

FIRST DAY OF CLASS – ORIENTATION

Day #1 – Tuesday – 1/29/2019

Objectives

- Orient students to the tools, systems, and expectations of the course.
- Begin building rapport with students and establish community.
- Get first glimpse of students' thoughts about writing for baseline data.

Activity Schedule

1. Take Role (10)
2. Welcome! (5)
3. Media Release (5)
4. Drive Sign-Up (5)
5. Free Write – Handout on why are you here? (15)
6. Syllabus (20)
7. Homework and reading handout (10)
8. Questions (5)

Workshop Hour

- Read Why are you here? Responses and write on board.

Upcoming

- *Why Good Students Do Bad in College* notes due on Wednesday.
- Google Forms assignments due on Wednesday.
- Accept Google Drive invitation as soon as possible.

- Who is "at-risk" versus "good"?
- Good students get left behind, but have great potential

Why "Good" Students Do Bad' in College: Impactful Insights

Imagine that you're a professional who has performed your duties well by your and your supervisor's standards. In fact, you have received outstanding performance reviews from your supervisor. Additionally, your work is held in high regard by your peers.

Now imagine that you take a new job in which you are essentially performing the same duties. However, these duties carry greater weight. You understand that this new job demands more time and effort, and you work with increased energy and diligence. *→ Same duties, but higher expectations*

The time arrives for your first project review. You are confident. You've invested more time and worked more conscientiously than you ever did in your previous job. However, your supervisor deems the quality of your work unacceptable. Even worse, for the first time in your life, your effort is questioned. Shocked, as you received only stellar reviews in your prior position, you meet with your supervisor to obtain insights about what went wrong and guidance concerning her expectations for the next project. You take her suggestions to heart and double down on your efforts for your next project. However, she still judges your work as inadequate. This cycle repeats itself until you eventually disengage from the job. Ultimately, you divest your efforts from your work and put your energy into something that provides a greater return, such as your family or a hobby. Over time, you become the average employee your supervisor accused you of being months earlier.

Unable to accept constructive criticism (fragile ego structure) - need affirmation

Over the past few years, the phenomenon of college student academic underperformance has received considerable attention. Media outlets have covered the issue extensively, and the topic is now being addressed in the learning assistance and general higher education literature. This is a pivot from the ever-mentioned "at-risk" population, namely, those students whose pre-college academic background suggests that they may need additional support in college. The underperforming population consists of "good" students, namely, students whose academic background suggests that they should do well and even excel at the collegiate level.

→ Good students/professionals fail too. Why? More importantly, how can that be addressed?

Who are the "good" students?

"Good" students are the studious, serious-minded, hard-working college students whose grades lag behind their capabilities and efforts. These students enter college with strong academic backgrounds and exhibit solid work ethics, yet their sincerest efforts produce only mediocre grades. Good students may not perform so poorly as to trigger institutional academic alerts. Their solid academic backgrounds and sheer work ethics are typically enough to keep them from failing courses, but they aren't enough to lift them above mediocrity and up to their personal standards.

→ Students who do the work, but don't get much out of it. Why work if you don't see the value

Students who enjoyed pre-college academic success enter institutions of higher learning with a high academic self-image. They believe they are excellent students and expect to earn grades that reflect their effort and are consistent with their image. Like the employee who was unable to

→ Impact on self-image. It all goes back to the relationship between identity, subjectivity, and environment

ORIENTATION CONTINUED – WHY GOOD STUDENTS DO BAD IN COLLEGE

Day #2 – Thursday – 1/31/2019

Objectives

- Check on students' progress orienting to the course.
- Discuss the role of close reading and page annotations (in developing meta-cognition).
- Get first glimpse of students' thoughts about writing for baseline data.

Activity Schedule

1. Take Role (5)
2. Questions? (5)
 - a. OpenLab
 - b. Drive
 - c. Homework
 - d. Anything else
3. At-risk, good, vs. high performance students (10)
4. Free write – who am I as a thinker? (5)
5. "[How Thinking Works](#)" by Dr. Derek Cabrera (15)
6. How 80/20 vs. 20/80 applies to TED Talk? (5)
7. What does mobile thinking look like in practice? (5)
8. ThinkWell Diagram – template for higher-order thinking skills (10)
9. Next week (5 min)
10. Alexander Lopez introduction (10)

Upcoming

- *How to Tame a Wild Tongue* notes due on Tuesday.
- Google Forms graded tomorrow (have 19—some are failing)
- First grade discussion next week – good students getting bad grades.

- Accept Google Drive invitation as soon as possible.

Notes

“Good” students

- Good students are the most overlooked cohort of students.
- Good students are those who are used to performing average effort to meet expectations.
- Good students fail as well. Why? Most importantly, how can this be addressed.
- Why work if you don't see the value, or if criticism is provided without clear ideas about why the work is important, how to do it better, or where it will lead.

The Pareto Principle a.k.a. The 80/20 rule.

- The Pareto Principle – 80% of effects come from 20% of causes.
- The 80/20 rule vs. the 20/80 rule – what portion of effect needs to come from faculty or from students.

Perspective is important, as is learning how to think about things in new and different ways.

- Immobile thinking
- Horizontal mobility – accumulation of knowledge on the same thinking level “mile wide and inch deep.”
- Vertical mobility – develop the ability to think at higher orders of meaning.

How Thinking Works (TED Talk by Dr. Derek Cabrera)

- “Smart” students are good at structured, rule-bound assignments.
- They can't do unstructured problem-solving.
- Doing good at school is not the same as doing good at life.
- Ability to think is not the same as intelligence.
- Educational problem with global effects.
- Bandwidth solution – increase size of pipe – doesn't work.

- Thinking needs to be taught – complex ecology of thought.
- DSRP Thinking
 - Distinctions – between things – define terms with increasing nuance.
 - Systems – every part is a whole and every whole a part
 - Relationships – recognize these things
 - Perspectives – complex and multiple
- Train “slumpers” – splitters and lumpers

GLORIA ANZALDÚA

How to Tame a Wild Tongue

Gloria Anzaldúa was born in 1942 in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas. At age eleven she began working in the fields as a migrant worker and then on her family's land after the death of her father. Working her way through school, she eventually became a schoolteacher and then an academic, speaking and writing about feminist, lesbian, and Chicana issues and about autobiography. She is best known for *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (1981), which she edited with Cherríe Moraga, and *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987). Anzaldúa died in 2004.

what aspects of
this writer's
identity
intersect my own?

"How to Tame a Wild Tongue" is from *Borderlands/La Frontera*. In it, Anzaldúa is concerned with many kinds of borders — between nations, cultures, classes, genders, languages. When she writes, "So, if you want to really hurt me, talk badly about my language" (par. 27), Anzaldúa is arguing for the ways in which identity is intertwined with the way we speak and for the ways in which people can be made to feel ashamed of their own tongues. Keeping hers wild — ignoring the closing of linguistic borders — is Anzaldúa's way of asserting her identity.

what kinds of
borders have
I faced and
what has
helped me
cross them?

"We're going to have to control your tongue," the dentist says, pulling out all the metal from my mouth. Silver bits plop and tinkle into the basin. My mouth is a motherlode.

The dentist is cleaning out my roots. I get a whiff of the stench when I gasp. "I can't cap that tooth yet, you're still draining," he says.

"We're going to have to do something about your tongue," I hear the anger rising in his voice. My tongue keeps pushing out the wads of cotton, pushing back the drills, the long thin needles. "I've never seen anything as strong or as stubborn," he says. And I think, how do you tame a wild tongue,

train it to be quiet, how do you bridle and saddle it? How do you make it lie down?

"Who is to say that robbing a people of its language is less violent than war?"

— RAY GWYN SMITH¹

I remember being caught speaking Spanish at recess — that was good for three licks on the knuckles with a sharp ruler. I remember being sent to the corner of the classroom for "talking back" to the Anglo teacher when all I was trying to do was tell her how to pronounce my name. "If you want to be American, speak 'American.' If you don't like it, go back to Mexico where you belong."

Beaten for
being left-handed
"talking back"

"I want you to speak English. *Pa' hallar buen trabajo tienes que saber hablar el inglés bien. Qué vale toda tu educación si todavía hablas inglés con un 'accent,'*" my mother would say, mortified that I spoke English like a Mexican. At Pan American University, I and all Chicano students were required to take two speech classes. Their purpose: to get rid of our accents.

Attacks on one's form of expression with the intent to censor are a violation of the First Amendment. *El Anglo con cara de inocente nos arrancó la lengua.* Wild tongues can't be tamed, they can only be cut out.

Eviscerated
↳ is an act of violence

OVERCOMING THE TRADITION OF SILENCE

*Ahogadas, escupimos el oscuro.
Peleando con nuestra propia sombra
el silencio nos sepulta.*

En boca cerrada no entran moscas. "Flies don't enter a closed mouth" is a saying I kept hearing when I was a child. *Ser habladora* was to be a gossip and a liar, to talk too much. *Muchachitas bien criadas*, well-bred girls don't answer back. *Es una falta de respeto* to talk back to one's mother or father. I remember one of the sins I'd recite to the priest in the confession box the few times I went to confession: talking back to my mother, *hablar pa' tras, repelar. Hocicono, repelona, chismosa*, having a big mouth, questioning, carrying tales are all signs of being *mal criada*. In

The language of
"no child hood"
was one of silencing.

