



Writing to Learn, Assessing to Learn

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At the 1997 Third National Writing Across the Curriculum Conference, keynote speaker Thomas Angelo concluded his presentation¹ by challenging his listeners to chart new paths to “deep learning,” to pursue that fluency of comprehension and application—that transformation—that instructors labor to foster in their students. Achieving this goal, he asserted, demands: 1.) redesigning and reinventing traditional educational operating procedures; 2.) finding ways of evaluating and grading that focus efforts on the collaborative nature of such learning; and 3.) transforming mental models of classroom practice and theory. This paper responds to Angelo’s challenges in relation to the assessment of writing across the disciplines. In particular, this discussion will posit a certain “mental model” for assessment and propose a pedagogical milieu most conducive to both it and the kind of learning Angelo espouses.

While attitudes toward assessment have remained virtually the same, the overall *ethos* of writing-across-the-curriculum programs has undergone dramatic re-modeling in the last ten years. First, English departments have assumed roles as participants not pedants in an interdisciplinary dialogue about the nature of writing. As Catherine Pastore Blair noted in 1988, “each discipline has its own individual relationship to language; the English department context is not a privileged one” (384). Beyond the balanced integration of the English studies perspective is the current binding of a dichotomy that divided WAC’s concerns since its inception: the reconciliation of the writing-to-learn emphasis with the imperative to learn to write in specific disciplines. Kirscht, Levine, and Reiff in their 1994 *College Composition and Communication* article promote a focus upon “the rhetoric of inquiry” (369-370) as the appropriate path for combining both pursuits, defining the disciplines “as centers of inquiry rather than as banks of knowledge,” and disciplinary conventions “as emerging from communally negotiated assumptions about what knowledge is and about the methods for shaping it” (374). WAC programs, according to Jones and Comprone, “must work toward balancing humanistic methods of encouraging more active and collaborative learning in WAC courses with reinforcing the ways of knowing and the writing con-

ventions of different discourse communities. In other words, teaching and research need to be combined in a way that encourages joining conventional knowledge and rhetorical acumen. Only then will students know enough to negotiate between the constraints of different fields and the self-imposed needs of their individual intentions” (61). This evolving *ethos* promises to strengthen the integrity of WAC’s purposes and better focus pedagogy so that it may indeed engender deep learning across the disciplines. However, this evolution remains at a great distance from perhaps the most daunting aspect of any WAC program: assessment of writing across the curriculum.

Assessment is inadvertently presented as the least philosophically-aligned component explained in WAC faculty manuals. Such guidebooks invite teachers to see their programs as integrative, student-centered “cultures” for enhanced learning, challenging students’ intellectual flexibility in interactive, collaborative classroom environments. However, when writing evaluation is explored, the attitude metamorphoses into one of clinical expedience: evaluation methods are presented primarily as precisely defined, discipline-specific, formalist checklists. Detailed examples pervade excellent WAC faculty manuals such as Barbara Walvoord’s WAC workshop packet or UCLA’s *The Shortest Distance to Learning*.² [See appendices A and B] What sort of documents do these checklists inspire? Clearly focused, purposefully organized, well-supported prose. So where is the problem? It lies in what is missing from these checklists: while valorizing the discipline-specific character of students’ writing, these checklists neglect the writing-to-learn side of the WAC equation.

Checklist mentality undermines the student-centered aspects of writing to learn in three ways. First, the checklists value writing as a *product* and not students’ familiarity and facility with composing *processes*. Based solely on instructors’ expectations, the checklist is product-oriented: it places value on apparent and effective outcomes. This is not to say that final drafts are not worthy of careful consideration, but, while in their teaching instructors place value on students’ flexibility in developing effective writing (and thinking) behaviors, in assessment instructors rarely address or value that flexibility. Second, the checklist asserts the *authority* of discipline-specific discourse without affirming or even accounting for the *autonomy* of students’ own voices. While colleagues across the disciplines labor to create classroom environments in which students feel comfortable exploring their ideas and discovering their own best ways of sharing them, nowhere in the checklist is students’ making of meaning *on their own terms*—which writing to learn so values—accounted for. For example, a first-year writing checklist from my former campus asserts the “controlling” main idea for the student’s essay “is chosen in accordance with the requirements and guidelines provided

