?

5. Use brackets as parentheses for words that you are inserting into quotes. In the example
   below, “[sic]” tells the reader that the essay’s author realizes that her source misspelled a
   word, but to quote accurately, she (the essay’s author) is providing the source’s spelling:
   Brennan (2009) claimed that “they will realiz [sic] the truth” (p. 68).

6. Distinguish between hyphens and dashes.

Two final suggestions:

1. As you take-care of corrections that you’ve noted in your drafts, cross them out so that,
   when you review the marked-up draft, you can quickly notice if you have not tended to any
corrections.
2. Be sure to proofread your "final final" draft.
Authors typically use a combination of writing strategies in the same piece: An essay, chapter, or news article might primarily be a comparison piece, for example, but each one probably also uses other strategies, such as analysis. Virtually all of these strategies rely on synthesis.

Bloom’s taxonomy is useful in identifying the kinds of thinking that are involved in creating a message, whether that message is delivered as a written document, as a speech, or as a hybrid that integrates the written word with sound and video. This section gives you brief descriptions of, and examples of, key writing strategies. The examples are drawn from service-learning English composition courses, and they are arranged in ascending Bloom order. As you read the assignments’ instructions, notice the ways in which those instructions require students to focus on one particular thinking skill, while still applying the other skills in Bloom’s taxonomy.

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CPN 102 EXTENDED DEFINITION [SAMPLE] Fall 2009

A definition essay focuses on explaining, part of the skill of understanding.

GOALS: Demonstrate skill in composing an extended definition.

YOUR INTENDED READER is a first-year SUNY Cortland student whose career goals mirror yours.

DIRECTIONS: Use the following checklist as your instructions for this essay. Check-off these items as you ensure that they are done. Be sure that you

1. Wrote an Extended Definition of “activist.”
2. Followed our guidelines for extended definitions.
3. Designed the essay for your intended reader.
4. Used a minimum of 5 sources, including 3 that you found through SUNY Cortland’s electronic databases. If you use a dictionary, be sure to include it in your References Page, and be sure to not refer to it as “the” dictionary.
5. Smoothly integrated at least three (but no more than four) quotes; only two quotes can be definitions of “activist.”
6. Paraphrased more than you quoted.
7. Integrated details from your service-learning experience.
8. Designed an appealing and informative title.
9. Used APA format for your References Page and for your in-text citations.
   Note: Your drafts and final version, individually, will fail if they do not meet this Requirement.
10. For your second draft, include an Explanation of Revisions.
11. Wrote an essay of 800 to 1,000 words.
EXTENDED DEFINITION: Reminders

In many discussions, definitions of key terms are often overlooked; yet those definitions are crucial to decisions regarding issues such as the economy, education, employment, and the environment. When we discuss and argue such topics, and the definitions of terms related to those topics, we should keep key elements of definitions in mind, especially as we consider the nuanced exploration of extended definitions.

Key elements of an extended definition:

1. A single-sentence statement that places the defined term in a category.
   
   A sport is a competitive physical activity. (In this case, sports are categorized as a kind of activity: A sport is an activity.

2. Subcategories of the term, including examples of each category.
   
   Different kinds of sports include individual sports and team sports. Golf and ice skating are examples of individual sports; auto racing and volleyball are examples of team sports.

3. Define terms within the definition that might be vague.
   
   In the definition, the word “physical” refers to major motion. Simply moving a hand, as in a video game, is not (for the sake of this definition)”physical.”

4. A section that tells what the definition excludes, including examples.
   
   Some activities not included in this definition are chess, checkers, and pilates because….

5. History of the term. This element can give a reader a deeper understanding of how the term has developed, how it is similar to – and different from – its earlier meanings.

How would you represent numbers 1, 2, and 4 (above) graphically?
SAMPLE SECOND DRAFT of an Extended Definition Essay

Howard Cosell

CPN 102

Activist: *Agitator, Aggravator, Ar—r*

October 24, 2008

Definition Essay – Draft #2

As educators, we help our students remember and apply knowledge and skills so that they will succeed as adults. We live our educator-lives within the walls of our classrooms, occasionally venturing to meetings with the school counselors and building principals. Whatever happens outside those walls does not affect our professional lives.

Or does it?

As my volunteer experience at William Bennett School is teaching me, childhood poverty can interfere with children’s learning. Most of the children whom I tutor seem to come from poor families, such as those represented in the Seven Valleys Health Coalition’s 2007 “Cortland Counts Report Card” (http://www.sevenvalleyshealth.org/report07/1_3.htm). This report says that one Cortland County child (0 – 17 years of age) in every 18 lives below the poverty line. Poverty complicates people’s health in many ways, one of which is that poor areas might have fewer health care facilities. Cortland County has only one dentist for every 6,018 low-income residents. An area with one dentist for every 1,500 people is considered high need, so Cortland is extremely high need.

Unfortunately, children don’t leave their poverty or their health-care issues at the door; rather, they bring those concerns and those concerns’ effects to the classroom.

I witnessed one of those effects on one morning before the school’s doors opened, as 12-year-old Tyler walked along a school hallway.

Although I did not stop him, I did ask Ms. Fretta, the Building Principal, if Tyler was allowed in the building so early. “Oh, yes,” she said, “Tyler usually doesn’t get breakfast at home, and sometimes not even dinner. We offer him and other children breakfast. That meal and our lunch are the only ones that they might have all day.” Without those meals, Tyler...
To quickly “identify” with his intended readers, the author addresses them in the first sentence, through word choice (“we”).

Author keeps readers’ attention by posing a relevant question.

Author integrates his service-learning experience with research, so the student is using (Bloom would say applying) information in a new situation.

An appositive provides a definition of “child.” We can also call this a parenthetical definition.

This paragraph’s first sentence builds coherence by connecting it with the previous paragraph.

This paragraph develops a first-hand narrative that personalizes the statistic given in the previous paragraph.
would not be physically or emotionally ready to learn.

As a teacher, I am not legally obligated to help the Tylers in my classes (beyond helping them learn), but I do feel a moral obligation to do so. That help will mean that I will use what I learn at SUNY Cortland to lobby for government policies that help our Tylers, and to lobby organizations to support local and national programs that help correct those children’s situations. In effect, I will be an activist.

*Dictionary.com* defines an *activist* as someone “who is a vigorous advocate for a cause, especially a political cause.” *Merriam-Webster.com* defines *activism* (the site does not define the word *activist*) as “a doctrine or practice that emphasizes direct vigorous action especially in support of or in opposition to one side of a controversial issue.” Based on these definitions and on a review of many people’s efforts to improve our society, I am refining that definition: An *activist* is an organized advocate for a cause in which many people could benefit, even though he or she could face personal harm from people responding to his actions.

An *advocate* promotes adoption of a particular product or a particular policy. Some advocates work on educational reform, environmental protection, or other social justice issues. The group National Right to Life, for example, promotes the overturn of Roe v. Wade ([http://www.now.org](http://www.now.org)); the National Organization for Women promotes women’s rights ([http://www.nrlc.org](http://www.nrlc.org)).

Not all advocates belong to a specific organization. A. Gross (2008) gives an example by describing the actions of Dee Thompson, who has volunteered her energy and money for almost twenty-five years of “retirement” to improve the lives of people living in Huntington Station, on New York State’s Long Island (pp. B1 & B6). Although she is president of the local chapter of the NAACP (Gross, 2008, p. B6), she has completed projects such as the Huntington Enrichment Center through her own efforts.

Reporter D. Tobin’s (2007) portrayal of Bob Hood offers a second example. Another retiree, Bob Hood, lives an hour north of Cortland, in
Here, the student is planning, which, per Bloom, is a skill in which the student is creating information.

“Authoritative” definitions of the term.

Thesis statement

Definition of a term within the main term that the author is defining.

Example of the term. Refining the definition The next few paragraphs provide specific examples to help support and illustrate the author's thesis statement.

The words “a second example” show an “addition” relationship

Author includes information that builds this example’s relevance to the readers (who are in Cortland).
the village of Cazenovia. Hood has donated his time and money for the past seven years to helping some of Haiti’s abject poor earn a living and to improve their living conditions. Hood learned about those Haitians through his church; in contrast, some activists begin on their own, affiliating themselves with an organization only after beginning their own activist efforts.

To improve the effectiveness of those efforts, activists organize their messages and their actions, often by collaborating with other groups. While those groups might grow out of similar interests, they might also come from seemingly opposing points of view. A commercial fisherman from the state of Washington, Pete Knutson, for instance, confronted law-makers and lumber industry interests by collaborating with people whose interests usually conflict with his: Environmentalists and Native American leaders (Loeb, 2005, p. 43). Another example comes from Montana, where ranchers are partnering with environmentalists, “farmers, retired homeowners, ski resort operators, and even religious groups” to fight lawmakers and power company executives who want to build huge coal-burning plants (Moran, 2007, p. C. 1). As these examples show, people in a variety of walks of life can be activists.

So far, this definition has provided an extended **denotative** (“dictionary”) meaning of the word “activist.” However, an important component of a definition is often the word’s **connotative** meaning (the associated, often emotional, meanings). To get an idea of the connotative meaning of “activist,” I conducted an informal survey of my friends and acquaintances: fourteen out of twenty people associate the word “activist” with liberal, or “left-learning,” people. However, conservatives can also be activists, as demonstrated by people in National Right to Life (http://www.nrlc.com) and by people such as Richard B. Liebert, a Republican and one of the ranchers who is fighting against the construction of coal-fired power plants (Moran, 2007, p. C. 1).
Reader cue points to a relationship of contrast.

This dependent clause points to upcoming contrast and to information that the reader might not expect.

Reader cue lets reader know that the upcoming information gives an example.

…and another example. Smoothly integrated quote.

This paragraph synthesizes information from two sources: Loeb (2007) and Moran (2007).

Three cues alert the reader to a significant subtopic.

Author provides a reason for his next step.

Author conducts his own empirical research to generate additional information.