↓
how do we raise
children with a
voice?
more importantly,
an effective
voice?

my culture they are all words that are derogatory if applied to women — I've never heard them applied to men.

→ naming something is exercising power over it

The first time I heard two women, a Puerto Rican and a Cuban, say the word "*nosotras*," I was shocked. I had not known the word existed. Chicanas use *nosotros* whether we're male or female. We are robbed of our female being by the masculine plural. Language is a male discourse.

And our tongues have become
dry the wilderness has
dried out our tongues and
we have forgotten speech.

— IRENA KLEPFISZ²

Even our own people, other Spanish speakers *nos quieren poner candados en la boca*. They would hold us back with their bag of *reglas de academia*.

Oyé como ladra: el lenguaje de la frontera

Quien tiene boca se equivoca.

— MEXICAN SAYING

"*Pocho*, cultural traitor, you're speaking the oppressor's language by speaking English, you're ruining the Spanish language," I have been accused by various Latinos and Latinas. Chicano Spanish is considered by the purist and by most Latinos deficient, a mutilation of Spanish.

the oppressor's language
→ to who we identify with
is part of our identity
subjectivity

But Chicano Spanish is a border tongue which developed naturally. Change, *evolución*, *enriquecimiento de palabras nuevas por invención o adopción* have created variants of Chicano Spanish, *un nuevo lenguaje. Un lenguaje que corresponde a un modo de vivir*. Chicano Spanish is not incorrect, it is a living language.

For a people who are neither Spanish nor live in a country in which Spanish is the first language; for a people who live in a country in which English is the reigning tongue but who are not Anglo; for a people who cannot entirely identify with either standard (formal, Castillian) Spanish nor standard English, what recourse is left to them but to create their own language? A language which they can connect their identity to, one capable of

communicating the realities and values true to themselves — a language with terms that are neither *español ni inglés*, but both. We speak a patois, a forked tongue, a variation of two languages.

Chicano Spanish sprang out of the Chicanos' need to identify ourselves as a distinct people. We needed a language with which we could communicate with ourselves, a secret language. For some of us, language is a homeland closer than the Southwest — for many Chicanos today live in the Midwest and the East. And because we are a complex, heterogeneous people, we speak many languages. Some of the languages we speak are:

1. Standard English
2. Working class and slang English
3. Standard Spanish
4. Standard Mexican Spanish
5. North Mexican Spanish dialect
6. Chicano Spanish (Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California have regional variations)
7. Tex-Mex
8. *Pachuco* (called *caló*)

My "home" tongues are the languages I speak with my sister and brothers, with my friends. They are the last five listed, with 6 and 7 being closest to my heart. From school, the media, and job situations, I've picked up standard and working class English. From Mamagrande Locha and from reading Spanish and Mexican literature, I've picked up Standard Spanish and Standard Mexican Spanish. From *los recién llegados*, Mexican immigrants, and *braceros*, I learned the North Mexican dialect. With Mexicans I'll try to speak either Standard Mexican Spanish or the North Mexican dialect. From my parents and Chicanos living in the Valley, I picked up Chicano Texas Spanish, and I speak it with my mom, younger brother (who married a Mexican and who rarely mixes Spanish with English), aunts, and older relatives.

With Chicanas from *Nuevo México* or *Arizona* I will speak Chicano Spanish a little, but often they don't understand what I'm saying. With most California Chicanas I speak entirely in English (unless I forget). When I first moved to San Francisco, I'd rattle off something in Spanish, unintentionally embarrassing them. Often it is only with another Chicana *tejana* that I can talk freely.

Words distorted by English are known as anglicisms or *pochismos*. The *pocho* is an anglicized Mexican or American of Mexican

Patois
↓
dialects of the
"common people"

Teetyit?
Nidju?
Yuntu?
Afor Ired' is up

origin who speaks Spanish with an accent characteristic of North Americans and who distorts and reconstructs the language according to the influence of English.³ Tex-Mex, or Spanglish, comes most naturally to me. I may switch back and forth from English to Spanish in the same sentence or in the same word. With my sister and my brother Nune and with Chicano *tejano* contemporaries I speak in Tex-Mex.

From kids and people my own age I picked up *Pachuco*. *Pachuco* (the language of the zoot suiters) is a language of rebellion, both against Standard Spanish and Standard English. It is a secret language. Adults of the culture and outsiders cannot understand it. It is made up of slang words from both English and Spanish. *Ruca* means girl or woman, *vato* means guy or dude, *chale* means no, *simón* means yes, *churro* is sure, talk is *periquiar*, *pigionear* means petting, *que gacho* means how nerdy, *ponte águila* means watch out, death is called *la pelona*. Through lack of practice and not having others who can speak it, I've lost most of the *Pachuco* tongue.

Languages of rebellion

CHICANO SPANISH

Chicanos, after 250 years of Spanish/Anglo colonization, have developed significant differences in the Spanish we speak. We collapse two adjacent vowels into a single syllable and sometimes shift the stress in certain words such as *maíz/maiz*, *cohete/cuete*. We leave out certain consonants when they appear between vowels: *lado/lao*, *mojado/mojao*. Chicanos from South Texas pronounce *f* as *j* as in *jue* (*fue*). Chicanos use "archaisms," words that are no longer in the Spanish language, words that have been evolved out. We say *semos*, *truje*, *haiga*, *ansina*, and *naiden*. We retain the "archaic" *j*, as in *jalar*, that derives from an earlier *h*, (the French *halar* or the Germanic *halon* which was lost to standard Spanish in the 16th century), but which is still found in several regional dialects such as the one spoken in South Texas. (Due to geography, Chicanos from the Valley of South Texas were cut off linguistically from other Spanish speakers. We tend to use words that the Spaniards brought over from Medieval Spain. The majority of the Spanish colonizers in Mexico and the Southwest came from Extremadura — Hernán Cortés was one of them —

and Andalucía. Andalusians pronounce *ll* like a *y*, and their *d*'s tend to be absorbed by adjacent vowels: *tirado* becomes *tirao*. They brought *el lenguaje popular, dialectos y regionalismos*.⁴⁾

Chicanos and other Spanish speakers also shift *ll* to *y* and *z* to *s*.⁵ We leave out initial syllables, saying *tar* for *estar*, *toy* for *estoy*, *hora* for *ahora* (*cubanos* and *puertorriqueños* also leave out initial letters of some words). We also leave out the final syllable such as *pa* for *para*. The intervocalic *y*, the *ll* as in *tortilla*, *ella*, *botella*, gets replaced by *tortia* or *tortiya*, *ea*, *botea*. We add an additional syllable at the beginning of certain words: *atocar* for *tocar*, *agastar* for *gastar*. Sometimes we'll say *lavaste las vacijas*, other times *lavates* (substituting the *ates* verb endings for the *aste*).

We use anglicisms, words borrowed from English: *bola* from ball, *carpeta* from carpet, *máquina de lavar* (instead of *lavadora*) from washing machine. Tex-Mex argot, created by adding a Spanish sound at the beginning or end of an English word such as *cookiár* for cook, *watchar* for watch, *parkiar* for park, and *rapiar* for rape, is the result of the pressures on Spanish speakers to adapt to English.

We don't use the word *vosotros/as* or its accompanying verb form. We don't say *claro* (to mean yes), *imagínate*, or *me emociona*, unless we picked up Spanish from Latinas, out of a book, or in a classroom. Other Spanish-speaking groups are going through the same, or similar, development in their Spanish.

LINGUISTIC TERRORISM

Deslenguadas. Somos los del español deficiente. We are your linguistic nightmare, your linguistic aberration, your linguistic *mestisaje*, the subject of your *burla*. Because we speak with tongues of fire we are culturally crucified. Racially, culturally, and linguistically *somos huérfanos* — we speak an orphan tongue.

Chicanas who grew up speaking Chicano Spanish have internalized the belief that we speak poor Spanish. It is illegitimate, a bastard language. And because we internalize how our language has been used against us by the dominant culture, we use our language differences against each other.

Chicana feminists often skirt around each other with suspicion and hesitation. For the longest time I couldn't figure it out. Then

argot -
jargon or
slang of
a group

20

broken, bastard,
illegitimate
languages

it dawned on me. To be close to another Chicana is like looking into the mirror. We are afraid of what we'll see there. *Pena*. Shame. Low estimation of self. In childhood we are told that our language is wrong. Repeated attacks on our native tongue diminish our sense of self. The attacks continue throughout our lives.

Chicanas feel uncomfortable talking in Spanish to Latinas, afraid of their censure. Their language was not outlawed in their countries. They had a whole lifetime of being immersed in their native tongue; generations, centuries in which Spanish was a first language, taught in school, heard on radio and TV, and read in the newspaper.

