

Small Acts, Big Impacts

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Outline

- Introduction and context
- A “living” google doc (briefly)
- Reading “Letters **from** your Besties” - Week 1 Class 1
- Learning from peers, with peers
- Practice working in the Living doc
 - Pedagogy and Technology discussion
- Reflecting on the quarter - Week 10 Class 2
- Setting up reflection
- What are you taking with you?
- Writing “Letters **to** your Besties”
- Closing thoughts and Q&A

Set the stage

Week X Class Y (a basic template)

Welcome to class, here is some relevant information about what we are doing today and how it relates to what we are learning.

Learning Objectives, 3-4 guiding themes for this class period

Class at a Glance, timeline for the class period

X number of sections, depending on the particular class, title, brief description, details/links/worksheet-style formatting to receive student work in the moment, etc.

Homework, with live links to materials/assignments on Canvas

Week 1 Class 1

The most important class of the quarter. I am working hard to set up context, set clear expectations, help them learn how the class is going to operate over the next 10 weeks, jump right into setting up the first assignment and try to show the students I want to help them be successful.

The timeline in brief looks like this:

- Brief welcome and introductions
- Course goals
- Textbook/course readings information
- Canvas and how it is set up for us
- Relevant syllabus information
 - *There is a lot of information here, attendance and engagement expectations, policies and expectations around turning in work, discussion on how to promote an inclusive and positive classroom environment, etc (read- a lot of lecturing from me)
- Letters from your besties/lessons from the last class
- The rhetorical situation
- Assignment #1 introduced
- Homework

Time travel through the first part of class.....

Lessons from the last class

Think - Pair - Share

Think—Click here and read through the letters written to you from the last class I taught. Just get a feel for what your peers are saying, and take some notes on what you think is important/valuable/relevant.

Pair—Then, we will gather into small groups and as a group you should **collaborate and take notes to distill a few key takeaways from these letters**. What did you learn from previous students in this class about how to be successful?

Share—Align in your groups on the best pieces of advice you extracted from the letters, and in an orderly fashion, please paste your responses below.

—**Attention**— all quarter long we will be collaborating in google docs. **Please, I ask you with sincerity, maintain orderly formatting.** It is imperative to my logical brain that things stay formatted well. AND, I will drag this class to a screeching halt if things get out of hand in the organization of this doc and we will all work to fix it.

What have we learned from the students who took this course in the Fall?

(one person from each group paste your groups responses here)

Group 1:

Group 2:

Group 3:

Group 4:

Pro Tips for collaborating in a shared “Living” doc:

We are learning here how we are going to be using this “Living” doc for the rest of the quarter and a little bit of close management here helps us all align

- ask individuals/groups to work in a separate document
- in a controlled manner, prompt each group to paste in their responses to the shared google doc
- be paying attention, and working to fix things as they come up and leverage them as learning lessons for the class

(if you don't know how to fix something, ask them for help! “Can someone please be a dove and add page numbers to this thing?”)

Actual group responses

Group 1: **Start your work early**. Go to office hours. Understand the topic and goal of the assignment before you start. Become a detective. Put effort into peer reviews. **Shitty rough drafts are your friends.** Do the assigned readings. Try to always attend lectures. Don't cram. Keep up with discussion posts. Writing about something you're interested in is easier.

Group 2: **Start writing early**, show up to live classes to ask questions, **do not be afraid to just write and refrain from perfection during the early stages** of brainstorming and writing, trust the agenda, guidance from Dr. Carpenter, and provided materials (everything will be useful in one way or another)

Group 3: **Start writing early**, participate and attend office hours, **use "shitty first draft" idea to combat procrastination and perfectionism**, do readings (and make sure to set out enough time to **do the readings**), reach out if you need help

Group 4: Use your resources: professor, peer reviews, google doc, canvas site, etc. **Do not procrastinate** and try to block out the work as much as you can. Leave time to rewrite. Pick topics that you are interested in. Attend live lectures as much as possible. **Do all the readings beforehand**. **Write a shitty first draft!** It helps you get your thoughts down. Utilize the librarian. Have a reference manager.

Now that we have identified some general trends in our groups, and read what other groups had to say, let's distill this down into a list of best practices below. If you see that someone has already typed in a similar comment, you can just paste a checkmark to show you agree. (we will use this approach often in class this quarter).

What are our best practices going to be? ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓

Keep on top of due dates ✓✓

What are our best practices going to be? ✓✓✓✓✓

- Keep on top of due dates** ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓
- Try not to procrastinate** ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓
- Maintain proper college etiquette (be polite to each other and the professor) ✓✓
- Take peer reviews seriously ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓
- Come to class every day ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓
- The Personal Statement assignment is particularly important and directly useful for most of us ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓
- Doing a good job on the Annotated bib helps you prepare for the Review Paper- ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓
- Writing basic drafts and returning to it with fresh eyes can be very useful in understanding your 'plan' for the assignment** ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓
- Actually read the readings & apply the principles you learn** ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓
- Having other classwork is not an excuse to turn in bad work or turn in assignments late, ✓✓✓✓
- Utilize the readings and read them in paragraphs at a time to better grasp the content** ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓
- If you are struggling, talk to Professor Carpenter, don't wait it out in silence and then turn in bad work ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓
- Don't be afraid or offended by feedback/criticism - take it in stride and utilize it ✓✓✓✓✓
- Use a reference manager for citations ✓✓✓✓
- Plan your paper whether it's writing an outline, visualizing or even just thinking about content beforehand** ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓
- Make a reverse outline ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓
- Don't procrastinate, start early** and **it's okay to be bad at the first draft.** ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓

Reflection Moment for us-

Pedagogy- students are hearing from me what they need to be successful, and now they also get to hear it from their peers.