by the instructor and is consistent with the goals of the assignment”: what controls students’ responses is not of their own making. In addition, the writing demonstrates “an acceptable level of grammatical correctness”—acceptable in relation to the “conventions of edited written English” (see appendix C). This is the rhetoric of the academy at its most daunting. It creates that chasm between students’ making manifest their own ideas and the academic demand that students articulate meaning only in the language the academy acknowledges. In classrooms that strive to be student-centered, the language of the student and the discourse of the text should stand *in relation to* one another; students’ authenticity must be part of the equation. Finally, the checklist privileges an *analytic* predisposition toward student texts versus providing students with a *holistic* reader-response from the instructor that articulates how the student’s making of meaning was interpreted and re-formed by an interested and involved reader. Checklist mentality is judgmental: students’ discourse is either in alignment with teacher expectations, or it is not. But beyond this sensibility of correspondence that defines one kind of assessment lies the middleground of a reader’s response—terrain expansive enough to permit the demands of discipline-specific discourse to be placed alongside the students’ making of meaning; here the voice of the novice need not be supplanted. The instructor’s reader response may acknowledge that meaning has been made *both* in students’ alignment with disciplinary discourse *and* in their divergence from it. Thus, teachers’ constructive responses as interested professionals can invite students to participate in a new discourse community without the dichotomy of either/or judgments.

WAC manuals’ portrayal of assessment as aligned with only formalist expectations stands in contradiction to the balance suggested in WAC’s recent reconciliation of writing to learn and learning to write in the disciplines. As teachers committed to this reconciliation, we should pursue “mental models” of assessment that allow us to practice in assessment what we “preach” in our pedagogy across the curriculum: the primacy of students’ thinking. While I will not presume expertise in the assessment of other disciplines’ discourses, I would like to suggest a heuristic that may reveal the character of assessment pertinent to both the new WAC *ethos* and the goal of deep learning. I propose a dual heuristic, of sorts, for discovering assessment techniques that address directly the conflicts inherent in WAC checklists. This heuristic seeks out a new model of assessment derived from what these checklists clearly lack: *dialogic* and *dialectical* dimensions.

Checklists are monologic in their articulation of concerns—academic demands predominate—and are focused solely on closure in the form of a product. This strategy subordinates students to being, at best, adept

mimics of their instructors' expectations and, at worst, empty accounts awaiting deposits of authority. To remedy this imbalance, evaluation can and should take on the energy of good conversation: positing, listening, responding, arguing, qualifying, restating—all activities part of the process of writing itself. Assessment that promotes ongoing conversation about its own conflicts—ideally, throughout a student's college career and, pragmatically, up to a manageable point within the confines of a semester—enlists the novice writer as a participant. Such dialogic assessment tools are already plentiful. For example, students' self-evaluations of their writing projects submitted routinely throughout the term are an effective path to evaluative conversations. I use Jeffrey Sommers's technique, defined in his chapter of Anson's *Writing and Response*, entitled "The Writer's Memo: Collaboration, Response, and Development."³ I ask my students to offer me a personal letter with each essay draft in which they explain their composing processes, what parts of the project were easy, which aspects were more daunting, what this particular project revealed to them about themselves and their composing processes, and what in particular they want me to respond to in my commentary—what they believe is most important for us to talk about. My students and I share this correspondence in an assessment log, a diary consisting of their self-assessments, my responses to their drafts, and *their reactions* to my responses, which I also answer. Like Glenda Conway, who requests self-reflective cover letters with her students' final portfolios, I find myself looking forward to reading our shared diary as much as their projects (84).