Author integrates his research with information from published sources.
**American Spectator.** Klein was encouraging conservatives to be involved in discussions dealing with health care reform; at the beginning of the article, Klein noted that, “while the right has been effective in mobilizing support among its activist base on issues such as guns, taxes, and judges, conservatives who aren’t involved in public policy for a living tend to tune out” of discussions relating to health care (p. 38).

Activists are not the only people working toward goals, of course. A person in business promoting a new product or a new approach to selling more product is not necessarily an activist, especially if that individual is doing so for her/his own financial interests. At the same time, a person lobbying for environmental legislation is not an activist if he is doing so for his own financial gain. Neither of those people is acting selflessly. However, selfless motivation is not the sole criterion for activism: an activist also sacrifices time and effort. Dee Thompson and Bob Hood could have simply donated money to one or more charitable organizations; instead, they donated their skills and knowledge, and they sacrificed their own time and comfort.

Similarly, simply sending a letter to the editor or signing a petition does not make a person an activist. In August of 2007, 45,00 people “signed petitions protesting a permit granted in Indiana that allows the largest oil refinery in the Midwest to discharge more pollutants into Lake Michigan” (Sander, 2007). Although those people, by signing the petition, were helping activists overturn the permit, they were not activists. The activists were the people who organized the petition-signing and the delivery of the petition to Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels.

While many people can benefit from activists’ successes, other people may suffer losses. To prevent those losses, those people may, themselves, become activists (unless they are working for private gain); they may work through the legal system or other public-spheres to counter the original activists’ actions. However, they could take more drastic measures: they could damage the original activists’ property,
Author notes the limits of his definition by naming kinds of people who would not be included in his definition (though they might otherwise seem to be included).

In this sentence, the author uses organization, a reader cue, and punctuation to build interest.
reputations, careers, or physical health. Such situations bring us to the final – and most dramatic – element of this definition: Through her/his actions, an activist might jeopardize her possessions or life.
Diane Wilson’s (2005) experience dramatizes the life-and-death aspect of activism. Wilson worked to protect one of Texas’ Gulf Coast fishing areas against a multi-national corporation’s pollution. One night on her fishing boat, she almost died because her boat had been sabotaged, presumably by someone working for the people she was working against (p. 369).

As teachers, we might find ourselves at odds with the school administration, the teachers’ union, the business community, the state, or with parents. Although our lives might not be threatened, our livelihoods and reputations might be at risk. We might find our personal time, our family time, interrupted. We might find ourselves collaborating with people who had previously been adversaries. Ideally, we will work to ensure that our students are not hindered by their backgrounds, but helped by them.

References
Title –

- **Problem.** A Definition of “Activist” sounded bland, boring.
- **Cause.** The wording simply restated the assignment.
- **Solution:** Use wording that suggested that the essay will offer a definition, but do so in a semi-poetic way… Activist: *Agitator, Aggravator, and A--- (I’m still working on it)*

Thesis statement –

- **Problem.** Vague thesis statement: “An activist is a person who dedicates her- or himself to a cause in which many people could benefit.”
- **Cause.** The word “person” covers every person on the planet. In addition, the original definition covered too wide an area of actions.
- **Solution:** Changed from to “An activist is an organized advocate for a cause in which many people could benefit, even though she or he could face personal harm from people responding to her actions.”

Personal Volunteer Experience

- **Problem.** Placement of that experience (originally, only at the end of the essay) delayed a personal connection with my intended reader.
- **Cause.** Placement.
- **Solution.** Added a reference to volunteer experience in the intro.
This part of the assignment helps the author think about—and polish—his writing.
PROCESS ESSAY: GREEN DAYS
Due: Wednesday, April 09, 2014

[A process essay focuses on explaining, part of the skill of understanding]

Goal – Compose a process essay in which you explain how to conduct a specific environmental sustainability activity for K-6 children who live in an urban area.

Intended Audience - SUNY Cortland teacher-education majors, especially those who will teach in urban elementary schools. Feel free to narrow your audience even further; for example, you could address second-grade teachers or Inclusive Special Education teachers, specifically.

Discussion – STEM subjects (Science/Technology/Engineering/Mathematics) are increasingly important in our educational system. One STEM consideration is environmental sustainability.

In the context of this assignment, the term environmental sustainability refers to actions that each of us can take to help sustain (or maintain) the health of our environment. By taking such actions, we can help ensure our own good health and that of our country’s economy.

The first part of your essay explains the activity’s importance. In other words, the essay contextualizes the activity; it provides background information. Examples of background information include

- Increased need for sustainability-oriented education.
- The value of experiential, or “hands-on,” education.
- Environmental challenges that relate to your activity.
- The importance of understanding the scientific method.
- Aspects of the culture for which this activity is designed.

The information for at least this part of your essay will come from online databases that you access through SUNY Cortland’s Memorial Library at MyRedDragon; you will also generate information from your service-learning experiences. The sample essay draft that accompanies these instructions shows one way in which you can do so.

In the process portion of the essay, explain how to conduct the activity. This part of the essay

- Includes the activity’s goal.
- Progresses chronologically, in sequence.
- Defines key terms.
- Should include reasons for taking each step.

This assignment also includes a presentation component.
What unnamed situation, condition, or action have you noticed during your service-learning? What name would you give it? How would you define it?
Checklist. Be sure that you

1. Explain how to design an environmental sustainability lesson for K-6 children in urban areas.

2. Contextualize your lesson. (Provide background info in 1st part of essay’s body.)

3. Refer to at least four paginated periodicals sources that you find through one or more of Memorial Library’s electronic databases.

4. Include service-learning experience.

5. Integrate
   - Three or four quotes, with only one quote per source.
   - Information from your service-learning experiences.

6. Paraphrase source material more often than you quote.

7. Meet APA requirements, including those dealing with
   - In-text citations.
   - References page.

   Note: Your drafts and final version fail if they do not meet this requirement.

8. Use Word® to take the following steps regarding sentences that you have constructed:
   - Put your thesis statement in bold.
   - Single-underline one of your complex sentences.
   - Double-underline one of your compound sentences.
   - Yellow-highlight one of your appositives, including the punctuation.

9. Use Excel to create a chart or graph that illustrates statistical data that you generated.

10. Smoothly integrate that visual (from #8, above) into your essay.

11. Compose an essay of at least 750 words.

12. Submit your final project in the following way: In your essay’s folder, place the following items in this order (moving from top to bottom)…
   - Grading Rubric, with your name. (The rubric is the next-to-last page in this packet.)
   - This checklist, completed.
   - Final draft.
   - Rough drafts, w/ dates they were composed & w/ the Explanation of Revisions (2nd draft).
   - Pre-writing and outline(s), if any.
   - Research Record. (The Research Record form is the last page of this packet.)
   - Your annotated sources.
Discussion – Your FSA 101 and CPN 103 courses include practice in presenting ideas to groups; in CPN, you have a semester-long Résumé project. One way of polishing your presentation skills, strengthening your résumé, and improving your CPN grade is to present some or all of this Process Essay at a Green Days event. (Green Days events run from April 7 to April 27).

You could, for example, use your essay as the basis for a speech, or you could form a panel with some of our classmates to discuss your group’s ideas. Other options include creating a poster and explaining its contents to event participants, or putting your audience members to work by having them conduct the activity that you describe in your essay.

Requirement – Professionalism
1. Your work throughout this project must be submitted on time.
2. Your work must show attention to detail.
3. You must participate in a Green Days Preparation Workshop (time and place t.b.a.).
4. If you are doing a group project,
   a. E-mail me a note by class time on Wednesday, February 26, in which you
      1) Name your Presentation Team members.
      2) Itemize your contributions to that project.
   b. Share preparation and presentation responsibilities equally.
   c. Remember: You may “fire” a teammate for lack of participation or for unacceptable work.
5. After you present your project at Green Days, submit an assessment of this project. As a participant in this first-time project, you are a pioneer: This is the first time that a CPN 103 student has presented a CPN project at a Green Days event. Your assessment will help me refine instructions for future projects. For your assessment, please submit a one- to two-page review that
   a. Explains what “worked.”
   b. Describes what did not work.
   c. Offers suggestions for improvement.

Resources – To help ensure success, take advantage of the resources listed below
1. Creating&PresentingProfessionalPosters presentation by guest speakers, March 17 class.
2. Green Days Presentation Practice. This professional development event focuses on presentation skills. Date and location t.b.a.
3. Poster-printing. Posters must be submitted for printing
   a. by Monday, March 24.
   b. as a PDF.
c. formatted for a 36"x48" (3'x4') poster.
Rosalind Franklin 12 February 2013

CPN 103-601 Synthesis Essay, draft 1 [Sample]

Eleven-year-old Ecologists

[Note: This draft has slightly wider-than-required margins to facilitate annotating.]

“Help your students learn how to learn; do not give them the answers!” This was the message that I learned at a SUNY Cortland Tutoring Workshop in February 2014; it is also the message that I learned at the Tully Regional Enrichment Program, which is where I tutored in the fall 2013 semester. This lesson is important in all subjects, especially the sciences. Transition into next paragraph = strong coherence.

The sciences are becoming more important in the U.S. educational system. One especially important part of the sciences is “sustainability.” Haury (1998) explains that sustainability is a complex concept that focuses on protecting the environment while promoting economic growth and improved quality of life (pp. 1 – 2). The concept includes skills such as problem-solving in interdisciplinary and multicultural ways, and it states that education must make sustainability its primary focus (p. 2). Citation for paraphrase in 2nd part of sentence. This sentence begins the transition into a problem that is important for reader to know. “however” & “but rather” = are reader cues; they build coherence.

