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INTRODUCTION



Paying Attention to Tools

I know, I know—*everything* is wrong with this picture. As academics and instructors (who are, almost by definition, professional readers), the critique of this graphic is all too easy. It maps a relationship to technology along familiar lines of domination and oppression: gender (a woman scared of the computer), race (a blond, white woman scared of the computer), class (a blond, well-coiffed, white woman scared of the computer), and sexuality (a blond, well-coiffed, white woman scared of the computer, which seems to be emanating some sort of virile energy). Add to this mix the fact that the graphic is a standard piece of clip art in the “Science & Technology” category for Microsoft Word 2000, and we can see how capitalism plays its role, too. Even if we were to bracket this whole critique, there remains, I know, something counter-intuitive about the use of this graphic: if this is a booklet about using technology to teach, why use a graphic that seems to illustrate such a fearful or adversarial relationship to technology?

In part, I decided to use this graphic because it lays bare the kind of angst we all feel towards technology at some time or another. After all, I may be the Director of Instructional Technology for the Writing Program, but there remain days when I am convinced my computer is some too-intelligent adversary bent on frustrating (if not destroying) me and my work.

But I also chose this graphic because it *does* have so much wrong with it, and it doesn't try to hide it. Rather than subtly re-encoding power in seemingly bland or innocuous graphics, this image forces us to pay attention. In *Technology and Literacy in the Twenty-First Century: The Importance of Paying Attention*, Cynthia Selfe asks us all to pay attention to technology, to note the ways in which old hierarchies persist in new technologies. As part of this project, we need to develop what Selfe calls “critical technological literacy,” an ability not simply to use technology, but to think about it critically as well.

Of course, “critical technological literacy” presupposes “technological literacy,” an ability to function in electronic and computer environments. This booklet represents an attempt to move towards *both* kinds of literacy. It contains strategies used by the teachers of the Rutgers Writing Program that deploy technology in the writing classroom. In that sense, it's a way for you to gain skills with using technology in your classroom as well. At the same time, these strategies ask us to think about technology—about what it does and about what we can make it do—which is a step towards critical technological literacy as well.

Ultimately, technology is only a tool and like any tool its investments and values can themselves be refashioned and retooled. If we fear technology, we cannot participate in this refashioning. If the networks of power built into technology remain hidden, we cannot participate in this refashioning. If we never stop to think about technology, we cannot participate in this refashioning. Only when we engage technology—asking what it does and what we want it to do *for us*—can we use the tools of technology for the ends that mean something in our classrooms. And if we're able to make a move like that, then we can

reshape what technology is and does. We can use it to teach action horizons and research in the disciplines. We can harness the web, and the forums, and the software of the computer classroom. We can even take a program like Adobe's Photoshop and manipulate images in such a way as to revise their visual arguments.



Things That Work with Technology is very much a work in progress. Then again, the same is true of my own attempts to incorporate technology successfully with my pedagogy. As I continue to explore and experiment, I'll be sure to expand this booklet with other things that have worked for me. But I'm hoping you, too, will not only explore and experiment but will also share what has worked for you. To make a contribution to this collection, please email me at barclay.barrios@rutgers.edu.

INTRODUCING STUDENTS TO TECHNOLOGY

Section One: The Computer Classroom

Tips for Bringing Your Class to the Computer Classroom for the First Time

I love to use the computer classroom—mostly because I’m convinced that just being in a new room somehow perks up my class. Before I bring them there, however, there are a few steps I’ve found useful:

1. Make sure students have an Eden account. They’re going to need one to log into the computers, so starting a week or so before we’re scheduled to be in the computer classroom, I not only remind students we’ll be going there but I remind them, too, that they’re going to need to log in with Eden.
2. Walk the class over the first time. Let’s face it—the Writing Program computer classrooms aren’t the easiest places to find. So, rather than asking my class to meet *at* the room the first time we visit, I sacrifice the first few minutes of class to walk them all to the room. Not only does this eliminate the “I couldn’t find the room” excuse in subsequent visits, but it also gives that first class a “field trip” feel.
3. Spend some time in the lab first. I try to drop by the lab when no one’s in there. I’m just going in to make sure I don’t have problems with the instructor’s computer, to get familiar with the space, and to check out the software and printer in the lab.
4. Find out how much your students know. I give my students a quick, informal survey of their use of computers early in the semester, and I make a mental note of who might have problems in the lab as well as who self-represents as something more like an expert. That way, I can ask students with more experience to help the ones with less.

Googling!

One great way to get introduce students to technology is to have them “google” their names. It introduces them to searching for information on the web and to using the search engine Google in particular. In the computer classroom, have students start a browser, go to <http://www.google.com>, and type their names in quotation marks. See what results pop up. You can segue into a class activity by having them then google the author of the essay you’re currently discussing.

Section Two: The Forum

Saying Hello on the Forum

This is a kind of forum icebreaker I like to use to get my students 1) registered for the forum and 2) talking there. I tell students to register (either outside of class or in a computer classroom session) and then they need to post something about themselves on a thread I’ve setup. It’s a really small move, but it makes the forum a friendlier place, which is a good move towards regular discussion.

