



5 Tips toward Great Writing Instruction

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- #5 Scaffold Shorter (Low-Stakes) Assignments that Build into Bigger (Higher-Stakes) Ones
 - Consider designing a sequence or series of smaller 1-3 page papers throughout the term that build up to larger, more complex papers. This will allow students the opportunity to get a more authentic sense of what it means to *synthesize* writing the way academics do.

- #4 Have Students Read, Review, and Rewrite BEFORE You Read and Comment on Their Work
 - Peer review can be an enormously rich pedagogical method that, with practice and some experimentation and patience, can become the center of your teaching craft. **You can also encourage students to visit the University Writing Center** <http://www.tamuk.edu/writingcenter>.

- #3 Consider Conducting Small-Group Sessions to Provide Feedback.

- #2 When Commenting on Student Writing Always Start with Higher-Order Concerns (HOCs); Then in Later Drafts Cover Later-Order Concerns (LOCs).
 - This is especially important for peer review considerations. Make sure and have students (and yourself) commenting on more global issues like claim/purpose, evidence, function of the text parts (intro, body, conclusion), evidence (HOCs). In later drafts you can turn to spelling, syntax and typos (LOCs).

- #1 Consider Using a “Grading Contract” (along with Student Self-Assessment) System.
 - For example, you could offer a “GUARANTEED B” to students on the writing components of the course. This would, importantly and by necessity, entail some thoughtful conditions, which might include:
 1. Attending class regularly.
 2. Meeting due dates and writing criteria for ALL writing assignments.
 3. Participating in all in-class activities and exercises.
 4. Giving thoughtful peer feedback during class workshops and working faithfully with your group on other collaborative tasks (for example, sharing papers, commenting on drafts).
 5. Sustaining effort and investment on each draft of all papers.
 6. Making substantial revisions when the assignment is to revise—extending or changing the thinking or organization—not just editing or touching up.
 7. Copyediting all final revisions until they conform to the conventions of edited, revised English.
 8. Attending conferences with the teacher (and home group members) to discuss drafts (adapted from Danielewicz and Elbow “A Unilateral Grading Contract to Improve Learning and Teaching.” *College Composition and Communication*, Dec. 2009 https://works.bepress.com/peter_elbow/39/).

 - Students can also benefit greatly by writing detailed critical reflections and self-assessments of this process, including what they learned and how they improved, and what they still need to think about for future writing projects.

You can find detailed examples of all of the above in my online resource *Peer Pedagogies* (written with three undergraduate students):
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-jzfZ7xSdc4PmlpR5sEbkvjNPyBZ1SWr/view>.