Through this sort of dialogue, I hope my students not only will sharpen my diagnostic abilities as an evaluator but also identify for themselves both the rigors of appraising their efforts and the authority I offer them in setting the course of assessment. Written teacher commentary of any sort—as opposed to merely correction symbols—can foster dialogue, particularly if it asks questions and poses options for revision.⁴ Obviously, conferences with students, ones in which drafts are examined, are the most-frequented sites for dialogue, but there too teachers must beware of their love of their own monologues and instead reveal possibilities for reconsidering students' texts in careful conversation.

As it is dialogic, assessment can and should be dialectical—a mode of inquiry in itself. How does assessment pattern a way of knowing, particularly a self-reflexive understanding of evaluation of a specific discipline? Checklists imply that the path of knowing is one of alignment: instructors characterizing students' writing in relation to their distance from discrete expectations of form, the way of most traditional essay grading. This alignment is never as clear-cut as instructors may make it seem; as Milton, Pollio, and Eisen noted in their 1986 study, *Making Sense of College Grades*, instructors can come to the same text in strikingly differ-

ent ways over time, supposedly applying the same criteria. A true dialectic is no less capricious but is not one-directional; it offers an open-ended interchange. Its participants set the pace and tone of the conversation and agree on a point of closure. In evaluating writing, this interchange can be multi-vocal, for example, involving teacher commentary, students' self-assessments, and peer evaluation. The voices in the conversation, each representative of different reading contexts, carry their own authority, but the identities are free to evolve over time. Peers may begin as cheerleaders but, in time, become adamant critics. Even instructors may begin as advice-givers but over successive drafts become astute questioners—or simply listeners. A dialectic demands effort from all participants; passivity or lack of commitment to inquiry shortchanges those involved and brings the path to an abrupt end.

Ideally, the dialectic that assessment embodies should invite students into the same dialectic WAC pedagogy promotes: an interactive, transformative experience with language. In this regard, assessment techniques should be qualified by this question: does the technique an instructor chooses open students to and foster an appetite for new experiences with thinking and writing? Checklists, in their concern for alignment with academic/professional standards, imply that such alignment is an end in itself, a sufficiency. But can assessment encourage students to move beyond the comfortable repose of sufficiencies to remain eager for more experiences, despite conflicts in expectations and outcomes? The validation and closure proffered by the checklist must be surpassed by receptivity to the experience of making and re-making texts. The goal of assessment should be not (only) to valorize the pragmatic—the assimilation of discrete knowledge and patterns of organization—but to invite the openness to experience a thinking person maintains, encountering conflicts and yet discovering options for appropriate action.

What assessment strategies model this orientation to experience? High-risk performance assessments, such as those in writing proficiency examinations, model, like checklists, closure in the form of alignment with defined criteria. On the other hand, assessment techniques that take into account students' needs to reconceptualize texts through revision after teacher and peer feedback—open techniques—fair better in the dual heuristic. Currently, in the face of both WAC's commitment to affirming students' authority in creating their own discipline-specific texts and the administrative imperative for graded assessment, the most dialectical of compromises is portfolio assessment. While certainly not apropos in every classroom across the curriculum, portfolios of student-selected student writing have the potential to ensure a process-oriented, student-centered approach to writing assessment.⁵ While no panacea in itself, the portfolio method does fulfill, within the administrative constraints instruc-

tors currently find themselves, the dual heuristic: it is both dialogic and dialectical. To say that portfolios stimulate conversations in regard to assessment is common knowledge. Dialogue between peers and between students and instructors, both spoken and written, propels essay drafts' development over the course of a semester or, in the case of writing-across-the-curriculum portfolios, over a course of study. And, as a way of knowing about writing in any discipline, portfolio assessment is the most effective dialectic available thus far. While still reliant upon an anthology of varied products, portfolio assessment accounts for the implementation of processes shaped by students' own decision-making. It permits the instructor, novice writers, and their peers the time to be engaged readers of texts-in-progress—and to offer the sort of ongoing readers' responses that checklists disallow. The dialectic that portfolio evaluation invites is open-ended (to a point) and balanced both in its respect for individual authority and its demand for receptiveness to diverse commentary. However, this dialectic can be maintained only if supported by classroom pedagogy commensurate with its reciprocity and multivocality. In relation to aligning assessment appropriately with the heuristic I have suggested, I recommend a re-examination of “operating procedures,” to paraphrase Angelo: the classroom practices that undergird assessment.