If a person, Chicana or Latina, has a low estimation of my native tongue, she also has a low estimation of me. Often with *mexicanas y latinas* we'll speak English as a neutral language. Even among Chicanas we tend to speak English at parties or conferences. Yet, at the same time, we're afraid the other will think we're *agringadas* because we don't speak Chicano Spanish. We oppress each other trying to out-Chicano each other, vying to be the "real" Chicanas, to speak like Chicanos. There is no one Chicano language just as there is no one Chicano experience. A monolingual Chicana whose first language is English or Spanish is just as much a Chicana as one who speaks several variants of Spanish. A Chicana from Michigan or Chicago or Detroit is just as much a Chicana as one from the Southwest. Chicano Spanish is as diverse linguistically as it is regionally.

By the end of this century, Spanish speakers will comprise the biggest minority group in the U.S., a country where students in high schools and colleges are encouraged to take French classes because French is considered more "cultured." But for a language to remain alive it must be used.⁶ By the end of this century English, and not Spanish, will be the mother tongue of most Chicanos and Latinos.

So, if you want to really hurt me, talk badly about my language. Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity — I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself. Until I can accept as legitimate Chicano Texas Spanish, Tex-Mex, and all the other languages I speak, I cannot accept the legitimacy of myself. Until I am free to write bilingually and to switch codes without having always to translate, while I still have

are steep towards
the language
we speak is
part of how we
view ourselves

Spanish as
the majority-
minority
language

to speak English or Spanish when I would rather speak Spanglish, and as long as I have to accommodate the English speakers rather than having them accommodate me, my tongue will be illegitimate.

I will no longer be made to feel ashamed of existing. I will have my voice: Indian, Spanish, white. I will have my serpent's tongue — my woman's voice, my sexual voice, my poet's voice. I will overcome the tradition of silence.

Overcome the tradition of silence

My fingers
move sly against your palm
Like women everywhere, we speak in code. . . .

— MELANIE KAYE/KANTROWITZ⁷

"Vistas," corridos, y comida: My Native Tongue

In the 1960s, I read my first Chicano novel. It was *City of Night* by John Rechy, a gay Texan, son of a Scottish father and a Mexican mother. For days I walked around in stunned amazement that a Chicano could write and could get published. When I read *I Am Joaquín*⁸ I was surprised to see a bilingual book by a Chicano in print. When I saw poetry written in Tex-Mex for the first time, a feeling of pure joy flashed through me. I felt like we really existed as a people. In 1971, when I started teaching High School English to Chicano students, I tried to supplement the required texts with works by Chicanos, only to be reprimanded and forbidden to do so by the principal. He claimed that I was supposed to teach "American" and English literature. At the risk of being fired, I swore my students to secrecy and slipped in Chicano short stories, poems, a play. In graduate school, while working toward a Ph.D., I had to "argue" with one advisor after the other, semester after semester, before I was allowed to make Chicano literature an area of focus.

How can one have a voice if they belong to a people who struggle to have a voice?

Even before I read books by Chicanos or Mexicans, it was the 30 Mexican movies I saw at the drive-in — the Thursday night special of \$1.00 a carload — that gave me a sense of belonging. "Vámonos a las vistas," my mother would call out and we'd all — grandmother, brothers, sister, and cousins — squeeze into the car. We'd wolf down cheese and bologna white bread sandwiches while watching Pedro Infante in melodramatic tearjerkers like *Nosotros*

los pobres, the first “real” Mexican movie (that was not an imitation of European movies). I remember seeing *Cuando los hijos se van* and surmising that all Mexican movies played up the love a mother has for her children and what ungrateful sons and daughters suffer when they are not devoted to their mothers. I remember the singing-type “westerns” of Jorge Negrete and Miquel Aceves Mejía. When watching Mexican movies, I felt a sense of homecoming as well as alienation. People who were to amount to something didn’t go to Mexican movies, or *bailes*, or tune their radios to *bolero*, *rancherita*, and *corrido* music.

The whole time I was growing up, there was *norteño* music sometimes called North Mexican border music, or Tex-Mex music, or Chicano music, or *cantina* (bar) music. I grew up listening to *conjuntos*, three- or four-piece bands made up of folk musicians playing guitar, *bajo sexto*, drums, and button accordion, which Chicanos had borrowed from the German immigrants who had come to Central Texas and Mexico to farm and build breweries. In the Rio Grande Valley, Steve Jordan and Little Joe Hernández were popular, and Flaco Jiménez was the accordion king. The rhythms of Tex-Mex music are those of the polka, also adapted from the Germans, who in turn had borrowed the polka from the Czechs and Bohemians.

I remember the hot, sultry evenings when *corridos* — songs of love and death on the Texas-Mexican borderlands — reverberated out of cheap amplifiers from the local *cantinas* and wafted in through my bedroom window.

Corridos first became widely used along the South Texas/Mexican border during the early conflict between Chicanos and Anglos. The *corridos* are usually about Mexican heroes who do valiant deeds against the Anglo oppressors. Pancho Villa’s song, “*La cucaracha*,” is the most famous one. *Corridos* of John F. Kennedy and his death are still very popular in the Valley. Older Chicanos remember Lydia Mendoza, one of the great border *corrido* singers who was called *la Gloria de Tejas*. Her “*El tango negro*,” sung during the Great Depression, made her a singer of the people. The everpresent *corridos* narrated one hundred years of border history, bringing news of events as well as entertaining. These folk musicians and folk songs are our chief cultural myth-makers, and they made our hard lives seem bearable.

Language evokes
time, place -
evokes identity

I grew up feeling ambivalent about our music. Country-western and rock-and-roll had more status. In the 50s and 60s, for the slightly educated and *agringado* Chicanos, there existed a sense of shame at being caught listening to our music. Yet I couldn't stop my feet from thumping to the music, could not stop humming the words, nor hide from myself the exhilaration I felt when I heard it.

There are more subtle ways that we internalize identification, especially in the forms of images and emotions. For me food and certain smells are tied to my identity, to my homeland. Woodsmoke curling up to an immense blue sky; woodsmoke perfuming my grandmother's clothes, her skin. The stench of cow manure and the yellow patches on the ground; the crack of a .22 rifle and the reek of cordite. Homemade white cheese sizzling in a pan, melting inside a folded *tortilla*. My sister Hilda's hot, spicy *menudo*, *chile colorado* making it deep red, pieces of *panza* and hominy floating on top. My brother Carito barbecuing *fajitas* in the backyard. Even now and 3,000 miles away, I can see my mother spicing the ground beef, pork, and venison with *chile*. My mouth salivates at the thought of the hot steaming *tamales* I would be eating if I were home. 35

Si le preguntas a mi mamá, "¿Qué eres?"

"Identity is the essential core of who we are as individuals, the conscious experience of the self inside."

— GERSHEN KAUFMAN⁹

Nosotros los Chicanos straddle the borderlands. On one side of us, we are constantly exposed to the Spanish of the Mexicans, on the other side we hear the Anglos' incessant clamoring so that we forget our language. Among ourselves we don't say *nosotros los americanos*, *o nosotros los españoles*, *o nosotros los hispanos*. We say *nosotros los mexicanos* (by *mexicanos* we do not mean citizens of Mexico; we do not mean a national identity, but a racial one). We distinguish between *mexicanos del otro lado* and *mexicanos de este lado*. Deep in our hearts we believe that being Mexican has nothing to do with which country one lives in. Being Mexican

is a state of soul — not one of mind, not one of citizenship. Neither eagle nor serpent, but both. And like the ocean, neither animal respects borders.

Dime con quien andas y te diré quien eres.

(Tell me who your friends are and I'll tell you who you are.)



— MEXICAN SAYING

Si le preguntas a mi mamá, "¿Qué eres?" te dirá, "Soy mexicana." My brothers and sister say the same. I sometimes will answer "soy mexicana" and at others will say "soy Chicana" o "soy tejana." But I identified as "Raza" before I ever identified as "mexicana" or "Chicana."

As a culture, we call ourselves Spanish when referring to ourselves as a linguistic group and when copping out. It is then that we forget our predominant Indian genes. We are 70–80 percent Indian.¹⁰ We call ourselves Hispanic¹¹ or Spanish-American or Latin American or Latin when linking ourselves to other Spanish-speaking peoples of the Western hemisphere and when copping out. We call ourselves Mexican-American¹² to signify we are neither Mexican nor American, but more the noun "American" than the adjective "Mexican" (and when copping out).

Chicanos and other people of color suffer economically for not acculturating. This voluntary (yet forced) alienation makes for psychological conflict, a kind of dual identity — we don't identify with the Anglo-American cultural values and we don't totally identify with the Mexican cultural values. We are a synergy of two cultures with various degrees of Mexicanness or Angloness. I have so internalized the borderland conflict that sometimes I feel like one cancels out the other and we are zero, nothing, no one. *A veces no soy nada ni nadie. Pero hasta cuando no lo soy, lo soy.*

When not copping out, when we know we are more than nothing, we call ourselves Mexican, referring to race and ancestry; *mestizo* when affirming both our Indian and Spanish (but we hardly ever own our Black ancestry); Chicano when referring to a politically aware people born and/or raised in the U.S.; *Raza* when referring to Chicanos; *tejanos* when we are Chicanos from Texas.

