



Worth Weller

Continuing Lecturer

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W131 and W233 online are taught as an integrated process in which learning goals and outcomes are seamlessly blended with projects and assessments. All projects are broken down into component parts so that students can see their progress towards the learning goals, and all component parts include discussion and feedback features so that critical thinking can occur within the conversation of the class.

Skills are built sequentially, and through learning diaries and discussions students are encouraged to take a metacognitive approach towards their own learning. Assessments encourage this same approach to their writing.

All projects lead to the next project, so that students understand the learning process is not a discord or bable of voices but rather a conversation in which the student becomes ever more adept in his or her level of participation.

Believing that function follows form, and also being a great fan of Stephen King who maintains that all writing begins at the paragraph level, I stress well composed, unified paragraphs, beginning with clear topic sentences and offering plenty of support and illustration so that the reader can clearly “see” and follow the point of the paragraph.

Returning to my point about learning being part of a larger “conversation,” I also try to match the learning goals of the university with the learning goals of my classes by stressing critical analysis as opposed to mere story telling or opinion forming. I ask my students to look for and report the “meaning” of what they have read, not in the broad sense of high school symbolism but rather to discover and analyze the argument being presented by the text. All texts, written and image oriented, are arguments, of course.

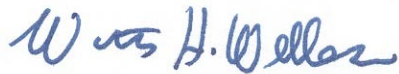
To promote the practice of critical thinking which is the prelude for critical analysis, I cause the students to engage each other in multiple discussion threads that guide the students towards their next written assignment. With Paulo Freire’s comments on the banking system of education in mind, I ask the students to make meaning among themselves of several topics I provide, usually accompanied by some YouTube videos or PPT material to help start the

discussion. In this manner – particularly in the case of W131, upon which this portfolio is based -- they brainstorm among themselves the ideas and observations they will be using to construct the framework of their forthcoming essays.

The accompanying three student papers illustrate the above, from an assignment asking them to construct a three page critical analysis of Faulkner's short story, "Barn Burning," through the lens of feminist and Marxist literary theory. This is a two week unit, not counting the week for revisions, in which I introduce them to critical theory as a guide for all disciplines.

That said, I hope that the following documentation indicates that my teaching supports the goals of the Writing Program.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Worth H. Weller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "W".

Worth Weller
Continuing Lecturer of English and Linguistics