First, instead of indoctrinating new WAC faculty with rubrics for grading, WAC administrators need to discover with them plans for effective workshop activities that promote thinking; activities that reveal how to assign tasks to workgroups; how to make sure tasks are accomplished in the time available; how to foster successive drafts of a document; how to generate and build on free-writing or brainstorming; and how to promote different types of revision. A campus-wide, up-to-date, open file of useful *real* classroom strategies is as essential to establishing common goals for writing-to-learn as sharing discipline-specific assessment criteria. As Edward White asserts, “until effective ways of teaching the writing process become well known, there will be insufficient demand for process measures to assess that curriculum” (243). A balance must be fostered across the disciplines between accentuating writing in its equipmental capacity—as an effective product, as a tool—and promoting an openness to the processes that forge that product.

Second, in relation to the goal of expanding students' autonomy within the academic conversation, a repertoire of collaborative learning techniques may provide the best arena for enhancing students' responsibilities in the assessment situation. Studies such as Nystrand and Brandt's reveal how empowering peer-critiquing can be: students come to see each other as collaborators and revision as “reconceptualization”; when instructors are the sole evaluators, teachers become “judges” and the process of revising is reduced to “editing” (212). Too often, however, the

benefits of collaborative experiences are seen as icing on the pedagogical cake: as Sharon Hamilton asserted in her recent conference session, “Writing in ‘The Principled Curriculum’,”⁶ the collaborative learning environment clearly needs to become the cake. The collaborative classroom is also the storehouse from which to distribute shares of evaluative responsibility. If faculty impress upon students that there are various ways of using the process effectively, somewhere in assessment faculty must *attribute value* to students’ processes. WAC faculty need to draw attention to the interconnections among talk (recorded or videotaped), notes, outlines, and drafts—the progress apparent in a collection of articulations by a single student. In other words, instructors must value more than just the efficacy of tentative and final drafts to show students that early work is essential to final assessment. The collaborative learning experience is the vehicle for these intentions. Working in groups, students can evaluate portfolios of works-in-progress: they can generate criteria, come to consensus (if possible) in their critiques, and offer group commentary along with dissenting opinions. Workgroups can prepare case studies about their peers’ portfolios as part of their own writers’ journals. They can record interviews with “famous” writers: their professors, professionals in the field, or senior students. Having been granted a degree of control in establishing criteria for evaluation, students then have the concomitant responsibility to apply them thoughtfully. In discussing peers’ work, other students can palpably address the writing process and become conversant in the meta-discourse of rhetorical commentary pertinent to their field. And, of course, well-focused feedback orients authors’ intentions, if for nothing else than to show how they relate to the understanding of their peer groups. Composing processes in all of their dimensions can be fruitfully appreciated, negotiated and assessed *by students* in groups—not by their instructors alone.

Group dynamics bring into immediate high relief another concern in relation to students’ progress: their evolving identities. But how can assessment encourage students’ authenticity—the growth of individual voices? Faculty are accustomed to assessment that aligns students with the traditions of discipline-specific discourse: we reward students who sound like us. But can instructors attribute value to apparent *difference*, to students whose thinking in their own terms impedes the trajectory of traditional instruction—a “conversation” into which we respectfully have invited them (Rorty as qtd. by Trimbur 606)? In relation to affirming students’ own voices, “When we focus on teaching students discourse conventions . . . we need to do so in a way that allows [students] to problematize their existence and to place themselves in a social and historical context through which they can come to better understand themselves and the world around them” (Freire as paraphrased by Chase 21).

