

Using Writing Modules: Writing Module Questionnaire

Writing assignments and writing modules work best when the assigned writing is described as clearly as possible, the learning goals are made explicit, and the skills stressed during modules support those goals. To help us design modules to support your writing assignments as well as possible, we ask that you come to our preparatory meeting with:

- Your current assignment prompt and grading criteria (or any ideas you have)
- If available, samples of student writing from this course (covering poor, average, and good examples)
- Where possible, answers to or ideas about the following questions (feel free to send answers ahead of time, or simply come prepared to talk about them)

Questions:

- What do you hope to get out of incorporating a writing module/involving the writing center?
- Are all the students in the class participating in the module? Roughly how many will participate?
- What role do TAs play in planning/administering the class?
- What are your goals and learning objectives for this assignment?

Suggestion: consider:

- What type of writing are you assigning?
 - How is this sort of writing used in the discipline?
 - What does an ideal sample of this writing look like?
 - What writing skills will the students have to use to complete the assignment successfully?
 - What particular writing skills do you want your students to sharpen or develop with this assignment (e.g.: thesis development, organization, mastery of discipline-specific conventions, etc.)
 - What content (if any) do you want the students to have mastered and be able to explain in this assignment?
 - Is this course part of a progressive set of writing skills being developed over multiple semesters?
- How does your prompt address the above issues?

- What are the grading criteria for this assignment? How do they address the learning goals described above?

Suggestion: Typically grading criteria directly correspond to the assignment goals. That is, if the assignment goals emphasize “thesis development”, this element will also become one of the areas that will be graded.

When presenting grading criteria to students, start with global issues (such as thesis, strength of analysis, and organization). Address grammar and style at the end. The reasons for this are complicated, and can be discussed during our meeting.

- How well do you think students generally do at meeting the learning goals? What strengths do you see (what is working well)? What general problems do you see? What have you tried to address these problems?
- Which of these topics (if any) strike you as being particularly pertinent to addressing common issues in writing in your class? Check all that apply, with priority if applicable:

- _____ Reading critically in the discipline
- _____ Writing to audience and determining audience needs
- _____ Developing research questions
- _____ Developing a thesis or a main focus
- _____ Analyzing a sample papers to discover the expected conventions of the desired writing
- _____ Converting oral to written reports and vice-versa
- _____ Using the library and databases effectively
- _____ Strategies for avoiding plagiarism while working with material you don't yet understand
- _____ Learning how to interpret feedback and revise effectively
- _____ Language conventions in the discipline and use of “stock phrases”
- _____ Overall organizational conventions: what goes where, length
- _____ Cohesion, paragraphing, and flow
- _____ Using grammar and punctuation to emphasize meaning
- _____ Other (please describe _____)

- If given detailed instructions, how capable do you think your students are of doing peer review as homework, without additional support? Do you think that having peer review facilitated by a writing center representative would be helpful?

- If you think in-class peer review would be helpful, do you think that your students would benefit from group facilitation by an undergraduate peer writing tutor (writing fellow)?
- What concerns do you have about writing modules?