Redman (2013), however, points to research showing that our educational system is not helping, but rather is hurting our efforts at sustainability because the system favors the simplifying of this complex subject (p. 1). Salter and Atkins (2013) make a similar claim regarding our teaching of science overall (p. 158). Together, these three scholars encourage us to teach science in general, and sustainability in particular, with experiential methods: Redman urges the use of a problem-solving approach (p. 2), while Salter and Atkins promote an inquiry-based approach (p. 178). For teachers to use an experiential method when teaching science, they, themselves, need to experience an experiential approach so that they understand the scientific method. Unfortunately, many pre-service teachers lack that experience. A definition builds reader understanding. Organization = General to Specific

Citation for paraphrase

Redman (2013)

Salter and Atkins (2013)

Example of Synthesis: 2 sources

Redman (2013) and Salter and Atkins (2013) in same ¶.
Salter and Atkins (2013), for example, point to research showing that “preservice teachers rarely have the opportunity to engage in authentic, open-inquiry experiences” (p. 158); in other words, most future teachers do not really understand the scientific method. Salter and Atkins’ research shows, though, that hands-on learning (which can involve problem-solving) can help us reach that goal (p. 173). An additional benefit to this approach is that pre-service teachers can learn to like science (p. 178). We want our K-12 students to enjoy science as well, of course, so we should apply a similar approach in K-12 classrooms, and especially in early education, so children will enjoy science in their high school courses.

Many authors have described problem solving-based lessons in sustainability for K-6 children (Annis et al, 2009; Cole, 2010; Spearman & Eckhoff, 2012). Reeves and Emeagwali (2010) report on a multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural service-learning course in Texas that partners with the Rainwater Environmental Alliance for Learning (REAL) School Gardens program. Through this program, “elementary school students design, install, and sustain urban gardens which serve as outdoor classrooms for students to learn some very important lessons about community, family, nature, and sustainability” (p. 35).

Students can learn lessons about biology, geology, writing, art, and (perhaps most importantly) about learning, itself. They can also learn how to get along with each other. For example, Reeves and Emeagwali describe the way in which a teacher used a REAL project to help a student improve both his social and academic skills (p. 36).

Lessons can also include parents, as Annis et al. (2009) describe. Their activity involved elementary school children and their parents: During the course of the three-week activity, children in different grade levels learned information about, and skills in, health, science, mathematics, and communication while creating a solution to the problem of food waste.

A teacher can use lessons created by others, or he can create a lesson for his/her students.
Student is following the assignment’s instructions (#8 in the assignment’s checklist).
sustainability problems and general solutions, then moving to specific projects. Thompson et al. (2012) name some of those problems, such as “carbon footprints, solid waste, and water footprints,” “renewable and nonrenewable resources,” and “life cycles of materials and energy usage” (p. 16). Thompson et al. (2012) also name general solutions that begin with the prefix “re”: Reduce, reuse (p. 17), recycle, refuse, redesign (p. 18), repurpose, repair, and restore (p. 19). The sixth-grade children I tutor at the Dian Fossey Magnet School are examples of students for whom a teacher can design sustainability lessons.

These children come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. Of the 52 children who are in the classrooms where I tutor, two are from South Korea, three are from Chad, and five are from Guatemala. As the pie chart below illustrates, about one in five of the children has immigrated to the U.S. In addition, almost 70% (37) of the children receive reduced- or no-cost lunches. This variety of backgrounds presents opportunities and challenges.

![Pie chart showing the distribution of students from South Korea, Chad, Guatemala, and total number of children.](image)

Opportunities lie in the children’s cultural backgrounds, as they represent cultures from four continents, different climates, and different topographical regions (in-land and coastal, for instance). Challenges lie in the sensitive nature of some of the children’s economic situations. However, careful planning can help children learn about sustainability while they also learn about mathematics, cultures, and English Language Arts. One such sustainability activity is the

The student’s own empirical research.
Talkin’ Trash Project, which I created for “my” sixth-graders (though I imagine that someone created it before I did). The section below describes this five-day project.

On the day that the lesson begins, give each child a page with printing on both sides. One side is simply a numbered-lined page that is labeled “Food Remnants.” The second side has two columns, each lined. The left-hand column is labeled “Food Containers.” The right-hand column is labeled “Container material (cardboard, plastic, glass, metal).” Giving children a note to give to Mom and Dad could help increase the number of children who bring-in lists; doing so can also help increase the number of items on the lists.

On the following day, children share the information on their lists, then (working in teams), children apply their arithmetic skills. First, they count the number of containers and, using pencil and paper (not calculators), they determine the percentages of each kind of material, and percentages of refundable, recyclable, and disposable containers. Next, they determine the ratio of items that could have been recycled or returned to those that actually were.

The third day brings a blend of art and arithmetic (or, as I call it, artrithmetic), in which children use the numbers that they generated to create colorful charts. Ask the children to help you post their lists and their charts on the classroom’s walls.

Over the fourth and fifth days, your children learn lessons in some combination of social studies, biology, botany, and English Language Arts: Ask children to write and draw a short description of one of their families’ meals. They will be “published” authors and artists because you will put their stories together into a class anthology.

This approach asks children and teachers to learn how to learn; it asks them to learn how to ask – and answer – questions. As Jenny, one of my sixth-graders, asked, “What happens to all the boxes we toss out?” At this writing, Jenny and her classmates are finding answers to that question. This approach, then, asks children and teachers to model a key aspect of the scientific
method: We do not necessarily know answers before-hand (such as the percentage of glass
containers that is not recycled by the children’s families): We cannot find the answer in a book. Instead, we are creating information. That, alone, should be exciting for the children, even if it is scary for the teacher.

References


ANALYSIS

Out of Bloom’s six levels of thinking skills, analysis is the fourth-most difficult one. When you analyze something, you take it apart to explore a certain kind of relationship. A structural analysis of a building, for example, could describe ways in which the building’s materials contribute to or detract from the building’s resistance to earthquakes. That structural analysis could be even more specific by focusing on the products and processes that secure the building’s materials together. The thesis statement for such an analysis would pinpoint the results of the analysis:

The use of elastic ceramic adhesive compounds allows one-kilometer-tall buildings to withstand earthquakes as strong as magnitude 6.5 on the Richter Scale.

The author of a rhetorical analysis explains how the writer of a message tries to change the audience’s beliefs or actions through his (the author’s) use of rhetorical elements. For instance, if you were to write a rhetorical analysis of a newspaper article, your thesis statement could explain how the author’s use of metaphor could sway readers’ opinions. In a comparative rhetorical analysis (such as the sample essay that follows), you compare and contrast the two authors’ rhetorical strategies.

Describe an essay that you must write for another course. On which thinking skill does it focus? Explain your answer.
GOALS: Demonstrate skill in
1. Rhetorical Analysis
2. Comparison

READER: SUNY Cortland first-year students.

INSTRUCTIONS:
I will email you three newspaper reviews of President Obama's 2012 *State of the Union* Address. Compare rhetorical decisions made by two of those articles' authors. Although each article deals with the same event, the authors' decisions might lead readers to different opinions of the event; focus your essay on those differences.

Remember that your essay, like other analyses, should be as objective as possible: Your opinions of the articles and of the speech are irrelevant to your analysis.

CHECKLIST. Be sure that your essay
___ 1. Rhetorically analyzes two of the articles
___ 2. Focuses on differences in the authors' rhetorical decisions
___ 3. Follows our guidelines for comparison
___ 4. Integrates quotes from each source.
___ 5. Paraphrases source material, as appropriate, at least twice
___ 6. Meets APA requirements regarding in-text citations and References page.
   Note: Your drafts and final version, individually, will fail if they do not meet this requirement.
___ 7. Has between 750 and 850 words

Describe a time in which someone gave you his/her opinion, even though you did not ask for it. What was your reaction, “inwardly”? How did you react to the other person?

How often do you give your opinion, even though the other person did not ask you for your opinion?
Describe a message, written or spoken, in which you were objective? What steps did you take to reach that goal?
REMINDERS regarding COMPARISON

For our purposes, the word “comparison” includes both comparison and contrast. When comparing two or more items, issues, objects, actions, or opinions, you describe relationships of contrast and similarity.

Principles of Comparison:
1. Create a focus. (Compose a thesis statement.)
2. Include contrast.
3. Avoid judgment; compare as objectively as possible.
4. Give equal treatment to the items being compared; use about the same number of words for each item you are comparing.
5. Use reader cues that demonstrate relationships between the two items. Use, for example, cues such as “in contrast to” and “similarly.”

One way to identify unique similarities or differences is to use a table such as the one below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item A</th>
<th>Points of Comparison</th>
<th>Item B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In this column, write specific evidence to indicate a way in which this item is similar to, or different from, item “B.”</strong></td>
<td><strong>In this column, write specific categories of comparison.</strong></td>
<td><strong>In this column, write specific evidence to indicate a way in which this item is similar to, or different from, item “A.”</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cite your sources, including page numbers; doing so will save you time and aggravation later.</td>
<td>Example:</td>
<td>Cite your sources, including page numbers; doing so will save you time and aggravation later.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mention possessions, such as TVs, “AC” and cars as signs that some “poor” are not poor (p.2).</td>
<td>Definitions of “poverty”</td>
<td>Focus on statistics (p. 2) and demographics to define “poverty” (p. 2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point to low-income people’s “steady improvement in living conditions” (p. 3)</td>
<td>Poverty trends</td>
<td>Point to increasing rates of poverty (p. 15).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrington uses the word “radical” five times in the first eight paragraphs.</td>
<td>Word choice &amp; organization</td>
<td>Redd et al. use the word “moderate” four times in the first nine paragraphs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrington uses a snake metaphor when describing Clark.</td>
<td>Figurative language</td>
<td>Redd et al. use a meteor simile when describing the agency’s decision.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that the person who made this table also created statistics.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>John Boehner</th>
<th>Rhetorical Analysis</th>
<th>January 27, 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CPN 103</td>
<td>Comparative Rhetorical Analysis Essay</td>
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</table>

Newspaper authors can change their readers’ opinions about events. One event, Obama’s State of the Union on January 25th, 2011, made headlines everywhere. However, the multiple reports regarding his speech were not all alike. Using certain rhetorical devices (ways of using language to persuade people) to subconsciously sway the opinion of non-critical readers, Anne E. Kornblut and Scott Wilson (2011) of the Washington Post, and Sheryl Gay Stolberg (2011) of The New York Times portrayed the speech in different ways: Kornblut and Wilson presented more positive information, and so relayed an approving and enthusiastic tone to the speech, while Stolberg presented more negative information, which gave a disapproving and pessimistic tone to the speech.

