Engaging Students Using Writing

Workshop Outline: 9:45-10:30am in Van Zoeren 247

9:45am
- Name and department
- area of study (rhetoric and composition: eat sleep breath teaching of WRITING)
  - not a lit person, but can tell you anything you need to know about writing studies/teaching of writing
- Why here today? Hope's efforts to enhance writing on campus

9:50am
- To get started, Please take one of the notecards at your table
- Write down one or two ways you incorporate writing into your classrooms
- Volunteers to read?
  - Now, you're going to get a lot of this today, and you probably got a lot of this yesterday, but I don't really know any of you yet, so indulge me. Do I have a volunteer to stand up, give us your name & department and what your card says?
    - after each person speaks, ask others who use in a similar way to stand and say their names/depts., too.

10:05 am
- Sounds like you're already using writing both formally and informally--GREAT: the more students write, the better they become at it.
- Now, the title of the workshop is "engaging students using writing", so tell me, how many of you felt engaged when you were writing on the notecards?
  - why or why not?
  - probably not as engaged as you could have been bc you had NO IDEA why I asked you to do this. There's really no context.
  - So, that's our first big lesson--your writing assignments, whether formal or informal, should have CONTEXT.
  - what else could have made the notecard experience better?
    - ask for examples.
  - Transition back to idea of GOALS.
    - when I started the workshop, did you have any idea about what it's goals were? Did I tell you what they were?
    - all the writing your students do should be tied to your course goals and the context of your classroom
      - don't assign writing just to meet a requirement.
      - it should be purposeful, and your students should know the purpose.
      - one more thing to do to engage students is to scaffold their writing assignments, does anyone know what that means?
    - RESPONSE from FAC. what is scaffolding?

10:15

We have 15 minutes left. That's not a lot of time, but I'd like you to get out the assignments you brought with you, or think about an assignment you want to assign. With the people at your tables, consider this more carefully.
- How can you help students connect the assignment to the course goals/objectives?
- What ways can you scaffold the assignment into the class?
- What ways can you give students context for the assignment?

Always ask yourself these three questions before assigning a paper or project. You want your students to be invested in the writing, so you must find the right time and place for it, and the right explanation for it. Sometimes, scaffolding can help students see how the assignment connects to goals and objectives, so consider using that to your advantage. I'll come around and see some of what you're doing and ask any other questions you have. If you'd like to ask further questions, feel free to contact me via email. werner@hope.edu