Section Three: The Web

Familiarizing Students with the Writing Program by Justin Hart

Many instructors find it useful to spend a lab day reviewing the writing program site with their students. Justin, one of our 101 instructors, devised a worksheet for use in the computer classroom with his class. It asks students to walk through the website and pay attention to some of the resources available, and it can also be used to lead into a discussion of how grading works and the grading criteria. This sheet would make a great activity for the computer classroom, but you could also hand it out as homework for students to complete on their own. You'll probably want to get the Word or Rich Text Format version, so you can adapt it to your own class. The versions are available at:

http://wp.rutgers.edu/program/instructional_technology.html#handouts

USING TECHNOLOGY FOR RESEARCH

Section One: The Computer Classroom

Group Research on a Topic by Robert J. Gill

Have students work in pairs, each having a computer. Then, for about 25 minutes, both students search for information on one of their topics. During this time they can share finds, offer suggestions for search terms, and consider the strength of the sources. Once the time is up, the two students write a brief "Activity Report" which is then handed in. The report notes successes and problems. The class continues with the pairs of students now searching for sources for the other topic. Again, they will spend 25 minutes on search time with a few minutes afterwards for an "Activity Report" which is handed in.

It is interesting to see how the pairs work. The student whose topic is being searched often tends to be too narrowly focused. The other student tends to be "freer" and often makes a good discovery. The entire activity takes a full class period.

Note: While this exercise is geared toward 200 level classes and above, it could be adapted on a smaller scale (much less time for research) for an expository class. For instance, one could have the pairs do a search on race relations in the 1960's when reading Baldwin's "Down at the Cross," or "shamanism" when reading Abrams. Aside from the background information benefit, expository classes can work on evaluating print/online sources as part of their ongoing dialogue with textual material.

For 200-300 level classes: Reviewing online sources

Since most of the research that students do is now done online, it helps to plan a lab exercise to be done shortly after the library orientation day. The practical experience tends to "cement" what the orienter has told them about evaluating Internet sources of information.

Have the students divide into groups of three or four. Let each group choose a topic currently in the news or related to the class discussion about which there is divided public opinion. [If the opinions depend upon the use of statistical proof, all the better for our purposes!] On the day my last class did this exercise, the topics ranged from using Yucca Mountain as a nuclear storage site to partial birth abortion to stem-cell research pros and cons to litigation involving public cigarette smoking.

Have the group members work at nearby terminals to do some quick Internet searching on the topic. Have them search for sites which they think are either opinionated or objective. For an easy example, one could use the Focus on the Family (James Dobson) site in conjunction with a Planned Parenthood site on the topic of abortion, and then show some sort of objective site that merely lists abortion statistics. Hopefully the groups will find enough interesting sites so that each group member can evaluate one and present it to the class.

To aid them in their evaluation, you may want to tell them to try and identify

- the intended audience for the site

- the means by which the information is conveyed (i.e. statistics, graphics, emotional stories, reference to authorities)
- how well the information is documented
- any overt perspectives that might have influenced the site's creators
- what the site is missing in terms of being a good research source.

They may want to consider ways in which the statistics could be manipulated to convey information in a biased manner, how to deal with the contrasting approaches and statistics used by their research sources, how reliable in general they think the source is, whether or not the "evidence" can be duplicated, and which groups may disagree with this source's interpretation of data (and why).

After they have half an hour or so to search and discuss the various sites within their groups, give each person a few minutes to review his or her site with the rest of the class via the NetOp mechanism on the instructor computer (or your laptop if you are in a smart classroom). They should leave class with a heightened sense of the need to scrutinize their use of Internet sources.

Section Two: The Forum

Threads for Topics

Start threads for students who are research similar topics. This gives them a place to discuss successes and frustrations in their search for sources. They can share URLs for web documents and can even evaluate each other's work.

Section Three: The Web

Using the Web to Introduce Research

I find that 201's Research Depot is a good starting point for students. It covers the basics of research and evaluation of internet sources and the material applies to most any research-based class—not just 201.

Annotated Link List

The web is a great way for students to access information, but often they don't stop to consider that some information out there is worthwhile and some isn't at all. One way I try to force students to begin research and to be accountable to quality research is to ask them to produce an annotated list of links at the start of their research process. This introduces them to their topic and gives them practice with annotation. What's more it gives me a chance to introduce to a discussion of how to evaluate internet sources and how to determine the value of a source.

WORKING WITH A NEW READING

Section One: The Computer Classroom

Opening Up a Reading

I like to bring my class into the lab for the first day of a new reading. I generally have them do some work on the new essay at the computer, but I always save time for a general discussion as well. Here are some of the kinds of exercises I ask students to do:

1. Locate important passages from the new text and type them into a blank document. Then have students switch computers and add a comment about whether or not they feel that's an important passage and why. Keep having them switch computers 3 or 4 times. Then have students return to their original computers and digest their peers' comments. Ask students to report on the passages they chose and what others had to say about. Not only does this open up discussion about the text, but students leave with recorded comments about a particular passage.
2. Have students write a short paragraph that summarizes the argument of the new reading. Then have them condense that paragraph, and keep condensing until they have one or two sentences that summarize the essay. Ask students to share these sentences with the class. Again this opens up discussion and gives students practice at identifying an author's argument, but it can also lead into a discussion of paraphrase or how to form a project statement by starting with a large sense of what you want to write about and then condensing that down.