Kornblut and Wilson’s (2011) article portrays an overall good feeling about Obama’s speech by making statements such as, Obama “sought to rouse the nation,” pointing out his “major accomplishments” and noting how throughout his speech he was “interrupted at least 75 times for applause,” thus emphasizing the writers’ overall approval of Mr. Obama. These authors also describe Obama as being “patriotic.” By making such statements, they expose their audience to more of the event’s highlights, while minimizing the low points. These authors do, however, include some negative points as well.

They write, for example, that the President “did not call for massive new programs,” and that he used “rhetoric rather than specifics.” (In other words, he tried to sway his audience’s opinion by his word choice and other rhetorical devices, as opposed to providing specific examples for his future plans.) However, these few negative aspects that were pointed out in this article were outweighed by the overall praise for the speech. The opinion of Kornblut and Wilson, which seems to agree with Democratic Party policies, attempts to sway the readers into agreeing with the policies and ideas of President Obama by praising many aspects of this speech and by addressing a significant number of the highlights.

Unlike Kornblut and Wilson, Stolberg (2011) seems to emphasize more
Reader cues develop coherence by signaling relationships of contrast.

Thesis Statement.
Here, the author is thinking creatively.

These sentences show the relationships between specific details and the student author’s thesis statement.

Reader cues show relationships of contrast and example.
of the flaws of the President’s speech rather than review his accomplishments. For example, Stolberg writes that Obama “could be more efficient” and that he “lacked the loft of the inspirational address” that he gave last year. She points out that Obama “failed to bring the unemployment rate below nine percent,” and claims that he gave a vague speech (he “provided no details”). Also, she claims that Obama was speaking of new legislation “without any mechanism [policy] to enforce” it. A large portion of this article criticizes the State of the Union Address, writing only briefly about the president’s accomplishments. Stolberg seems to be sarcastic when writing that Obama is in “surprisingly good political shape.” The rhetoric sways readers’ opinions by focusing mainly on the negative aspects, leading readers to experience a more Republican view of Obama’s speech.

Although both articles have their differences, they do have some similarities. The authors agree that bipartisanship was a main point in both Obama’s speech and in Congressmen’s behavior, which included sitting side by side peacefully; however, the authors differ in how they acknowledge that. Kornblut and Wilson address only the Republican reaction, stating, “Republicans received his speech well,” but they fail to mention Democrats’ reactions. On the other hand, Stolberg mentions that “Republicans and Democrats sat side by side,” writing that both sides seemed to get along.

Both newspaper articles clearly describe the same event, yet the writers’ biases and opinions seem to either subliminally or consciously come out in their articles. This creates two different general opinions that spring from each article. Kornblut and Wilson claim that Obama’s speech was a “balance between sounding too rosy and too alarmed,” meaning he addressed the country’s standing in the world with equal amounts of optimism and caution about the U.S.’s standing in the world. These claims lead readers to believe that everything is all right in the hands of our president.

On the other hand, Stolberg addressed this topic by saying that Obama has a “rosy economic vision,” conveying the idea that Obama was being too optimistic and not tackling the threats that are real to Americans as he should have. The way in which these writers portrayed this issue can convince their readers to either agree or disagree with a lot of Obama’s policies.
Author develops coherence by using a reader cue that signals contrast.

Appositive provides a parenthetical definition, which adds clarity by helping the intended readers understand the quote.

The author uses a dependent clause to transition from contrast to similarity. Notice that the independent clause in the sentence develops the new (and, at this point, more important) claim.

The author uses a semicolon and a reader cue to construct a compound sentence in which she moves from showing a similarity to showing contrast. This move and the one noted above help to develop coherence.
Readers need to be very skeptical about what they are “learning” when getting their news. As shown through these two newspaper articles, different opinions can be expressed on the same event, and depending on which one is read, one’s view may be completely changed through the weight of positive or negative topics expressed. The claims that the authors either chose to include or to leave out can drastically change their argument and subliminally change how a reader feels about an event or topic.

References


The author concludes by explaining the importance of her message to her readers.
ARGUMENT

In “Bloom terminology,” an argument evaluates points of view. In everyday use, the word “argument” denotes an angry verbal exchange; in scholarly work, however, we consider argument to be a reasoned exchange of information and ideas in support of or against particular points of view. Also in contrast to popular thought, reasoning should include emotion, in part by recognizing and validating the reader’s point of view because that point of view might include an emotional component. A written argument can begin developing a strong working relationship with the intended reader by empathizing with his point of view.

That empathy leads to the creation of “common ground” for an agreement between the people who are arguing. The agreement could involve mutual compromise or an agreement to disagree, or it could lead to one person changing his mind. Whatever the result, this approach to argument claims that dealing strictly with logic is illogical and counterproductive.

In an argument, understanding and acknowledging the other person’s point of view is called “Rogerian Argument,” after an American clinical psychologist who promoted the importance of empathizing with other people’s perspectives, especially in emotionally-charged situations. Arguments are, of course, often emotionally-charged, so we can help arguments become productive by intentionally learning about, respecting, and acknowledging the other person’s point of view. In a face-to-face argument, we can use active listening as a way of understanding the other person’s perspective, and as a way of showing that we are interested in – and understand and respect – that perspective. At other times, however, we do not have the luxury of talking with our intended reader, so we must research his points of view.

The next time you are in an argument, calm the situation by convincing the other person that you are interested in his/her point of view.

Do so by using active listening skills.
GOAL: Demonstrate strength in composing a Rogerian argument.

INTENDED READER: A decision-maker who is involved with education policy and/or funding.

DISCUSSION: Throughout this semester, your activities in FSA 101 and in CPN 103 have uncovered a range of challenges that hinder children's learning; those activities include

- Volunteering at Dr. Martin Luther, Jr. School
- Reading works by (but not limited to)
  - Linda Darling-Hammond
  - Jonathan Kozol
  - Wilkinson and Pickett
  - Authors of articles you found in your own research for class assignments
- Discussing and presenting ideas and service-learning experiences

Some of those educational challenges involve

- Learning difficulties based on disabilities.
- Cultural barriers that interfere with learning, especially when children have disabilities.
- State funding that leaves poor school districts with insufficient resources.
- State and federal mandates that impose "high stakes" accountability testing; some people claim that such mandates, which force teachers to "teach to the test," interfere with effective learning.

One way in which current and future teachers can help solve such "structural barriers" to effective education is by asking decision-makers to take certain actions.

For this assignment, compose a letter in which you ask a decision maker to take a particular step on a particular educational challenge. For example, you might ask

- Your U.S. congressman/woman to support (or oppose) a particular spending bill.
- Governor Cuomo to visit Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., School (after you receive written permission to do so from the appropriate individual), so that the governor can experience – first-hand – some of the effects of funding cuts or of State mandates.
- The president of your home-town’s Parent/Teacher Organization to advocate on behalf of federal funding for Community Action Programs (which administer Head Start and Early Head Start programs).

Because you are trying to convince someone to do something, your letter’s purpose is to be persuasive; it argues for a particular action. (A persuasive message could also argue for a
particular point of view, of course.)
SOURCES:
1. **Required** –
   a. *At least two published articles.*
   b. *Your current service-learning experiences.*
2. **Optional** –
   a. *FSA and CPN readings.*
   b. *Cortland-area sources* that provide background information for your personal narrative. One such source is [http://www.sevenvalleyshealth.org/](http://www.sevenvalleyshealth.org/).
   c. Information from a Website that you’ve proposed, and that I’ve approved.

CHECKLIST: Create a business letter that –
1. ___Follows the business letter format provided at [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/653/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/653/01/)
2. ___Is designed for a reader whom you have proposed, and I have approved.
3. ___Addresses an issue that you have proposed, and that I have approved.
4. ___Follows a Rogerian approach to argument.
5. ___**Integrates**
   a. ___Required source material.
   b. ___At least one properly-documented chart or graph *that you create.*
   c. ___One or two short quotes, maximum.
6. ___Uses APA formatting for your in-text citations and References section. *Your drafts and final project will fail if they do not do so.*
7. ___Is between two and three pages long.
Kirsten Gillibrand

May 16, 2011

[Name]
[Local address]
SUNY Cortland
Cortland, NY 13045

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

As a first year student at SUNY Cortland majoring in Inclusive Special Education, I am greatly influenced by, and concerned with, the funding of urban education. One of my goals as a teacher is to allow students living in poverty to be able to succeed through their education. However, with only a small portion of funding in urban schools, such as those in New York City, this aspiration will be difficult to reach.

I understand that you have restored about $230 billion back to schools after originally cutting $1.5 billion from the budget. However, Micah C. Lasher, the city’s Director of State Legislative Affairs, criticized the way in which the money was divided: $134 million going to districts north of New York City, $53 million going to New York City, and $43 million going to Long Island. Lasher said that “We are dividing up crumbs, and to make matters worse, the crumbs have been divided unfairly” (Kaplan, 2011). I am sure dividing the state’s money is no easy decision to make with the tremendous amount of pressure you face, but it is imperative that schools be funded equitably (not equally, because poorer schools need more money than affluent schools).

The large gap in achievement between the urban and the suburban schools of New York can be attributed to a lack of funding, shortage of classroom materials, and ineffective teachers. I experience this first-hand when I go to Martin Luther King, Jr., Magnet School in Syracuse, NY. Ninety-eight percent of students in this school are living in poverty and nearly all of them are non-white. Many immigrants from places such as Somalia, Kenya, Burundi, and other African countries come to this elementary school where they are taught to learn English as effectively and quickly as possible so that they will be prepared to take the state exams.

