

FROM THE IDEA TO THE ESSAY:  
JOURNAL WRITING AS A  
MEANS OF HELPING  
FINAL DRAFTS

Thesis

Submitted to

The College of Arts and Sciences  
of the  
UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
The Degree  
Master of Arts in English

by

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UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

Dayton, Ohio

July 1993

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## ABSTRACT

### FROM THE IDEA TO THE ESSAY: JOURNAL WRITING AS A MEANS OF HELPING FINAL DRAFTS

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University of Dayton, 1993

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Journal writing has been proven by scholars and researchers to help some students improve their writing. But very few studies have looked to see if there are any specific types of journal assignments that can help students write certain types of assignments. I decided to answer two questions that would enable me to see more clearly the connection between journal assignments and the drafts written by two groups of my students in the spring and fall semesters of 1992. First, what is the connection between journal writing and the content of student essays? And how does the type of journal assignment affect or influence the students' writing in their formal essays?

My study indicated that the amount of improvement in student writing depended on the students themselves and their motivation to work in the journals. Generally, students who completed both "focused" and "open" assignments and made a genuine effort in class showed improvement in their papers. Further, students who did not see the important role that the journals could play to their writing and their grades tended to write weaker papers.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to gratefully thank Dr. Steve Wilhoit for all his help in guiding me through this thesis. His ability as a teacher and advisor has been invaluable to me during this project and in the Master's program at UD.

I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of several people who have played an important role in the completion of this thesis. First, Dr. Betty Youngkin, whose insightful comments on several drafts helped shape this thesis. Also, Dr. Brian Conniff, for his guidance near the end of this project, and to Molly for keeping me on task when I did not want to be.

Finally, to Henry David Thoreau, who wrote: "What a man thinks of himself, that it is which determines, or rather indicates, his fate."

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## Chapter One--Introduction to the Research

In composition classrooms the journal has long been a tool that students can use to explain their feelings, express themselves, respond to issues and topics that concern them, and experiment with and explore writing in general. For these and many other reasons, writers and researchers such as Toby Fulwiler, Donald Murray, Ken Macrorie, and Peter Elbow have stressed the importance of journal writing in the composition classroom. However, few investigations done examined the specific ways specific journal assignments have helped improve students' essays. To investigate this connection more fully, I conducted a study of my students and the journals they kept as part of the introductory composition classes I taught in the spring and fall of 1992 at the University of Dayton. My investigation sought to answer two questions. First, what is the connection between journal writing and the content of student essays? And second, how does the type of journal assignment affect or influence the students' writing in their formal essays?

The answer to these questions can contribute to current research on journal writing, which sees the journal as an aid to student learning, a means of self understanding, and a tool for improving our students' writing.

## Writing to Assist Learning

Writers like Janet Emig, Frank Smith, and Linda Flowers and John Hayes have long stressed the link between writing and learning. Today numerous researchers see a connection between the cognitive processes that Flower and Hayes identified as essential to successful composing and problem solving and the types of journal assignments that are becoming prevalent in composition classrooms today. For instance, in "Progress Logs: Teaching Writing Process Awareness," Kristie Fleckenstein sees a direct link between journal writing and "the general cognitive aspects of the writing process" investigated by Flower and Hayes (106-07). As a way of helping students think "metacognitively" about their writing--that is, to think about their own thinking as they compose essays--Fleckenstein proposes that writers keep a "progress log" which enables them to be more aware of the way they are developing a text (106). As the students write their essays, they keep a log of the "techniques, strategies, problems, and solutions they use, encounter or discover" (106). These entries allow the students to learn about the process they have employed to produce a piece of writing. By focusing on the process, the students "become conscious of what they do as they write," and "are more able to control their activities" (106).

Similarly, in "A Writing Log Helps Teachers Help Students," Anne Wescott Dodd writes that basic writers were able to think about their composing processes more deeply because of the writing log they kept in class. Each student was to keep a log of "the dates and times they worked on writing during the week and comment on what they did during that time" (27). This log gave the students an opportunity to think and write about the way they compose papers. It enabled them to see what they liked and disliked about their work. Also, the students could use the logs as a tool for future reference. One of the students wrote that the logs were "very helpful to look back on, to find helpful techniques used before" when writing papers (31). Another commented that "keeping a log helped me to see how I was using my time. I pinpointed my problems" (31).

Writing also assists learning through the development of content for the students' essays (Stanley 22). As students write more on a topic, they will learn more about it, become more interested in it, and be more motivated to write about it in the future. For instance, Ken Macrorie, in the Foreword to Toby Fulwiler's The Journal Book, sees the connection between increasing student motivation and interest in writing with the learning process. He notes that as students become more adept at using the



journals, "they become more and more engaged, they often write more clearly, and their journal entries display fewer mistakes . . ." (2). He continues that

the payoffs from using journals in classrooms are here shown to be astounding. Students learn from making mistakes and half-forming ideas. They learn to think, not by doing exercises in a faddish "critical thinking" textbook, but by working their way through real questions, with real interest and real intent. (Foreword)

Building interest in composing is crucial if students are to learn from writing. Macrorie and Fulwiler use the journal as a tool to raise students' interest in writing because of the variety of writing strategies and topics which the journals can incorporate. These researchers have found that once students get interested in the journals and the writing, they will begin to examine their own work more carefully and will want to develop more fully as writers.

The third way that writing can assist learning is by helping students develop voice and an argumentative position in their essays. Here, the form journal assignments assume seems to matter less than the type of reflection they promote and the type of writing they encourage. According to Pat D'Arcy, in "Writing to Learn," the lack of form or organization typical of many journal

assignments actually facilitates learning for many students (42). He says, "in searching for a form of writing that would serve students as a mode of learning, I discovered paradoxically that the formlessness of journals enabled the students' own voices to be heard in their own writing" (42). This "formlessness" is invaluable to student writers because it encourages them to develop their own voice in their writing and to work out their own positions on issues. The journal acts as an experimental laboratory where students can learn to develop their own style of writing and their own argumentative strategies.

Additionally, the writing journal plays an important role in the writing across the curriculum classroom. Students learn not only about the content of the particular course, but according to Brian Connery, they learn how "to enrich themselves, authorize themselves, startle and amaze themselves, and humanize themselves"(103). This enrichment develops throughout the course as the students gradually develop "methods of criticism and analysis applicable both to writing and to other disciplines" through the journal entries and other writing assignments given during the semester (103). Connery believes it is important to relay to our teaching colleagues in all disciplines the idea that writing assists in the learning process, but it is just as important to relay to them that "writing . . . is valuable

in and of itself" (101). Too often teachers outside the humanities do not realize the importance that writing can play in students' intellectual development.

Journal writing not only enables students to improve their writing skills, but it also can help in their critical thinking and reading skills. For many first-year students, reading is not an important part of their lives (Reagan 179). Upon entering college, however, most will learn that if reading does not become integral to their studies, they will not get through the first year. Nancy F. Browning, following the theories of Frank Smith and Donald Graves concerning the relationship between reading and writing, proposed a journal in her reading/study skills course which "had students write weekly about how to cope with problems in their classes" (39). Students read in class and often responded to their readings in their journals. Browning discovered that such student reactions to readings would involve the students more acutely in their assignments at higher critical and analytical levels (39). In addition, by writing about these readings, the students were developing and organizing their ideas, as well (39). Linking critical reading and writing, according to Emig, will encourage "analysis and synthesis" of course material (40). In essence, the students "will have written themselves toward understanding" (Fulwiler, "Journals" 40).

### Journal Writing as a Means to Understand Oneself

Just as journals enable students to comprehend more fully their own writing process and intellectual development, so too can they help students come to a better understanding about themselves and their beliefs. For instance, Stanley and Shimkin argue that journals allow the student to "trace his/her intellectual and emotional growth and so come to a greater understanding of him/herself" (2). In essence, Stanley and Shimkin believe that journals work to help the students attain "multiple learning purposes," which "initiate students into particular modes of thinking . . ." (2). The journal assignments can be designed to expose to more than one idea or theory at the same time, their own as well as others'.

In her composition classes, Stanley tries to encourage her students to examine, through informal writing, their views of "self and society" (22). Stanley's goal is to learn what she can about her students' "struggle to make sense of their lives and to encourage them to find language to express their experiences so that their language and their reality could more nearly coincide" (23). To attain this understanding, Stanley uses in-class freewriting as well as focused journal entries where she specifies the topic the students are to address "off the top of their heads"(23). Further, she assigns the students entries

which would encourage them to examine their beliefs as well as their position in society (23). She explains that the questions she assigns her students are similar to those given by Robert Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton in their book, Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life. Some questions that the authors used in their survey of middle class Americans to "determine what sense [Americans] made of their individual and collective lives" (21) were: "How ought we to live? Who are we, as Americans? and What is our character" (21)? Stanley used similar questions in her journal assignments to initiate student thinking about their lives and their role in society, thus enabling them to learn more about themselves and their relationship to their environment. Why is all this important? To Stanley, its importance is couched in the hope that students will begin to use language in a different, richer, and more experimental manner to learn more about themselves and their place in society. Stanley sees a connection between learning with writing and experimenting with the methods one employs in the writing process. She believes that if students experiment with their own writing process in their journals, they will learn more about how they write and can become stronger writers because of this new knowledge. Without such

Stephen W. Schwartz teaches a freshman orientation course at Marietta College in which journals play a fundamental role in helping the students learn how to cope with their first year of college. Schwartz uses "personal journal writing as a means of enhancing adjustment and coping skills" (2). The course and personal journals are centered around "life issues that are central to the development of adults" (2). Each of these issues-- identity, intimacy, autonomy, and competency--is the focus for different sections of the journal (3). Schwartz uses the journal assignments to help the students through their difficult first year, and to encourage them to learn more about both themselves and their life goals.

### Types of Journals

Clearly, there is not one perfect form of journal writing. Much of the learning that takes place through keeping a journal results from the amount of commitment individual students give to the process as well as the type of journal entries the professor assigns. There are numerous forms of journals, each with its own strengths and purposes which can facilitate student learning. Among them are progress journals, private journals, shared journals, dialogues, and focused journals.

As mentioned earlier, Fleckenstein uses progress logs in her writing courses to help students begin "to exercise

of the progress log is to keep students focused on the procedures they follow when writing for class (106). As such, the logs serve as a "companion diary" to the essays in class. Fleckenstein's hope is that through keeping and frequently referring to these logs, students will develop a broader range of strategies to rely on when problems occur in their writing process. The journals call for the students to "subject their personal writing styles to the same analytical eye they have used on professional writers in past classes" (112). This self-analysis is often the first time that students have looked critically at their own writing.

Personal or private journal writing has become an important way for students to learn not only about themselves but also about becoming better writers. Some of the published material on journal writing discusses personal writing using the method of Ira Progoff which stresses understanding the self through personal writing. Progoff says,

As the events of a life set themselves in order, giving perspective for the past and guidance for the future, something additional happens. It is as though previously untapped knowledge is activated so that a person is brought face to face with . . . the meaning of his personal existence.

