

Strategies for Facilitating Student Success in Writing

Involve students in teaching texts: ask cohorts to prepare and present summaries of chapters or sections

- Promotes—indeed requires—active reading
- Provides practice in essential skills: recognizing claims, identifying central points of evidence, producing fair, complete, accurate summaries
- Reduces student anxiety about mastering the whole
- Gets the whole text before the class
- Provides you a series of opportunities to correct misreadings or misunderstandings
- Provides effective review

Write out your writing assignments; be explicit about what you want; use directive verbs; define your terms

- Speaks to the reality of student work patterns; provides direction when they need it most
- Makes compliance—and success—more likely, and so, facilitates further compliance and success
- Conveys your own seriousness about the enterprise

Give essay exams; teach the process; make your questions explicit and directive; let them practice

- Requires students to seize and order the material
- Makes clear who understands and who does not
- Challenges students not merely to report (or even guess) but to analyze and synthesize, to see and explain connections, to make sense

Make writing assessment easier for you to do and easier for students to understand: use a rubric, and share it with your class

- Reduces the suspicion that assessment is eccentric, subjective, or directed by voodoo
- Helps students focus their efforts by making clear standards and goals
- Makes easier your own work

Prevent plagiarism: make eccentric assignments; require source defenses; make use of subtasking

- Helps students by making them do the work they need to do themselves in order to build essential skills
- Helps reduce the pressure which is one of the causes of plagiarism, by preventing procrastination
- Provides practice in the essential skill of source analysis
- Avoids horror