The ESL students are not the only ones with obstacles such as language barriers and poor home lives. Nearly every student at MLK, Jr., must face major hurdles in his day-to-day life, which most suburban students would never need to overcome: They have unstable home lives, a lack of proper meals, and inadequate sleep. These issues interfere with their ability to focus in school, as well as their ability to take standardized tests. A preschool-aged student told me how his dad’s car was stolen the night before, another spoke about how her mother left her home alone all night —
Author uses a business format for her letter; doing so reinforces her professional ethic.

Understanding that her reader is very busy, the author immediately identifies herself and raises her concern.

Author demonstrates empathy for the reader by referring in detail to some of the reader’s relevant accomplishments and by acknowledging the intended reader’s difficult job.

Author identifies a subtle but significant difference in two terms’ definitions.

Author’s relevant first-hand experience builds her credibility; she also blends that experience with statistics—a kind of information that she knows is important to her intended reader.

The author does not
she is four years old. Most of the students’ parents do not work, thus they receive checks from the government, and these are the people whom the students are looking to for answers on where to go in life. Without access to a quality education, these students have nothing.

Statistically, a lot of these urban students will unfortunately end-up dropping out of school before they graduate, and will probably end-up involved in some type of criminal behavior. There have been many comparisons between urban dropouts and prison inmates. In 2005, the amount of funding given to each student in urban New York City was $11,700, while in suburban Manhasset, Long Island the per-pupil spending was nearly double; $22,000 (Kozol, 2005). It is no coincidence that 66% of the state’s prison population comes from New York City, while only 5% of prisoners come from Long Island (Wagner, 2002), as seen in the chart below:

![Graph](image)

I understand that your policy regarding our state’s prison system includes removing 3,500 prison beds as a way of lowering and the number of prisoners. That number has gone down dramatically from 2001, when the annual inmate admission was a total of 120,157, to a total of 95,385 in 2010 (The City of New York, 2011). Your policy is a step in the right direction, but future generations could see further improvements when the number of prisoners drops even more, which could be done by raising the quality of education in urban districts.

In the year 2000, the cost of incarceration in the U.S. was more than $40 billion. Sending someone to prison for a year would cost more than sending someone to Harvard for a year, which costs $35,000. Over the last 20 years, prison spending has increased by 571.4%, while spending for education only rose by 33.4% (Haney, 2008). By putting more money into education, more people will be educated enough to get good jobs, giving fewer incentives for people to commit crimes, which will lead to fewer people going to jail.

We both know that there is not one simple solution to the problems that face our nation. Fixing education may not fix all of our problems, but it is the best place to start. By increasing the knowledge of younger generations, you simultaneously increase the chances of a better economy (more people will get higher paying jobs...
Through the use of cited details, the author continues to demonstrate her empathy for her intended reader.

The reader shows relationships between education reform and a more balanced state budget.

In an argument, a thesis statement might be kept until the conclusion so that the author can first explain her reasoning without alienating her reader.
and will be able to spend more, also fewer people will be collecting money from welfare). I am asking you, the Governor of New York State, to lower the number of people being sent to prison by proposing to the legislature that we increase funding to low-income school districts.

Thank you for your service to our State.
Sincerely,

Kirsten Gillibrand

References


Describe a situation in which a salesperson, in answer to the question, “How much is it?,” first described the features and benefits of that product or service, then gave the price.

Why would the salesperson do that?

How ethical is that behavior? Explain.
SYNTHESIS

When you synthesize, you combine two or more items or ideas to create something new. In Bloom’s taxonomy, this is the most difficult kind of thinking skill.

Materials such as rayon, Kevlar, and many plastics, for example, are synthetic—they did not exist before humans created them by combining certain chemicals and compounds. When composing a message, you create a new idea by combining information (an author’s “chemicals”) from sources such as published materials, speeches, and your service-learning experiences.

Methods for generating new ideas, of identifying new relationships between ideas, include annotating, outlining, discussing, drawing, and reflecting on source material. You could identify, for instance, similarities in the topics of songs sung by the children whom you tutor, and topics you read about in articles dealing with at-risk children.

As you show relationships between your different sources’ information, avoid giving each source its own paragraph. Effective synthesis often demands that you put the same kind of information from different authors into the same paragraph. Notice how the paragraph below develops a unique idea by integrating information from different sources.

LeDoux (2002) points to the importance of emotional self-awareness (p. 259), yet Dolan (2002) reminds us that we are often only marginally aware (or completely unaware) of our emotional state or of the effect of that state on our behavior, including our communication behavior (p. 1192). However, Dolan (2002) also claims that by being more aware of our emotional states, we can improve our thinking, especially with regard to consequences and to our learning (p. 1194). Educators can use service-learning’s emotional dimension to teach students how to be more emotionally aware, and in so doing, educators can broaden and deepen students’ learning.

When you synthesize—create—an idea or a product, you deal with ambiguity.

In a service-learning course, for example, you apply course concepts to your experiences in the community. Your textbooks cannot give you the answers to questions such as, “Describe the social structure at your service-learning site,” so you need to determine how to describe that structure.

Your professor might ask you to compose an essay or report in which you decide the research question, and you decide on your research strategy, and you construct your thesis statement.

How comfortable are you in dealing with ambiguity?
CPN 102-806  SYNTHESIS ESSAY [SAMPLE]  fall 2011

GOAL: Demonstrate strength in the following skills –
1. Research  2. Integrating multiple sources and graphics

INTENDED READERS: SUNY Cortland freshmen

INSTRUCTIONS/CHECKLIST
1. ___Create a webpage. Be sure that your webpage –
2. ___Is designed for SUNY Cortland freshmen.
3. ___Describes a condition or situation in another country; that situation should mirror the one for which you are volunteering in your current community project.
4. ___Describes one non-U.S. NGO’s [Non-Governmental Organization’s] steps in addressing that condition in that other country.
5. ___Provides that NGO’s Web address.
6. ___Provides a thesis statement that combines numbers 3 and 4 (immediately above).
7. ___Provides the name, Web address, postal address, and contact information for the agency or program with which you are volunteering.
8. ___Draws on information from the following sources –
   a. ___Your current community project experience.
   b. ___The NGO’s Website.
   c. ___At least three recent (January 2006 or newer) periodicals articles that you find through our library’s databases; those articles should provide information about
      1) ___the situation or condition that you are describing.
      2) ___the non-U.S. NGO that you are describing. (For example, you could have two articles about the situation, and one about the NGO.)
9. ___Integrates
   a. ___At least one properly-documented photo.
   b. ___At least one properly-documented table, chart, or graph that you create (not copy).
   c. ___At least one electronic link to an additional source of information; you may use your non-U.S. NGO’s Web address.
   d. ___Three short quotes (no more, no less) from three different sources.
10. ___Uses APA formatting for your in-text citations and References section.
    Note: Your drafts and final project will fail if you do not do so.
11. ___Is between 600 and 800 words long.
It was just about time for our fifteen minute break. As I was helping “Kayla” (my nine-year-old mentee) finish her homework, she paused to talk to her friend, “Melinda.” Kayla began telling her about what had happened at recess today, so I stopped what I was doing to listen to their conversation. “Melinda, I really wanted to play jump-rope today, but the cool girls wouldn’t let me join in,” remarked an extremely upset Kayla. Melinda replied, “You know we’re never going to get to play with them because we aren’t cool like them. They never include us because we don’t fit in with them and they don’t like us.”

My eyes darted to Kayla. I was caught so off guard that I instantly felt like a concerned mother. “Kayla, what happened, and who are these girls?!” I asked. Kayla refused to say anymore. Her face lost any trace of color it had, and her eyes became dreary at the thought of being a bully victim.

Mitchell (2010) refers to authors Marini et al. (2006) in defining bullying as “a form of hostility found among peers” (p. 2). Fleming et al. (2009) associate bullying with side effects such as depression, anger, resentment, anxiety, antisocial behavior, and shattered self-esteem (p.131). Kayla often displayed some of those effects, including low self-esteem. For example, one night for homework, Kayla had to find five words in a dictionary that best described herself. For ten minutes she sat and stared at the pages. I said, “Kayla, what about ‘smart,’ ‘intelligent,’ and ‘beautiful?’” But she frowned and lowered her eyes to the floor. I later learned that at the Cortland, N.Y., Youth Assist Program, through which I volunteer, all twenty-eight of the youths from the ages of nine to seventeen are bullied.
The essay’s author aims to catch her readers’ attention by beginning with a service-learning narrative.

In the 2nd sentence, the author adds clarity by providing context, and she develops conciseness through use of a dependent clause.

The author adds clarity by letting the reader know who is talking.

This paragraph’s last two words provide an organic transition into the next paragraph; this step develops strong coherence.

This paragraph’s 2nd and 3rd sentences demonstrate the synthesis of information from two sources—and the integration of relevant and detailed service-learning experience.

Student author provides statistics from her host agency to demonstrate the severity of the problem.
Those numbers suggest that the problem is widespread; Author Gillian Patterson (2005) supports that claim with national statistics: “one in four [U.S.] primary school pupils are bullied” (p. 27), with the harassment ranging from direct physical bullying (such as shoving, kicking, and hitting) to indirect bullying, which includes social exclusion, rumors, and made-up tales (p. 27). Kayla experiences those three kinds of indirect bullying.

Bullying’s effects include damaged academic, social, and emotional development. Marini et al. (2006) have that interrupted emotional development can lead to social anxiety, poor self-esteem, bad temperament, and unbalanced peer relations (p. 551). To that list, Patterson (2005) adds “long-term parental arguing, abuse” and financial problems (p. 28). Both Patterson (2005, p. 28) and Marini et al. (2006) name depression as yet another problem. The graph below is based on research by Marini et al. (2006) and by T. Buggey (2007); it shows that bullied youths had higher rates of depression than non-bullied youths, and that bully victims had lower levels of self-esteem than non-bullied youths.

Some researchers, such as Lila C. Fleming and Kathy H. Jacobsen (2009), have been concerned about relationships between bullying and other symptoms; to learn more, they conducted a study in the South American country of Chile (p. 130). This study was the first ever to examine bullying and its symptoms of depression in South America. Fleming and Jacobsen concluded that students who had claimed that they were being bullied because they were poor were more likely to be depressed and lack a group of close friends (p. 133). Kayla is in this...
This paragraph’s first sentence points to a similarity between local and national statistics, thereby building coherence.

