FREWRITING (WITH PHOTO S)
Instructor: Betty Huang

1. Brief Description of in-class writing exercise:
Freewriting/Writing to explore (see BELOW; part of a longer writing assignment)

2. Context for the exercise:
Early in the semester, when students have written only one response paper to a film.

3. Goal(s) of the exercise:
The first part of the assignment is to generate a set of in-class writing, reading, and paper assignments using students' own writing. It also fosters collaboration among students and encourages them to share their voices with one another early in the semester.

The second part of the assignment asks students to do the following in a take-home assignment: 1) read the handout I've created from your in-class writing; 2) identify observation common to all (or most) entries; 3) identify observations you had not thought of on your own.

The third part of the assignment is in an in-class small-group exercise in which groups of students are asked to distinguish between descriptions, analytical commentaries, and claims. They are then asked to generate possible theses and an outline (using the claims identified in their homework assignment) for a two-page paper assignment on a comparative analysis between the two photos. Two other in-class exercises are 1) creating interesting paper topics; and 2) quoting classmates' writing (a quick exercise on integration of quotes)

4. Common results of the exercise:
Students wrote very good responses to the photos, and found all subsequent exercises and writing assignments useful and applicable for the longer paper assignments to come.

5. Student responses to the exercise:
Students appreciate having their writing compiled and "published" as a handout, and having their own writing as a reading assignment. They liked the consensus and the new insights offered by all of the entries, and found the exercise in distinguishing between description (data), analytical observations, and claims useful. They also liked quoting from one another, and being quoted by someone else; it shows what they say is valuable and insightful.

6. Other Comments:
Worked well with the summer course, in which the class meetings were three hours long. Don't know how well it works in a regular semester. (Cont't next page)
EXERCISE:

Responding to Images of War

I. Nick Ut, “Children Fleeing a Napalm Strike,” 1972

Write a paragraph in response to Ut’s photo. You may want to consider the following:
- the relationship between the children and the soldiers in the photo
- the expressions on the faces of the soldiers and the children
- the movements of the people in the photo
- the role of the viewer (that is, what do you think Ut wanted to evoke in the viewer? And did you, the viewer, respond accordingly?)
- the overall message of the photo. Susan Sontag says that “although the camera is an observation station, the act of photographing is more than passive observing.” Is this photo “more than passive observing?” If yes, how? If no, why not?

(20 minutes)

II. Go to: http://www.stevencurtis.com/vietnam/images/pic1.jpg (U.S. soldiers and Vietnamese child)

Compare this photo with Ut’s. How do the Ut and the Curtis photos compare—or more accurately, contrast—with one another? What analytical commentaries can we draw from our comparison of these two photos?

(20 minutes)

III. Email your writing to me at byhg@mail.rochester.edu.