Chicanos did not know we were a people until 1965 when Cesar Chavez and the farmworkers united and I Am Joaquín was

Chicanos
as an identity
↳ only when
named

published and *la Raza Unida* party was formed in Texas. With that recognition, we became a distinct people. Something momentous happened to the Chicano soul — we became aware of our reality and acquired a name and a language (Chicano Spanish) that reflected that reality. Now that we had a name, some of the fragmented pieces began to fall together — who we were, what we were, how we had evolved. We began to get glimpses of what we might eventually become.

Yet the struggle of identities continues, the struggle of borders is our reality still. One day the inner struggle will cease and a true integration take place. In the meantime, *tenemos que hacer la lucha. ¿Quién está protegiendo los ranchos de mi gente? ¿Quién está tratando de cerrar la fisura entre la india y el blanco en nuestra sangre? El Chicano, si, el Chicano que anda como un ladrón en su propia casa.*

Los Chicanos, how patient we seem, how very patient. There is the quiet of the Indian about us.¹³ We know how to survive. When other races have given up their tongue, we've kept ours. We know what it is to live under the hammer blow of the dominant *norte-americano* culture. But more than we count the blows, we count the days the weeks the years the centuries the eons until the white laws and commerce and customs will rot in the deserts they've created, lie bleached. *Humildes* yet proud, *quietos* yet wild, *nosotros losmexicanos-Chicanos* will walk by the crumbling ashes as we go about our business. Stubborn, persevering, impenetrable as stone, yet possessing a malleability that renders us unbreakable, we, the *mestizas* and *mestizos*, will remain.

Notes

1. Ray Gwyn Smith, *Moorland Is Cold Country*, unpublished book.
2. Irena Klepfisz, "Di rayze aheym/The Journey Home," in *The Tribe of Dina: A Jewish Women's Anthology*, Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz and Irena Klepfisz, eds. (Montpelier, VT: Sinister Wisdom Books, 1986), 49.
3. R. C. Ortega, *Dialectología Del Barrio*, trans. Hortencia S. Alwan (Los Angeles, CA: R. C. Ortega Publisher & Bookseller, 1977), 132.
4. Eduardo Hernández-Chávez, Andrew D. Cohen, and Anthony F. Beltramo, *El Lenguaje de los Chicanos: Regional and Social Characteristics of Language Used by Mexican Americans* (Arlington, VA: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1975), 39.

5. Hernández-Chávez, xvii.
6. Irena Klepfisz, "Secular Jewish Identity: Yidishkayt in America," in *The Tribe of Dina*, Kaye/Kantrowitz and Klepfisz, eds., 43.
7. Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz, "Sign," in *We Speak in Code: Poems and Other Writings* (Pittsburgh, PA: Motherroot Publications, Inc., 1980), 85.
8. Rodolfo Gonzales, *I Am Joaquín/Yo Soy Joaquín* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1972). It was first published in 1967.
9. Gershen Kaufman, *Shame: The Power of Caring* (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Books, Inc., 1980), 68.
10. John R. Chávez, *The Lost Land: The Chicago Images of the Southwest* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), 88–90.
11. "Hispanic" is derived from *Hispanis* (*España*, a name given to the Iberian Peninsula in ancient times when it was a part of the Roman Empire) and is a term designated by the U.S. government to make it easier to handle us on paper.
12. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo created the Mexican-American in 1848.
13. Anglos, in order to alleviate their guilt for dispossessing the Chicano, stressed the Spanish part of us and perpetrated the myth of the Spanish Southwest. We have accepted the fiction that we are Hispanic, that is Spanish, in order to accommodate ourselves to the dominant culture and its abhorrence of Indians. Chávez, 88–91.

For Discussion and Writing

1. List the different kinds of languages Anzaldúa says she speaks and organize them according to a principle of your own selection. Explain that principle and what the list it produces tells us about the Chicano/a experience with language.
2. How does Anzaldúa use definition to discuss her experience with language, and to what effect?
3. **connections** Compare Anzaldúa's sense of herself as an American to Audre Lorde's in "The Fourth of July" (p. 239). In what way does each woman feel American? In what way does each not?
4. In her discussion of moving back and forth between the varieties of languages she speaks, Anzaldúa uses the term "switch codes" (par. 27). Define that term and write about situations in your life in which you switch codes.

LANGUAGE AND SELF – THE TONGUES WE SPEAK

Day #3 – Tuesday – 2/5/2019

Objectives

- Connect writing as a cultural system that extends a biological instinct.
- Discuss the role that language plays in identity formation and practice.
- Get students to examine their own identities as language users and writers.

Activity Schedule

1. Take Role (5)
2. Questions? (5)
 - a. OpenLab
 - b. Drive
 - c. Homework
 - d. Anything else
3. Free-write about Anzaldua (10)
 - a. What does she write that you identify with?
 - b. What does she write that you can't identify with?
 - c. What does she write that you want to know more about?
4. Small groups (20)
 - a. What do we need to know about Anzaldua's essay? Share what you agree with as a group and what you disagree with.
5. How does language help shape identity and culture? (15)
6. "[Identifying Yourself Through Language](#)" by Robyn Giffen (15)
7. TED Talk Discussion – Can we separate our identity from language? (5)

Workshop Hour

Creating a language manifesto.

Upcoming

- Selections on the Hero's Journey in Drive. Read for Thursday.
- First grade discussion on Thursday – shocking, but easily fixable.
- First project assigned on Thursday. More writing than you have ever done in your life.

LANGUAGE AND SELF – THE TONGUES WE SPEAK

Day #3 – Tuesday – 2/5/2019

Notes

1. Anzaldua discussion (20)
 - a. We all speak many tongues.
 - b. Even when we speak the same language – it is not the same (a representation of our identity – intersectionalism).
 - i. Patois – language of the community, “common people”
 1. Jeetyet?
 2. No'dju?
 3. Yuntu?
 4. Af'r'I' red'up.
 - ii. Argot – jargon or slang of a group
 - c. Language use is an exercise in power. Naming something is power. Your language is used against you – you are judged by the language you speak – politics of identity and representation. Identity ↔ Subjectivity
 - d. Language evokes time and place, a sense of culture and community. It evokes identity.
 - e. Ethnic ↔ Linguistic Identity
 - f. Self ↔ Where does our sense of culture and belonging come from? How do we identify with others through language?
 - g. Internalization of language – “Identity is the essential core of who we are as individuals, the conscious experience of the self-inside.”
 - h. What is the consequence of being told you speak broken English, or bastard English, or “slang”?
 - i. Our esteem towards the language we speak is part of how we view ourselves.



- j. How can an individual of a community have a voice outside of the community, when the community itself is not heard? E.g. Chicanos.
- k. Giving up a language is giving up an identity.

STORY AND SELF – RECOGNIZING THE ROLE OF SELF IN NARRATIVE AND WRITING

Day #4 – Thursday – 2/7/2019

Objectives

- Describe the monomyth.
- Connect the role of self to culture and writing.
- Introduce students to Project I – The Story of the Self.

Activity Schedule

1. Take Role (5)
2. Questions? (5)
 - a. OpenLab
 - b. Drive
 - c. Homework
 - d. Anything else
3. Free-write about Campbell (10)
 - a. What is a hero?
4. Large group discussion (20)
 - a. Hero's journey.
 - b. Relationship to self and writing
5. Project I, Part I? (20)
6. Grades (15)

Upcoming

- DasBender "Read Critical Thinking in Writing" for Tuesday.
- Assignment on Tuesday (summary) – take notes.

LANGUAGE AND SELF – THE TONGUES WE SPEAK

Day #4 – Thursday – 2/7/2019

Notes

1. A journey – a great movement – separation, descent, ordeal, return.
2. Common structural elements of myth, fairy tale, dreams, movies, and literary stories.
3. The journey is not always, or only physical – it is a metaphorical, and spiritual, journey as well. The hero must change.
4. Character arc – stages of growth
 - a. Ordinary world – the three-dimensional hero, flaws and all
 - i. What is the central dramatic question/premise
 - ii. Entry into special world – plot
 - b. Refusal of the call – Recognition of risk, resistance to change
 - i. Stakes of refusal grow
 - ii. Hero is comfortable—doesn't want to change
 - c. Meeting of the mentor – provides insight, confidence, training, or gifts
 - i. A person, or a tome, map, whatever
 - d. Crossing the threshold – Accepting one's reality
 - i. There is no turning back
 - ii. May go willingly, or be pushed
 - iii. Internal force or external force
 - e. Tests, allies, enemies – faces encounters that test the hero's resolve
 - i. Our look at the special world
 - ii. Dramatic story of relationships, trust
 - f. Approach to the inmost cave – leading to the heart of the story/conflict
 - i. Dealing with setbacks
 - ii. The ticking clock
 - iii. Preparing to face the greatest fear
 - g. The Ordeal
 - i. Central life-or-death crisis
 - ii. What will be lost or given up to succeed

- iii. Essential, central, magical stage
- h. Reward – survival, celebration
- i. Road back – Completing the journey, re-establish what was lost and won (dramatic risk).
- j. Resurrection – Cleansing, final life-or-death struggle, rising to the sacrifice
- k. Return with elixir – Final reward, restoration of balance, hero is changed

STORY AND SELF – MODELS TO THINK ABOUT

Day #5 – Thursday – 2/14/2019 [No class on 2/12 (Tuesday)]

Objectives

- Looking at ways of positioning the self with respect to narratives.
- Transition into discussion of “critical thinking.”
- Discuss Project I – The Story of the Self.