It is there before him, collected in his own handwriting in his Intensive Journal. (quoted in Connors 25)

Patricia Connors uses personal journal entries as an invention technique for her students. In "Making Private Writing Public: Teaching Expressive Writing in the Composition Class," she contends that students, through expressive journal writing, will be encouraged "to develop fluency, to explore topics, and to find subject matter--to invent" (26). Because she sees, as did Progoff, the importance of private journal writing as a way to help students learn, Connors developed a four-step process of journal writing in her course to stimulate students to write about themselves and then to share their ideas and beliefs with the class in order to promote discussion and further learning.

The first step in Connors' process is to allow the students to write a "large body of private expressive writing through specific journal writing assignments" (26). After completing numerous journal entries (Connors does not specify exactly how many), the students next select certain entries that they will share with the class. Connors discusses several ways that "sharing" may take place. The third step in the process is externalizing, "the real leap from private to public writing" (27). Typically, the



students will complete "a number of writing assignments with informative or persuasive purposes, including revision" (27). This assignment could be an "article on how to cope with divorce based on personal experience or a short story based on a childhood incident" (27). The final step is "public distribution" (27). Students can submit an article or story for publication, create a class booklet, or just distribute copies of the work to the entire class (27).

Similarly, Margaret Vaughn uses expressive journal writing to help students "understand themselves within their environment" (15). She believes, along with Progoff, that personal writing is best done when the writing is focused (16). Like Connors, Vaughn gives specific journal assignments to focus her students' attention on topics pertinent to class discussion. She found that certain patterns began to occur in her students' thought processes. For instance, although she did not notice it at the outset of her study, Vaughn saw an "observation/speculation/reflection pattern" in the way that her students responded in their journals (16). Typically, students write on a topic and move through each of these three stages of analysis during different assignments. For instance, in the first assignment students may make general observations about a topic like "work." Next, they might speculate about the

consequences of work in the lives of people. Finally, they may reflect back on the previous two entries and attempt some sort of synthesis or comparison between the ideas expressed earlier. If the students choose to look back on the journals, some of this writing in the pattern may "later supply content for more finished writing; or it may not. Occasionally, it surprises" the writer (17).

Another journal form is the dialogue. With this approach the teacher plays as important a role in the writing as the student because the teacher responds in some way to the students' writings in the journal. By doing so, the teacher becomes "a co-participant in ongoing, written conversation" (Peyton 1). Joy Kreeft Peyton employs the dialogue journal in her work with the English as a Second Language students she teaches at the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington D.C. (2). Peyton allows her students to write in their journals as much as possible on whatever topic they choose every day (2). The role of the teacher is very diverse. The teacher acts as a questioner, answerer, and commenter, but never as an evaluator or corrector (2). For Peyton, the most important justification for dialogue journals

is that reading and writing at all levels and in any curriculum can be interactive, just as speaking is, and students' literacy skills can

develop along with their speaking skills--in the context of genuine interaction with a person with whom they want to communicate. (6)

### Evaluating Journals

Evaluation of journals is an issue of considerable debate among teachers because many do not see the need to put a grade on ideas or beliefs students express there. Other professors believe that giving the journal a grade will encourage students to do more work and to take the assignments more seriously.

Many educators think that grading journals in the traditional sense, making a distinct evaluation of the journal as a whole, should not be practiced. Rather, a regular response, such as commenting on students' work once a week, is necessary to help the students with their writing. For example, in "Sharing Journals," Judith M. Newman writes that as she keeps a running dialogue with her students in their journals she responds to them weekly. Rather than give the journals a grade, she asks questions, answers questions, offers encouragement, empathizes, provides moral support, and suggests writing strategies for the essays they are writing (136-37). Each of these responses allows the student to continue the dialogue, while Newman still generally guides the student's writing in a beneficial way. Newman purposely tries to rid the

students of their anxiety about writing for the teacher and encourages them to "examine their own writing" (140). The hope is that the students' writing will become more focused as a result of such responses as they learn more about their own composing processes and strategies. Peyton also believes that journals should never be evaluated or corrected (2). She explains:

There is no overt error correction in the journals. The teacher has many opportunities to correct errors on other assignments, but this is one place where students write freely, without the need to focus on form. (4)

On the other hand, Browning sees the need to place grades on journal assignments. A journal assignment can receive one of three grades: a "check+" for exceptional work, a "check" for satisfactory work, and a "check-" for uncompleted work. She assigns these "very general marks on the journals . . . , because this assignment [keeping a journal] encompasses a large proportion of the class requirements and because it seems to help less intrinsically motivated students to complete their work" (42). Clearly, the main reason that Browning grades the entries is to keep the unmotivated students working on the journals. However, the only way that her students cannot get some credit for the work is if they fail to do an

assignment (42). Often, this type of response is enough for the students to keep up with the work and to thoughtfully and honestly attempt each assignment. Browning sees the need for grading, and she thinks her method is sound because the journals are personal and designed to encourage students to take risks with their writing (42). If traditional letter grades were given for entries, the chances of students writing for the teacher instead of for themselves are much greater.

### Conclusion

Clearly, journal writing can be an important way for teachers in all disciplines to help their students learn not only about their own composing styles but also about the course material, their attitudes concerning society, and the world they inhabit. As many leading teachers and scholars have found, effective use of journals promotes learning about the subject, and it enables writers to experiment with the language without fear of formal evaluation. Less explored, though, are the specific uses to which students put specific kinds of journal writing assignments. Do all types of assignments promote learning equally well for students? Do students find certain types of assignments more helpful when exploring a topic, forming a position, or developing their own voice? Which types of assignments seem to promote the type of

introspection so many theorists suggest journal writing encourages?

To find answers to questions like these, I studied the journals my students kept in two introductory composition classes. In the following chapters, I will describe these classes, explain the nature and scope of my study, and suggest what my findings contribute to a better understanding of the specific ways that specific types of journal assignments influence students' writing, attitudes, and growth.

## Chapter Two--Journal Writing in the College Classroom: Two Examples

My interest in journal writing arose during the fall of 1991 when I was a graduate assistant teaching introductory composition for the first time. The first semester I taught I did not use journals in my class because I was afraid the majority of my students would not find them challenging. However, as I slowly began finding ways to incorporate journal writing into my classes, I noticed more improvement in my students' writing. Other factors such as homework assignments or extra work done by the students may explain this improvement, but I believe one of the primary reasons for it is the consistent use of journal writing which enabled my students to practice, without fear of penalty, the writing and reasoning skills they need to master. However, if journal writing is to help students, the types of assignments given and responses offered need to match the goals of the course in which they are employed. I learned this teaching two introductory writing courses--English 102 and English 101.

### English 102

The purpose of English 102 at the University of Dayton is to prepare students to write college-level argumentative and persuasive essays including research papers. In the

course, students learn such important skills as critical reading and summarizing; quoting, paraphrasing, and documenting source material; conducting research; and analyzing, critiquing, and composing arguments. Most of the assignments in the course require students to argue for a position they have formed through reflection, discussion, and library research. Students in 102 receive a grade based on at least seven written papers, including a multi-source argumentative research paper.

#### Text

The primary text I used in English 102 spring term 1992 was Writing Arguments: A Rhetoric with Readings, by John D. Ramage and John C. Bean. This text teaches argument construction and analysis based on the theories of Stephen Toulmin. In addition, the text contains a wide assortment of readings arranged thematically; it helped stimulate discussion and worked well with the response and summary journal assignments I asked my students to complete.

#### Assignments

The students were assigned seven papers to write. Each paper (except for the last one) demanded increasingly more difficult and complex research and documentation skills. After completing summaries, analyses, and critiques of readings, the students wrote comparison,



definition, and evaluation arguments, then finished the term analyzing fiction. (The assignment sheets for these essays and the course policy sheet are included in Appendix A.)

First, students wrote a summary of a reading. Since one primary goal of the course was to teach library research and the ability to extract important information from sources, learning to locate and summarize the main ideas of a source text was essential. The next essay involved analysis. In this assignment the students were to identify, using Toulmin's terms, an argument's major claims, grounds, and warrants. At this point in the course, the students received detailed instruction on proper methods for quoting and paraphrasing material.

The third paper assigned was a critique. Drawing on what they learned from writing their summaries and analyses, the students were to use Toulmin's model of argument analysis to argue for the value or worth of a position presented in a source text. This assignment allowed the students to determine the strength of an argument based on how well it was presented and supported.

In the fourth assignment students were asked to compare and contrast any two articles in Writing Arguments which took opposing sides on the same topic. The students

were to choose the side with which they agreed and support their view using the articles as well as their own knowledge and experience. In presenting their argument, they also had to refute the opposite position, again drawing on the readings in the text for support. This paper was the first for which my students had the option of using library research if they wished. Rather than basing their paper on two articles from the text, they could draw on two articles with similar themes that they found in the library. At the end of this paper the students included a works cited list for the first time.

In the fifth paper the students were asked to write a definition argument, gathering all of their information from library research. In this assignment the students had to argue whether a specific person, act, or event fit the definition of a more general, abstract term. For instance, one of the possible topics was "Is Magic Johnson a true hero?" The students' goal for this essay was to define what a hero is and then determine whether Magic Johnson adequately meets the criteria. The students were asked to analyze and evaluate the criteria and decide which supporting sources would strengthen their argument.

The sixth paper, the evaluation essay, continued to build on the definition paper. In this assignment the students were to determine the qualitative worth of some

suggested topics was "Is democracy a good form of government?" The students conducted research not only on "democracy" but also on "government" and what makes it "good" or effective.

The seventh and final paper involved literary analysis. Because many of the students had never written essays about literature before, I thought that this would be a positive way to end the semester. After reading and discussing "A Good Man is Hard to Find" by Flannery O'Connor, the students had a choice of two possible assignments. In the first they were asked to choose popular actors who could portray the major characters if the story were made into a film. The students were to convince their readers that their choices were sound based on their understanding of the characters in the story and their knowledge of the actors' careers. The second assignment they could choose was an analysis of the story based on plot, theme, or character development. This paper was due the final day of class.

#### Journal Assignments

The spring of 1992 was the first time that I had taught using journals. Though I had kept journals as a student in some of my undergraduate classes, I had yet to experiment with them as a teacher. During this semester I used only focused journal assignments, assignments in which

I specified exactly what I wanted the students to write about in their entries (Connors; Vaughn). I used only focused assignments because I thought that my students might have a difficult time choosing what to write about without some guidance, and I was not confident in my own ability to give students suitable guidelines for open journal assignments. I felt secure that my focused assignments would keep them centered on the issues and ideas we were discussing in class and might improve the quality of the essays they were working on since each assignment was linked in some way to one of the seven essays.

Generally, the students wrote four types of focused journal assignments in English 102. The first kind of assignment attempted to improve my students critical reading skills (Browning) and stimulate discussion within the class. For instance, one assignment asked the students to read several articles in Writing Arguments which we were scheduled to discuss in the next class. I wanted to initiate student thinking about the essays and the issue they addressed (whether or not to distribute free contraceptives in high schools) before we talked about them in class. The students were asked to write down their opinion on the issue and explain why they held it. I wanted the students to look for the main points in the

articles so their own opinions could be strengthened by knowing and understanding what the various authors had to say.