The student author identifies the relationship between two sources’ information.

The author further develops coherence by concisely explaining the importance of this graph. Notice that she cited the sources of information that she used in creating the graph.

The author shows a relationship between her sources and her service-learning experiences.
category.

To help deal with this kind of problem, some concerned individuals created the Committee for Children, which helps combat bullying, violence, and child abuse in countries from Japan to Slovakia (which is in Eastern Europe). Their program, Second Step, was formed to diminish bullying by helping to create a safer environment for children and to relieve them of this burden (Committee for Children). Concerned citizens in Chile created a program called Paso Adelante Chile, or Step Ahead Chile. Step Ahead Chile works to prevent bullying and aims to help children live in more peaceful harmony.

Researchers who are associated with Step Ahead Chile conducted a study in which they compared students who had not been participants in a program like Step Ahead Chile with those who had (http://www.meeduco.cl/website/). Their results showed that children in the program behaved in more socially-acceptable ways: “78% improved their social skills, 42% showed to be less aggressive, 37% were more apt to choose positive social goals, and the students needed 41% less adult intervention to resolve conflicts” (Step Ahead).

Kirsty Scott’s (2010) research confirms those results; she claims that such programs are vital because they help youths manage social and emotional setbacks, which often go unseen in the school (2010). Here in Cortland County, The Youth Assist Program is designed to provide youths with a haven through which they can build self-esteem.

Kayla is a beautiful, smart, and unique young girl. Every Tuesday for two and a half hours, my goal is to help her see that she has these qualities and many more. It kills me to witness how bullying has made her become sensitive and defenseless. A nine-year-old girl should never have to hesitate to be herself. As a proud member of the Youth Assist Program, I want to be able to help Kayla recognize all the great things she has to offer, and help lift the victimization off of her shoulders.

To volunteer with Family Counseling Services, contact AmeriCorps member Kim Mullins at kmullins@fcscortland.org, or visit Family Counseling Services’ Website: http://www.counselingservicesofcortland.com/.
References


Electronic Database Research

Find relevant scholarly information through electronic databases

A database is a storage place (a base) for information (data).

To find information, many people “Google” or “Bing”: they search for information by using a Web-based search engine. This process may work well for everyday needs, but its results often include sources whose credibility may be questionable. Fortunately, you – as a SUNY Cortland student – have already paid for services that help provide quality sources: Electronic Databases.

The Electronic Shopping Mall

Academically-oriented companies construct electronic “stores” (databases) of source material; those electronic stores collect newspaper, magazine, and journal articles that offer general information, in the same way that department stores provide a range of general products. Other databases, though, provide information that is specific to a particular field of study; these are the “Foot Lockers” or “Dick’s Sporting Goods” of databases.

For example, if you are looking for general information about education in South Korea, you could start by accessing a general database such as Academic Search Complete. After doing so, however, you might want information that is more specific, such as data regarding inclusive education in South Korea. You could get such information from databases that store articles from specific disciplines (fields of study); two such databases are Education Source and Education Research Information Center (ERIC). You find both kinds of databases under one “electronic shopping mall roof”: Memorial Library’s homepage.

When you access these databases, you will find “fields” (spaces) into which you can type key words. However, considering the large number of articles published each day, you’ll want to narrow your search; one way of doing so is through the Boolean approach to searches. Boolean searches work on the principle of “More Equals Less”: Entering more search terms gives you fewer articles (which is usually what you want). Here is a sample Boolean search:

If you were researching cultural perspectives on disabilities, you might access the Academic Search Complete database, then enter the search term disabilities into a search field. As of this writing though, the search will result in “only” 165,166 articles (or their abstracts [summaries]). Replacing that search term with culture gives you more than half a million articles: 542,748. However, by asking the search engine to find articles with both terms (disabilities and culture), you have just 3,348 articles. You can make your search even more effective (find relevant articles) and efficient (spend less time) by adding a third search term, such as Kenya. More Equals Less – That three-term search gives you (as of this writing) just six articles.

Use the diagram below to visualize this Boolean search. Each circle represents all the database’s articles that have its (the circle’s) term. The computer does your work for you, scanning hundreds or thousands of articles. The star represents articles that include all of the
search terms.
In the Boolean search above, we asked an electronic database to find articles that have information about disabilities and culture and (moving to a different continent) Kenya. In about one second, the database searched almost three-quarters of a million articles across 420 periodicals that were published over many years to give us the two articles that fit our request.

Very Important: Record your searches. Doing so saves you additional time by helping you to avoid duplication of effort. It also gives you ideas for more effective search terms. Our Research Record (see below) gives you an effective way of recording your searches.

**RESEARCH RECORD (one design)**

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<td>Disabilities</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabilities</td>
<td>Society</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabilities</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>East Africa</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Use this section to record “clues” to help you refine your search. For example, from an articles’ title, you might find an additional search term, such as (in this case) *East Africa*.]

Many articles deal with parents’ beliefs. *Culture* is a more productive term than *society*. 
To earn your “Boolean benefits,” follow these guidelines as you search: Use
1. The singular form of nouns, then repeat the search, using the plural form.
2. Synonyms. For example, use child in one search, then use infant, then teen (among others).
3. General and specific labels. Use learning disability (a general term) in a search, then ADHD (as well as other specific learning disabilities) in another.

Note: These first three guidelines are important because you do not know which words authors have used in their articles.

4. Even after you have found enough sources to satisfy an assignment’s minimum requirements, remember that you might not have found the most useful articles; with this in mind, feel free to continue your search so that you have more than just the first group of articles you found. This is similar to another part of life: You won’t necessarily want to choose the first person you date as your significant-other.

5. If, after rigorously ensuring that you have conducted effective searches, you do not locate relevant articles, you have – paradoxically – struck gold: You have identified an area that few, if any, people have explored. In so doing, you provide yourself with a field rich in possibilities for creating unique messages, new knowledge, and publishable articles. If you find yourself in this situation, talk with your instructor; you two can discuss your next steps as you explore ways of composing a publishable article(!).

As you conduct your research, you’ll need to know the differences between a magazine and a professional journal: These two kinds of publications are similar in that each is a periodical: each comes out periodically. Magazines such as Time and Newsweek are published weekly, while National Geographic is published monthly. (Newspapers are also periodicals, of course.)

Magazines tend to be glossy publications with many advertisements. In addition, they are aimed at general audiences, though those audiences could be fairly knowledgeable about certain topics, such as readers of Discover, Car and Driver, and Astronomy (among others). You might consider each magazine’s readers to be hobbyists: They know a bit more about the magazine’s topic than “the average Jane or Joe.” Those magazines’ writers and editors are familiar with their readers’ interest, beliefs, and levels of knowledge, so they tailor their magazines’ content accordingly.

Professional journals, on the other hand, provide articles on very specialized topics for readers who are very knowledgeable about those topics, so—unlike magazines—journals are not found on supermarket shelves; rather, they live in college libraries, and they hold articles written by specialists for specialists. Titles include BioOne, Contemporary Women’s Issues, Early Childhood Research and Practice, and Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine Collection.

Importantly, experts review articles that are submitted for publication in journals because journals tend to be the places where researchers and other scholars present innovative ideas in their respective fields (“disciplines”); journals’ editors want to be sure that published articles present credible that are based on credible information. When a newspaper prints an article about a new medical advance, for example, chances are that the newspaper article is drawing on
the journal article that first reported that advance.
REFLECTION

Definition – Reflection is a creative process through which a person develops a more nuanced understanding of an experience, event, or a situation that he/she finds puzzling or troubling (adapted from Jay and Johnson, 2002, p. 76).

Overview. Active listening, reflection, and essay-writing are similar, but different, processes.

When we engage in active listening, we ask another person open-ended questions, then paraphrase his answers as a way of developing an understanding of his point of view or (when we serve as editors) as a way of helping him clarify for himself what he wants to write.

When we reflect, we also begin with an open-ended prompt, and we also have another person as part of the process. Unlike reflective listening, though, when we reflect, we respond to the prompt, which is intended to help us develop an understanding of an experience, event, or a situation that we find puzzling or troubling (Jay and Johnson, 2002, p. 76). Thinking about your thinking is called “metacognition.” You consider, for example, ways in which your upbringing has influenced your beliefs, or you explore ways in which emotion influences your decision-making. One result of metacognition is that you can more deeply understand yourself.

Reflection is often an inductive process: You begin by drawing relationships between details from your community project experiences. As you identify such relationships, you begin to draw generalizations that can provide insight, new perspectives. Because of its inductive nature, a reflection’s “thesis statement” often arrives as an “A-Ha” moment – a revelation – near the conclusion. In this way, then, reflection is also different from traditional essays. The list below summarizes reflection’s purposes.

Purposes: You can reflect to
1. Develop a more nuanced understanding of your beliefs and values
2. Develop greater empathy for someone else
3. Identify inconsistencies between, for example, your
   a. Stated educational philosophy and the lessons that you design
   b. Stated values and your actual classroom behavior
4. Change your behaviors, including your teaching methods
The importance of reflection

Reflection is an important element in many professions. For example, it is part of student-teachers’ *Teacher Professional Assessments* (TPA). The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) underscored reflection’s importance by naming it as a critical skill for pre-service and in-service teachers (NCATE, 2011-2012, pp. 3, 5, and 6).

Callens and Elen (2011), at Belgium’s Center for Instructional Psychology and Technology, note that teachers need to understand their own educational theory and philosophy, and they need to understand their own self-image as professionals (p. 496). Professor Pernilla Nilsson (2009), at Sweden’s Halmstad University, suggests that reflection helps teachers develop such understandings, which then help teachers continually improve their skills (p. 241).

However, Callens and Elen (2011, p. 496), and scholars such as Queensland (Australia) University of Technology’s Mary Ryan (2013, p. 144), note that many teachers-in-training are not taught how to reflect. Students at SUNY Cortland, however, such as those in CPN 102 and 103, do receive reflection instruction.