Activity Schedule

1. Take Role and general Questions (5)
2. Models to think About (20)
3. How to Live to Be 100” (20)
4. Story of the Self – Part I (15)
5. Why have we focused on you (5)
6. Transition to “critical reading” and due dates (10)

Upcoming

- DasBender “Read Critical Thinking in Writing” for Tuesday (annotate carefully).
- Dillar “Living Like Weasles” for Tuesday (take some notes).
- Assignments on Tuesday (analysis; summary).

STORY AND SELF – MODELS TO THINK ABOUT

Day #5 – Thursday – 2/14/2019

Notes

1. A journey – a great movement – separation, descent, ordeal, return.
2. We live a life constructed of narratives and stories – oral ↔ tradition.
3. Rethinking narratives – what goes into it, and what is its relationship to critical thinking

Critical Thinking in College Writing: From the Personal to the Academic

Gina DasBender

There is something about the term "critical thinking" that makes you draw a blank every time you think about what it means. It seems so fuzzy and abstract that you end up feeling uncomfortable, as though the term is thrust upon you, demanding an intellectual effort that you may not yet have. But you know it requires you to enter a realm of smart, complex ideas that others have written about and that you have to navigate, understand, and interact with just as intelligently. It's a lot to ask for. It makes you feel like a stranger in a strange land.

As a writing teacher I am accustomed to reading and responding to difficult texts. In fact, I like grappling with texts that have interesting ideas no matter how complicated they are because I understand their value. I have learned through my years of education that what ultimately engages me, keeps me enthralled, is not just grammatically pristine, fluent writing, but writing that forces me to think beyond the page. It is writing where the writer has challenged herself and then offered up that challenge to the reader, like a baton in a relay race. The idea is to run with the baton.

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writing that changes your thinking

engaging writing
understanding ideas - or just being able to work with them.

What is critical thinking?

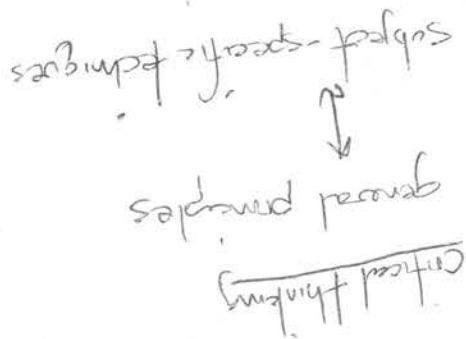
You will often come across critical thinking and analysis as requirements for assignments in writing and upper-level courses in a variety of disciplines. Instructors have varying explanations of what they actually require of you, but, in general, they expect you to respond thoughtfully to texts you have read. The first thing you should remember is not to be afraid of critical thinking. It does *not* mean that you have to criticize the text, disagree with its premise, or attack the writer simply because you feel you must. Criticism is the process of responding to and evaluating ideas, argument, and style so that readers understand how and why you value these items.

Critical thinking is also a process that is fundamental to all disciplines. While in this essay I refer mainly to critical thinking in comparison, the general principles behind critical thinking are strikingly similar in other fields and disciplines. In history, for instance, it could mean examining and analyzing primary sources in order to understand the context in which they were written. In the hard sciences, it usually involves careful reasoning, making judgments and decisions, and problem solving. While critical thinking may be subject-specific, that is to say, it can vary in method and technique depending on the discipline, most of its general principles such as rational thinking, making independent evaluations and judgments, and a healthy skepticism of what is being read, are common to all disciplines. No matter the area of study, the application of critical thinking skills leads to clear and flexible thinking and a better understanding of the subject at hand.

To be a critical thinker you not only have to have an informed opinion about the text but also a thoughtful response to it. There is no doubt that critical thinking is serious thinking, so here are some steps you can take to become a serious thinker and writer.

ATTENTIVE READING: A FOUNDATION FOR CRITICAL THINKING

A critical thinker is always a good reader because to engage critically with a text you have to read attentively and with an open mind, absorbing new ideas and forming your own as you go along. Let us imagine you are reading an essay by Annie Dillard, a famous essayist, called "Living like Weasels." Students are drawn to it because the idea of the essay appeals to something personally fundamental to all of us: how to



Criticism is the process of evaluation and response, anchored to some value.

live our lives. It is also a provocative essay that pulls the reader into the argument and forces a reaction, a good criterion for critical thinking. So let's say that in reading the essay you encounter a quote that gives you pause. In describing her encounter with a weasel in Hollins Pond, Dillard says, "I would like to learn, or remember, how to live . . . I don't think I can learn from a wild animal how to live in particular . . . but I might learn something of mindlessness, something of the purity of living in the physical senses and the dignity of living without bias or motive" (220). You may not be familiar with language like this. It seems complicated, and you have to stop ever so often (perhaps after every phrase) to see if you understood what Dillard means. You may ask yourself these questions:

- What does "mindlessness" mean in this context? → *not stuck in one's head*
- How can one "learn something of mindlessness?" → *observation*
- What does Dillard mean by "purity of living in the physical senses?"
- How can one live "without bias or motive?"

These questions show that you are an attentive reader. Instead of simply glossing over this important passage, you have actually stopped to think about what the writer means and what she expects you to get from it. Here is how I read the quote and try to answer the questions above: Dillard proposes a simple and uncomplicated way of life as she looks to the animal world for inspiration. It is ironic that she admires the quality of "mindlessness" since it is our consciousness, our very capacity to think and reason, which makes us human, which makes us beings of a higher order. Yet, Dillard seems to imply that we need to live instinctually, to be guided by our senses rather than our intellect. Such a "thoughtless" approach to daily living, according to Dillard, would mean that our actions would not be tainted by our biases or motives, our prejudices. We would go back to a primal way of living, like the weasel she observes. It may take you some time to arrive at this understanding on your own, but it is important to stop, reflect, and ask questions of the text whenever you feel stumped by it. Often such questions will be helpful during class discussions and peer review sessions.

↳ how to read critically - stop, reflect, ask questions
↳ but this takes time

↳ Reading to understand - conducting an analysis

LISTING IMPORTANT IDEAS

When reading any essay, keep track of all the important points the writer makes by jotting down a list of ideas or quotations in a notebook. This list not only allows you to remember ideas that are central to the writer's argument, ideas that struck you in some way or the other, but it also helps you to get a good sense of the whole reading assignment point by point. In reading Annie Dillard's essay, we come across several points that contribute toward her proposal for better living and that help us get a better understanding of her main argument. Here is a list of some of her ideas that struck me as important:

1. "The weasel lives in necessity and we live in choice, hating necessity and dying at the last ignobly in its talons" (220).
2. "And I suspect that for me the way is like the weasel's: open to time and death painlessly, noticing everything, remembering nothing, choosing the given with a fierce and pointed will" (221).
3. "We can live any way we want. People take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience—even of silence—by choice. The thing is to stalk your calling in a certain skilled and supple way, to locate the most tender and live spot and plug into that pulse" (221).
4. "A weasel doesn't attack anything; a weasel lives as he's meant to, yielding at every moment to the perfect freedom of single necessity" (221).
5. "I think it would be well, and proper, and obedient, and pure, to grasp your one necessity and not let it go, to dangle from it limp wherever it takes you" (221).

These quotations give you a cumulative sense of what Dillard is trying to get at in her essay, that is, they lay out the elements with which she builds her argument. She first explains how the weasel lives, what she learns from observing the weasel, and then prescribes a lifestyle she admires—the central concern of her essay.

fake notes -
amofafe

Good ideas for research writing -
I still start with amofafe

You have to find the
main idea, or argument,
or narrative/story

NOTICING KEY TERMS AND SUMMARIZING IMPORTANT QUOTES

Within the list of quotations above are key terms and phrases that are critical to your understanding of the ideal life as Dillard describes it. For instance, "mindlessness," "instinct," "perfect freedom of a single necessity," "stalk your calling," "choice," and "fierce and pointed will" are weighty terms and phrases, heavy with meaning, that you need to spend time understanding. You also need to understand the relationship between them and the quotations in which they appear. This is how you might work on each quotation to get a sense of its meaning and then come up with a statement that takes the key terms into account and expresses a general understanding of the text:

Quote 1: Animals (like the weasel) live in "necessity," which means that their only goal in life is to survive. They don't think about how they should live or what choices they should make like humans do. According to Dillard, we like to have options and resist the idea of "necessity." We fight death—an inevitable force that we have no control over—and yet ultimately surrender to it as it is the necessary end of our lives.