To that end, to at least focus concern on students' evolving voices, the *student-writer*, her/his *peers*, and her/his *teacher* should work to:

- a.) recognize and define the human voice apparent in the writing;
- b.) identify and define the kinds of thinking apparent in the piece; and,
- c.) identify the milieu from which the work comes, along with defining how it relates to that world and the world of the reader.

A balance should be struck between the writer's self-consciousness and articulated intentions and the impact of those notions upon her peers and her instructor. A bridge should span the private being of the individual student and the public demands of discipline-specific articulation. Evaluation should reflect the dynamics of both.

Third, what the previous paragraphs implicitly espouse is that the teacher as the locus of authority in the classroom can choose to distribute shares of power. Students' self-assessments—which act to contextualize⁷ their composing processes and drafts—should be counterbalanced with their peers' critiques and the instructor's reader-responses in assessment. Reader-responses from all three parties and follow-up interchanges should be integral to evaluation procedures. When antagonisms arise among respondents, the instructor should act as mediator, translator, and negotiator to provide options for reconciliation. When instructors *cause* antagonisms, they must negotiate with students who, in turn, tolerate their differences as co-participants in the learning process—the conversation—acknowledging their instructors as experienced, knowledgeable representatives of the academic/professional community. Students should become responsible both for self-regulation and applying class-generated criteria to the work of other students. Discipline-specific assessment rubrics need not and cannot be abandoned but could be placed and critiqued *in relation to* students' intentions. Students could negotiate with their peers about ways to define their relationship to the discourse traditions in which they find themselves. They should come to trust each others' judgment and their own—not just relying on the teacher's authority.

Theories of collaborative learning claim that the more directly responsible students become for their own learning, the more richly they benefit from instruction. Balancing evaluative power in openly dialogic and dialectical ways can challenge students to take their writing and that of others *seriously*. Similarly, the possibility of student-teacher collaborative assessment also could ground instruction in respect for individual composing processes and for students' authenticity and autonomy, and foster a responsive and not purely judgmental relationship to students' work-always-in-progress. In this way, monolithic checklists can be replaced with a multiplicity of workable classroom strategies that open for

students the tangled way to consensus about effective discourse. It is when students critique their own ways of knowing and those evaluations are recognized as *valid* and in dialogue with the discourse communities they occupy that they achieve a real sense of their own emplacement—their *being* somewhere, their *going* somewhere. Assessing-to-learn, then, can foster the transformation at the heart of Angelo’s challenge—the deep learning that occurs when students find themselves.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Thomas Angelo’s presentation was entitled, “Seven Shifts, Seven Levers: Using Assessment to Develop Learning (and Writing!) Communities Across the Curriculum” and was delivered on 6 February 1997.

² See “Checksheets for Criteria” in Barbara Walvoord’s in-house text, *Teaching Students to Think and Write* and pp. 73-82 in *The Shortest Distance to Learning*, ed. JoAn McGuire Simmons, Los Angeles: Los Angeles Community College District and UCLA, 1983.

³ See also accounts of similar metacognitive self-assessments in Sam Watson’s chapter, “Letters on Writing—A Medium of Exchange with Students of Writing” in *Teaching Advanced Composition: Why and How*, eds. Katherine H. Adams and John L. Adams, Portsmouth, NH: Boynton, 1991. 133-150; and Kathleen Blake Yancey’s *Portfolios in the Writing Classroom* Urbana: NCTE, 1992. 104.

⁴ For a thorough, up-to-date examination of teacher response styles and the degrees to which they control student writing, see Richard Straub’s article, “The Concept of Control in Teacher Response: Defining the Varieties of ‘Directive’ and ‘Facilitative’ Commentary,” in *College Composition and Communication* 47.2 (May 1996): 223-251.