Switching to the Visual

Sometimes I think students need to "switch registers" to locate a new perspective, to open up new modes of learning, or even to get a better sense of a project/argument. I sometimes start a new reading by bringing them to the lab to let them work with visual modes of explanation. Here's what I've tried:

1. Draw the argument. I tell students to use either the drawing tools in Word or Paint (Start >> Programs >> Accessories >> Paint) to draw a picture of the author's argument. I make it clear to them that they'll need to print this picture out and explain it to the class. This also works really well as group work.
2. Make a visual argument. I ask students to use a search engine like Google to locate images or pictures that are clustered around the topic or argument of the new essay. Working with these, I ask them to create a kind of "visual argument" that uses a series of images to illustrate the argument of the new reading. These can be copied and pasted into Word for printing and sharing with the class. Again, this can also be a good group project.

Section Two: The Forum

Working with a New Reading by Michael Cripps

The bulletin board forum is a potentially wonderful technology precisely because it makes sharing easy, and retains a public record. It is a great place to get students to begin work with a new reading. I like to link all my reading assignments to a requirement that students post to the bulletin board forum, and respond to other students' posts.

1. Early in the semester I will seed the bulletin board discussion on a new reading by posting questions about issues in a reading. I require students to respond to some set of these questions, and to post their own questions about a new reading. This kind of assignment works best when students are required to quote the passages that give them trouble. Lastly, I require students to respond to at least 1 or 2 of those questions. Each student only posts about 4 times, and the result is a written record of early insights and issues.
2. As the semester progresses, I hand off primary responsibility for initial posts to 3 or 4 students (making sure to distribute the requirement). Other students are required to respond to some or all of those questions, and to post questions or problems they are having with the reading. Over the course of the semester, students can return to the forum posts for help with the readings.

When a Paper Is Due on the Same Day as a New Reading by Michael Goeller

Often in 101 I find myself assigning a new reading on the day that the final draft of the previous assignment is due. This does not make for such a good session, of course, since most students will not have done very much of the reading. So now I have students meet that day in the computer lab and get them to do some basic work with the new reading in front of a computer, posting their ideas to the class forum. In the course of an hour they will generate lots of great material that I can use in discussion the following class meeting. And if I wanted, I could have them return to the assignment at home, once they had a chance to really go through the reading, so that I can increase their time on task.

Here is an assignment I used in introducing Abu-Lughod's essay on the day they were turning in papers on James Scott. I think it worked very well.

Applying Scott's Terms to Abu-Lughod's Essay

I know that since all of you were writing Essay #3 for today, you probably did not have much time to read Lila Abu-Lughod's "Honor and Shame" in our book. I hope, though, that you at least read far enough to get a sense of how her essay might be talked about using terms and ideas from Scott.

Today what I want you to do is the following:

Choose an incident from Abu-Lughod's essay that you think would make a good connection with James Scott's essay and discuss it in the forum using at least two quotations. Tell us about the incident you have chosen, and then begin discussing it using terms and ideas from Scott. Discuss at least two quotations at some length using ideas from Scott to help explain these passages. Try to use quotations from Scott as well. And see if you can write two paragraphs in the forum.

I would like you to use your own, original example from the essay, but if you feel you have not read the essay well enough to choose a good incident, consider one of the following:

A) Kamla wrote an essay titled "An Essay on the Young Bedouin Woman of Egypt and the Changes in Her Life over 40 Years" in which, according to Abu-Lughod, "You can trace, in the stilted words of her essay and the candid comments (in parentheses) she made as she read it aloud to me, the outlines of the new world she hoped to gain by marrying the likes of Engineer Ibrahim Saleem." How might Scott interpret the passages of Kamla reading her essay aloud to the author? How would he discuss specific passages and parenthetical remarks?

B) Reread the story about Kamla's cousin Salih drinking liquor. How might Scott interpret this story? What specific passages help us to read the way power and resistance get played out in this incident?

Using Images on the Forum to Stimulate Discussion by Carmen Vendelin

I first thought to post images to the forum for my 201: Photography and Visual Culture class. I knew I would not have much time to devote to teaching the students how to write about images in class and I thought the forum could be used in that capacity. I began by posting images for formal analysis and for students to attempt connecting images to issues in the texts. The students posted images relating to their topics, posing questions and asking for feedback. (The students especially like posting controversial images and starting debates.) My next goal is to get students to use images in their replies, so they think about the visual image as part of their answer.

From this experience, I branched out into the 101 forum. I, like many instructors, was concerned that my students were reading uncritically. Our first reading was Lila Abu-Lughod's "Honor and Shame." In the essay, Abu-Lughod records the comments of Bedouin tribal members. The Bedouin oral tradition includes over-exaggerated insults and name-calling. Many students took their words at face value. I made the following post, hoping that some students would question the Bedouin perspective.

What do women wear in Egypt?