Reflection: Characteristics

1. Reflection can be exercised in a variety of media, including writing, speaking, and art.
2. Reflection is a “team effort” –
   a. It is conducted with a facilitator.
   b. The facilitator applies reflective listening skills so that the individual who is reflecting can create his/her own understandings.
3. Reflection involves ambiguity –
   a. The individual who is active does not necessarily have immediate answers to prompts. (If he did, he would not be reflecting.) Rather, that person explores the unknown.
   b. That “unknown” is often an experience or a situation that is mysterious or disturbing.
   c. Reflection has no “right or wrong” answer; rather, it is a conclusion reached after careful consideration of details.
4. Unlike “data-based questions” and traditional essays, reflection does not necessarily begin with a thesis statement; rather, it often begins with consideration of details, then moves toward (what is, in effect) a thesis statement—a generalization, a conclusion, a realization.
5. Reflection prompts are characterized by
   a. The use of details.
   b. Requests that ask the person (who is reflecting) to
      1) Explain inconsistencies between his/her experience and beliefs, or to
      2) Consider elements of mysterious, confusing, or troubling events, situations, or conditions.
   c. Thinking that draws on
      1) Description – *What did you notice?*
      2) Comparison – *Through what different perspectives can you describe or analyze this situation, condition, or event?*
3) Critical thought (Hayden et al, 2012, p. 146; Jay and Johnson, 2002, p. 76) – *How can you account for differences between your beliefs or goals and what you’ve observed?*
Note: This approach to reflection does acknowledge the usefulness of deductive prompts, such as, *You have written that “concepts in physics are too hard for 3rd-graders to understand. What evidence/experience do you have for that claim? What evidence/experience contradicts that claim?”*

An Example

One service-learning reflection of a SUNY Cortland student in Professors Bonni Hodges’ and Donna Videto’s *Community Health* course provides an example of metacognition (thinking about your thinking). The student and her classmates helped underserved groups in Cortland County, New York, a very poor rural community. In the excerpt below, the student considers differences between her preconceptions and her community service experiences. Through her reflection, this student realized that she originally believed that people from different walks of life prioritize concerns in the same way, that she now realizes that—in certain circumstances—public health officials need to value the perceptions of community members more than their own. This is an excerpt from her reflection:

> I realize putting together a community health program is no easy task because you have to understand the group you are working with… Other things you have to realize are that people in that society may not see the same problem you do. They may be more concerned with other issues, and you have to work around that to address what they think is the most important issue in their community.

Like other skills, reflection requires practice, so in addition to composing written reflections, we will also reflect during “debrief” sessions in class, usually on days when a written service-learning reflection is due. Your Service-Learning Journal (refer to page 89) can be an excellent source of detail for your reflections, so promptly record your observations and thoughts in your service-learning Log after each time you are at your community project.

Reflecting on Writing

The prompts below are samples of *writing reflection* assignments from the fall 2009 to fall 2012; reflection assignments in our class might be different. Sample reflections follow some of the prompts; at those reflections, use the right-hand columns to annotate the reflections.
Prompt: High school vs. college writing  [SAMPLE]

In a two- to three-page piece, reflect on differences in expectations between high school writing classes and college writing classes. Before drafting your reflection, list details from high school and college writing assignments.

Reflecting on Writing: High school vs. college writing

“You’re responsible for your spelling and punctuation!” my 11th-grade high school teacher would always tell me. I figured that he would know what I was saying even if my spelling and punctuation were not perfect because people don’t worry about those things when they’re texting, and I know that he texts. Last semester, when my first college writing teacher told us to use Spell Check, at first I resisted, but then gave in. Later, of course, my instructor told us that Spell Check isn’t always right. I was back again to “I’m responsible.”

I was also responsible for learning the APA format, after I’d finally understood MLA. The rules on writing seem to change from high school to college, except for the responsibility part. Another rule change is the number of drafts. In high school, I wrote one draft and one final version. The only changes I had to make were to spelling and punctuation. Now I have to write at least two drafts, and the final essay must be at least 600 words. In my fall semester class, I actually wrote two essays that were over 800 words.

In addition to the number of words, I now have to be able to explain why I used certain words. My college instructor in the fall semester asked me why I used certain words. For example, why did I use the word “kid” in my multiple source essay? My “intended readers” were agency supervisors who have programs for children. Apparently, those supervisors might think that I do not respect kids if I call them kids. At the same time, I can now use the word “I” because I can write about my own experiences in my community service project. My high school teacher told us not to use that word. Words are not the only parts of an essay that now I have to be careful about: organization is also high on my instructors’ priority list.

In high school, I slammed together an essay in a night or in an early-morning rush. The order of information was usually unimportant. Now, though, I need to decide what information is important to my reader, and if I’m going to put that information toward the beginning or toward the end of the essay. In my second multiple-source essay last semester, I lost sleep over my essay’s organization (among other things the instructor graded), like which was more important to my readers, the amazing statistics or the heart-wrenching personal stories? (I decided on the stories.) Where do I put that information, toward the beginning or toward the end? (My answer: “Yes.” I put the beginning of one story at the beginning of the essay, and put the story’s ending at the end of the essay.)

For that essay, some of the statistics came from my library research; other statistics came from my community service experience. I had never really thought
of counting things before this class (outside of hits, runs, and errors). Now, I need
to count how many kids – children – are in the room, how many have clothes that seem too small, too big, or for the wrong season. Now, I have to put these numbers in the same paragraph as numbers that I get from my research. Along the same lines, I now have to put information from different sources into the same paragraph, and sometimes into the same sentence. I cannot always use one paragraph for the information that I get from one author, like I did in high school; now I have to put “like things together,” as my instructor last semester said.

Not only am I coming up with information on my own, but I’m also writing my own thesis statements. My high school teachers used to give me a thesis statement, but now it’s my responsibility to give my reader something new and interesting. I now “create information.” This whole idea of creating (or “inventing”) information drives me crazy: it sounds irresponsible. More than that: it sounds unethical. And neither of my college writing teachers would tell me if my thesis statement (or the rest of the essay, for that matter) is good. No, both of them ask questions and parrot back to me what I said (in their own words, of course). All I want to know is what should I change to make the essay get a good grade.

More frustrating yet is our peer review sessions: I’m not allowed to ask my partner’s advice. My partner is supposed to ask me questions and paraphrase my answers so that I can, yes, figure out how to improve my essay by myself.

This is very strange. I like what I’m writing about, but I’m not sure that I like how I’m writing it. It’s very stressful. When I was getting ready to come to college, I was excited about being independent. But this independence in class is nerve-wracking.
Prompt A: Non-profit vs. For-Profit agencies
Consider differences between non-profit organizations and programs (such as the one with which you are volunteering for our learning community) and for-profit organizations (businesses).

1. Compose a reflection of about 600 words.
2. Tell where you are volunteering for your community project this semester, and briefly describe your responsibilities.
3. Read the Webpage for a nonprofit organization and one for a for-profit organization. (Conduct a content analysis.)
4. In your comparison, identify notable differences between the two sites.
5. Reflect on those differences.
6. As part of your reflection, feel free to refer to an incident from, or to an observation about, your community project.

SAMPLE

[Name] September 22, 2011
CPN 102-806 Service-Learning Reflection

I have volunteered in the community, and I have worked at “real” jobs, but I’ve never thought about ways in which volunteer organizations are different from money-making organizations. For this reflection, I compared the Cortland County Community Action Program (CAPCO, where I volunteer) with Kodak, a company in my home town.

Kodak promotes its products through a constantly-updated and active Webpage: The middle of the screen switches between three images and messages, one of which reads, “Capture the art of autumn with the latest products from Kodak.” The page also includes a “Latest News” field that gives a different Kodak news item every 3 seconds. With some searching, a reader can learn how he or she can make money through Kodak: Click on a link that is in tiny print at the bottom of the page, labeled “About Kodak.” The reader can also read the company’s annual reports and the biographies of its Board of Directors.

In contrast to Kodak’s site, CAPCO’s site is neither current nor active. It has a date (2010) on which it was updated, though it must have been updated in 2011 because it includes the organization’s 2010 Annual Report. It has no moving images or words, though its words are emotionally moving. Under the heading, “Welcome to CAPCO!” the viewer reads, “Our mission is to provide programs and resources that promote self-reliance and dignity.”

These organizations’ annual reports reflect their different priorities,
sizes, and budgets. Kodak’s 208-page report shows a cash flow of over
$1.6 billion that comes from sales and from investors. CAPCO’s 22-page report reveals a budget of barely $8 million (less than 0.5% of Kodak’s budget); 81% ($6,480,000) of CAPCO’s money comes from the federal government.

Each organization has a board of directors. Federal law requires CAPCO’s Board to be composed of fifteen members who represent three parts of society: elected officials, low-income community members who are being served by CAPCO, and people from the private sector. At the moment, though, only fourteen Board members are listed. Kodak’s fourteen-member Board is made-up of people with strong business backgrounds.

I found at least one set of numbers interesting: eleven of CAPCO’s Board members are women, including its president and its executive director. In contrast, only one Kodak Board member is a woman. This difference is also reflected in my volunteer experience because I volunteer with women at CAPCO’s Head Start Program, though children in the program are boys and girls. It is also reflected in my service-learning class, where fifteen of the nineteen students are women.

If this short analysis is any clue, our culture seems to promote role differences between men and women in a low-key way. More information from the Webpages supports that claim: CAPCO’s Webpage has five photographs of people: three children (one boy, one girl, and one infant), and five adults. Of the adults, only one was a man. Unlike CAPCO, though, Kodak’s photos seem split between men and women. The for-profit world appears to be ahead of the nonprofit world in terms of gender representation, but in practice, it seems to favor men.

In these two cases, the digital media seem to suggest that, as a woman, I will be “courted” by big business, but not employed by big business. In this environment, a girl or young woman would move into the “emotionally moving” world, where she would help more but earn less, possibly in an organization that promotes its clients’ “self-reliance and dignity” – even though (ironically) that organization would be anything but financially self-reliant.

