**Activity #1:** We'll first describe our own writing process. Think of a writing project you’ve recently finished or one you’re currently working on. Then, please finish this statement: “For me, writing is like…”

How can we use writing to promote our students’ critical thinking? *Engaging Ideas*, 181-182, Chapter 8.

**Activity #2:** We’ll do a writing exercise that you might adapt in your classes to help students build reading skills. You (and maybe a partner) will be assigned a section of Chapter 1. Please read your section and do the activity you’re assigned. You’ll share your response as the rest of us take notes (an exercise in active listening). We’ll identify what we feel are the most important points we’ve heard.

Then you’ll design a brief writing activity for a reading assignment in your own class.

What can we do to prevent too much summary or “data-dump” writing? *Engaging Ideas*, 24-27; 29-32, Chapter 2.

**Activity #3:** After looking over some samples, please compose 2 short prompts for your course that either:

1. Create cognitive dissonance
2. Require students to present knowledge as dialogic rather than informational
3. Teach “academic moves” or disciplinary genres
4. Create opportunities for active problem solving

We’ll be sharing and explaining our prompts with a partner. A few of us will “report out.”

Why should we combine formal and informal writing assignments? *Engaging Ideas*, 92-93, Chapter 6 and 131-142, Chapter 7.

**Activity #4:** Consider formal and informal writing prompts for your own class:

- A variation of a formal paper you assign, or could assign (e.g., 92-93)
- Two short prompts that invite informal, exploratory writing (22 ideas on 131-142)

We’ll listen to examples.

******BREAK FOR LUNCH*****

Why explore the link between verbal and visual thinking? *Engaging Ideas*, 179-180, Chapter 9.

**Activity #5:** Pull out the handout with Lawrence Musgrove’s templates for visual thinking. Draw and briefly explain one concept you found useful this morning. Then find two ways to draw an important concept in your own class. Write a brief explanation of the concept for one drawing.

What is important to know about assignment design?

- Easy-to-read instructions, 97, 99-103, Chapter 6
- Students’ research problems, 229-231, Chapter 13
- Organizational issues, 256-261, Chapter 13
- Scaffolding, 246, Chapter 13

**Activity #6:** Scaffolded curriculum—begin by outlining a longer assignment for students in your course (see 99-103). You’ll share the outline with a partner, and refer to the questions on 106, Chapter 6, to

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Please note: If you complete all of today’s workshop, you will receive a WAC stipend of $250.
analyze the assignment. You may also have some time to consider listing an exploratory-drafting activity (140), activities for reading sources (181-182), and relevant critical thinking tasks (160).

**Why use rubrics?** *Engaging Ideas*, 269-273; 277, 289. Chapter 14

*Activity #7:* We’ll look at differences among rubrics that are analytical (271), holistic (272), task specific (273), or weighted (277). We’ll also look at a way to shorten grading (289). Look back at the assignment you outlined in Activity #6. List three specific criteria you want students to meet. Then we’ll use a rubric to score a sample of student writing and discuss results.

**What do we need to know about grammar?** *Engaging Ideas*, 73-79; 81, Chapter 5

*Activity #8:* We will look at a *style sheet* for grammatical items and practice *minimal marking*. Circle 3-4 errors you want the student to edit and write the error #. Provide 1 marginal question or suggestion, and give two end notes addressing one important strength and one revision-oriented request.

**How does peer review affect critical thinking?** *Engaging Ideas*, 151-54, Chapter 9

*Activity #9:* We’ll get into trios. Each partner will talk through her/his inventory. **15 minutes per person!**

A. **Spend 7 minutes presenting** your inventory.
B. Then allow yourself **3 minutes** to discuss at least three ways you think you might use writing to enhance your students’ critical thinking skills in the course.
C. Finally, give your partners **5 minutes** to provide you with feedback, i.e.,
   - One of your ideas that your partners find particularly useful
   - A question or concern that your partners share with you
   - An insight you stimulated your partners to consider in her own course

**Questions for the inventory of a course you want to enhance with writing:**
1. What is the course you want to transform into a writing-enhanced course, and what kinds of writing do you currently include in the course?
2. What are the main units or modules in your course?
3. What are your main learning objectives (or chief concepts and principles) for the course?
4. What thinking skills are especially important in your course—and crucial to your academic discipline?
5. What are the most difficult aspects of the course, based on previous students’ experience?
6. What problems do students typically have with the writing tasks you set?
7. What difference do you want your course to make in your students' lives?

How did this exercise in peer review affect your thinking about your course inventory?

**Wrapping up:** An opportunity for an additional WAC stipend

1. **Implement writing and critical thinking tasks** in a course that you have transformed and taught for next year's fall or spring semester.
2. Provide a *syllabus* and *writing assignments* to WAC director to demonstrate how you’ve implemented the tasks.
3. By early May, **submit a class set of papers to NIU’s Assessment Coordinator** for assessment in the University Writing Project.

**Some resources:**
- Purdue Online Writing Lab: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/)
- WAC Clearing House: [http://wac.colostate.edu/](http://wac.colostate.edu/)
- NIU Writing Center: [http://uwc.niu.edu/](http://uwc.niu.edu/)
- Scaffolding assignments: [http://www.niu.edu/taconnections/2008/fall/scaffolding.shtml](http://www.niu.edu/taconnections/2008/fall/scaffolding.shtml)
- WPA Statement on Plagiarism: [http://www.wpacouncil.org/node/9](http://www.wpacouncil.org/node/9)
- Students’ Right to Their Own Language: [http://www.goingpublicwithteaching.org/rmoore/media/files-pdf/CCCC_article.pdf](http://www.goingpublicwithteaching.org/rmoore/media/files-pdf/CCCC_article.pdf)

Please note: If you complete all of today's workshop, you will receive a WAC stipend of $250.