In "Honor and Shame," some members of a Bedouin community describe the dress of urban Egyptian women as immodest. Kamla asserts that some Egyptian girls in the cities go out to clubs and wear "short dresses" (Abu-Lughod 42). Kamla's father is concerned that young Bedouin men will want to marry Egyptian women because they look "so pretty" in these "short dresses" (Abu-Lughod 43). "A group of Bedouin elders" even meets to "discuss what to do about these women who 'walk around naked'" (Abu-Lughod 43). How literal are these statements? Do you think the Bedouin might be exaggerating? How short do you think the "short dresses" are? How long could they be and still be considered indecent by the Bedouin? Has anyone been to Egypt who could describe the way most women dressed when you were there?

Student replies acknowledged that the Bedouin probably exaggerated. I then thought showing them some photos might help accelerate the process. Then they would have more to inform them than their reading skills and logical deduction. I posted images not only of Egyptian women but also of Bedouin. Posters were most interested in the Bedouin images. How, for example, they did or did not conform to student expectations; how they might be

able to preserve the tradition of tattooing (a cultural detail that I do not think the students caught from the one brief mention in the text).

How to do it:

Images can be uploaded from a computer hard drive by clicking the "browse" button next to the "attach image" box, and will appear in the post itself. (Acceptable file types and maximum size are listed.) Image links may also be added by clicking the "IMG" button above the text entry box. With this method, the post contains a link, rather than an image, that must be clicked to open another page with the image.

Section Three: The Web

Introducing a New Reading Using the Web By Barclay Barrios

Generally, I like to have my students locate the new reading in a larger context, and one of the fastest ways I know to do this is for them to use the web. Here are a collection of strategies I've used to get students exploring a new reading--for each, you can have the students do the activities outside of class for homework, or you can book time in one of the computer classrooms and have it as an in-class activity:

1. Use the Link-O-Mat (if there is one for your course). You can either let students explore the links, or direct them to particular ones that you think open up the reading. Discuss what students find or have them post reactions to a class forum.
2. Have students search for the author's name in Google. They can then do a brief oral presentation on the author. Or students can explore the reading through the larger context of the author's work.
3. Start with small groups. Have the groups pick out key terms and key contexts for the essay. Then have them do searches in Google to locate other pages that speak about or to these terms, concepts, and contexts.

PREWRITING

Section One: The Computer Classroom

Brainstorming

Part One: Pose a general assignment to the students to get them thinking about the essay at hand. For instance, one might ask them to comment on the effectiveness of the Broken Windows Theory in Gladwell's essay in relation to a particular place with which they are familiar. You could either write the prompt out using the classroom teacher function in the lab, put it on the board, or pass it out on small sheets of paper, but give them something written rather than just shouted oral directions. (The labs do not have the best acoustics, and there are too many distractions for them to concentrate on oral assignments.) The more vague you are about the kind of situation you are asking them to envision, the more varied their responses will be—i.e., sloppiness in personal hygiene, dirtiness of public buildings, broken down cars left in parking lots—dare we hope it—poor grammar or spelling on a paper!] Have them write for 10-15 minutes without stopping to revise or read over. Ideally, this short writing assignment will have them immediately begin to evaluate the relevance of the theory beyond the example (New York City Subways) given in the Gladwell essay, and it may highlight for them why they react to the essay as they do. Walk around surreptitiously reading over shoulders to identify three or four passages that may lead to good discussion. After the intensive writing session is over, ask if those people would e-mail their passages to you for use in the next class. Alternatively, they could be used as forum postings to generate online discussion between classes.

Part Two: If time allows after the initial writing session, you could have students switch terminals and read each other's work. The reader then has 10-15 minutes to write in response to the first writer. If you have even more time, have the initial writer then respond to the reader, or a third person comment on the first and second writers' texts. The benefit of this is that by the time they leave class, they have already started to put their thoughts in writing and they have identified and captured their instinctive reactions to another writer's ideas. At the end of the session they can e-mail the document to all the writers involved for future reference.

Section Two: The Forum

Forums and Prewriting by Michael J. Cripps

The forum can work well as a venue for prewriting exercises precisely because students can exchange ideas, and receive feedback that can be revisited throughout the drafting process. Since papers are constructed one paragraph at a time, I like to require students to post potential paragraphs for drafts they are working on, complete with textual evidence.

1. When working with one reading, I ask students to create posts that includes two different passages in the reading and to discuss the relationship between those passages.

2. When working with more than one reading, I ask students to post a writing sample that brings together a specific moment from each of those readings.

Each of these forum posts can be linked to an assignment that requires students to visit their peers' prewriting posts and comment on the relationships under discussion.

DRAFTING

Section One: The Computer Classroom

Starting an assignment by Rebecca Hartman

One good use of the computer classroom, especially at the beginning of the semester, is to have students begin their rough drafting in a computer classroom session. I often pair students up and have them discuss the assignment for 5 minutes. Then they can collaboratively type up what they think the assignment is asking them to do. Then the pair works on brainstorming how to approach the draft. Some students prefer to begin with selected quotes, others may choose to draft a working thesis, while others may begin with free-writing. (Instructors can also require a 3-5 minute free-writing session to get students warmed up.) The students then work independently, but side-by-side, getting their rough drafts on paper. In the last 15 minutes of the class, have the pair exchange their drafts, and do a mini-peer review, making suggestions as to whether the draft is directly responsive to the assignment, what direction the essay should take, and which quotations to use. This exercise is especially useful in demonstrating to students that papers get produced in pieces and by actually sitting at the computer and working, a fact that 100 and 100R students often need repeatedly demonstrated.