These Websites are samples from for-profit and nonprofit organizations; an analysis of government Websites might also be revealing and upsetting. It would probably show that most mayors and governors are men; men run big business and government, both of which have money. Women serve in agencies that rely largely on government spending, which means that they rely on tax dollars. Those taxes are probably paid mostly by men. In spite of laws that promote gender equality, women are still being given “allowances” by men. As a woman in college, I might be preparing for a career focused on what’s “right”
over “might.”
APPENDIX

WRITING SKILLS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Critical Reading/Listening</th>
<th>Computer Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Paraphrase &amp; Summarize</td>
<td>1. Purpose: Attention to</td>
<td>1. Word-processing;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Compose coherent messages by showing relationships</td>
<td>a. Author’s purpose</td>
<td>formatting</td>
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<tr>
<td>between generalizations and details, including</td>
<td>b. Content</td>
<td>2. Database research</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Claim (“Fact”)</td>
<td>c. Opinion</td>
<td>Programs—</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Statistic</td>
<td>d. Use of emotion</td>
<td>PowerPoint, Pamphlets,</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Opinion</td>
<td></td>
<td>Webpages</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Authority/Credibility</td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Create and integrate</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. Word choice</td>
<td></td>
<td>visuals, such as graphs,</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. Organization</td>
<td></td>
<td>charts, and tables,</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Design messages that integrate purposes of</td>
<td></td>
<td>into messages</td>
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<tr>
<td>a) Persuading</td>
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<td>b) Informing</td>
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<tr>
<td>(keeping interest)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Composing messages using strategies such as</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Analysis</td>
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<td>b. Comparison</td>
<td>c. Synthesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Word choice</td>
<td>d. Argument</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Explain how to create effective sentences through</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Sentence</td>
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<td>Structure</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Appositives</td>
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<td>6. Design effective topic sentences &amp; thesis statements</td>
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<td>7. Develop Clarity</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Specificity</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Word choice</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Active voice agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Develop Coherence</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Transitions</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Integrate quotes</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Reader cues</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Develop Conciseness</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Eliminate unnecessary words</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Nouns as verbs</td>
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<td>10. Punctuate correctly, using, for example,</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Comma</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Semi-colon</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Dash</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Research creatively, using electronic databases</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Document using (at least) APA format</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. References page</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Develop objectivity</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Tailor essays for specific audiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Reflect</td>
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*Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review.
PRESENTATION SKILLS
GUIDELINES FOR USING VISUALS as speaking notes.

1. Preparation of material
   a. PowerPoint, Prezi, or Webpage – if possible, highlight key items such as
      1) Specific words.
      2) Parts of a visual.
   b. Speaking notes – make them “quickly readable”…
      1) Use 8½x11” paper; avoid note cards.
      2) Be concise – use only a word or two per idea.
      3) Use large writing so that you can read the words at arm's length.
   c. Use strong contrast between ink and paper colors.

2. Preparation of interaction with audience
   a. Know your audience, including
      1) Their interests.
      2) Special needs that they might have.
      3) The number of people who will attend (especially if you have handouts).
   b. Practice with the equipment you’re using.
   c. Have a “Plan B” in case equipment does not work.
   d. Anticipate questions.

3. Practicing your presentation
   a. One way is to begin at the end: Practice your conclusion first, then practice the body of
      your speech and the conclusion (in that order). After you're comfortable with those two
      sections, practice the entire presentation, beginning with the introduction. In this way,
      the further into your speech you go, the more familiar you are with your material.
      This is also a way through which you can learn how to say difficult words, regardless
      of the language: Start with the words' last syllable; after you learn how to say that
      syllable, than say the last two syllables, and so on until you can say the entire word.
   b. Anticipate potential interference by taking the following steps at least a day before your
      presentation –
      1) Familiarize yourself with the time and place of your presentation so that you can
         notice possible sources of extraneous noise, light, or temperature change.
      2) Practice using the equipment so that you’re not “learning on the job.”
   d. Have a “Plan B,” especially for equipment. Be ready to smoothly leave your PowerPoint if
      the equipment is not working. You could, for example, have overheads ready for use
      with (obviously) the overhead projector. You could have other alternatives, of course.

4. Delivery
   1. Look at your speaking notes only briefly.
   2. Look at the audience, even when you are referring to your visuals.
   3. Don’t worry about forgetting a specific detail; just focus on developing your thesis.
statement.
4. Enjoy!
SERVICE-LEARNING

For students in a variety of majors, service-learning is an effective and engaging way of learning.

Definition:
The SUNY Institutional Research and Information System defines service-learning as “a credit-bearing teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience and strengthen communities.”

This definition underscores the importance of the individual as a community member who is actively engaged in social justice issues. Service-learning is also important when we consider the situation in which many new teachers and other professionals find themselves: They are teaching children whose backgrounds differ greatly from their own. One of service-learning’s benefits is that it helps people (including future teachers) learn how to understand – how to empathize with – children from backgrounds different from their own.

Benefits
A service-learning class can offer benefits over a traditionally-taught class, including students’
1. Ability to more easily empathize.
2. Deeper understanding of issues’ complexities.
3. Intensified dedication to community service.
4. Development of skills that include critical thinking, communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and analysis.
5. Greater understanding of how course content relates to “the real world.” For future teachers, in particular, this benefit relates to both content and method –
   a. Service-learning’s content involves issues related to social justice; such issues grow out of, for example, “structural barriers” that promote unequal access to educational and economic opportunity.
   b. Future teachers can use service-learning methodology as a way of helping their students succeed in and out of the classroom.

Your service-learning journal will be an important tool with which you record your observations as soon as possible after a volunteering session. Your journal will serve as a resource for assignments such as reflections and research essays. The next page gives you a sample service-learning journal entry.
Today we introduced children to geography. Ms. Geller started the unit by asking children for a show of hands. She asked, “Who has seen a waterfall?” I could not believe that almost half of the children – 12 out of 27 – had never seen a waterfall. Ms. G. was not surprised. Later, while students were working on team projects, I asked “Lenny” if he had ever seen a picture of a waterfall. He thought so, but wasn’t sure. He asked me if I’d ever seen one. I told him that I grew up in Ithaca, which is not very far away from here, and has many waterfalls. I’ve visited each one many times.

“What do they look like?” he asked me. “There are lazy ones that just roll down hills,” I said, “and there are some that are taller than the school. They fly off of cliffs and come crashing down.” We talked about what they sound like. To help him understand what they smell like, I brought him to the turtle tank. (Lenny had never seen a turtle before meeting Harry, the class turtle.) We each took a whiff of the tank. It was musty and rich. I told him that the tank smells a lot like the smells I’ve noticed at waterfalls.

At that point, Lenny (who is 10-years-old) told me that he had never been out of town. Again I was amazed. My family has travelled every summer, sometimes camping in the Adirondacks, sometimes going to another state. Once we went to Italy. Lenny never got past the Sicily Bakery in Syracuse.
Guidelines: The Six R’s
1. **Reciprocity.** The people in a service-learning project work as equals.
2. **Respect.** Each individual respects the other.
3. **Responsibility.** Each person has a responsibility to his/her project partners:
   a. Be on-time
   b. Participate for the full length of the project
   c. Communicate with the appropriate people in case of a problem
   d. Complete reports completely, accurately, and promptly
   In short, be professional.
4. **Routinely participate in your community project.** Your experiences generate variety and richness over time, so just a few visits are usually not enough to help any of the participants or you.
5. **Record** events, situations, comments, statistics, and other notable information promptly after your session. Refer to the “Observing” section on page 82.
6. **Reflect.** This is the heart of service-*learning*; though reflection, you explore a variety of links between your experience and your academic course-work.

**YOUR COMMUNITY SERVICE PARTNERS: NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.**
Nonprofit organizations serve a variety of vital needs in this very poor county. Unemployment was above 9% long before the country as a whole reached that number during the recession that began in 2008. Partly as a result, one in five children here lives in poverty, and many eat precious little after leaving their school lunch room on Fridays – until the following Monday, when they eat again at school.

To help deal with this problem, one of our nonprofit community agencies, the Cortland County Community Action Program [CAPCO], provides many of these children with backpacks stuffed with food. CAPCO puts the food in backpacks so that the children need not suffer the humiliation of being seen with donated food. CAPCO – along with the many other nonprofit agencies in Cortland County – helps address a range of social and economic concerns that would otherwise make life worse for many of our low-income neighbors. In many ways, these organizations function differently from for-profit organizations:
1. Obviously, they are not “in business” to make money; rather, they exist to serve the needs of people in need. If they do generate a “surplus” of money (what would otherwise be considered “profit”), they must use that money in ways that serve their clients, not in ways that would—in a for-profit organization—benefit investors.
2. Nonprofit organizations usually get their money from one or some combination of sources
   a. Government grants
   b. Private grants
   c. Donations
3. Nonprofits usually have Boards of Directors that have fiduciary responsibilities: These Boards ensure that the organizations stay true to their mission statements and that they spend their money appropriately and wisely.

4. Nonprofits rely to varying degrees on volunteers to help them carry-out their missions.

5. Here is a list of some of Cortland County’s needs, along with some of the agencies that help meet those needs. (Cortland County has approximately thirty community agencies.)
   a. Family Development – Family Counseling Services, the YWCA
   b. Health Education – Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cortland County, Cortland County Community Action Program
   c. Hunger – Loaves and Fishes (soup kitchen)
   d. Mentorships – Access to Independence, Family Counseling Services, the Cortland Youth Bureau, the YMCA, and YWCA.
   e. People with Disabilities – Access to Independence
   f. Substance Abuse – Catholic Charities of Cortland County, Cortland Prevention Resources, The Cortland Area Communities That Care

In the 2013-2014 academic year, 1,943 SUNY Cortland students participated in service-learning courses. SUNY Cortland offers 61 service-learning courses across 20 departments.

Welcome to the family.

Do Good; Live Well.
References