Another type of journal assignment I used in English 102 gave students practice writing the kinds of essays they were working on in class at that point in the course. For example, when we were writing summaries, many of the journal entries gave the students an opportunity to practice summary writing. Next, when we moved on to analyzing arguments, many of the journal assignments helped students learn to write an analysis paper. I could build on the summary assignments by asking the students to analyze the same article in their journals using their earlier summary as a guide. I then had them write movie reviews in their journals to practice writing critiques. The students could look at how they critiqued a film and see patterns of development similar to the Toulmin model. This led to a better understanding of the critique assignment as well as Toulmin argumentation. Normally, I gave one or two journal entries linked to each paper so the students could practice writing and thinking about the specific topics and types of essays we were discussing. Then, if problems with certain assignments arose, I would talk to the class about them and give more journal work for the students to do.

Two less frequently used journal assignments were freewrites and audience awareness exercises. Freewriting is a fairly common invention technique in which students write on a topic for a certain length of time in order to develop some ideas for their papers. The theory, proposed by Peter Elbow in Writing Without Teachers, holds that writers can discover strong ideas for an essay if they can remain focused on a subject by continuously writing about it for a brief amount of time, usually 3-5 minutes. Usually, freewriting is done early in the writing process, but it is not unusual to find writers going back to it as an invention technique when they experience difficulty. The class wrote audience awareness exercises to gain a better understanding of a particular audience they may be writing for in the future. For instance, the class was asked to write three responses to an article in the local paper concerning the university's basketball team, each aimed at a different audience: a concerned alumnus, the president of the university, and the basketball player whom the original article offended. The class completed only a few assignments like this because they generally were not having trouble developing their ideas or writing to the assigned audiences of their essays, and, thus, did not often need the practice that these journal entries could provide.

During the semester, I assigned a total of twenty journal entries. Approximately half of them were written in class and the remainder were completed by the students at home. Overall, the journal proved to be an effective way of stimulating discussion in a required class that traditionally is one many students find boring.

### English 101

According to the department syllabus, English 101 at the University of Dayton is designed to improve the students' "critical reading and writing skills through analysis and practice in the processes of reading and writing." Essentially, the course employs a process-oriented, aims and modes approach to composition requiring students to write at least eight papers. Some of the major skills taught to the first-year students are reading college-level prose critically and analytically, understanding and utilizing the stages of the writing process when composing essays, writing for different audiences, and developing the ability to edit and revise their own essays. The primary difference between English 101 and English 102 is that English 101 focuses on expository writing, 102 on argumentative and persuasive discourse.

### Text

The primary text I used in English 101 was The Macmillan Writer: Rhetoric, Reader, Handbook which offers instruction on the writing process and nine rhetorical modes. The book also gives the student important information about reading texts critically, taking an essay test, and writing about literature.

### Writing Assignments

The students completed eight essays in English 101 during the fall of 1992: process, illustration, definition, division-classification, comparison-contrast, in-class essay, summary, and a journal reflection. I also assigned a final in-class essay and summary to help prepare my students for the department-wide exit exam all English 101 students must complete. The primary goal of the course is to give students instruction on and practice in writing a variety of papers they will likely be assigned in their other college courses. (The assignment sheets and my course policy sheet for English 101 are located in Appendix B.)

The first paper of the semester involved process analysis, which requires students to exercise their skills in analysis and description. The second paper was an illustration essay. I asked the students to "use specific examples with details to support the assertion you make in



your thesis" (See Appendix C). This assignment builds on the process paper by asking the students not only to order their ideas coherently but also to add support for their opinions.

The next assignment was a comparison/contrast essay which asked the students to analyze two ideas, situations, or products that are similar in some ways but different in others. The writers' goal for the essay was to make a choice between the two products, situations, or ideas and support the decision using evidence logically developed in the paper. This assignment naturally builds on the illustration paper because the students are defending their position, but, at the same time, they are looking at more than one source of information.

The fourth paper, division/classification, called on students to analyze information and categorize ideas. For instance, one of the three possible assignments the students could choose was to think of several excuses they have heard used for turning work in late, and then divide these excuses into separate categories based on their similarities. The fifth paper was a problem/solution essay which asked the students to propose an answer to a particular campus problem. As a class we chose five possible topics according to their importance in the minds of the students and the possibility of being addressed in a

clear, logical way. This paper continued to build on the analytical skills the previous four had begun by having the students define a particular problem, develop several possible solutions, and decide which is the best.

The sixth paper the students wrote was a summary of Michael Korda's essay "Obtaining Power." The summary enabled the students to get a stronger understanding of Korda's main points before they wrote the seventh paper, an in-class essay based on Korda's article. The format of the in-class essay was identical to that used for the departmental final examination.

The students wrote their seventh and final paper in their journals. I asked the students to write a response paper about the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of their journals as a learning tool during the semester. This assignment proved to be a good way to get response from the students about the journals, and it helped me plan my journal exercises for the future because I was able to elicit suggestions from the students about the assignments' strengths and weaknesses. The assignment asked the student to get as specific as possible with their examples and explanations.

### Journal Assignments

My journal guidelines for the fall of 1992 were different than those from the previous spring. I decided to allow the students much more freedom when choosing topics and issues for entries. While I continued to use focused journal entries, as in English 102, I now added open entries, assignments in which the students decided what and how to write. With open entries the students could write about whatever they wished as long as they were not writing entries that simply recounted their daily activities (see D'Arcy). (The journal guidelines I distributed to the students are included in Appendix D.)

The students could also count rough drafts, practice grammar exercises, responses to issues discussed both in and out of class, responses to issues that affected them personally, and creative writing if they desired. They turned in the journals four times during the semester so I could see if the entries were being completed properly (Vaughn). At the end of the term the students' journal grades were based on the number of assignments that they completed correctly. Most of the students submitted at least the required minimum of 45 entries; surprisingly, some even turned in more. The journal grade accounted for 10% of the course grade.

I assigned approximately twenty of the 45 entries during the term. In addition, students had the option of responding to assignment sheets which I called "Journal Quotables," quotations from famous authors that normally had something to do with the issue the class was discussing at that time. For instance, one quote students could consider when we were discussing the issue of censorship was from William Shakespeare: "Art made tongue tied by authority." Typically, the students were to explain what the quote meant to them and then give their view of the issue. I was careful to ask the students to give support for their views. The aim of these exercises was to help satisfy one goal of English 101: to encourage students to think not only about their writing but also about issues and concerns that will affect them once they leave college. (A sample quotable sheet may be found in Appendix E.)

I also allowed my students to write rough drafts in their journals. I thought this would work to the students' advantage because in the past many had not earned any kind of course credit for their rough drafts. These assignments proved to be effective because, as a result, more students wrote multiple drafts of their essays which tended to improve their writing.

### Role of Journal Writing

Throughout the semester, the journals served several functions in the English 101 class. First, they gave students practice writing the types of essays they were writing in class at that time. For example, as the class prepared to write the summary essay, they were assigned various articles from the text to summarize as practice. Another assignment I used read "In your journal, write the process you go through in the morning to get ready to go to class." Such assignments call on students to practice analyzing a process, identifying its constituent parts, then presenting their findings logically and clearly to their readers, typically employing some type of chronological organization. Second, the journals stimulated class discussion. Once students had written a journal assignment on a reading, they seemed to feel more comfortable talking about it in class; they were more familiar with the author's ideas, and they already knew what their response was. Next, journals helped to teach critical reading because the assignments often asked the students to do some type of summary, analysis, or critique of a source (Browning).

The fourth role that the journal played in my English 101 class was to encourage multi-draft writing. Allowing students to write drafts in their journals emphasized the

important role such drafts play in improving writing.

Finally, the journals offered practice with grammar and audience adaptation if the students were having difficulty with those particular aspects of their writing.

The next chapter will look more closely at the different journal assignments I used in each class. I will analyze in more detail the students' responses to the specific assignments I gave them, paying particular attention to the connection between what the students wrote in their journals and what they wrote in their final essays. Finally, I will offer student testimony on the relationship between specific types of assignments and both their writing and thinking skills.

### Chapter Three--Findings

Even though I detected improvement in students' writing as a result of keeping journals, I wanted to study more closely how journal writing was affecting the way students produced their drafts and what they believed to be the strengths and weaknesses of writing journals. To determine how much the focused journal assignments helped the students' writing in English 102, I first examined their work to see how they improved during the term--both in their journal entries and in the grades on their papers--and then looked at how frequently ideas expressed in their journals appeared in the final drafts of their essays. Next, I distributed the questionnaire to approximately one-quarter of the students to solicit in more detail their views on the effectiveness of the journals. The questionnaires also functioned as a way to help me determine if the students' writing and thinking about the issues the class discussed had changed as a result of working on their journals.

In the 101 course, I initiated my evaluation by looking at how well the students completed the focused and the open assignments. That is, did there seem to be a significant difference in the amount of time or effort the students devoted to the task when they completed the

focused and open assignments? Next, I used the final paper assignment (an evaluation of the journals' effectiveness) as a way of determining which types of entries the students preferred--open or focused--and to understand more clearly the students' overall impression of the journals.

English 102--Spring 1992

At the end of the spring term I asked ten randomly chosen students to fill out a survey with eleven questions. The first five questions of the survey called for the students to respond to general questions about the journals while the last six questions asked them to answer specific questions about certain essays and the corresponding journal assignments (see Appendix F).

The first question asked the students if they believed that keeping a journal was an asset to the course. Of the ten responses, eight were completely positive. Though the reasons varied, most of the students said the journals were an asset:

It provided a place to write down ideas before a paper was written . . . .

The journal was an asset to the course because it allows the student to stay focused on the assignments.



The journal help me in getting my ideas together.  
. . I use it as a tool. I developed the essays  
out of what I wrote in the journal.

Clearly, to these students, the journal served as a comfortable place to do prewriting and help stimulate ideas for their essays. Further, the focused journal assignments allowed most of the students to concentrate on learning the type of essay they were writing in class at that time, such as evaluation or definition arguments.

Two students, however, had mixed reactions to keeping a journal in English 102. The first commented that prewriting is a valuable tool, "but one can pre-write on a word processor or computer also." It seems that this student considers journal writing an unneeded step in the writing process that can be avoided or made simpler by writing on a computer. The second student said that focused journal assignments weakened the course because "students feel they have to use the journal." For this student, specific journal assignments hinder creativity and limit what he can write about.

The second question on the survey asked if the students kept a diary or another form of journal other than the one they completed for class. If they did, I wanted to know the types of writing they included in them as a way of determining the number of students who enjoyed writing

outside of class. I believed that those who kept a diary or some other type of journal might be better writers than those who did not. Of the ten respondents, only three kept a diary or notebook at the time of the survey. Most said that they had kept one at some time in the past, but because they were so busy in college they had given up on it. Of the positive responses, two said that most of their diary entries concerned their feelings and responses to particularly emotional times in their lives; the third student claimed that his diary was strictly a recapitulation of his daily events. As it turned out, the students who kept diaries did receive higher grades in the course on the average than those who did not. One of the students earned an "A" and the other two received high "B's." Generally, I think there is a connection between consistent diary or journal writing and higher writing grades simply because the students are able to get more practice and can experiment with the language much more often than those who do not keep a diary or journal.