Section Two: The Forum

Drafting and Forums by Michael J. Cripps

Every teacher and writer knows that the drafting process is at the center of any effort to improve writing. For many students, however, drafting often appears as a chore and as something to be avoided (or minimized). The most successful writing instructors find ways to make drafting work in their classes. A bulletin board forum can extend that work beyond the confines of the classroom, and can distribute more broadly the benefits of drafting.

One way to link peer review to revisions that get into the final draft of a paper is to require students to revise specific passages and post both the original and the revision to the forum. This assignment works best if it is due by the class meeting following a peer review day because it keeps the students thinking about their drafts. Without a requirement of this sort, students often put off revisions until just before the final draft is due and risk losing much of the benefit of peer review.

Section Three: The Web

Using the Writing Program Website

There are a few different resources on the Writing Program website that I think can be useful for students who are approaching or working on a draft.

For starters, you might have students visit particular Tutorama's. I find this especially useful around the third or fourth papers. By then, I have a sense of what each student needs to

work on, so I can send them to a particular tutorama: one that will help feed them directly into their drafts.

The Gradatorium is useful in a similar way. Not only does it provide students with an introduction to grading, but it also serves to model the kinds of writing they should be doing in their drafts. I might ask them to look at a particular paper for a quick discussion of what makes it (or its project or a paragraph) strong or weak. Then I might ask them (in class or in the computer classroom) to produce writing based on that model.

Finally, the different questions located in the Link-O-Mat's are a great way to get students brainstorming and working on connections, projects, and paragraphs that can build into a draft.

WORKING WITH QUOTATION

Section One: The Computer Classroom

Working with Two Passages: Version 1

This is a computer lab version of a traditional classroom exercise, in which you either present the students with two passages from the same reading or with one passage from two separate readings. Note: the benefit of your choosing the passages is that you can identify satisfyingly succulent bits of thought. The downfall is that you can almost guarantee that these two passages will show up in students' papers once they have invested a lab's worth of time on the exercise. To discourage this, encourage them to go through the same process using other passages at the end of the session. Have the students type out the two passages, and then write on the first passage for fifteen minutes or so (a good paragraph's worth). In this paragraph they should try to explain what the writer is saying using their own words and then commenting on it. They then write a similar paragraph on the second passage, followed by a third paragraph connecting the ideas in the first two passages.

Version 2 by Rebecca Hartman

This exercise can be useful as students are revising a rough draft into a final draft. It works best after the second paper.

Students come to class with a pre-chosen quotation that they want to use in their essays. On a blank screen they input the quotation, then write for 5-10 minutes, explaining and interpreting the passage. Students then switch screens and expand upon the interpretation the first students wrote for 5-10 minutes. Then the second students select a quotation from a second text that would connect well with the first quotation. They type this passage and then write 5-10 minutes interpreting it. The students switch back to their original screens. The first students then have in front of them 1. the quotation they initially chose; 2. the interpretation they wrote; 3. the interpretation the 2nd student wrote; 3. a new passage with an interpretation written by the second student.

The first student then writes for 15-20 minutes, constructing a connection between the two quotation. The exercise can continue with the students then moving to develop the connection between the texts as a part of their own arguments. The finished product can be saved to disk or emailed to both students for future reference.

Section Two: The Forum

Textual Protocols and the Forum by Michael J. Cripps

One of the most valuable classroom practices in Expository Writing is the work students do learning to work with specific moments in the readings. Whether the discussion involves the interpretation of difficult passages, techniques for embedding quotes into paragraphs, or even the variety of textual protocols (paraphrase, reference, quotation), the bulletin board is a useful supplement to classroom learning.

1. A useful assignment on textual interpretation requires students to post a passage (from a draft) in which they quote an important passage and interpret it. Peers are required to comment on the interpretation, and to offer alternative readings if they seem more relevant. Peers are required to bring in additional textual support.
2. A useful assignment on textual protocols asks students to post two passages from a draft. One of those passages exhibits the appropriate use of quotation. The other passage either references or paraphrases a moment in a text. The student then explains why these two uses of text are appropriate given the context of the discussion. Peers then comment on those uses of text.
3. A bulletin board forum assignment on smooth integration of quotation into a paragraph asks students to post at least 2 passages (from their drafts) that include quotations. Peers then critically evaluate the mechanics of textual integration. Is there a smooth transition to the quote? Is the citation style correct? Are there alternative ways to integrate the passage into the paragraph? What might they look like?

PEER REVISION

Section One: The Computer Classroom

Round Robin Exercise for Clarifying Focus

This works well at about the midway point of the semester, when students are accustomed to having other students read their work and they are more aware of the benefit of a clearly stated project. It's a good exercise to use when starting a rough draft revision day in the computer lab.

Have the students come in and create a document with their thesis statement/argument/project focus typed at the top. Often, this is enough to point out to some of them that they really don't have an adequate focus for their project. Once everyone has a thesis at the top of a document, have everyone shift to the terminal to the right. The students then read the thesis in front of them and comment on it or paraphrase it, adding their initials afterwards. This should only take two minutes at the most. Have them all shift again until everyone has commented on the original statement and the initial writer is back in place. In the remaining time, have the students work individually on their papers based on the comments received. They might want to concentrate on their first paragraphs or rework their papers entirely.