Quote 2: Dillard thinks the weasel's way of life is the best way to live. It implies a pure and simple approach to life where we do not worry about the passage of time or the approach of death. Like the weasel, we should live life in the moment, intensely experiencing everything but not dwelling on the past. We should accept our condition, what we are "given," with a "fierce and pointed will." Perhaps this means that we should pursue our one goal, our one passion in life, with the same single-minded determination and tenacity that we see in the weasel.

Quote 3: As humans, we can choose any lifestyle we want. The trick, however, is to go after our one goal, one passion like a stalker would after a prey.

Quote 4: While we may think that the weasel (or any animal) chooses to attack other animals, it is really only surrendering to the one thing it knows: its need to live. Dillard tells us there is "the perfect freedom" in this desire to survive because to

Knowing what the words mean is important

her, the lack of options (the animal has no other option than to fight to survive) is the most liberating of all.

Quote 5: Dillard urges us to latch on to our deepest passion in life (the "one necessity") with the tenacity of a weasel and not let go. Perhaps she's telling us how important it is to have an unwavering focus or goal in life.

WRITING A PERSONAL RESPONSE: LOOKING INWARD

Dillard's ideas will have certainly provoked a response in your mind, so if you have some clear thoughts about how you feel about the essay this is the time to write them down. As you look at the quotes you have selected and your explanation of their meaning, begin to create your personal response to the essay. You may begin by using some of these strategies:

1. Tell a story. Has Dillard's essay reminded you of an experience you have had? Write a story in which you illustrate a point that Dillard makes or hint at an idea that is connected to her essay.
2. Focus on an idea from Dillard's essay that is personally important to you. Write down your thoughts about this idea in a first person narrative and explain your perspective on the issue.
3. If you are uncomfortable writing a personal narrative or using "I" (you should not be), reflect on some of her ideas that seem important and meaningful in general. Why were you struck by these ideas?
4. Write a short letter to Dillard in which you speak to her about the essay. You may compliment her on some of her ideas by explaining why you like them, ask her a question related to her essay and explain why that question came to you, and genuinely start up a conversation with her.

This stage in critical thinking is important for establishing your relationship with a text. What do I mean by this "relationship," you may ask? Simply put, it has to do with how you feel about the text. Are you amazed by how true the ideas seem to be, how wise Dillard sounds? Or are you annoyed by Dillard's let-me-tell-you-how-to-live approach and disturbed by the impractical ideas she so easily prescribes? Do you find Dillard's voice and style thrilling and engaging or merely confus-

Critical thinking means knowing where you stand in relationship to the text

When you think of something always, always, always write it down.

ing? No matter which of the personal response options you select, your initial reaction to the text will help shape your views about it.

MAKING AN ACADEMIC CONNECTION: LOOKING OUTWARD

First year writing courses are designed to teach a range of writing—from the personal to the academic—so that you can learn to express advanced ideas, arguments, concepts, or theories in any discipline. While the example I have been discussing pertains mainly to college writing, the method of analysis and approach to critical thinking I have demonstrated here will serve you well in a variety of disciplines. Since critical thinking and analysis are key elements of the reading and writing you will do in college, it is important to understand how they form a part of academic writing. No matter how intimidating the term “academic writing” may seem (it is, after all, associated with advanced writing and becoming an expert in a field of study), embrace it not as a temporary college requirement but as a habit of mind.

To some, academic writing often implies *impersonal* writing, writing that is detached, distant, and lacking in personal meaning or relevance. However, this is often not true of the academic writing you will do in a composition class. Here your presence as a writer—your thoughts, experiences, ideas, and therefore who you are—is of much significance to the writing you produce. In fact, it would not be far-fetched to say that in a writing class academic writing often begins with personal writing. Let me explain. If critical thinking begins with a personal view of the text, academic writing helps you broaden that view by going beyond the personal to a more universal point of view. In other words, academic writing often has its roots in one’s private opinion or perspective about another writer’s ideas but ultimately goes beyond this opinion to the expression of larger, more abstract ideas. Your personal vision—your core beliefs and general approach to life—will help you arrive at these “larger ideas” or universal propositions that any reader can understand and be enlightened by, if not agree with. In short, academic writing is largely about taking a critical, analytical stance toward a subject in order to arrive at some compelling conclusions.

Let us now think about how you might apply your critical thinking skills to move from a personal reaction to a more formal academic

academic is an expression of the personal towards more "universal point of view."

critical thinking is a skill that can (and should) be used everywhere

response to Annie Dillard's essay. The second stage of critical thinking involves textual analysis and requires you to do the following:

- Summarize the writer's ideas the best you can in a brief paragraph. This provides the basis for extended analysis since it contains the central ideas of the piece, the building blocks, so to speak.
- Evaluate the most important ideas of the essay by considering their merits or flaws, their worthiness or lack of worthiness. Do not merely agree or disagree with the ideas but explore and explain why you believe they are socially, politically, philosophically, or historically important and relevant, or why you need to question, challenge, or reject them.
- Identify gaps or discrepancies in the writer's argument. Does she contradict herself? If so, explain how this contradiction forces you to think more deeply about her ideas. Or if you are confused, explain what is confusing and why.
- Examine the strategies the writer uses to express her ideas. Look particularly at her style, voice, use of figurative language, and the way she structures her essay and organizes her ideas. Do these strategies strengthen or weaken her argument? How?
- Include a second text—an essay, a poem, lyrics of a song—whose ideas enhance your reading and analysis of the primary text. This text may help provide evidence by supporting a point you're making, and further your argument.
- Extend the writer's ideas, develop your own perspective, and propose new ways of thinking about the subject at hand.

CRAFTING THE ESSAY

Once you have taken notes and developed a thorough understanding of the text, you are on your way to writing a good essay. If you were asked to write an exploratory essay, a personal response to Dillard's essay would probably suffice. However, an academic writing assignment requires you to be more critical. As counter-intuitive as it may sound, beginning your essay with a personal anecdote often helps to establish your relationship to the text and draw the reader into your writing. It also helps to ease you into the more complex task of textual analysis. Once you begin to analyze Dillard's ideas, go back to the list of im-

to begin... the personal anecdote

Stages of critical thinking (a la Dos Berdo's)

- understand and establish the personal connection/stake
- textual analysis (summary, evaluate, analyze)
- gap identification that you can fill in through your analysis
- look at the rhetoric of the text (style, organization, coherence etc.)
- connect ideas of text and/or extend

portant ideas and quotations you created as you read the essay. After a brief summary, engage with the quotations that are most important, that get to the heart of Dillard's ideas, and explore their meaning. Textual engagement, a seemingly slippery concept, simply means that you respond directly to some of Dillard's ideas, examine the value of Dillard's assertions, and explain why they are worthwhile or why they should be rejected. This should help you to transition into analysis and evaluation. Also, this part of your essay will most clearly reflect your critical thinking abilities as you are expected not only to represent Dillard's ideas but also to weigh their significance. Your observations about the various points she makes, analysis of conflicting viewpoints or contradictions, and your understanding of her general thesis should now be synthesized into a rich new idea about how we should live our lives. Conclude by explaining this fresh point of view in clear, compelling language and by articulating your main argument.

MODELING GOOD WRITING

When I teach a writing class, I often show students samples of really good writing that I've collected over the years. I do this for two reasons: first, to show students how another freshman writer understood and responded to an assignment that they are currently working on; and second, to encourage them to succeed as well. I explain that although they may be intimidated by strong, sophisticated writing and feel pressured to perform similarly, it is always helpful to see what it takes to get an A. It also helps to follow a writer's imagination, to learn how the mind works when confronted with a task involving critical thinking. The following sample is a response to the Anne Dillard essay. Figure 1 includes the entire student essay and my comments are inserted into the text to guide your reading.

Though this student has not included a personal narrative in his essay, his own world-view is clear throughout. His personal point of view, while not expressed in first person statements, is evident from the very beginning. So we could say that a personal response to the text need not always be expressed in experiential or narrative form but may be present as reflection, as it is here. The point is that the writer has traveled through the rough terrain of critical thinking by starting out with his own ruminations on the subject, then by critically analyzing and responding to Dillard's text, and finally by developing a strong

Look at examples of good writing, but also how good writing is used in an analytical way.

Critical thinking means engaging with a text
 recognizing conflicting viewpoints, contradictions, theses
 ↳ synthesize these

Building our Lives: The Blueprint Lies Within

We all may ask ourselves many questions, some serious, some less important, in our lifetime. But at some point along the way, we all will take a step back and look at the way we are living our lives, and wonder if we are living them correctly. Unfortunately, there is no solid blueprint for the way to live our lives. Each person is different, feeling different emotions and reacting to different stimuli than the person next to them. Many people search for the true answer on how to live our lives, as if there are secret instructions out there waiting to be found. But the truth is we as a species are given a gift not many other creatures can claim to have: the ability to choose to live as we want, not as we were necessarily designed to. Even so, people look outside of themselves for the answers on how to live, which begs me to ask the question: what is wrong with just living as we are now, built from scratch through our choices and memories?