The next question on the survey asked if the journal assignments helped the students with their writing. For the most part, the students believed the journal entries had a positive effect on their writing. One student commented that "the journal assignments helped make me

think more and in different ways about the writing assignments." Another, confirming what Connors had contended, saw the importance of the journals as an invention technique: "The assignments did help because they force you to write about the topic. You put ideas on paper and later refer to them." The students who did not think that the journals helped their writing usually felt restricted by the assignments. One commented that the journals "guided my thoughts and I'd rather just write what is in my brain at the time I'm writing." Responses like this are important because as teachers, we are reminded that some students' writing styles may not be conducive to the constraints that certain journal assignments put on the writers. We need to remember that all students compose differently and their individual styles should be respected. Overall, though, eight of the ten respondents answered favorably to question three.

The fourth question asked, "What did you like about the journal assignments?" All of the students named at least one aspect of the journals that they liked. Responses ranged from "They didn't take forever to do" to "I liked how the questions/topics we were asked to write about were interesting to write on, yet they still helped with papers." Some other common responses were that the assignments were "informal" and written so that students

could be "honest" and express their feelings about various topics (Elbow). The students also seemed to appreciate that the majority of the entries "were relevant to whatever paper we were doing." Perhaps for these students the journals offered a place to express themselves free from the weight of being graded, and because of this, they were able to explore their beliefs about the topics they were addressing in their papers and discussing in their class. Plus, they knew what they wrote in the journals would not be negatively criticized. The journal proved to be one place where students' views were not only valid but strongly endorsed (Newman).

The fifth question asked the students to list or explain any parts of the journal assignments that they did not like. Two students reported that the major problem with the assignments was their scarcity: They wanted more assignments than were actually given. One noted that the "only suggestion is that perhaps we would have written more in it." Other comments said that the entries were time consuming or they limited the students' "free thinking." These students preferred to choose their own writing topics (D'Arcy) and believed that not allowing them to do so damaged their writing. For them, the writing journal should have no guidelines or direction. Finally, three

students responded that they liked everything about the journals.

The next five questions asked the students to respond to specific journal entries linked to certain essay assignments. For example, question six asked the students to think back to the first journal assignment they completed when working on their critique paper. It asked the students to comment on whether they used any of the information from their journal entry in their final draft. Their comments indicated that, generally, the assignment was a success. Of the ten students, seven said they incorporated some part of their journal entries into their final drafts while two others said that the entries helped them develop some new ideas about the topic. The students who did not use journal-generated material in their final drafts had changed topics after writing the entry. Another student decided to change topics late in the writing process and was not able to complete the journal entry before writing his paper.

The seventh question, which corresponded to the definition paper, contained three parts which paralleled the three parts of the journal assignment. First, it asked students "did you use anything from the journal in your essay"? Next, the question asked if writing about the topic before researching it affected the way the students

read the articles. And, finally, "did the [journal] assignment help you think of the issues in ways you hadn't before"?

One goal of the journal assignment for the definition paper was to determine if students' opinions could be swayed or influenced by reading material on an issue written by an expert. For the most part, the students remained adamant about the opinions and beliefs they expressed in their journals even after reading what others had to say on the topic. Only three students changed their minds or seriously considered the viewpoints of the more "learned" authors. If anything, their opinions were strengthened by writing about the topics before reading the articles.

Seven students said they did use material from the journal entries in their final essays, an encouraging indication that they were beginning to see journal writing as a way to help them develop their own ideas (D'Arcy). Most of the students could recall sections of the essays that they pulled from their journals. For instance, one student decided to use her journal assignment as a form of prewriting in which she "set up the three criteria [to be defined] and refuted."

The eighth question asked the students to consider the journal assignment that was linked to their synthesis essay. The question was broken into three parts which corresponded to the three questions of the original journal assignment. The first part of question eight asked if the students felt reading about their topic and then writing about it helped with their final essays. Eight students responded that writing about the issue after doing research did help them with their papers. One student commented that the journal "assignment helped me to focus on the differences in the two articles [the articles that her paper addressed]. The reading and writing changed my mind some because writing makes you analyze what you read more closely." Another noted, "The research taught me different things about beauty contests [the topic] I ignored. I didn't become an authority but I could be certain and confident in what I wrote. . . ." Clearly, for this student, journal writing lead to the type of engagement with an issue that Macrorie noted in his Foreword to Toby Fulwiler's The Journal Book.

The second part of question eight asked the students if they had used material generated in their journal entries when they wrote their essays. The six students who responded to the question said that the journal entries had been an integral part of their papers. Students utilized

the journal writing to various degrees--from helping them form a part of the introduction to the essay, to combining some of the primary sections of the final draft.

The third part of question eight asked if the students' minds were changed about their topics by doing research on them. Only three students said that writing about their topics after doing research changed their mind about the issue they were working on. In fact, some students reported that writing about the situation served to strengthen their point of view rather than change it. For instance, one student said, "No, writing about the subject made my opinion stronger in favor of Magic Johnson as a hero." Still another remarked that "I didn't change my mind [about the issue], but my views were reinforced." Obviously, these journal assignments are "neutral," confirming some research conducted by D'Arcy and Macrorie: the students themselves decide while writing whether to challenge their existing views or to reinforce them.

The ninth question focused on the evaluation essay. Its primary purpose was to determine if writing about a topic before doing research helped students write a better final draft. It also was intended to determine the number of students who used information from their journals in their essays, and if the students, after completing this journal assignment, saw their topic differently.



The students overwhelmingly agreed that writing about the topics before researching them made their papers stronger. In fact, nine students commented that the journal writing was an asset to the paper; the other student did the research before completing the journal assignment. One student commented that writing about the topic before researching it helped "because it gave me an idea of what a good teacher was [his topic]. By having this idea, I knew exactly what I was looking for when I went to look for material to back my opinion." Another sees the value of the journal as an invention technique, "simply because I was able to get some ideas down on paper."

The second part of the ninth question, whether any section of the journal entries were used in the final essays, showed another positive result. Seven students said they used various sections or ideas developed in their journal assignments in their final essays. In fact, five students said that their journals gave them some of the main points in their essays. This important finding shows a distinct connection between journals as a prewriting and thinking tool and the students' acceptance of the journals as a way to develop their ideas and essays.

The final part of the ninth question called for the students to determine if the journal assignment helped them see their topic from a new perspective. Four of the seven students who responded to this part of the question felt that the journal did enable them to look at their topic differently. For instance, one student wrote an evaluation argument about a specific teacher and discovered which "characteristics to look for if I really want to decide-if I have a good teacher or not." Another student writing about the teaching profession was shown a new aspect of the career. She wrote, "The assignment allowed me to see that stress would be a large part of my career." Clearly, the journals provided an opportunity for the students to think about their topics and develop some ideas for research based on their own thinking and self-reflection, assets both Fleckenstein and Connors have noted.

The tenth question was the only one that pertained to more than one journal assignment. During the course, the students had to complete four journal entries about the short story "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" by Flannery O'Connor. They completed these entries because I wanted to give them a broader base from which to draw material since this was the only literary work they would be reading or writing about during the semester. Also, I believed that a wider range of assignments for this paper would enable the

students to develop their ideas more fully, an important consideration because most of the students had little or no experience writing about literature. (The assignment sheet for this essay is included in Appendix G.)

Question ten is broken into three parts. It asked if the students used any of the journal entries in their papers, if the journal assignments gave them a better understanding of the story, and if writing more than one entry for this paper assisted them in any way. I observed that the respondents' biggest problem with this survey item was their tendency to respond to only certain parts of the question. For example, four students failed to respond to the first part of question ten; of the six who did respond, four felt that the journal assignments were an asset to writing the papers. One student wrote that "my main points in my paper came from my journal--foreshadowing and the unpredictable plot."

The second section of question ten called on the students to decide if they gained a "better understanding of the literature" they read in class through the journal entries. This part of the question elicited the most response. Seven students said that they had learned more about O'Connor and the story because of the journal assignments than they would have learned without the assignments. One student saw the importance of looking at

the different points of view in the story; she said, "Writing about the different views in the story helped me to understand the story more fully." Another reported that the assignments allowed him to identify the different themes in the story: "Yes, the assignments helped me to break the story down into different ideas. Ex. religion, life, relationships." No students answered negatively to this part of the question; one respondent was uncertain, and the other two students failed to respond.

The final section of question ten asked the students to indicate whether they felt doing more than one journal entry on a specific paper helped them. Only five students responded to this part of the question, and of those, three said that having completed numerous entries helped them finish their papers. However, each response was unique. One student saw the entries as a means of clarifying his ideas. Another commented that the assignments allowed her to "think about the story." The third student saw the importance that journals can play in the decision making process of writing. She wrote, "Writing more than one entry, this help [sic] in deciding what exactly to write about--allowed me to choose what I thought I could write about and be successful at it." The journals seemed to have various advantages for several of the students. These responses show the important role that journal writing can

play in individual composing processes; its advantages are numerous and different for every student.

The last item on the questionnaire asked the students how much time they typically spent on a writing assignment. I thought that this question could help me determine the students' attitudes toward the journal they kept for class. In all likelihood, the longer they spent on the journals, the more important they felt that the assignments were to their learning and their writing. Based on my experience as a composition teacher, I did not expect the students to spend a long time on any one assignment simply because I knew that for most of them, composition was not their first priority. Most did not have aspirations to be writers or teachers. Still, I was surprised by the results. Seven of the students said they spent between 10-30 minutes per journal entry. The other three students spent more than 30 minutes per journal assignment.

#### English 101--Fall 1992

Unlike the English 102 class the previous spring, I did not use a questionnaire to determine the effectiveness of the journal assignments I employed in English 101. Rather, the topic of the students' last essay was whether their journal helped or hindered their writing during the fall term of 1992, an idea I borrowed from Vaughn. The students completed the paper in their journals, and they

knew it would be graded by the same standards as any other essay they turned in. The assignment called for the students, after completing their final journal entry, to look back over the completed journal and determine how the journal assignments they did helped or hindered their writing during the semester. The students were to use specific examples from their journal entries to support their assertions. This paper assignment allowed me to get an overall impression from the students about the journals, and it enabled the students to make any suggestions for improving the journals in the future. My goal for this assignment was to determine if there was any difference in the amount of time or effort that the students spent working on the focused assignments as opposed to the open entries. Very few students responded specifically to this concern; therefore, I decided to look at the entries themselves to see if there was a difference in the types of topics they addressed or the quality of writing in the entries.