Working with the Difference between Summary and Analysis by Barbara Hamilton

In a lab session run soon after classroom discussion on the importance of analyzing rather than summarizing, have the students come in, call up their rough draft of the next paper, and switch terminals with a partner. Have the readers add their names to the top of the documents as reviewers, then read through the papers once. On their second reading, direct them to use the highlighting function to identify all quotations in yellow. Then they should highlight all places in the paper where the writer is merely repeating ideas from the text in red. Anything they identify as analysis should be highlighted in green. The reviewer should then save the document on the writer's disk as a separate document.

This color analysis works well through visual impact to show the writers whether they have balanced their content well. In looking at a sea of yellow or a pool of red, it becomes immediately obvious to students that they have strung together too many quotations with little discussion between them, or if they are merely summarizing rather than saying anything original. The disagreements that will arise between writer and reviewer as to whether the reviewer has accurately defined summary and analysis are sometimes hairy but always productive to both parties.

Targeted revision by Rebecca Hartman

This exercise 'forces' students to work on revision. It also may give them insights into the usefulness of reading and responding to instructor and/or peer comments. (It can also give instructors good feedback on how students are interpreting comments on their papers.)

Students are told to select one critical paragraph that instructor and/or peer has commented upon and brainstorm on possible revisions the night before class. (For 100/100r students, it is critical that they bring this brainstorming in writing to class.)

Students create the paragraph on a blank screen. Below the paragraph, in a contrasting font, they summarize the comments and note what they think should be done to effectively revise the paragraph. An important component here is for them to clearly state how such revision will strengthen their overall paper. (I usually ask them to underline this statement.)

Students then spend a significant part of the class period (30 minutes +) on targeted revision of their paragraph, on screen. During this time, the instructor can give individual attention to students.

This exercise can go a couple of ways. Sometimes it is very productive to let students work on this the entire class period. (Some will finish one paragraph and then choose another one to revise. Let them go for it!) Other times, students can really only work on one paragraph. With remaining time, it's useful to have them print their work, exchange it with a peer, who then will comment upon and critique the revision. (Sometimes you can make this exchange quite successful by pairing students based on skills. Thus, a student who has done a good job of revision to improve quotation interpretation can exchange with a student who is struggling with this skill.)

"Traditional" Peer-Revision Day, Lab-Style

If you are still getting accustomed to being in the computer lab, you can easily adapt your usual peer-revision sheets for lab use. Have the students call up their rough draft and then switch terminals with another member of their peer revision group. Have the reviewers type in their names at the top of the documents as commentators or reviewers. Where they would normally make marginal comments, they type their comments in italics, bold, brackets, a different color, or in a text box as close as possible to the passage in question. Caution them against changing spelling or punctuation on the writer's draft. Instead, encourage them to write a note at the end like "You need to look in the handbook and review how to use commas." "Check your spelling." If you have given numbered comments on a peer-revision handout, have them answer those at the end of the draft. When they are done commenting, have them save the new document as a separate file (RD2comments.doc), using the Save As function so they don't cancel out the writer's original draft. Repeat with the other member of the revision group. As always, have the group members discuss each paper and set of comments once the revision work is done.

Section Two: The Forum

Peer Review and Forums by Michael J. Cripps

The bulletin board forum is a great place to make peer review a semi-public event. Publicity is wonderful because it tends to bring out the best in all of us. Students who have to put their names on a review tend to take the process seriously. An added benefit of bulletin

board peer review is its permanence. In the crucible of a paper deadline, students can revisit the forum for some real (written) guidance

I like to require students to post passages from their first drafts to the forum, and to comment critically (and constructively) on their peers' posted passages. The actual assignment that brings drafting beyond the classroom walls varies with the time in the semester, or even the particular class I'm teaching.

1. Early in the semester, I'll focus on body paragraphs in the drafts and require students to post 1 or 2 of those paragraphs, with some discussion of how they are to fit together. I might ask students to post their best and worst paragraphs. I'll assign peers not in the peer revision group for that draft to respond to those posts. A checklist is often very helpful to guide those responses. Does the passage demonstrate appropriate use of text? If not, what might be a better passage or example from the reading? Is the student's voice in control of the paragraph(s)? If not, where is the student's voice? How might the passage (or passages) be rewritten?
2. Later in the term, I'll ask students to post the introductory paragraph and another passage of their choosing.
3. When I teach 201, I like to use the forum to enable more peers to comment on entire drafts. In 201, the papers get quite long (10-15 pages), and it is difficult for students to effectively review more than 1 or 2 papers in a class period. I ask students to take home their peers' drafts and continue to evaluate the drafts for homework. These students must post responses to the forum.

Section Three: Peer Revision for 302/303/312/322 classes

Here are two lab exercises you are welcome to adapt to the needs of your own class.