⁵ Several authors describe in particular the authority-sharing benefits of portfolio assessment. See, for example: Belanoff, P. and M. Dickson. *Portfolios: Process and Product*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton, 1991; Callahan, Susan. “Portfolio Expectations: Possibilities and Limits.” *Assessing Writing* 2.2 (1995): 117-151; Gill, K. *Process and Portfolios in Writing Instruction*. Urbana: NCTE, 1993; and Yancey, K. B. *Portfolios in the Writing Classroom: An Introduction*. Urbana: NCTE, 1992.

⁶ The full title of Sharon Hamilton’s presentation was “Writing in ‘The Principled Curriculum’: Writing and Critical Thinking in a New Undergraduate Education Program” (Third National Writing Across the Curriculum Conference, Charleston, SC, 7 February 1997).

⁷ For an insightful discussion of such contextualization in students’ self-assessments see: Jeffrey Sommers’s article, “Grading Student Writ-

ing: An Experiment and a Commentary,” in *Teaching English in the Two-Year College* 20.4 (December 1993): 263-274.

Appendix A

from *Thinking and Writing in College*. Barbara Walvoord, Lucille McCarthy, et al. Urbana: NCTE, 1991. 15-16.

Primary Trait Scoring Sheet for Anderson’s Class

Please evaluate the original research paper and assign an appropriate number of points for each section. In each category, higher numbers represent greater mastery. Please do not award partial scores.

Title

5 - Is appropriate in tone and structure to science journal; contains necessary descriptors, brand names, and allows reader to anticipate design.

4 - Is appropriate in tone and structure to science journal most descriptors present; identifies function of experimentation, suggests design, but lacks brand names.

3 - Identifies function, brand name, but does not allow reader to anticipate design.

2 - Identifies function or brand name, but not both; lacks design information or is misleading.

1 - Is patterned after another discipline or missing.

Introduction

5 - Clearly identifies the purpose of the research; identifies interested audience(s); adopts an appropriate tone.

4 - Clearly identifies the purpose of the research; identifies interested audience(s).

3 - Clearly identifies the purpose of the research.

2 - Purpose present in Introduction, but must be identified by reader.

1 - Fails to identify the purpose of the research.

Scientific Format Demands

5 - All material placed in the correct sections; organized logically within each section; runs parallel among different sections.

4 - All material placed in correct sections; organized logically within sections, but may lack parallelism among sections.

3 - Material placed in the right sections, but not well organized within the sections; disregards parallelism.

2 - Some materials are placed in the wrong sections or are not adequately organized wherever they are placed.

1 - Material placed in wrong sections or not sectioned; poorly organized wherever placed.

Methods and Materials Section

Contains effectively, quantifiably, concisely organized information that allows the experiment to be replicated; is written so that all information inherent to the document can be related back to this section; identifies sources of all data to be collected; identifies sequential information in an appropriate chronology; does not contain unnecessary, wordy descriptions of procedures.

4 - As above, but contains unnecessary information, and/or wordy descriptions within the section.

3 - Presents an experiment that is definitely replicable; all information in document may be related to this section; however, fails to identify some sources of data and/or presents sequential information in a disorganized, difficult pattern.

2 - Presents an experiment that is marginally replicable; parts of the basic design must be inferred by the reader; procedures not quantitatively described; some information in Results or Conclusions cannot be anticipated by reading the Methods and Materials section.

1 - Describes the experiment so poorly or in such a nonscientific way that it cannot be replicated.

Nonexperimental Information

- Student researches and includes price and other nonexperimental information that would be expected to be significant to the audience in determining the better product, or specifically states nonexperimental factors excluded by design; interjects these at appropriate positions in text and/or develops a weighted rating scale; integrates nonexperimental information in the Conclusions.

Appendix B

from *The Shortest Distance to Learning*. Ed. JoAn McGuire Simmons. Los Angeles: LA Community College District and UCLA, 1983. 77.