I decided to use the final essay rather than a questionnaire for a couple of reasons. First, I wanted to see what parts of the journals the students felt strongest about without receiving any specific prompts from me. I wanted to see what parts of the journal were most and least helpful for them. And second, I believe that the survey

format may have limited the students' responses in some ways because of the meticulous structure of the questions. An essay offered students an open format for telling me about both the highlights and lowlights of journal writing.

#### Student Views About Open Entries

Several students wrote that open entries, entries when the students chose topics to write about, gave them a great deal of freedom to express their views and their feelings about a variety of subjects, supporting D'Arcy's contentions. For example, one student commented:

Some people use writing as an escape.

Having a journal provided this escape, while still using it for practice and a grade, which acted as an incentive. This escape that I mentioned earlier could either be found in poems, quotes or just writing how one felt on that particular day. If something was bothering one then it could be used as topic for discussion in the journal. I know whenever I felt like writing I always went to my journal, in this it helped me express my feelings more freely.

Many students said they liked the open entries because they gave them an opportunity to write about their feelings and beliefs and to "blow off a little steam." For instance, Tabitha remarked "at times when I was really frustrated or

mad I could go and let out all my angers into my journal . . . ." This student felt that writing about whatever was upsetting her helped because she no longer would "blow up" at someone when she was mad.

Another student, Matt, also saw the advantages of the journal to respond to issues and write about feelings.

The journal

has become a "personal friend" to me in that I can tell it anything. I feel calm and relaxed after expressing my feelings toward controversial issues and people who irritate me.

Further, by expressing their views and feelings, students have the chance to learn about themselves and their writing (see Connors; Progoff; Vaughn). Matt continues,

I have written on the issue of abortion, presidential commercials, and drug abuse. After expressing my opinions I know where I stand on these issues. This is important to me because it is the way I feel without anyone questioning me.

One of the secondary goals for using journals in this class was to help the students develop their own views on topics and encourage them to think about some issues that may have an effect on their lives in the future (D'Arcy; Macrorie). Clearly, Matt recognized this as an important role of the journal for him.



Another aspect of the open assignments was the role the journals could play in helping students prepare for and write their formal essays. Melanie noted,

In using a journal as a practice for prewriting, it helped immensely in creating opening and closing paragraphs, while also giving ideas for essays in brainstorming exercises.

Further, the journals' importance was increased for many students because they were able to write their rough drafts in them. The rough drafts served as not only practice for the final essay, but also a way to help the students learn about their own writing process. Kevin explains:

I did enjoy being able to write down my rough drafts in a notebook where corrections can easily be made. Also, [having] the rough drafts in the journal allowed me to look back to see what I had done previously and to draw on that to futher [sic] improve my papers.

Clearly, students responded favorably to the open assignments. Most appreciated the freedom they enjoyed when writing entries, but the few students who did not like the open entries predominantly lacked an understanding of the purpose behind the assignments and did not want to take the time to write good entries.

### Student Views on Focused Entries

The final journal-based essay also enabled the students to respond to the focused entries. However, because 30 of the 45 entries required during the semester were open, they commented less frequently about the focused assignments. Normally when they did refer to them, their comments were positive. Some students had difficulty developing their own topics to write about, but when I assigned entries, they found the writing much more entertaining and enlightening. For instance, Ted remarked,

. . . when topics were presented the process of journal writing became much more enjoyable. With a topic available, the writing of the journals was better because of the time I could spend thinking of what to write on a topic instead of thinking of the topic itself.

Many of the students' comments regarding the focused entries were in reference to the "Journal Quotables" which I gave to help stimulate discussion as well as to motivate the students to think about certain issues.

Marcie, for example, wrote that the journal quotables were a place where,

We were told to write on our reaction to the quote how we took the quote, and/or how the quote has related to personal experience. When one

wrote about a quote, they were able to express personal feelings and get the view one held across. This type of writing enhanced my way of getting my point across.

Another student commented that the "journal quotables" were his favorite part of the journal because "we could show how we feel towards different issues and allowed Mr. Barine [sic] to better understand where we are coming from when we talk during in-class discussions or in our papers."

#### Student Views on Whether Journal Writing Improved Their Essays

For the most part, students felt that the journals were a great asset to the course. Many of them used writing in their final essays that was originally in their journals, especially material generated by prewriting activities and rough drafts. Students also saw the value of the journal entries as a means to develop ideas and enhance their beliefs. For example, Ted writes:

the journals offered a place to put all of my ideas down in one neat place and even receive a grade for them. In addition, I often found myself with a better understanding of events because I had thought them through.

Obviously, for Ted, the journal acted as a vehicle to clarify ideas and develop opinions that were not only expressed in class discussions but also in some formal essays. Another student commends the journal for helping him develop his skills in argument. He writes,

I wrote a journal about the presidential election (journal entry# 30). With some help from the U.S.A. Today and tv reports; I wrote a compelling entry about the "Landslide" not victory for Bill Clinton. . . I virtually crushed any opinions or facts on his [opponent's] part. After this awesome victory, I kissed my journal.

The journal helped this student develop some ideas about the recent presidential elections. Without the journal as a tool for developing his ideas, he may not have argued as astutely as he feels he did.

Some students saw that the journal was a way to learn from their past writing mistakes, engaging in the type of metacognitive activities advocated by Fleckenstein, Stanley and Shimkin, and Flower and Hayes. For example, by paying attention to his errors on formal essays, and wanting to fix them, Joe used the journal to develop as a writer:

For the first time in my life I began to pay attention to detail in writing. I began to look

harder at my writings for errors and strengths. I then capitalized on my strengths and worked on my errors with this journal. That's the great part about this journal, with 45 entries one begins to see patterns of mistakes.

The journals also enabled some students to organize and develop their ideas in a way that made their final essays more focused and tightly constructed. Matt notes that "writing in a journal has been a great activity for me to do in my English class this semester. It has helped me organize my ideas and bring them together to form a clear, concise paper." After journal writing "I can examine my journal carefully to decide which ideas to put in my paper and which ideas to leave out." Obviously, Matt saw the importance of the journal as a means of effectively developing the writing process. So did Johnathan, who saw the journals as an effective tool in the writing process later than some students, but still discovered its importance to learning about one's own writing. He commented,

I realized that by writing a first draft, no matter how bad it was I could always build from it and improve on every aspect of the essay.

Johnathan also recognized that his writing improved during the semester. He explains,

there is even a difference in the quality of journal entries. The first entry #3 [rough draft] is very sloppy and underwritten. As I progressed through the semester the essays in the journal became much more refined. In comparing journal entry #3 to journal entry #20 I show a much clearer thesis in #20 than I do in #3. I have clear separation of paragraphs and more specific examples than in #3. It appears that my writing is more goal oriented to making a better essay.

Students also saw the importance of the journals as a means of developing the self and feeling good about themselves, benefits noted by researchers such as Elbow, Macrorie, and Vaughn. In "Developing the Self Through Writing," Mimi Schwartz comments on the important role writing can play:

not only to explain or process information, but also to grow personally and creatively as well as intellectually. Of course, this involves thinking and communicating; but it also involves feeling, discovering, risk-taking, problem-solving, inventing and reinventing, to

name just a few of the other processes that also shape the confidence, performance, and development of the whole self. (247)

Clearly, Matt is using the journal to learn about himself and grow as a person, as well as to build confidence in his writing. His writing improved steadily throughout the semester. He writes that through the journal he began "confronting my problems and learning to deal with them, and writing about my successes in order to feel good about myself." This response may not directly show that Matt has developed as a writer, but by learning about himself and writing about what he has accomplished Matt felt more confident in writing his final essays, thus making his final drafts stronger.

Some students used the journals to help their writing in courses other than English. Joe commented that these journals have directly affected my other classes. Being in the school of education it seems mandatory that each one of my classes has to involve some sort of writing skills. In my Sports Management class alone I had to write five papers for the class. By writing journals daily the papers I was writing for other classes seem to come easier to me.

Further, some students wrote rough drafts of assignments for other classes in their journals. Typically, these were the better students in the class; they normally wrote more frequent, more thoughtful journal entries.

Overall, the journal was an important part of English 101. Many of the students learned not only about themselves but also about their own writing styles because of the journals. The open and focused journal entries enabled students to focus on different aspects of their writing so that more could be learned about their own writing process and abilities. When students took work seriously, the journals were a resounding success; however, as is usually the case, there were some students who did not do the required work. Obviously, those students learned very little through their journal entries.

In the next chapter I will look in more detail at the patterns of response I found in the students' journal entries and draw some conclusions concerning the two questions I posed initially: First, what is the connection between journal writing and the content of student essays? And second, how does the type of journal assignment affect or influence the students' writing in their formal essays? I will also discuss some of the problems I encountered with this study, and I will suggest several ways to use journals effectively in composition classes.



## Chapter 4--Connections

I began this study to answer two questions: what is the connection between journal writing and the content of student essays, and how does the type of journal assignment affect or influence the students' writing in their formal essays? The answer to each of these questions seems to be a resounding "it depends."

### Motivation

Several factors seem to affect the way students will use journal entries in their final drafts, if at all. Based on this study, the amount of journal writing which transferred to the students' final draft depended first on the student's motivation. Since many entering freshmen students have little interest in writing as a career or even as a hobby, motivating them to write several strong papers a semester can be difficult. The results of my study show that motivation and grades generally have a direct relationship: the majority of the students in my spring 1992 course who received "A's" did excellent work in their journals and tended to extract more material from them than those students who received a "B" or a "C" in the course.

For example, Tom, an "A" student, frequently lifted the main ideas for his final drafts from his journal. His work on his definition paper (Is Playboy magazine pornographic?) was typical. Two of the main points Tom tries to defend in his essay originated in journal entries. In one journal entry he tried to define "pornography" and wrote "When I try to define pornography, I would say material that depicts sexual behavior, and I would say sexual behavior is between a male and a female." This definition gets developed and further explained with supporting research in the body of his essay. He contends that Playboy is not pornographic when he writes, "First of all, Playboy does not depict sexual behavior. This publication does not picture a male and a female involved in sexual intercourse." From there Tom gives examples to support this claim. He then used an additional entry to develop some secondary examples for his essay, as well, citing several respected entertainers and public figures whose work has been featured in Playboy. He refers to these women later in his essay to support his point that not all women appear in Playboy nude. Tom, a motivated student, clearly used his journal entries as a way to consider his topic before composing his essay.

Another student from the same semester utilized the journal equally well. For her fourth essay, the comparison/contrast paper, Tanya's journal accounted for about one-third of the material in her final draft. This journal assignment asked the students to choose two articles to compare or contrast from their text, Writing Arguments, and comment on the author's beliefs about the topic. The last part of the journal assignment asked the students to explain their views of the issue and also to comment on whether or not those views have changed since reading the articles.

Tanya's paper concerned the importance of affirmative action for minorities and women. In her journal Tanya developed two important arguments that she used in her essay: one, a rebuttal to the opposition's point that affirmative action is a form of reverse discrimination; and two, another refutation of the opposition's stand on the legality of affirmative action.