Topic Proposal/Funding Source Statement Rough Draft Revision

1. Go to either Microsoft Word or Corel WordPerfect. Type in your topic proposal and funding source statement. Once everyone has done that, we will begin.
2. At the signal, everyone should move to the next terminal to the right. Read the proposal and funding source statement and then scroll down to the end. Enter your initials and comment critically (meaning good and bad criticism) on the proposal. When you are done, move to the right again and repeat the process until you have read everyone's work and are back at your own terminal. Don't skip from machine to machine out of order or the whole system will break down. Be patient and wait a minute. Conversely, don't hold up the line by writing a dissertation on the proposal-- a few good sentences will do.
3. If you are having a hard time thinking of something helpful to say about the topic proposal, you may read and comment on other people's comments. If you think someone else's suggestion is good or bad, say so, referring to that person's initials.
4. Once we are all back "home," save the file on your disk under a recognizable name like "proposal comments."

5. Review all of the comments and use them to help you write your final draft of the Topic Proposal and Funding Source Statement.
6. Once you have received approval of your proposal and funding source statement from your instructor, you can start working on your Annotated Bibliography.

Directions for In-lab Peer Revision of Midterm Paper I

One of the main purposes of the midterm sales letter is to get your funding source interested in your idea. You can do that by being as clear and direct as possible in the way that you explain what you propose to do, and you can try and structure your argument so that the benefits to your funding source or its mission are clear. Today, along with the usual stylistic peer revision work, we will use the computer to highlight those places in the draft that may or may not appeal to the funding source. The focus of your attention today will be to remember that these letters are WRITTEN FOR AN AUDIENCE.

1. Insert your disk and pull up your rough draft.
2. Switch terminals with someone else and review each other's work.
3. Complete these steps:
 - a. Write your name at the top of the peer revision sheet as reviewer, and the writer's name as writer.
 - b. Read through the paper once; then start over, paying careful attention to the tone and the way the writer addresses the audience. If you see any passages where you think the writer needs to be more diplomatic in tone, highlight them in red. Highlight passages in green where the writer is doing a good job relating his or her concerns with the funding source's objectives or goals. [Notice the color symbolism!]
 - c. If you see misspellings or awkward grammar, highlight those passages in yellow.
 - d. Using the peer revision sheet from the coursepack, check off the yes and no answers at the top.
 - e. At the end of the person's draft, answer the numbered questions from the handout. Alternatively, you could make comments in brackets directly in the writer's text as close as possible to the passage in question.
 - f. When you are done commenting, please save the new file using the Save As function-- don't cancel out the person's original draft. I suggest naming the file "Rdcomments.doc" or something like that.
4. If you have any bibliographic format questions which cannot be answered by the style guide in the coursepack, try doing a web search to find what you need to know using the online style guides in the Writing Program website or the Rutgers Library site.

5. Switch with your partner and go back to your original terminal. Discuss with each other the comments you have made, and provide suggestions as to how the draft can be made more appealing to the funding source.

ANTI-PLAGIARISM EXERCISES

Section One: The Computer Classroom

Tracking Changes

I think there's always some concern about doing something like peer revision in the computer classroom. It's just so easy for one student to be making suggestions within another student's actual word processing file and then for that student to keep the changes—essentially plagiarizing. One way to side-step this (while also giving your students experience in the kinds of collaborative writing tools used in the business world) is to use the "track changes" feature of Word during any kind of peer revision. Granted, students could still simply merge the changes into their papers, but having the changes visually demarcated from their own text provides a clear boundary for them to respect.

This site has a good tutorial on how to use track changes. Check out the collaborative tools tutorial for Word. Students who are used to Word Perfect can simply have their files imported into Word.

Switching Programs, Gaining Literacy

Another way to make students aware of boundaries during peer revision is to force them to switch word processors during peer revision. That is, if a student's paper is in Word format, ask the peer reviewers to open it in Word Perfect, and vice-versa.

This switch has a few advantages. First off, it physically separates the original paper and the peer revision, which creates physical (well, OK, electronic) boundaries between their words and the suggestions from the peer reviewer. Second, it expands everyone's computer literacy by forcing them to deal with different programs (Word and Word Perfect)

Section Two: The Forum

Exposing Myths

One of the things that makes the forums, in general, so very useful is that it provides a space to open up conversations and discussions. You might start a discussion of plagiarism by having your class post to your class forum (or a cross-section forum) their understanding of what plagiarism is. You don't even have to intervene in this discussion, necessarily.

Encourage students to post their own definition of plagiarism and then respond to one or two others. In the end, the class may reach a consensus of what plagiarism is by talking it out—without you needing to intervene.

Scenarios

Another way to use the forum to open up discussions of plagiarism is to post threads that describe "questionable" situations and then ask your class to reply to the threads and explain

why each is or is not plagiarism. After all, most students understand that just buying a paper is plagiarism; what gives them trouble are situations that are less clear-cut. In this sense, a lot of the plagiarism that actually happens is wholly unintentional—students just don't understand that what they think is getting help or paraphrasing is actually plagiarism.

I think it's particularly useful to use something like the forums to have this discussion because there's already so much that has to be covered in the classroom that moving the discussion outside the classroom allows it to have the space and time that's needed while still giving you a chance to do what needs to be done in the classroom.

Section Three: The Web

Plagiarism in a Larger Context

One of the things I like best about the web is that it lets you get a quick snapshot of an issue in its larger social context. Around the first paper, I'll ask students to research plagiarism on the web (I might have them do this as homework, or bring them into the computer classroom and have them do a quick search as part of a class). Students can find sites about plagiarism and anti-plagiarism web services (such as TurnItIn.com). In part, this research helps students locate a variety of descriptions and definitions of plagiarism.