Annie Dillard's essay entitled "Living Like Weasels" is an exploration into the way human beings might live, clearly stating that "We could live any way we want" (Dillard 211). Dillard's encounter with an ordinary weasel helped her receive insight into the difference between the way human beings live their lives and the way wild animals go about theirs. As a nature writer, Dillard shows us that we can learn a lot about the true way to live by observing nature's other creations. While we think and debate and calculate each and every move, these creatures just simply act. The thing that keeps human beings from living the purest life possible, like an animal such as the weasel, is the same thing that separates us from all wild animals: our minds. Human beings are creatures of caution, creatures of undeniable fear, never fully living our lives because we are too caught up with avoiding risks. A weasel, on the

Comment: Even as the writer starts with a general introduction, he makes a claim here that is related to Dillard's essay.

Comment: The student asks what seems like a rhetorical question but it is one he will answer in the rest of his essay. It is also a question that forces the reader to think about a key term from the text—"choices."

Comment: Student summarizes Dillard's essay by explaining the ideas of the essay in fresh words.

other hand, is a creature of action and instinct, a creature which lives its life the way it was created to, not questioning his motives, simply striking when the time to strike is right. As Dillard states, "the weasel lives in necessity and we live in choice, hating necessity and dying at the last ignobly in its talons" (Dillard 210).

It is important to note and appreciate the uniqueness of the ideas Dillard presents in this essay because in some ways they are very true. For instance, it is true that humans live lives of caution, with a certain fear that has been built up continually through the years. We are forced to agree with Dillard's idea that we as humans "might learn something of mindlessness, something of the purity of living in the physical senses and the dignity of living without bias or motive" (Dillard 210). To live freely we need to live our lives with less hesitation, instead of intentionally choosing to not live to the fullest in fear of the consequences of our actions. However, Dillard suggests that we should forsake our ability of thought and choice all together. The human mind is the tool that has allowed a creature with no natural weapons to become the unquestioned dominant species on this planet, and though it curbs the spontaneity of our lives, it is not something to be simply thrown away for a chance to live completely "free of bias or motive" (Dillard 210). We are a moral, conscious species, complete with emotions and a firm conscience, and it is the power of our minds that allows us to exist as we do now: with the ability to both think and feel at the same time. It grants us the ability to choose and have choice, to be guided not only by feelings and emotions but also by morals and an understanding of consequence. As such, a human being with the ability to live like a weasel has given up the very thing that makes him human.

Comment: Up until this point the student has introduced Dillard's essay and summarized some of its ideas. In the section that follows, he continues to think critically about Dillard's ideas and argument.

Comment: This is a strong statement that captures the student's appreciation of Dillard's ability to recognize why most people cannot live this way. This is a good example of critical thinking.

Comment: Again, the student acknowledges the importance of conscious thought.

Comment: While the student does not include a personal experience in the essay, this section gives us a sense of his personal view of life. Also note how he introduces the term "morals" here to point out the significance of the consequences of our actions. The point is that not only do we need to act but we also need to be aware of the result of our actions.

Comment: Student rejects Dillard's ideas but only after explaining why it is important to reject them.

Here, the first true flaw of Dillard's essay comes to light. While it is possible to understand and even respect Dillard's observations, it should be noted that without thought and choice she would have never been able to construct these notions in the first place. Dillard protests, "I tell you I've been in that weasel's brain for sixty seconds, and he was in mine" (Dillard 210). One cannot cast oneself into the mind of another creature without the intricacy of human thought, and one would not be able to choose to live as said creature does without the power of human choice. In essence, Dillard would not have had the ability to judge the life of another creature if she were to live like a weasel. Weasels do not make judgments; they simply act and react on the basis of instinct. The "mindlessness" that Dillard speaks of would prevent her from having the option to choose her own reactions. Whereas the conscious-thinking Dillard has the ability to see this creature and take the time to stop and examine its life, the "mindless" Dillard would only have the limited options to attack or run away. This is the major fault in the logic of Dillard's essay, as it would be impossible for her to choose to examine and compare the lives of humans and weasels without the capacity for choice.

Dillard also examines a weasel's short memory in a positive light and seems to believe that a happier life could be achieved if only we were simple-minded enough to live our lives with absolutely no regret. She claims, "I suspect that for me the way is like the weasel's: open to time and death painlessly, noticing everything, remembering nothing, choosing the given with a fierce and pointed will" (Dillard 210). In theory, this does sound like a positive value. To be able to live freely without a hint of remembrance as to the results of our choices would be an

Comment: Once again the student demonstrates why the logic of Dillard's argument falls short when applied to her own writing.

Comment: Student dismantles Dillard's entire premise by telling us how the very act of writing the essay negates her argument. He has not only interpreted the essay but figured out how its premise is logically flawed.

interesting life, one may even say a care-free life. But at the same time, would we not be denying our responsibility as humans to learn from the mistakes of the past as to not replicate them in the future? Human beings' ability to remember is almost as important as our ability to choose, because remembering things from the past is the only way we can truly learn from them. History is taught throughout our educational system for a very good reason: so that the generations of the future do not make the mistakes of the past. A human being who chooses to live like a weasel gives up something that once made him very human: the ability to learn from his mistakes to further better himself.

Ultimately, without the ability to choose or recall the past, mankind would be able to more readily take risks without regard for consequences. Dillard views the weasel's reaction to necessity as an unwavering willingness to take such career risks and chances. She states that "it would be well, and proper, and obedient, and pure, to grasp your one necessity and not let it go, to dangle from it limp wherever it takes you" (Dillard 211). Would it then be productive for us to make a wrong choice and be forced to live in it forever, when we as people have the power to change, to remedy wrongs we've made in our lives? What Dillard appears to be recommending is that humans not take many risks, but who is to say that the ability to avoid or escape risks is necessarily a flaw with mankind?

If we had been like the weasel, never wanting, never needing, always "choosing the given with a fierce and pointed will" (Dillard 210), our world would be a completely different place. The United States of America might not exist at this very moment if we had just taken what was given to us, and unwaveringly accepted a life as a colony of Great Britain. But as Cole clearly puts it, "A risk that you assume by actually

Comment: This is another thoughtful question that makes the reader think along with the writer.

Comment: The writer sums up his argument while once again reminding us of the problem with Dillard's ideas.

Comment: The student brings two ideas together very smoothly here.

Comment: This question represents excellent critical thinking. The student acknowledges that theoretically "remembering nothing" may have some merits but then ponders on the larger socio-political problem it presents.

doing something seems far more risky than a risk you take by not doing something, even though the risk of doing nothing may be greater" (Cole 145). As a unified body of people, we were able to go against that which was expected of us, evaluate the risk in doing so, and move forward with our revolution. The American people used the power of choice, and risk assessment, to make a permanent change in their lives; they used the remembrance of Britain's unjust deeds to fuel their passion for victory. We as people chose. We distinguished between right and wrong. These are things that a weasel can never do, because a weasel does not have a say in its own life, it only has its instincts and nothing more.

Humans are so unique in the fact that they can dictate the course of their own lives, but many people still choose to search around for the true way to live. What they do not realize is that they have to look no further than themselves. Our power, our weapon, is our ability to have thought and choice, to remember, and to make our own decisions based on our concepts of right and wrong, good and bad. These are the only tools we will ever need to construct the perfect life for ourselves from the ground up. And though it may seem like a nice notion to live a life free of regret, it is our responsibility as creatures and the appointed caretakers of this planet to utilize what was given to us and live our lives as we were meant to, not the life of any other wild animal.

Comment: This final paragraph sums up the writer's perspective in a thoughtful and mature way. It moves away from Dillard's argument and establishes the notion of human responsibility, an idea highly worth thinking about.

Comment: The student makes a historical reference here that serves as strong evidence for his own argument.

point of view of his own about our responsibility as human beings. As readers we are engaged by clear, compelling writing and riveted by critical thinking that produces a movement of ideas that give the essay depth and meaning. The challenge Dillard set forth in her essay has been met and the baton passed along to us.

DISCUSSION

1. Write about your experiences with critical thinking assignments. What seemed to be the most difficult? What approaches did you try to overcome the difficulty?
2. Respond to the list of strategies on how to conduct textual analysis. How well do these strategies work for you? Add your own tips to the list.
3. Evaluate the student essay by noting aspects of critical thinking that are evident to you. How would you grade this essay? What other qualities (or problems) do you notice?

WORKS CITED

Dillard, Annie. "Living like Weasels." *One Hundred Great Essays*. Ed. Robert DiYanni. New York: Longman, 2002. 217-221. Print.

CRITICAL THINKING AND SUMMARIES

Day #6 – Tuesday – 2/19/2019

Objectives

- Discuss what “critical thinking” is from DasBender’s article.
- Show the process of close reading and apply it to summarization.
- Go over “Writing an Effective Summary” assignment.

Activity Schedule

1. Take Role and general questions (5)
2. Free write – experience with Project I (10)
3. Project I questions and discussion (15)
4. Summary assignment (15)
5. DasBender article walkthrough (30)

Workshop Hour

How to “read” a complex text like *Consider the Lobster*.