Unfortunately, these two students were not typical of most of the writers in my classes. Many of them were not interested in becoming better writers or in using their journals effectively. In essence, the course acted as a means to an end--a college degree. Approximately one-quarter of my students utilized the journals as effectively as they could have been used to generate

material for their final drafts.

#### Type of Essay Assignment

Another factor in determining how much students used journal material in their final drafts could have been the essay assignments themselves. Some essays did not easily lend themselves to the type of journal writing which developed ideas for final drafts. For example, the process analysis assignment rarely evoked journal entries which spawned parts of final drafts--unless the journal work involved writing a rough draft. The same held true for the summary assignment. As students were working on their summaries, most of the journal assignments gave them practice summarizing other articles or works of literature, not developing ideas about the article they were summarizing for a grade.

For the most part, though, the paper assignments were conducive to effective journal work, that is, journal writing that helped stimulate ideas and add insights to a final draft. Most students had little difficulty doing the journal work; the problem arose in using the ideas from their journals in their essays. Too often students did not realize that the ideas they expressed in their journals would help make their papers stronger. Fewer students than I expected voluntarily used in their final essays work or ideas generated in their journals. This

lack of transfer might be credited to the students' limited familiarity with journal writing or to my own failure to urge them to use material from their journal in their essays.

#### Type of Journal Assignment

Looking back, I think many of the focussed assignments from the spring semester served the students' writing needs well. Most of the assignments that semester were created with one thought in mind: to stimulate thinking and discussion about topics students would be addressing in their essays. For the most part the assignments were a success. Most of the students polled responded favorably to the assignments, and looking back over their journals, most of the entries showed critical and creative thinking.

The journal assignments that tended to allow students to develop their ideas more completely were those that called for student response on an issue. For example, one journal assignment asked the students to consider their own view on their paper topic in relation to the opposing side's argument. The purpose of this exercise was to get the students to consider how their ideas compared with a more learned scholar's opinion of the same issue. At first, I thought that this assignment would stimulate the students to change their point of view about their topics

because they were comparing their own view to a more educated, experienced writer's. On the contrary, most student opinions were strengthened by looking at the opposition's point of view. Perhaps they simply acted defensively and refused to consider opinions other than their own or maybe they recognized, after reading other peoples' views, that their own perspectives were equally valid. In either case, this journal exercise exposed them to ideas and beliefs other than their own and encouraged them to consider their paper topic more deeply and critically.

Other types of journal assignments which often generated material for final drafts were the rough drafts. I only allowed rough drafts as journal entries during the fall of 1992. Obviously, the students who wrote rough drafts in their journals tended to use material from those drafts in their final essays. I never made rough draft assignments mandatory because I know there are those students who are not multi-draft writers (Harris). I did encourage it, though, and my hope was that most of the students would use them as a resource for their final papers, which they did.

### Focused vs. Open Journal Assignments

Just as several factors work together to determine how much journal writing will eventually appear in the final drafts of essays, so too does the type of journal assignment affect the students' writing. Both types of assignments that I used in my study were very effective in some ways and ineffective in others.

#### Focused Journal Entries

I used focused journal assignments in each of the two semesters of my study. They accounted for all of the assignments in the spring of 1992 and approximately one-third of the assignments in the fall term of the same year. The principal strength of the focused entries was helping the students work on specific skills I thought they needed to learn to develop as writers and thinkers. For example, with most paper assignments I would give two or three journal entries to stimulate student thought on the topics they were addressing. Also, the focused entries helped urge them to consider the topic more thoroughly and develop their ideas before they began writing their first draft. Further, these assignments enabled me to pinpoint students' weaknesses and work to correct them. For instance, if the students' summaries were particularly poor, I could assign practice summaries in the journals to strengthen those weaker skills.

Finally, and most importantly, the focused assignments helped insure that the students' journal entries pertained to class and could apply directly to their essay assignments. Focused assignments worked very well with students who have a difficult time finding topics to write about in their journals.

Though the focused entries were usually a success in both classes, during the second part of my study I learned the importance of giving students options for journal assignments. Generally, the focused assignments worked well on their own because they kept the students focused on their work and helped stimulate ideas for papers. On the other hand, as my study progressed I learned that the best way to utilize journal assignments for the students is to allow them to use both focused and open assignments in their journals.

#### Open Journal Assignments

I allowed students to write open journal entries along with focused ones in the fall term of 1992. The open entries could be rough drafts, practice grammar exercises, poetry, short stories, song lyrics, reader response entries, or just about any type of writing. I wanted the students to have the freedom to express themselves as they wished. One goal for the open assignments was to get the students to challenge themselves--to experiment with



language. Many students accepted this challenge and wrote poetry, attempted short stories, or even just practiced different types of writing such as critiques or editorials. My expectations for the open assignments were surpassed by the large number of students who tried to find creative ways to express themselves in different ways.

The crossover from the journal entries to the final drafts for the open assignments was slightly greater than the focused simply because the students were permitted to include rough drafts as journal entries. As the semester progressed, more students used their journals to write their rough drafts, and several students actually wrote more than one draft per paper. Those students who did so found that their grades were higher because of the extra practice they received. Another reason that slightly more students used information from their open journal assignments in their drafts was the opportunity open assignments gave them to work on the weaknesses they found in their own writing. For example, one student, Jim, noticed early in the semester that he had a tendency to misuse commas. He took it upon himself to practice writing then correcting sentences with comma errors in them. By the end of the semester he was averaging just one comma error a paper (the first essay he had 9 comma mistakes). Another student, John, learned how to write a more focused

thesis statement primarily because he wrote rough drafts in his journal. He looked at his papers and rough drafts throughout the semester and noticed a distinct improvement in his ability to develop a strong thesis. This improvement showed in his grades as well. He moved from a "D+" on his first essay to a "B" on his last paper. Much of that improvement is due to the work he did in his journal. Because of these advantages, the open assignments seemed to be a more individualized means of instruction for students.

### Implications

Most researchers and scholars have found that asking students to keep journals is a good way to improve writing skills. However, few studies have examined the specific benefits of specific types of journal assignments. According to my research, focused journal assignments seem to have the strongest effect in generating ideas for students' essays. They help guide students and keep them on task while still enabling them to develop new ideas for their essays. Open entries, on the other hand, tend to allow students to examine their own strengths and weaknesses, to look at themselves and their writing more closely. Open entries also seem to motivate students to write and experiment with language more effectively than do focused entries. Clearly, each type of journal assignment

is crucial for students to develop as writers, and because of this both should be used in the composition classroom.

To gain the benefits of keeping journals students will need to complete both types of assignments often and understand each type's importance to their writing. Students will be able to reach more of their writing goals if they can effectively use both open and focused journal entries to generate material for their essays and to grow as writers. Finally, along with using open and focused entries in the journals, teachers need to stress the importance of journal writing to their classes early and often during the semester. If students know the advantages that keeping journals can bring to their writing and their grades, they will be more willing to make the effort to use them.

## APPENDIX A

English 102 -- College Composition II  
Mr. Bryan A. Bardine  
Spring 1992

Class

Section 08  
MWF 10:00-10:50  
Miriam 208 11:00-12:00

Office

726 Miriam  
MW 9:00-9:50

Policies

1. All essays are due at the beginning of class on the announced due date. Essays not turned in then will be considered late and will be penalized a grade a day.
2. If you know you will not be able to turn in a paper on the announced due date, see me before the essay is due. We will arrange a new due date.
3. All papers must be turned in in person unless other arrangements are made with me in advance.
4. All essays are to be typed. This means the title page and bibliographies as well.
5. You are responsible for the material covered in class, including days that you are absent.
6. Please retain all your work in a manilla folder. I will collect this folder periodically during the semester and will retain it at the end of the term.
7. Quizzes cannot be "made up."
8. Plagairism will not be tolerated. Anyone plagiarizing work will receive a "0" for the assignment and possibly an "F" for the semester.

Policies (cont.)

Grading

Journals	10%	Definition	15%
Summary	5%	Evaluation	20%
Analysis	5%	Literature	15%
Critique	10%	Participation/Quizzes	10%
Comparison/Contrast	10%		

English 102  
Mr. Bardine  
Spring, 1992

Assignment #1 -- Summary

Due: Friday, January 17

For this essay, prepare a descriptive summary of either Irving Kristol's "Pornography, Obscenity, and the Case for Censorship" (526-529) or "Affirmative Action, Quotas and Merit" by Jack Greenberg (667-689).

Your summary must be comprehensive, coherent, and objective. Also, your reader should be able to understand your summary without having read the essay you choose.

If in your summary you quote material from either essay, place the page number where the quotation can be found in parentheses after the quoted material.

For example: Beck contends, "The number of cases of AIDS diagnosed among teens is still small compared with the national toll" (457).

IMPORTANT: The period comes after the page number.

Summaries can be difficult to write if the essays are not read carefully and critically. Find the main points of the essay and the primary supporting evidence and reasons. Next, use clear transitions to tie the summary together.

Finally, remember this is a descriptive summary, not a restatement summary. You will have many sentences that sound like, "Kristol opens his essay by," "Greenberg contends that," "Another point Kristol makes is," "Then Greenberg goes on to argue that" etc.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE SEE ME!!!!

English 102  
Spring, 102  
Mr. Bardine

Essay #2-- Analysis  
Due: Monday, January 27

According to Stephen Toulmin, there are three basic parts to any argument: the claim, the grounds, and the warrant. The claim is some assertion you want to prove; the grounds are the supporting evidence or reasons you have for making the claim, and the warrant is the assumption you make that links the grounds and the claim or the reasoning that leads you from the grounds to the claim.

Your assignment here is to write an analysis of Eli M. Oboler's essay "Defending Intellectual Freedom." You are to identify the various claims Oboler makes in his essay, his grounds for making them, and his warrants (whether stated or simply assumed).

You are not being asked to make evaluations of Oboler's argument: as with summary, your analysis must be comprehensive, coherent, and objective. Your task here is to break the article into its constituent parts and to identify those parts for your reader.

It would be helpful to open your analysis with a brief summary of the essay.

Use proper documentation.

English  
Mr. Bardine  
Spring '92

Essay #3-- Critique  
Due: Wednesday, February 12

For this assignment prepare a critique of either William F. May's "Occasion of Our Death" (652-654) or Robert Bork's "Waving the Flag" (633-635).

In a critique, the writer asserts and defends an overall judgement about the quality of an article. To reach this judgement you must first summarize and analyze the article; you need to know precisely what the article is saying and how it is organized.

The structure of your essay should look something like this:

Opening Section-- Introduce the topic  
                          Introduce the essay to be critiqued  
                          (author and title)

          Give your thesis (A clear assertion of the overall quality of the article; an assertion you will spend the rest of your paper explaining or defending.)

Next Section-- Summary- (Provide a 1-2 paragraph summary of the article)

Next Section-- An evaluation fo the essays various parts- (for instance, you could evaluate the author's claims, then her grounds then her warrants, etc. The order you evaluate will depend on the essay and how you feel about the essay.)

Conclusion: A review of your evaluation and a reassertion your thesis.

In this essay you should be documenting both quoted and paraphrased material.

GET STARTED ON THIS ASSIGNMENT EARLY!

