

**FACULTY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS**

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**Workshop 1: Using a Course Vocabulary**

**Length: 45 minutes**

**Motive: Defining key writing words is essential in writing courses**

**Objective: Exemplify why and how to use a course vocabulary**

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| 5min  | Directed introductions of workshop members: give name, title or position, and identify, in one word, the most important element of writing.   |
| 10min | Workshop leaders explain course vocabulary; identify advantages and challenges to using one.  |
| 8min  | Activity 1 (identified in handout)-- 5min: participants write a definition of the word they shared in the introduction. 3min: participants share definitions with partners and discuss. |
| 2min  | Participants write about activity 1) describe why they chose the single word, 2) explain how it felt to define that word and 3) analyze the discussion with their partners.             |
| 5min  | Participants mark selections from the in-workshop writing to share with the group.  |
| 10min | Activity 2 (identified in handout): dialectical annotation exercise. Participants circle and make notes on Gordon Harvey's Elements of the Academic Essay.                              |
| 5min  | Wrap-up main points; handout clean copies of Harvey's Elements.   |

Materials needed:

- Gordon Harvey's Elements of Academic Writing printed on legal-sized paper (attached)
- Handouts: Gordon Harvey's Elements of Academic Writing (letter paper), printouts of activities 1 and 2 (attached)
- Three different colors of pens (enough for each participant to have one)
- Branded blue books/exam books

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**Workshop 1: Using a Course Vocabulary****Activity 1 (10 minutes total):**

*3 minutes:* Participants will define the word that they identified in their introductions 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.

**Activity 2 (10 minutes total)**

Hand out Gordon Harvey's "Elements of Academic Writing" on a legal-sized piece of paper. 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).

*3 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. Then, in groups of three (same three) choose a time keeper, a scribe, and someone who can report back; participants should share their beliefs/doubts, talk about them, and find the group's consensus and dissensus about Harvey's Elements.

## Gordon Harvey's "Elements of the Academic Essay"

- 1. Thesis:** your main insight or idea about a text or topic, and the *main* proposition that your essay demonstrates. It should be true but arguable (not obviously or patently true, but one alternative among several), be limited enough in scope to be argued in a short composition and with available evidence, and get to the heart of the text or topic being analyzed (not be peripheral). It should be stated early in some form and at some point recast sharply (not just be implied), and it should govern the whole essay (not disappear in places).
- 2. Motive:** the intellectual context that you establish for your topic and thesis at the start of your essay, in order to suggest why someone, besides your instructor, might want to read an essay on this topic or need to hear your particular thesis argued—why your thesis isn't just obvious to all, why other people might hold *other* theses (that you think are wrong). Your motive should be aimed at your audience: it won't necessarily be the reason you first got interested in the topic (which could be private and idiosyncratic) or the personal motivation behind your engagement with the topic. Indeed it's where you suggest that your argument *isn't* idiosyncratic, but rather is generally interesting. The motive you set up should be genuine: a misapprehension or puzzle that an intelligent reader (not a straw dummy) would really have, a point that such a reader would really overlook. Defining motive should be the main business of your introductory paragraphs, where it is usually introduced by a form of the complicating word "But."
- 3. Evidence:** the data—facts, examples, or details—that you refer to, quote, or summarize to support your thesis. There needs to be *enough* evidence to be persuasive; it needs to be the right *kind* of evidence to support the thesis (with no obvious pieces of evidence overlooked); it needs to be sufficiently *concrete* for the reader to trust it (e.g. in textual analysis, it often helps to find one or two key or representative passages to quote and focus on); and if summarized, it needs to be summarized *accurately* and fairly.
- 4. Analysis:** the work of breaking down, interpreting, and commenting upon the data, of saying what can be inferred from the data such that it supports a thesis (is *evidence* for something). Analysis is what you do with data when you go beyond observing or summarizing it: you show how its parts contribute to a whole or how causes contribute to an effect; you draw out the significance or implication not apparent to a superficial view. Analysis is what makes the writer feel present, as a reasoning individual; so your essay should do more analyzing than summarizing or quoting.
- 5. Keyterms:** the recurring terms or basic oppositions that an argument rests upon, usually literal but sometimes a ruling metaphor. These terms usually imply certain *assumptions*—unstated beliefs about life, history, literature, reasoning, etc. that the essayist doesn't argue for but simply assumes to be true. An essay's keyterms should be clear in their meaning and appear throughout (not be abandoned half-way); they should be appropriate for the subject at hand (not unfair or too simple—a false or constraining opposition); and they should not be inert clichés or abstractions (e.g. "the evils of society"). The attendant assumptions should bear logical inspection, and if arguable they should be explicitly acknowledged.
- 6. Structure:** the sequence of main sections or sub-topics, and the turning points between them. The sections should follow a logical order, and the links in that order should be apparent to the reader (see "stitching"). But it should also be a progressive order—there should have a direction of *development* or *complication*, not be simply a list or a series of restatements of the thesis ("Macbeth is ambitious: he's ambitious *here*; and he's ambitious *here*; and he's ambitions *here*, too; thus, Macbeth is ambitious"). And the order should be supple enough to allow the writer to explore the topic, not just hammer home a thesis. (If the essay is complex or long, its structure may be briefly announced or hinted at after the thesis, in a road-map or plan sentence.)

