

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

Script for Writing Vocabulary Workshop (for Workshop Leader)**Set-up and general notes**

- Have different colored pens, Harvey handouts (letter-sized to distribute at end for participants to copy and hand out to their own students, legal-sized for the workshop activity), handouts of Activities 1 and 2, handouts of the agenda, and branded exam books.
- Participants should be in a circle, if possible (for dialectical annotation activity).
- Whenever possible, workshop leader should participate in the activities.

Introductions

5 minutes: Ask participants to state their names, position in the college, and one word that identifies the most important element in teaching writing, in their opinion.

10 minutes: Explain and discuss what we mean by “course vocabulary.”

Define what it means to use a course vocabulary, why it is important, what are the challenges in implementing one and why everyone should, then invite participants to discuss/ask questions.

Script (can be modified by workshop leader)

2 minutes: In their anthology, *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler define a keyword as: “a term that marks a site of significant contestation and disagreement, not consensus” (<http://keywords.fordhamitac.org>). Just like words such as marriage, race, black, white, gender, and queer have multiple political, cultural, historical, academic, popular, and personal meanings, so, too, do terms for writing. Students have very different ideas about what words like thesis, evidence, sources, stance, style, and motive mean, how they should be used, and what they should do. Many students have been taught how to write theses very differently from what we want them to produce, and likewise with evidence and sources. Even more importantly, the nuances that distinguish good writing from great writing are notoriously easy to recognize and hard to teach. That is where style, stance, stitching, and reflection come in. Many students don’t realize that they can have a unique, personable style that engages the reader yet still write academically. Using a list of keywords for writing not only establishes a set of terms that everyone can use but also fosters discussion, discord, synthesis, and critical thinking about writing.

However, just knowing something is important does not make teaching it immediately tangible. Once a course vocabulary for discussing writing is established, then the terms need to be utilized, over and over again, in class discussions about assigned readings, in peer reviews of student work, in writing workshops, and in instructor's comments. Simply handing students a list of words and their definitions won't really bring this concept home to them. Lessons should be planned around it, and teaching should continually reinforce it.

8 minutes: Discussion, ideas, Q&A. Possible ideas for discussion points: ask participants if they use a course vocabulary, or for ideas of how one might be employed successfully in a writing class.

Activity 1

3 minutes: Participants will define the word that they identified in the introduction and explain why it is so important for successful writing.

5 minutes: Workshop leader will assign partners. Participants will exchange and read their partners' definitions, noting, in their partner's notebook, any questions or comments. Then the partners can discuss their definitions with each other.

2 minutes: Describe the process of 1) choosing a single word and being forced to create a hierarchy, 2) defining that word, and 3) analyze the discussion with their partners. Finally, bracket or underline a portion of either the process writing or the keyword definition to share with the class.

5 minutes: Ask for volunteers to read what they bracketed or underlined.

Activity 2

Hand out Gordon Harvey's Elements of Academic Writing on a legal-sized piece of paper. Introduce it as a course vocabulary that many faculty use. Hand out pens to each participant, making sure that each trio sitting next to one another has a different color (for example, Mary, Joe, and Chris are sitting side by side. Mary should get a red pen, Joe a blue one, and Chris a black one, etc).

7 minutes: Ask participants to read through Harvey's Elements quickly, and star three that strike them--in whatever way (good, bad, essential, puzzling, etc). Then ask them to annotate their definitions on the paper (they can address why they chose these specific elements, if they agree or disagree with anything in Harvey's definition, etc). Encourage participants to include drawings and to use handwriting marks to clarify tone (caps, underlines, exclamation points, etc.). Then, participants hand the paper to the person sitting to their left. That person reads the writer's annotations and responds, in the same style. Then, hand the paper to the left again. The

third person reads the preceding two annotations and adds to them. Hand the papers back to the original writers.

3 minutes: Participants should read their colleagues' annotations, then write about any intersections, divergences, or surprising information they contain.

Post-Mortem/Wrap-up

5 minutes: Individuals share their writing about the annotation exercise, workshop leader hands out clean copies of Gordon Harvey's elements.

Learning outcome for participants: ideally, participants will gain an idea about how a course vocabulary can meaningfully shape writing objectives by offering a shared language and clarifying writing goals.