DOING A GOOD JOB ON A CRITIQUE TAKES TIME!!!



Bardine  
English 102  
Spring, 102

#### Assignment #4-- Comparison/Contrast

This assignment allows you to choose any of the issues in your Writing Arguments textbook. You don't have to choose just from the issues we've discussed in class; it can be from any one of the groups of topics from pages 441-717. Within each issue choose two of the essays that have opposing views.

Your goal for this essay is to take a stand supporting one side of the issue using the Toulmin form of logic that we've been discussing for the first six weeks of the semester.

In order to write a complete and effective compare/contrast essay you must look at both sides of the issue and be able to discuss each intelligently. You will be supporting your opinion by citing the essay that you agree with and refuting the essay of the opposite view.

In this paper clear and correct documentation and quoting are essential. It is important that your audience knows whose ideas you are discussing-- a particular author's or your own.

You may go to the library to get additional information, if you wish. Be certain that you make a photocopy of any material you document in your essay. For example, if you read a magazine article that runs from page 19 to page 26, and you quote or paraphrase material from page 24, be sure to photocopy page 24 of the article and turn it in with your essay.

This paper must be supplied with a proper works cited list.

DUE: MARCH 4

GOOD LUCK!!!

Bardine  
 English 102  
 Spring, 1992

### Definition Essay

Due: March 18

For this essay you will be solving a definitional problem. In your essay you must argue whether or not a given "X" (a borderline case) belongs to concept "Y", which you must define. Your definition of "Y," will be extended with examples to prove your point. After you have defined your "Y" term, you will need to apply it to your "X" term and argue, with extended examples, whether your borderline case either fits or does not fit "Y".

Basically, you will establish and discuss a set of criteria that defines the "Y" term (i.e. hero) and then demonstrate how the particular instance under consideration (i.e. Magic Johnson) does or does not fit the criteria. Your decision, whether Magic Johnson does or does not fit the term "hero" will be your thesis (i.e. Magic is a hero because it fits criteria A, B, C...).

Here are six possible topics. If you have any other suggestions that's fine, but I want you to clear them with me before you start researching this project.

Y Term	X Term
1. Hero	Is Magic Johnson a true hero?
2. Justifiable War	Was the Persian Gulf War a justifiable war?
3. Marriage	Can homosexuals truly be married?
4. Racism	Are mascots and nicknames depicting American Indians racist?
5. Pornography	Is <u>Playboy</u> pornographic?
6. Sexual Harrassment	Is a superior asking a subordinate for a date sexual harrassment?

## Definition Paper (cont.)

You will have to base your essay primarily on material that you find in the library. You must cite material from at least five different sources-- two of which must be scholarly journals. These scholarly journals will be located in the speciality indexes-- not The Readers Guide to Periodical Literature. Remember, you must turn in a photocopy of the specific material you cite. You must use in-text documentation and supply a Works Cited list. Good Luck!

Bardine  
 English 102  
 Spring 1992

### Evaluation Essay

Due: Wednesday, April 1  
 Length: At least 4 full pages

For this assignment you will be determining whether or not a given X is not a good Y. As in your definition essays, this assignment calls for you to do research to find criteria that help define the Y term. The difference is that your criteria must help define a good Y term--not just a typical Y term.

Essentially, you will establish and discuss a set of criteria that define a Y term (i.e. good school), and then show how the particular X term does or does not fit the criteria suggested. Your thesis statement will tell whether or not your X term is/is not a good example of the Y term based on the criteria. (i.e. UD is a good school because A, B, and C).

The purpose of this paper is for you to think critically about the chosen topic, and using research, make an intelligent decision about the quality of the given Y term. A second goal is for you to influence others to accept, or at least intelligently consider, your view of the X term.

#### Possible Topics:

	X Term	Y Term
1.	Is	a good book?
2.	Is	a good career?
3.	Is	a good teacher?
4.	Is UD	a good school?
5.	Is (hometown)	a good city?
6.	Is democracy	a good type of government?

Evaluation Essay (cont.)

NOTE: These are suggested topics. If you want to try something else that's fine, but be sure you get my okay before you start doing research.

As in the definition paper, research will play a key role in the writing process. You are to have at least 7 sources for this paper, and 3 of them must be from scholarly journals.

Also, clear and correct documentation, quoting, and paraphrasing are essential. If you have been having difficulty in previous papers see me before this one is due. Of course, a proper works cited list is required as well.

GOOD LUCK!!!

Bardine  
English 102  
Spring 1992

### Assignment #7 Literature

For the final paper of the semester you will be examining "A Good Man is Hard to Find", by Flannery O'Connor. You may do one of two things:

1. You are a casting director of a major motion picture company. Steven Spielberg comes to you and says he is directing O'Connor's short story and needs the "right" people to play the key roles in the story. He asks you to write an essay explaining the famous actors and actresses you would use in the roles of Bailey, The Misfit, Red Sammy, and Grandma. (You may choose supplemental characters if you wish) In your essay be sure that you explain your choices thoroughly. You are expected to make claims with evidence both from the short story and the actor's career. (Doesn't this sound like Toulmin logic?) for this assignment you may use first person and write this in the form of a letter to Mr. Spielberg. However, this does not mean that the paper should not have a thesis statement or a strong conclusion. Also, for this paper you will not need a works cited list since you are only using one source.

Or you may:

2. Analyze "A Good Man is Hard to Find" according to theme, plot, character development, style, and language. Essentially you are giving your view of the short story. You should support your assertion with quotes and explanation from the text. Your thesis should take a clear stand as to whether you feel the story is a good one or not. Proper in-text documentation is expected and will be graded. Almost forgot-- you don't need to look at all the aspects of the story that were mentioned above. You may choose one, two, three, four, or five if you wish.

Reminder: This paper is due on Wednesday, April 15 by 3:00. There will be no extensions---Don't even ask! Don't forget-- On the 15th bring your paper, your journal, and your portfolio of essays from the semester. You can pick them up 1 month into next semester (summer session). See me if you have any trouble.

## APPENDIX B

English 101--College Composition  
Mr. Bryan Bardine

## Class

Section 46  
TTH 10:30--11:45  
Chaminade 208

## Office

726 Miriam Hall  
229-3414  
TTH 12:30--2:30

## Texts

The MacMillan Writer Nadell, McMeniman, and Langan  
The Bedford Handbook for Writers, Hacker  
A Practical Guide for Research Papers, Farrelly and  
Murphy

## Policies

1. All essays are due at the beginning of class on the announced due date. Essays not turned in at the beginning of class will be considered late and will be penalized a grade a day.
2. You must turn in all papers in person unless other arrangements are made with me in advance.
3. If you know you will not be able to turn in a paper on the announced due date, see me before the essay is due. We will arrange a new due date.
4. All essays must be typed.
5. You are responsible for the material covered in class, including days that you are absent.
6. Please retain all your work in a manilla folder. I will collect this folder periodically during the term and will retain it at the end of the semester.
7. Unannounced quizzes cannot be made up.

## Policies (cont.)

8. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Anyone plagiarizing work will receive a "0" for the assignment and possibly for the semester.

## Grading:

Class work= 60% of course grade

Final exam= 40% of course grade

## Value of class work:

Process	5%	In-Class Essay #1	5%
Illustration	10%	Journal Paper	10%
Definition	10%	Summary	10%
Division/Classification	15%	Quizzes/Exercises	10%
Comparison/Contrast	15%	Journals	10%



Bardine  
English 101  
Fall 1992

Paper #1--Process Analysis  
Due Date: September 10, 1992

For this essay you should consider very carefully the process that you go through when you do something. You must explain to the reader both what you do and how you do it. Your audience for the assignment is anyone who does not know the process you use while doing your topic.

Please choose one of the following topics:

1. Explain the process you normally went through when writing a typical English paper in high school.
2. Explain how you perform a specific maneuver, for instance, how you change a tire or shoot a basketball.
3. Explain how you make your favorite meal.
4. Explain the steps you went through in choosing UD as your school.

When writing your paper, you must first analyze what you do, breaking the process into a series of steps. When describing each step, explain for your reader why you do (or did) it that way so that he or she will be able to fully understand the process you are describing.

Your thesis statement will be a judgment statement concerning the entire process itself--whether it is simple or complex, generally successful or unsuccessful, possibly helpful for others to follow, or completely unique to you. You may certainly use first person, but please try to avoid overused phrases such as "I think," "I feel," or "I believe." Also, do not use the 2nd person (you) in this essay.

## APPENDIX C

Bardine  
English 101  
Fall 1992

Paper #1--Process Analysis  
Due Date: September 10, 1992

For this essay you should consider very carefully the process that you go through when you do something. You must explain to the reader both what you do and how you do it. Your audience for the assignment is anyone who does not know the process you use while doing your topic.

Please choose one of the following topics:

1. Explain the process you normally went through when writing a typical English paper in high school.
2. Explain how you perform a specific maneuver, for instance, how you change a tire or shoot a basketball.
3. Explain how you make your favorite meal.
4. Explain the steps you went through in choosing UD as your school.

When writing your paper, you must first analyze what you do, breaking the process into a series of steps. When describing each step, explain for your reader why you do (or did) it that way so that he or she will be able to fully understand the process you are describing.

Your thesis statement will be a judgment statement concerning the entire process itself--whether it is simple or complex, generally successful or unsuccessful, possibly helpful for others to follow, or completely unique to you. You may certainly use first person, but please try to avoid overused phrases such as "I think," "I feel," or "I believe." Also, do not use the 2nd person (you) in this essay.

Bardine  
English 101  
Assignment #2--Illustration  
Due: Tuesday, September 29  
Length: 2-5 pages

### Illustration

In the illustration paper you will use specific examples with details to support the assertion you make in your thesis statement. Select one of the topics or generalizations listed below to develop into an essay. Remember that your examples should relate back to your thesis in order to give the essay a strong focus.

#### Topics

1. How are groups of people (women, minorities, young or old people) stereotyped by the media? Select a group, and give detailed examples of their portrayal by the media.
2. Write an essay either supporting or refuting the statement "Television is a negative influence on our youth today." Remember in your essay to give specific examples of how TV is or is not a bad influence on our youth.
3. Pick the teacher or coach who influenced you the most in school and explain why.
4. Choose your favorite book, movie, or musical recording. Write an essay using examples explaining your preference. Then try to convince your reader to feel the same way that you do.
5. Using examples to illustrate, write an essay about the virtues, vices, and compensations of people your age. (Refer to the Cowley essay)
6. Choose a general statement such as the one below and develop a thesis statement and a well-focused essay using examples from your own life experiences.
  - A. Each family has its own distinctive lifestyle

Your goal for this paper is to write a well organized essay with a solid thesis statement which you will explain and support with specific details. You are writing to a well-educated audience, so your examples must be specific

## Illustration Essay (cont.)

and well thought out. Rely on your experiences to write this paper: things you may have read or seen and remember, discussions you may have had with friends or talked about in school, etc.