The process of reading and distilling down the letters into best practices sets up Think, Pair, Share as an activity AND promotes actual engagement with the content, rather than passive reading only.

(A personal favorite) This experience reminds students their peers believe that they really don't need to do anything other than what they already know to be successful in this course (do the homework, come to class, try not to procrastinate, communicate with your instructor, etc.). Seems like a no-brainer in some ways but it really resonates

Technology- sets up what a "Living" google doc looks like and helps them become familiar with navigating and contributing to it.

Introduces elements like links to external sources and gives them some comfort in knowing that all of the course content is available for them on both Canvas and in this shared document.

You do need to manage student contributions to the doc early on, but it doesn't take much to get them all feeling comfortable in a "Living" doc

Fast forward - last day of the quarter.

Writing is hard. Brain thinking, performing research, organizing and making connections can also all be hard! One of the main themes in this course, given this actual, factual information, is that I want students to learn tools, strategies and approaches that can help them in the future as they navigate these things outside of our classroom.

Reflection/Metacognition help students think about what they have learned and what they want to take with them.

BUT, there is a problem. Official student evaluations are meh, at best.

Week 10 Class 2 (final day of course)

Brainstorm

This quarter we have learned a lot of different tools, strategies and approaches to writing. Along with feeling more comfortable and confident with scientific writing and research in general, I sincerely hope that you have learned some things that you want to take with you into the great unknown.

We are going to formally and informally reflect on our quarter in just a minute as part of the final exam, but right now, let's think about our experiences.

DR CARPENTER- Running list of TOOLS and STRATEGIES for writing and thinking:

Freewriting, revising, sharing with peers informally, sharing with peers formally (elevator pitches; peer review), reflection on peer review, establishing best practices by reading trusted sources broadly and learning, interrogating models relative to best practices, drafting, visualizing, reverse outlining, outlining, reflecting on how well models/your drafts meet expectations, etc.

Just a quick reminder of some of the many things we have learned about and used this quarter to get their cogs turning.

Take a moment to think about your process this quarter. In a short, timed free write respond to the prompt below:

What helped you the most with thinking, research, writing and revising this quarter?

Read through what you wrote, try to distill down some main ideas/themes by highlighting or distilling. Turn and chat with a peer and compare notes. Prepare some of your responses for pasting into the google doc.

What strategies, tools, tips, tidbits, etc. did we learn about this quarter that you want to remember? Bonus if you can explain what/how it is helpful.

- **Freewriting (if you don't know what to do, do something!)**
- Revising (relative to goal/expectations)
- Sharing with peers informally, (turning to talk to someone)
- Summarizing papers in an annotated bibliography is great mechanism for reading & understanding research papers
- Meet with the Librarians!
- Show don't tell when you're writing a Personal Statement
- **Peer-reviews are very useful!**
 - **Understand expectations and ask for specific feedback**
- Create a personal statement with meaning
 - Including evidence to support your claims
 - **Elaborate on how you learned something, do not just state it.**
- Reverse outline - great revision tool once you have a draft
- **Rhetorical situation (consider this before you write anything)**
- Write a shitty first draft (don't try to write a perfect one last min)
- Follow the Rubric (answer the prompt, read the directions!)
- Databases are curated to help with research
 - Top tips for searching databases: ABAS (always be advanced searching), Refine date range, keywords, search back/forward
- **Visualizing when brainstorming/thinking/writing/revising** (it is free, easy, low stakes and can be very helpful!)
- Interrogate samples relative to expectations
- Primary research papers can take different forms but all present new research
 - Review papers review previous research but do not present anything new (great way to learn a lot about the current state of knowledge in a field)

First- Personal Reflection- What am I taking with me?

I don't want you to walk away from this class thinking that the final paper is it. The things that stick with you, that you carry on from here and apply in future communication situations are as important to me as any work you completed in the course. Knowing you will likely have to communicate with others many times in the future, write a letter to yourself reminding you of what you want to remember as you wrap up this chapter. (this reflective letter serves as a portion of the final exam and it turned in on Canvas)

Second- Letters to your besties

Now it is our turn to pay it forward. I want you to take a moment to let your peers who are about to take this course know what you think they need to know in order to be successful. Whatever you think that is, please be honest and sincere.

Tinyurl links to a google doc so that you can paste your response anonymously. That way I can have confidence that you are speaking from the heart, and can give these letters to my next group of students in the first week so that they can benefit from your wisdom (just as you benefited from the wisdom of the previous cohort).

Concluding Remarks

- Reflection is a potent tool (here, guided reflection on what we learned, what we want others to know AND as fodder for guiding the next cohort into best practices)
 - Reflection is best served warm- build/set up first, Think/Pair/Share; free-write, etc.
- Help students help themselves (model processes with them, have them read, think, talk to each other, *then* share with the class).
- Google docs can be a platform for low stakes writing/thinking that encourages/democratizes participation, has very little cognitive start-up cost and \$0 monetary cost.
 - It is a low bar of entry, but not without some pitfalls. Worst case scenario, someone somehow deletes your entire google doc, you can always just restore to a previous version. Phew.
 - Definitely keep a masterdoc on hand too, just to be safe

Q&A

Thank you for your time today.

If you want support with your course(s): wac@ucdavis.edu

If you want to chat I get email at carpenter@ucdavis.edu