**7. *Stitching*:** words that tie together the parts of an argument, most commonly (a) by using *transition* (linking or turning) words as signposts to indicate how a new section, paragraph, or sentence follows from the one immediately previous; but also (b) by *recollection* of an earlier idea or part of the essay, referring back to it either by explicit statement or by echoing key words or resonant phrases quoted or stated earlier. The repeating of key or thesis concepts is especially helpful at points of transition from one section to another, to show how the new section fits in.

**8. *Sources*:** persons or documents, referred to, summarized, or quoted, that help a writer demonstrate the truth of his or her argument. They are typically sources of (a) factual information or data, (b) opinions or interpretation on your topic, (c) comparable versions of the thing you are discussing, or (d) applicable general concepts. Your sources need to be efficiently integrated and fairly acknowledged by citation.

**9. *Reflecting*:** when you pause in your demonstration to reflect on it, to raise or answer a question about it—as when you (1) consider a *counter-argument*—a possible objection, alternative, or problem that a skeptical or resistant reader might raise; (2) *define your terms or assumptions* (what do I mean by this term? or, what am I assuming here?); (3) handle a newly emergent concern (but if this is so, then how can X be?); (4) draw out an *implication* (so what? what might be the wider significance of the argument I have made? what might it lead to if I’m right? or, what does my argument about a single aspect of this suggest about the whole thing? or about the way people live and think?), and (5) consider a possible *explanation* for the phenomenon that has been demonstrated (why might this be so? what might cause or have caused it?); (6) offer a *qualification* or limitation to the case you have made (what you’re *not* saying). The first of these reflections can come anywhere in an essay; the second usually comes early; the last four often come late (they’re common moves of conclusion).

**10. *Orienting*:** bits of information, explanation, and summary that orient the reader who isn’t expert in the subject, enabling such a reader to follow the argument. The orienting question is, what does my reader need here? The answer can take many forms: necessary information about the text, author, or event (e.g. given in your introduction); a summary of a text or passage about to be analyzed; pieces of information given along the way about passages, people, or events mentioned (including announcing or “set-up” phrases for quotations and sources). The trick is to orient briefly and gracefully.

**11. *Stance*:** the implied relationship of you, the writer, to your readers and subject: how and where you implicitly position yourself as an analyst. Stance is defined by such features as style and tone (e.g. familiar or formal); the presence or absence of specialized language and knowledge; the amount of time spent orienting a general, non-expert reader; the use of scholarly conventions of form and style. Your stance should be established within the first few paragraphs of your essay, and it should remain consistent.

**12. *Style*:** the choices you make of words and sentence structure. Your style should be exact and clear (should bring out main idea and action of each sentence, not bury it) and plain without being flat (should be graceful and a little interesting, not stuffy).

**13. *Title*:** It should both interest and inform. To inform—i.e. inform a general reader who might be browsing in an essay collection or bibliography—your title should give the subject and focus of the essay. To interest, your title might include a linguistic twist, paradox, sound pattern, or striking phrase taken from one of your sources (the aptness of which phrase the reader comes gradually to see). You can combine the interesting and informing functions in a single title or split them into title and subtitle. The interesting element shouldn’t be too cute; the informing element shouldn’t go so far as to state a thesis. Don’t underline your own title, except where it contains the title of another text.