Bardine  
English 101  
Fall 1992

### Comparison/Contrast Essay

Due: October 15, 1992  
Length: 3-5 pages

In the last essay (illustration) you were concentrating on supporting your thesis using specific examples from your personal experience. This assignment will ask you to look at two things that are similar in some ways but different in others. You should make a choice between the two ideas, situations, products, etc., and be able to support your decision based on evidence you give in your paper. You are still utilizing the illustration skills you've put into practice, but now you are taking them one step further by comparing and/or contrasting two things.

#### Topics:

1. You have just been hired by a major record label as a sales manager to radio stations across the country. You are to choose two songs whose lyrics address the same social issue (i.e. racism, homelessness, child or drug abuse). How are the lyrics alike and different, both in what they say and in how they say it? Which song most successfully addresses the social issue? How so? Defend your opinions. Remember, what you say may change the face of music history. Write your paper as though you were writing to one of the radio stations to try to convince them that your song (and the band who plays it) should be played on their radio station as often as possible (This should be in letter form). Turn in copies of the lyrics with the paper.
2. As a concerned reader, you find two letters to the editor which take different positions on the same issue. You write back to the newspaper explaining how they are alike and how they are different, both in content and style. Which letter do you feel is most convincing? Defend your position. Turn in a copy of the letters with your essay.

## Comparison/Contrast (cont.)

3. You've just been assigned to review two movies of the same genre. Explain how their similarities and differences. Look at such things as plot, direction, photography, believability, casting, scenery, etc. Your goal is to decide which film is better based on the comparisons and contrasts you make. Defend your view. Pretend you are writing to an audience at a conference of film buffs.

Bardine  
English 101  
Fall 1992

Division/Classification Essay

Due: October 29, 1992  
Length: 3-5 pages  
Rough Draft Due: October 27, 1992

For this essay you may choose one of the following options:

1. The first couple of months at any new school can be rough on students; however, when the new school is college, and the new students are first-year students, many problems can arise. Write an essay in which you categorize the kinds of problems first-year college students may expect to encounter during the first several weeks of school. Give plenty of specific examples to illustrate these problems, and suggest how each can be solved, based on your own experience or what others have told you. Pretend that you are writing an article in the Flyer News as a sophomore at UD; your purpose is to help the new students better prepare for what may lie ahead. Your article may be run in the first edition of the newspaper for the 1993-94 school year.
2. Write a paper on excuses students give for not having their work done on time. Devise some scheme for categorizing the types of excuses the students typically give teachers; supply illustrating examples of each type of excuse and discuss whether, generally, teachers tend to accept them. Assume you are writing for an underground student newspaper. Your goal is to inform the students of ways that have worked in the past and methods that have failed.
3. Devise your own topic. You may, for example, choose to classify the different types of students in your dorm--i.e. "my dorm has 4 types of students: motivated, studs, clowns, and vegetables." You will need to break your topic down into at least three different categories, and provide specific supporting examples. Keep in mind that you will also need to make some sort of judgment about each of the categories--i.e., in the studs section--"besides being rather obnoxious, the studs often do not take their studies seriously and thus run the risk of earning bad grades."

## Division/Classification (cont.)

3. (cont.) This judgment is similar to the task in the first choice where the writer must suggest how each problem can be solved, and the second topic where the writer must discuss how successful the various excuses usually are.



Bardine  
Fall 1992  
English 101

### Problem/Solution Paper

Topic Due: November 5  
Rough Draft Due: November 12  
Final Draft Due: November 17  
Length: 3-5 pages

Write an essay proposing a solution to a particular problem. Please limit the topics for the paper to problems that exist on UD's campus. The problem should be one which you are facing at the university now or which you may face in the future. Your audience for this paper should be another person who may face the problem or to an outsider who could help solve the problem.

Your paper should convince readers to solve a common problem in a particular way. To keep the paper clear try to follow these steps: 1) Clearly define and explore your problem for the audience. 2) Explore the possible solutions to the problem, looking at both the strengths and weaknesses of each. 3) Choose the best solution for the problem. It may be a combination of the solutions in #2 or it may be a completely different solution.

Because you are dealing with campus problems you may wish to conduct interviews or surveys to help gather information, but please do not use library research. Please see me if you need help.

Some possible topics:

The meal plan  
Sophomore housing policy  
All dorms are going co-ed  
Dorm noise  
Alcohol abuse on campus

Bardine  
English 101  
Fall 1992

### Summary Assignment

Due: Tuesday, December 1  
Length: 1-2 pages

For this assignment use your recently gained knowledge about summary writing to develop a descriptive summary of Michael Korda's article "Obtaining Power." Remember that the purpose of a summary is to show your understanding of an article or essay or story by describing the main points in the work. Use the handout and notes taken in class today as your guide. This is your last typed assignment of the semester. Good Luck!!!!

Bardine  
English 101  
Fall 1992

### In-Class Essay #1

For this essay you will have 50 minutes. You should base your answer on the essay you've just read, your own personal experience and general knowledge. Remember, be sure to answer the question and pay close attention to the structure of your essay. Use your time wisely for this test.

Also, remember to include specific examples from the text and be sure to have a clear thesis statement. Further, your answer should include complete explanations of your examples and the points you are trying to make; plus don't forget to use paragraph breaks and a clear introduction and conclusion.

Question: Michael Korda's friend gives 5 rules for obtaining power in business and in life. Using at least 3 of the rules, apply each to your life here at UD and show how you obtain power with each. Be certain that you not only discuss the rule, but also discuss how the use of this rule brings you power.

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### Assignment #8

Rather than assign an in-class essay for our last scheduled class meeting on December 3, I would like to give you a different assignment that you can complete in your journals to be turned in on December 7. After completing your last journal entries, go back over what you have written this semester. I'd like you to write about how you feel the journal has helped or hindered your writing this semester.

In your essay you may want to summarize the different ways that the journal worked and didn't work for you. Then, in the body of the essay go into more detail and give examples of how the specific assignments did or did not work for you. Your essay will be graded on the content and clarity of your writing. I'm looking for you to be very specific in your explanation and your examples so that in the future I can develop more effective journals for my students. The essay should be anywhere from 3-5 journal pages.

Essentially, your paper should be structured so that you present your overall impression of the journal in the introduction and give a brief summary of the likes and dislikes (points to be discussed). The body should go into detail about the likes and dislikes discussed in the introduction. In the body you should draw on specific entries and assignments to get your point across.

I am looking for the following:

1. clear thesis
2. solid support for examples
3. creative intro and conclusion
4. fully developed paragraphs
5. minimal grammatical errors

This essay is worth 10% of your grade.

## APPENDIX C

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Paper #1--Process Analysis  
Due Date: September 10, 1992

For this essay you should consider very carefully the process that you go through when you do something. You must explain to the reader both what you do and how you do it. Your audience for the assignment is anyone who does not know the process you use while doing your topic.

Please choose one of the following topics:

1. Explain the process you normally went through when writing a typical English paper in high school.
2. Explain how you perform a specific maneuver, for instance, how you change a tire or shoot a basketball.
3. Explain how you make your favorite meal.
4. Explain the steps you went through in choosing UD as your school.

When writing your paper, you must first analyze what you do, breaking the process into a series of steps. When describing each step, explain for your reader why you do (or did) it that way so that he or she will be able to fully understand the process you are describing.

Your thesis statement will be a judgment statement concerning the entire process itself--whether it is simple or complex, generally successful or unsuccessful, possibly helpful for others to follow, or completely unique to you. You may certainly use first person, but please try to avoid overused phrases such as "I think," "I feel," or "I believe." Also, do not use the 2nd person (you) in this essay.

## Appendix D

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## Journal Guidelines

For writers to improve their skills it is important that they practice often. Journals are the perfect place for such practice to occur. The journal is not a place for you to record your daily activities. In this course you will use journals to respond to topics discussed in class, comment on issues that affect your life, practice the different modes of writing you will be working on this semester, and do specific assignments that I give you in each unit.

Your journals will not be graded according to grammar, punctuation, or spelling. It is your place to express yourself. Do not write things that you think I would like to hear--it's your baby, make the most of it. I will collect the journal four times during the semester to look it over and give some suggestions for improvement--if necessary. Each time I collect it you will receive a homework grade for turning them in. The fourth time I see them I will add the number of entries and determine your grade.

To receive an "A" for your journal grade you must write at least one full page a minimum of 3 times a week. Please be sure to date and number each entry you make in your journal.

Grade breakdown: 45+ entries= A  
40-44 entries = B  
35-39 entries = C  
30-34 entries = D  
>30 entries = F

## APPENDIX E

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## Journal Quotables

Censorship

"Art made tongue tied by authority."  
William Shakespeare

"Fear of corrupting the mind of the younger generation is  
the loftiest form of cowardice."  
Holbrook Jackson, British writer

"Every burned book enlightens the world."  
Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)

"Those expressions are omitted which can not with propriety  
be read aloud in the family."  
Dr. Thomas Bowdler (1754-1825)

"I know of no book which has been a source of brutality and  
sadistic conduct, both public and private, that can compare  
with the bible."  
Reginald Paget, British Labour Politician

Television

"Television is an invention that permits you to be  
entertained in your living room by people you wouldn't have  
in your home."  
David Frost

"It's a medium of entertainment which permits millions of  
people to listen to the same joke at the same time, yet  
remain lonesome."  
T.S. Eliot

Education

"What sculpture is to a block of marble, education is to  
the soul."  
Joseph Addison, English essayist

## Quotables (cont.)

"Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence."

Robert Frost

"Education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught."

Oscar Wilde, (1854-1900)



## APPENDIX F

## Research Project Questionnaire

1. Do you feel keeping a journal was an asset to the course? Why or why not?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Do you keep a diary or another form of journal at home? If so, what types of things do you write about?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Do you feel as though the journal assignments you did this semester helped you in your writing? Why or why not?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What did you like about the journal assignments?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What did you not like about the journal assignments?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Think back to the first journal assignment. Did you use anything from your entry in your essay? If so, what do you remember putting into your essay? Did the assignment help you to come up with new ideas for your paper? What do you recall?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. Weekend Journal Assignment. (definition paper) Did you use anything from the journal in your essay? If so, what? Did reading the essay after writing your view affect the way you looked at the article? Why do you feel the way you do? Did the assignment help you think of the issues in ways you hadn't before? If so, how?

## Questionnaire (cont.)

8. Weekend Journal Assignment II (synthesis essay) Do you feel that looking back on the research of the topic helped you with your paper? Why or why not? Did you use anything from this journal entry in your assignment? If so, what did you use? Do you feel writing about the issue helped you to change your mind? Why or why not?

9. Long Weekend Journal Assignment I (evaluation paper) Did writing about the topic before researching it help you in your paper? Please explain. Did you use anything from this assignment in your essay? If so, what did you use? Did this assignment help you see your topic in a different way? If so, how?

10. Last section of entries (literature paper) Did you use any of these entries in your paper at all? If so, what did you use? Did these assignments help you get a better understanding of the literature? In what way? Did doing one entry before the paper was due specifically help you in any way? How?

11. How much time would you say you spent on each of these assignments on the average?

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