This guide, like most used in writing assessment, gives as much explicit attention to structure and style as content; your guide would give

much less. For example, a scoring guide for Porter Ewing's history question, "Compare and contrast the old American Left with the American Left of the 1960's," might read like this:

A-- These essays demonstrate a clear grasp of the similarities and differences of the Old and New Lefts. They choose points of comparison that focus on their most characteristic traits of policy and political style, and they elaborate those points with well-chosen examples. Structure and mechanics serve content.

B-- These essays demonstrate a good understanding of the similarities and differences of the Old and New Lefts. They choose reasonable points of comparison and explain those points with appropriate examples. Structure and mechanics usually serve content.

C-- These essays demonstrate an acceptable but pedestrian understanding of the similarities and differences of the Old and New Lefts. Their points of comparison are the most obvious ones, and they are developed by only the most obvious examples, if any. Structure and mechanics may cause minor distractions for the reader.

D-- These essays demonstrate only limited understanding—or partial misunderstanding—of the similarities and differences of the Old and New Lefts. They may compare inappropriately or incompletely, and may make a limited number of serious factual errors in stating points of comparison or presenting examples. Structure and mechanics may sometimes impede the reader's understanding.

F-- These essays demonstrate little or no understanding of the similarities and differences of the Old and New Lefts. They may significantly misstate facts and misinterpret them, as well as failing to make overall points that are convincing or even defensible. Structure and mechanics may significantly impede the reader's understanding.

Unlike the UCLA scale, this one treats mechanics only as they actually interfere with communication.

APPENDIX C

The English 101 Checklist

Essays written in ENG 101 must be rated “superior,” “good” or “fair” in all of the following categories in order to be judged passing. These criteria for evaluation apply to all essays, including the final in-class essay.

I. THESIS STATEMENT

Superior
Good
Fair
Fail

The controlling or main idea of the essay is clearly apparent. The statement of the main idea, sometimes called the thesis, is effectively placed, whether at the beginning of the essay or elsewhere. It is chosen in accordance with the requirements and guidelines provided by the instructor and is consistent with the goals of the assignment.

II. INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

Superior
Good
Fair
Fail

The introductory paragraph includes more than a mere statement of the main idea. It fully and effectively orients the reader and attempts to attract the reader’s interest.

III. ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE

Superior
Good
Fair
Fail

The principle of organization is easily perceived, appropriate and effective. If more than the organizational principle or pattern is used, they are used together clearly and effectively to produce a unified whole. There is an easily followed progression of development from sentence to sen-

tence, idea to idea, paragraph to paragraph, so that there are no gaps in logic or information.

IV. SUPPORT

Superior

Good

Fair

Fail

This support is consistent with the main idea, specific and persuasive. Ideas are expanded and illustrated rather than singly repeated. The supporting details, examples, illustrations, facts and arguments are drawn from more than one source. Possible sources include personal experience, textbook readings, classroom discussions, interviews, television programs, newspapers, magazines, journals, pamphlets and books. In short, the support is effectively chosen and demonstrates an awareness of the topic beyond personal experience.

V. CONCLUSION OF THE ESSAY

Superior

Good

Fair

Fail

The concluding paragraph is not monotonously repetitive but rather demonstrates an understanding of the writer's obligation to maintain reader interest.

VI. VOCABULARY AND SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

Superior

Good

Fair

Fail

The content of the essay is expressed clearly and correctly. Individual words and phrases are well chosen to express the writer's ideas without serious distortion or excessive simplification. Sentences are clearly and completely formed and demonstrate neither monotonously repetitive nor tangled syntax. End punctuation is generally correct. Coordination and subordination are used to achieve sentence variety.

VII. ADDITIONAL CONVENTIONS OF EDITED WRITTEN ENGLISH

Superior
 Good
 Fair
 Fail

The essay demonstrates an acceptable level of grammatical correctness with regard to elements not specifically mentioned in Category III. Of particular concern here are verb forms and tenses, including subject-verb agreement. In addition, capital and lower case letters, contractions, and possessive forms are generally correct and commonly used words, including homonyms, are spelled correctly. Again, errors of these kinds are not so pervasive as to interfere with clarity and readability.

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