But I also like to use the web to tie this discussion into some of the issues in our latest reading. For example, there are a number of commercial anti-plagiarism resources, which of course rely on having copies of student papers in their databases. Essentially, they make their money off student work and students get nothing from the deal. I think this raises important issues about Intellectual Property which students can discuss in relation to something like Drucker or Pollan. That way, students 1) learn about plagiarism 2) learn about in a larger context and 3) think about it in the context of the reading we're doing.

TEACHERLY CONCERNS

Section One: Introduction

Technology has exploded at a somewhat intimidating rate, and at times you may feel that you are doing so much maintenance on your individual Web site, Internet searching, or e-mail/forum communication with students that you have less even less time for a personal life outside of Rutgers. It doesn't help that students keep somewhat different hours than we do and do not understand why we didn't immediately answer an e-mail sent frantically at 2:00 am. They want instant messages to be answered instantly, even if you are talking to a few other students, working on your website, posting to the forum, and checking out the Link-O-Mat simultaneously. Here are some tips from people who are in various stages of recovery from technology overload.

Section Two: The Web

Collaborative Tech Learning

Students always expect me to be the tech expert for the class. I guess I could be, but I'm not comfortable in that role and I don't think it's one I should be playing—it just doesn't feel pedagogically productive. I avoid this by giving my students a "tech skills survey" before our first trip to the lab. I ask them to identify their experience level with a variety of programs like Word or WordPerfect as well as their comfort with a variety of general computer skills. I distribute a collated list to the class, making it clear that all learning in our classroom is collaborative and that includes technological skills. Students actually come to enjoy helping each other figure out computer problems or software features.

Section Three: The Forum

A Caution on Bulletin Board Forums by Michael J. Cripps

I have used forums in my Writing Program classes since 1999. I migrated to forums out of frustration with the reading journals I used to require students to keep. I required a reading journal in my Writing Program classes for a whole host of reasons. I wanted students to read carefully (and critically), to isolate difficult passages in the texts and to work with them, and to reflect on initial ideas once they had read an essay several times. Students hated the reading journal requirement and (to be honest) I hated having to collect (and grade!) the journal.

Bulletin board forums offered me a way to retain the benefits of a reading journal without the weighty burden of lugging around notebooks. Moreover, they made it possible for students to share thoughts on the readings, and more. My first semester with a forum on WebCT was a disaster. I quickly learned that bulletin board forums, like any element of instructional technology, do not magically improve classroom practices, reduce the

instructor's workload, or make students write more effective essays. Forums can do all of these things, but only if you locate ways to put them at the center of your portfolio of requirements.

Here are four tips:

- Make forum usage a requirement.
Students are very busy. They will not visit and post regularly if it remains "optional." I require 5 posts per week. This seems like a lot, but it really isn't. A student can meet this requirement in about one hour's work each week. And the assignments I give make it possible for the students' posts to feed right into the drafting process.
- Seed the discussion and monitor regularly.
Productive forum activity does not spring forth spontaneously. I like to get things rolling during the first few weeks by modeling the kinds of posts (questions and responses) I'd like to see students making. Like all bulletin board forums, they require some sort of monitor. If students think you're not visiting the forum they won't take care with their posts.
- Bring posts into class.
I use the discussion on the bulletin board forum to help me with my class plans for a given day. When there is a new reading due, I'll often visit the forum just before class to see what students are writing about it. This helps me gauge where the class is on the reading, and enables us all to benefit from more focused class discussion.
- Encourage students to experiment.
Treat the bulletin board as a place for students to test their ideas. Assignments can help students try out their prospective paper topics, and can even help them refine specific components of a particular draft. If the forum can develop the culture of a functioning peer group, students will treat it as a great place to advance ideas in a low-risk environment.

Section Four: Other Concerns

Email Boundaries by Barclay Barrios

I think it's crucial to establish firm boundaries with your students around email. The temptation for them is to email you at any time, and the temptation for you is to check your email all the time. The problem, of course, is that this fosters dependence in your students and leaves you "always on the clock." In the end, it's in the best interests of all your students as well as your sanity to establish firm email boundaries. Here are some suggestions:

1. Have separate work and personal email addresses. I always use RCI as my work email—students get that address but friends get a different one. That way, I don't have to worry about work interrupting my personal time.
2. Make clear when you check mail and when you don't. I let students know I only check mail when in the office. Otherwise, they need to wait for me to get in the next day (or after the weekend).

3. Limit what can be done through email. I don't accept papers through email without special arrangement. I don't comment on drafts emailed to me except through special arrangement. I make it clear that email is best used for brief correspondence, such as alerting me to an absence or asking me a question. Anything more significant is best handled in person.
4. Provide alternate means of contact. I let students know the best way to reach me is by phone—often I am simply too busy to answer emails, but if they reach me by phone, they get a reply right away. You might not want to give out your phone number, but you can provide your own hierarchy of contact. You might, for example, tell students the best way to reach you is right before or after class, and then in your office hours, and then with a note in your mailbox, and only then by email.