Upcoming

- Load the Google Drive app onto your devices and sync the folders.
- Follow directions on Summary assignment for credit.
- 40 paragraphs due this Thursday. You will be getting another response assignment on the “Consider the Lobster” article then.
- Observer coming next Thursday to class.

CRITICAL THINKING AND SUMMARIES

Day #6 – Tuesday – 2/19/2019

Notes

Your Name Goes Here
ENG 1101—LC 53
Professor Patrick Corbett

September 1, 2018 (or whatever date it is)

A More Informative Title than What You Are Used To Writing

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This Is a Subject Heading....Your First Big Point Goes Here

Introduce that point here in a sentence and then elaborate on it in a way you’re your reader can follow...Lorem felis, varius fermentum justo placerat non. Curabitur suscipit porttitor turpis vel tincidunt. Sed ut risus eu mauris interdum accumsan ac eget ipsum. Pellentesque tempor, leo sed scelerisque placerat, augue erat convallis mi, sit amet blandit justo ex non lacus. Nam non lacinia metus. Vivamus rhoncus nulla nec hendrerit cursus. Nullam nec pharetra felis, id sollicitudin erat.

If That Point Needs Divided into SubPoints

You divide subpoints to make it easier for the reader to understand what you are writing because it is more organized. Also, this means your thinking is more organized as well ...Taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent per conubia nostra, per inceptos himenaeos. Curabitur mattis pulvinar ante eget pretium. Phasellus orci nunc, porta ut convallis in, varius eu arcu. Vestibulum ante ipsum primis in faucibus orci luctus et ultrices posuere cubilia Curae; Ut porta nunc risus, et sollicitudin arcu aliquam id. Sed cursus neque libero, interdum pretium eros laoreet quis. Etiam ut turpis eu augue feugiat dapibus. Proin vehicula ex ac ultrices dignissim.

Use More Subject Headings to Divide Big Ideas into Smaller Ones

The more complex point you are trying to make, the more divisions will be necessary....Lobortis vel pulvinar ac, facilisis ut turpis. Suspendisse viverra velit eu risus fringilla, sed bibendum mi vehicula. Sed sollicitudin placerat erat non euismod. Ut vehicula eros at lacus efficitur, in ultricies magna volutpat. Sed ut aliquam justo. In non sapien non ipsum eleifend elementum in ac orci. Curabitur vitae diam libero. Aenean luctus ligula sit amet sem efficitur, id pretium tortor semper. Nunc vel quam eu tortor scelerisque scelerisque ut non magna. Vestibulum sit amet hendrerit diam. Integer pulvinar feugiat justo maximus maximus. Vestibulum ante ipsum primis in faucibus orci luctus et ultrices posuere cubilia Curae; Cras ac nunc massa. Nunc ultrices vitae quam sit amet suscipit.

A Second Big Point Can Go Here...or Not

You are used to thinking of things in terms of body paragraphs. Now think of them in terms of body sections. In simple ideas, each section will be its own paragraph. Sometimes, a section will be many pages instead..Dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nullam sit amet sapien tincidunt, scelerisque ipsum et, laoreet sem. Phasellus tincidunt malesuada metus sit amet pellentesque. Mauris iaculis, est bibendum consequat iaculis, neque ex iaculis ipsum, a accumsan nunc velit eu dui. Etiam at ipsum consequat felis interdum dapibus quis a elit. In massa enim, egestas at justo sed, scelerisque sollicitudin ante. Etiam vel purus sit amet tortor elementum commodo non sed ligula. Mauris eu pretium enim, vulputate ultricies ex. Duis ultrices velit sed eros maximus laoreet. Nam vitae leo tincidunt, feugiat justo a, fermentum ante. Nunc facilisis in mauris vitae accumsan. Ut viverra sit amet nunc sit amet.

This Big Point Uses a List Structure to Break Down Parallel Information

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Your Name Goes Here
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DESIGNING A BASIC ANALYSIS

Day #7 - Thursday - 2/21/2019

Objectives

- Demonstrate how a basic analysis can be formed from critical thinking techniques.
- Show students how to format and upload a document to Drive.

Activity Schedule

1. Take Role and general questions (5)
2. Questions about Project I and demonstration (15)
3. Project I questions and discussion (15)
4. Writing an Analysis (25)
5. Individual meetings (15)

Upcoming

- Load the Google Drive app onto your devices and sync the folders.
- Project 1, Part 1 is due Friday (tomorrow) at midnight.
- On Tuesday, you will be getting *Consider the Lobster* analysis.
- Observer coming next Thursday to class.

DESIGNING A BASIC ANALYSIS

Day #7 – Thursday – 2/21/2019

Notes

Your assignment is going to be to write a 500- to 600-word analysis response to *Consider the Lobster*. And I'm telling you that you can do so without knowing many of the subject-specific techniques used in expert literary analysis. You can do so through general principles of critical thinking. Here are things that you must be willing to do.

- 1) You must be willing to read to understand—which involves writing as you read.
 - a. This involves a commitment of time and focus – the willingness to read closely and track what you have read through annotations and other forms of notes.
 - b. Reading critically means stopping, reflecting on what you have encountered, asking yourself questions, and taking notes on that process.
 - c. You must be able to discover what ideas are most important to you, and which chains of argumentation support that. You have to find the main idea, or argument, or the narrative/story that is speaking to you.
 - d. You have to be willing to look up seemingly important words or ideas you do not know.
- 2) As you read, you must be willing to think about how the text connect to you in a tangible way. Where do you stand in relationship to the text itself, its argument(s), or subject matter?
 - a. Academic writing (i.e., writing with the explicit goal of knowledge-creation and sharing) starts with the personal.
 - b. You must be able to articulate an opinion on the subject you are writing on (an informed opinion), but also try to apply that opinion towards more abstract, or general, ideas.
 - c. Recognize and question your own relationship with the text to situate yourself within it.
- 3) Find and identify the gap in your own understanding.

- a. What is missing that can be filled in through analysis? This is something that will bridge the “gap” between your own interest and understanding, the text, and the audience.
- b. For example, for me, the gap would be thinking about what my relationship is with the animal proteins (e.g., dead flesh), and what our relationship with our meat supply is more generally.
- c. Summarize, evaluate, connect, extend.
- d. Reorganize text according to conflicting viewpoints, contradictions, theses—all points for potential analysis.

Title of Essay

by

Your Name

Date Here

New York City College of Technology, CUNY
Prof. Patrick Corbett
English 1101-LC53

Your Name Here ©2019

Start your essay here.

REVISING THE WRITING PROCESS

Day #9 – Thursday – 2/28/2019

Objectives

- Introduce students to the personal essay assignment.
 - Short invention exercise.
 - Give an example.
- Show students how an informal analysis is part of a realistic writing process.

Activity Schedule

1. Take role and general questions (5)
2. Free write – “Who am I based on my personal survey?” (10/10)
3. Project I Introduction (10)
4. Revised writing process (15)
5. Example essay review (10)
6. Example essay discussion – “How to get from questions to an essay?” (15)

Upcoming

- Peer Tutor Workshop in Namm 229 at 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. today (free food/extra credit).
- No more writing assignments through the midterm. Next one will be in 3.5 weeks.
- Two reading assignments to help with essay – one each week.
- Project 1, Part 2 is due Friday, March 15th at 11:59 p.m.

DESIGNING A BASIC ANALYSIS**REVISING THE WRITING PROCESS**

Day #9 – Thursday – 2/28/2019

Notes

- The analysis process we designed for *Consider the Lobster* (Read—Take Notes—Reflect—Expand Notes) is just an expansion of reflection in writing process.
- The writing process is just an aspect of the larger failure-dependent creative process of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi.
- In your personal essay, you can summarize, evaluate, connect, and extend.
- You can focus on one question that sparks your imagination (e.g. what is the stupidest thing you've ever done), one category of questions (e.g., what is holding you back in your life right now), or wherever your personal gap exists that you wish to write into and explore.
- Note that what we are doing here in the first part of the class is “encouraging” you to expand your writing process and treat it more flexibly so that you can generate the necessary content to work with have a range of processes to apply to it, and the confidence to work with it until it is what it needs to be.
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REVISING THE WRITING PROCESS

Day #10 – Tuesday – 3/5/2019

Objectives

- Assist students with personal essay invention exercises.
 - Short invention exercise.
 - Give an example.
- Discuss audience as a concept.

Activity Schedule

1. Take role and general questions (5)
2. Free write – “Who am I based on my personal survey?” (10/10)
3. Project I Introduction (10)
4. Revised writing process (15)
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Story Corps Questions

- What are the most important lessons you've learned in life? Who or what taught those lessons to you?
- Are there any funny stories your family tells about you that come to mind?
- If you could interview anyone from your life living or dead, but not a celebrity, who would it be and why?
- How would you describe a perfect day when you were young?
- What was the most profound spiritual moment of your life?
- What are you proudest of?
- How has your life been different than what you'd imagined?
- What does your future hold?
- Do you have any last advice for me