

WHAT ISSUES DO YOU
SEE IN YOUR
STUDENTS' WRITING?

WHAT DO THEY DO
WELL?

COMMON DEVELOPMENTAL WRITING CONCERNS



SUCCESSFUL WRITERS

SHOW:

Purposeful Development

Rhetorical Context

Thought

Order

Language

Self-Reflection

PURPOSEFUL DEVELOPMENT

Does the writing have a sense of purpose?

Does the essay have plenty of examples, reasons, or details?

Is the writer able to produce more than a few short paragraphs?

RHETORICAL CONTEXT

Is the writer aware of their audience?

Do they have a clear purpose?

Is their writing style appropriate for the audience?

THOUGHT

Does the writing make the reader think?

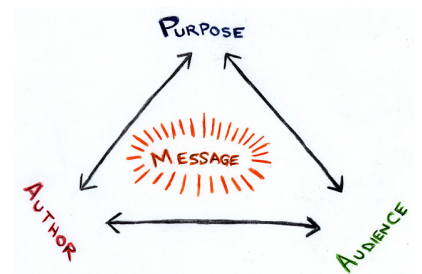
Are they "stating the obvious"?

Does the writer make strong connections between ideas in the form of analysis?

DEVELOPING IDEAS AND THOUGHT

For students who struggle with purposeful development, they can practice writing in the following ways:

- Making thesis statements
- Practicing topic sentences
- Using personal experience as examples
- Look at sample essays to determine a thesis
- Write opposing views to an existing essay or idea
- Turn weak main ideas into strong thesis statements
- Ask "How" and "Why" about their interests and topics
- Add examples to thesis statements



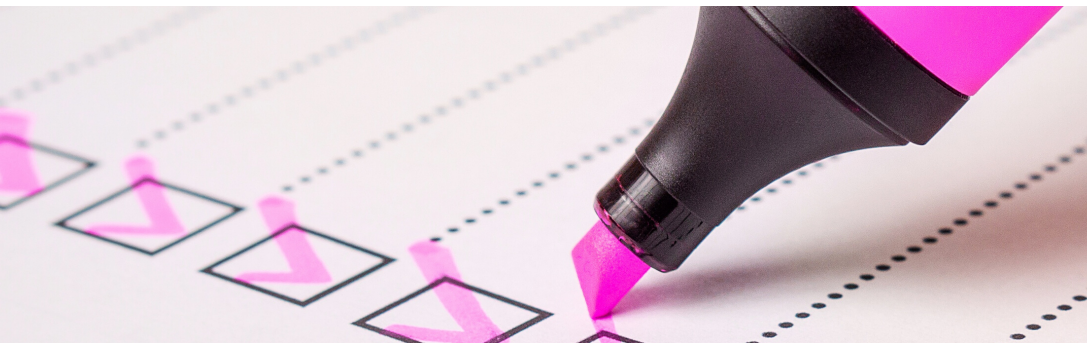
PRACTICING AUDIENCE

Audience and purpose often go hand in hand, and knowing one will help students in determining the other.

To practice audience and purpose students can:

- Write e-mails, letters, texts, etc. to and from specific people
- Write on the same topic with different audiences in mind (ex. high school students, a group of scientists, 3rd graders, the principal)
- Read different essays to determine their purpose
- Write to the same audience in several different tones (ex. frustrated, hopeful, serious, etc.)

ORDERING IDEAS AND USING LANGUAGE



Before writing on a topic, students can work on ordering by:

- Brainstorming, clustering, listing
- Outlining
- Reordering paragraphs of a completed essay
- Numbering ideas from a self-generated list in preparing for an essay

During or after writing on a topic, students can:

- Break larger text into smaller paragraphs
- Refocus topic sentences
- Cut up a current essay and reorder its ideas
- Add transitions to an existing piece
- Read and number a classmate's essay to reorder their ideas

Some of the most common language mistakes for developmental writers include:

- Comma use (run-on sentences, comma splices)
- Unclear pronoun/antecedent usage
- Sentence fragments
- Subject-verb agreement



ENCOURAGING SELF-REFLECTION

Reflective prompts are appropriate at any point in the writing process, and particularly after completion of an essay or writing. Students can do the following to reflect on themselves and their writing:

- Write a self-reflection piece
- Complete a summative portfolio
- Critique their own or others writing
- Identify their best and worst writing pieces from the semester
- Answer reflective questions after completing an essay (ex. What was the most challenging part of this assignment? I am proud of this because... It was difficult for me to... By working on this writing, I learned...)

ORDER

Does the writing move from idea to idea smoothly and in the most effective way?

Does the writing avoid seeming formulaic?

Does each paragraph support the writing's main idea?

How effective are the transitions?

LANGUAGE

Are sentences generally clear?

How correct are the mechanics?

Does the writer show their own sense of style?

SELF-REFLECTION

How aware is the writer of his/her own writing process?

Can the writer describe his/her strengths and weaknesses?

QUESTIONS?

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