Teaching Writing

Resources for Teaching Writing

Many people teach INTD 105, not all of them with a background in teaching writing. This page provides links to documents that may help instructors, both experienced and inexperienced with INTD 105, decide what to teach or how to do it. This collection is curated by the coordinators and friends of INTD 105, i.e., the links presented here have been selected to provide a range of high-quality information about writing and teaching it, and each is accompanied by a brief description of the kinds of information it leads to. We consciously try to keep the number of links on the page low, to help visitors find useful information quickly and efficiently. To some extent the page mirrors the structure and topics of *They Say, I Say*, although it departs from that organization where the book doesn't cover certain topics or doesn't identify them as distinct entities.

Anyone interested enough in writing to visit this page counts as a "friend" of INTD 105, so please make suggestions about other links that should be here, links that should be removed, or anything else that you think will make the page more helpful. Please send suggestions or comments to Doug Baldwin.

Thanks to Doug Baldwin for building the first version of this page, Rob Doggett for suggesting it, and Maria Lima for helping with the non-native English speakers section.

To go back to the main page, click here.

- Theses (also see *They Say, I Say* chapters 1 and 4)
  - "Thesis Statements" (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Writing Center). Describes the purpose of thesis statements, and discusses characteristics of good ones. Examples show how strong thesis statements can evolve through revision from initially vague ones.
  - "Developing a Thesis" (Harvard College Writing Center). Explores thesis statements via the process of developing them. Introduces characteristics of good thesis statements, and complementary pitfalls and warning signs of weak ones.
  - "The 'So What?' Question" (Theresa McPhail, *ChronicleVitae*, July 17 2017). A plea for coherent theses and argument frameworks in professional academic writing, but includes tests for whether a paper has these things that apply to student writing as well as faculty.
  - " Five Ways of Looking at a Thesis " (Eric Simpson, Grinnell College). Five short definitional statements about theses, applied to examples.
- Summarizing (*They Say, I Say* chapter 2)
  - "The Writing Process: Guidelines for Writing a Summary" (Hunter College Reading/Writing Center). Discusses the purpose and nature of summaries, offering two processes students can follow for creating summaries, depending on the length of the text they need to summarize.
  - "Guidelines for Writing a Summary with In-Text Citations" (Christine Bauer-Ramazani, St. Michael's College). Concentrates on the structure of a summary, including templates and a list of verbs commonly associated with summaries; it does, however, begin with a brief outline of a process for creating summaries.
  - "Summary" (Harvard College Writing Center). Identifies two kinds of summary, "true summary" and "interpretive summary," giving examples of each, and closing with cautions about balancing summary and argument in persuasive essays.
  - "Avoiding Plagiarism" (Purdue University Online Writing Lab). Despite the reference to plagiarism, this page is really a collection of classroom activities on summary, paraphrase, and quotation.
- Quotations (*They Say, I Say* chapter 3)
  - "Quotations" (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Writing Center). Discusses in detail when to use quotations, and how to do so judiciously, explaining the need to frame quotations and offering suggestions and examples for doing so. This page also discusses punctuation and similar mechanics of quotations.
  - "Quoting and Paraphrasing" (University of Wisconsin at Madison Writing Center). Compares paraphrase to quotation, and offers guidelines for when and how to use each, with particular attention to doing so without plagiarizing. This page also includes a section on punctuation and similar mechanics of quotations.
  - "Avoiding Plagiarism" (Purdue University Online Writing Lab). Despite the reference to plagiarism, this page is really a collection of classroom activities on summary, paraphrase, and quotation.
- Naysayers / Counterarguments (*They Say, I Say* chapter 6)
  - "Counterargument" (Harvard College Writing Center). Outlines moves for countering opposing views as making a "turn against" one's own argument to present the opposition, followed by a "turn back" to reinforce the original argument by rebutting the opposing view.
  - "Writing a Paper: Responding to Counterarguments" (Walden University Writing Center). Presents a process for identifying and writing about counter-arguments, which is then tied to Graff and Birkenstein templates.
- Establishing Relevance (*They Say, I Say* chapter 7)
  - "Introducing Work" (University of Manchester). Gives a broad discussion of the roles the introduction to a paper may play. Many of those roles involve describing why the work matters in some way, and the page offers a large set of template phrases for such descriptions.
- Connections and Flow of Argument (*They Say, I Say* chapter 8)
  - "Paragraph Transitions and Hooks" (Bronx Community College). Discusses transitions between paragraphs, with an exercise.
  - "Transitions" (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Writing Center). Surveys the importance of transitions at all levels of paper organization, and provides a list of common transitional phrases, organized by the kind of connection between ideas that they signal.
  - "Transitioning: Beware of Velcro" (Harvard College Writing Center). Discusses transitions via a metaphor of "stepping stones" that help a reader navigate an essay. The author contrasts such effective transitions to inappropriate ones that stick organizationally unrelated ideas together—"velcro" transitions, in the author's metaphor.
- Metacommentary (*They Say, I Say* chapter 10)
  - "Using Metacommentary to Specify your Contribution: Christmas Present Three" (Pat Thomson, University of Nottingham). Explores, via an extended example, ways in which metacommentary in the introduction to a paper can give readers a proper frame of reference for reading the rest of the document.
- Logic
  - "Logic in Argumentative Writing" (Purdue University Online Writing Lab). Introduces some basic ideas of logic as commonly used in persuasive writing, giving examples of both valid and invalid uses. This page also briefly contrasts "logical" argument, "non-logical" (e.g., emotional) argument, and "illogical" (i.e., just plain wrong) argument. (Curator's note: the examples about platypuses are presented as examples of faulty logic, which they are, but the reason is that the logic is deeply wrong, not, as implied by the text, that there is something "ambiguous" about the premises.)
  - "A List of Fallacious Arguments" (Don Lindsay). Presents a list of common misleading or fallacious argumentation tactics, with brief descriptions of each.
- Revision

