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### **WID Reflection**

The Writing in the Disciplines (WID) workshop was an invaluable experience and helped me rethink both the design and purpose of writing assignments in my courses. One of the most significant takeaways was the distinction between informal (low-stakes) and formal (high-stakes) writing. This framework provided me with a new lens through which to conceptualize and structure writing assignments in ways that can help students slowly build-up their writing skills.

I found myself asking: *What role does this writing assignment play in students' understanding of academic writing? How does the assignment support their growth as writers?* As such, my approach has shifted from feeling that some writing assignments were just class requirements toward viewing every writing assignment as an opportunity to help students become better writers, even if the assignment is informal and low stakes. This includes understanding the writing process as a means to understand the discipline (not just the topics/materials) and writing itself, including acknowledging the intellectual, emotional, and technical challenges of writing. In this sense, moving forward, I plan to spend more time demystifying writing in my courses and being explicit with students about how writing is also a process of thinking.

Furthermore, the emphasis on assignment staging led me to reconsider how each assignment contributes not only to the final paper but to students' broader academic development. How might the writing assignments in my courses become opportunities to help students understand the value and importance of writing, particularly with regards to 4-year colleges? How can these assignments teach students the conventions of academic writing and

help them foster writing skills that will benefit them in the long term? I think it is important to be intentional and transparent in the design of writing assignments and communicate to students what the purpose of academic writing is. In my experience, many students struggle to formulate a clear thesis statement precisely because the aims of academic writing (as a genre) are unclear. Consequently, the workshop helped me re-think assignments in ways that might help students understand that academic writing is about making an argument, instead of simply describing a topic.

I also found the small group format of the workshop helpful. It allowed for meaningful conversations about our assignments, pedagogies, and struggles as educators. It was helpful to hear how my peers design and implement writing assignments in their own courses— and, in turn, it inspired me to consider new ideas for writing assignments. For example, using classroom activities and field trips as starting points for writing instead of only focusing on the readings. I now see the potential and benefit of asking students to write informally about their experience during a class discussion, an activity, in response to a video watched during lecture, etc., instead of being so hyper focused on academic articles. I think this might help shift students' perception of writing as an abstract, intimidating task to a more reflective practice.

As a result of the workshop, I made several revisions to my syllabus and writing assignments. These are detailed below:

### **Revised Syllabus**

I revised my syllabus to provide a clearer, more detailed description of the course content and objectives. Additionally, I included a list of campus resources that could support students, such as the writing center. I also refined the language to make the syllabus more welcoming and less intimidating.

### **Informal Writing Assignment**

The workshop helped clarify the purpose of the informal writing assignment and its connection to the final paper. I reorganized the guiding questions for the reflection to help students structure their reflection in a more intentional way. I also provided concrete examples of social issues connected to scientific discourses (e.g., the pandemic) to help students think outside the readings.

### **Formal Writing Assignment**

I made most revisions to this document. I restructured the assignment into distinct stages, providing students with clear objectives and aims for each stage. By breaking down the assignment in this way, I hope it can help students understand and prepare better for the final paper.

### **Assessment Rubric**

Rather than using a traditional rubric, I developed a final project checklist. It was very reassuring to receive positive feedback about the effectiveness of the checklist as a useful tool for students.

Overall, the WID workshop had a profound impact on my thinking about writing assignments. It helped me rethink writing assignments beyond a means to evaluate student growing knowledge. Instead, I find myself thinking more of these assignments as opportunities to support students' ongoing development as writers.