- "Making Drafts Count" (David Gooblar, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*). Advocates a broad view of "draft," and by implication revision, as part of a process of developing an idea through multiple forms of presentation.
- "Revising the Draft" (Harvard College Writing Center). Offers suggestions for how to approach the task of revising a draft, with an example of a professional writer's revisions.
- "Teaching Guide: Using Student Peer Review (Colorado State University Writing Studio). General guidelines for planning a class session in which students review each others' writing. (Curator's note: such reviews are considered a "best practice" for teaching INTD 105 in particular, and writing in general.)
- "Why Students Hate Peer Review" (David Gooblar, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 1, 2017). Another view of peer review, focusing on ways to get students to do meaningful reviews of each others' work.
- Non-Native English Speakers
  - "Responding to Non-Native Speakers of English" (Sheryl Holt, University of Minnesota Center for Writing). Summarizes common problems non-native English speakers have writing college essays, and suggests instructor responses.
  - "Preparing ESL Students for College Writing: Two Case Studies" (Laureen Fregeau, *The Internet TESL Journal*). Reviews two students' experiences transitioning from a college ESL program to writing in non-ESL courses. Although many of this paper's findings are specific to a single ESL program, it also offers some insight into issues faced by all non-native English speakers in college writing courses.
  - "Overcoming Chinese-English Colloquial Habits in Writing" (Ted Knoy, *The Internet TESL Journal*). Describes Chinese linguistic patterns and cultural conventions that are awkward when translated too literally into written English.
- Comprehensive Discussions of the Writing Process and How to Teach or Develop It
  - "Good Questions for Better Essay Prompts (and Papers)" (Jessica McCaughey, *Faculty Focus*, April 8, 2020). Eight suggested things writing instructors should think about when planning and writing a writing assignment.
  - "Supporting Students in the Transition from High School to College Writing" (Ruth Li, MLA Style Center). Discusses differences between typical high school and college expectations of students' writing. Nominally addressed to high school teachers who want to help their students prepare for college, but also has lots of helpful insights for college instructors receiving students from high schools.
  - "Designing Effective Writing Assignments" (Hildy Miller, Portland State University). Suggests ways to design and present writing assignments in order to get the best responses from students.
  - "Teaching Guide: Evaluating Writing Assignments" (Colorado State University Writing Studio). Offers suggestions on how to grade a writing exercise.
  - "Revising How We Teach Revision Skills" (David Gooblar, *The Chronicle of Higher Education Vitae*, April 5, 2017). Discusses using student work as a source of examples for teaching writing. Despite the reference to revision in the title, teaching revision is really only the motivation for the idea, which is presented as useful for teaching writing broadly.
- Essays, Blogs, Discussions, etc. that Share Views on Writing
  - "Why We Must Get Back to Basics in Teaching Composition" (Rob Jenkins, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 29, 2020). Describes five fundamental principles that the author considers key to developing students as effective persuasive writers.
  - "Why Writing Better Will Make You a Better Person" (Bob Fischer and Nathan Nobis, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 4, 2019). Argues that much of what makes writing "good" amounts to treating one's audience ethically. Nominally addressed to faculty and graduate student writers, but undergraduates should be able to relate to most of the argument too.
  - "We Know What Works In Teaching Composition" (Doug Hesse, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 3, 2017). A summary of what research on teaching writing says are the most effective ways to do it, with links to some of the research literature.
  - "Why Can't My New Employees Write?" (John Warner, *Inside Higher Ed* / "Just Visiting" Blog, June 29, 2016). An essay on the importance of teaching writing as communication meaningful to the author rather than as preparation for assessment.
  - "Don't Be Cruel" (Thomas Batt, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 3, 2016). Why negative feedback on student writing is tempting to give, but ultimately harmful to learning.

To go back to the main page, click here.