

9

Infusing CLA into Classroom Instruction

Introduction

Much of our discussion thus far has been focused on the “what” of curricular content and course design. This chapter, in contrast, focuses on the “how” of our day-to-day instructional practices. We will talk about how to create **CLA moments**—opportunities to draw attention to issues of language, identity, power, and privilege—no matter what curricular content we are using. Research on critical approaches to education finds that everyday instances of “schooltalk” (Pollock, 2017), in fact, can play an important role in reinforcing our commitment to social justice (see also Quaid & Williams, 2021).

This chapter is particularly important for teachers whose control over their curriculum is quite limited and may be wondering, “Is there still a place for CLA in my classroom?” The answer is **yes—absolutely!** Below, we will discuss how CLA can shape how we talk about our programmatic and institutional constraints. We will then explore how to infuse CLA into class discussion, reading and speaking instruction, peer review, and feedback on student writing. The goal here, as always, is to build on—not replace—best practices for writing pedagogy. Readers newer to the teaching of writing may want to supplement this chapter with other readings on best practices for writing pedagogy, some of which are referenced in Chapter 3 (pp. 69-71).

Bringing CLA into Conversations about Institutional Constraints

As we touched on in Chapter 8, many writing curricula are shaped heavily by program requirements, professional standards, high-stakes assessments, and other factors. We may have to work with policies or curricular standards that we find problematic. Below, we consider the question: *How can*

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we teach with—and talk about—these constraints in ways that reflect our commitment to CLA?

Provide Context

Students are often told about policies and curriculum requirements without being given any rationale or historical context, which may imply to students that our program or institution's way of doing things is the only way. We can “demystify” our constraints by providing some background information about who creates our policies and curricula and how. Such explicit conversations help students understand how academic institutions function—and may even illuminate some possibilities for change!

Emphasize Our Dual Commitment to Pragmatism and Progressivism

As we talk with students about our constraints, we can be transparent about our commitment to both pragmatism and progressivism. I may not use these terms with students, but I often point out that I am trying to prepare them for the world as it is today, while also promoting a more just world for tomorrow. For example, earlier in my career, I taught in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) program that used timed writing exams for placement and course completion. Pragmatically, I had to devote a significant portion of our instructional time to teaching test performance strategies, and administering “practice tests,” so that students were prepared for these high-stakes exams. This left little space in the curriculum for more authentic and engaging writing tasks, which felt like a violation of my values as a teacher.

However, I tried to weave in conversation about the ethical and pedagogical problems with using timed testing as the sole measure of writing proficiency. And I made sure the students knew that a number of instructors, myself included, were working hard to push for reform to our curriculum and policies (Shapiro, 2011, 2012). Thus, drawing on Casanave's (2005) metaphor of academic writing as a “game,” I showed students how to play by the rules, but also invited them into conversations about the problems with those rules and our efforts to change them.

Make the Constraints a Focus for Analysis and Critique

Some of my fellow instructors in the EAP program referenced above had more grounding in critical approaches to EAP (e.g., Benesch, 2001, 2009;

Ruecker & Shapiro, 2020), and they took the conversations a step further: Students wrote letters describing their experiences with the program and proposing changes that could make it more equitable and effective. These letters were shared widely across the program, with student names removed, and they helped to build consensus about the need for reform—which did happen, eventually. Check out my 2011 article “Stuck in the Remedial Rut,” which is available freely online, if you’re curious to know more!

Thus, we may be able to give students opportunities to discuss and write about aspects of our programs that are unjust or ineffective. Possible foci can include:

- **Placement/Advising:** How did you feel about your course placement? Did you feel that you had some choice and agency in selecting courses? What information would be helpful to share with future students? (See Saenkhum [2016] for more on student-centered advising.)
- **Textbooks:** How useful, affordable, and/or accessible is our textbook? What beliefs about language and writing are evident in the book? (See Russell [2018] for more on language ideologies in writing textbooks.)
- **Grading/evaluation:** Have our course/program assessments allowed you to demonstrate your learning as a writer? Are the grading criteria clear and fair? How useful is the feedback to your growth as a writer? (See Crusan [2010] and Poe and Elliot [2019], for more on the ethics of writing assessment.)

We may be unable—or students may be unwilling—to share written critiques with decision-makers in our programs and institutions. But creating opportunities for students to voice their experiences and concerns, even if it is just within the confines of our class, can produce powerful writing with valuable insights. Moreover, it can prepare students to advocate for themselves and others as they move through our institutions and into their professional and civic lives (Benesch, 2009).

A CLA Approach to Classroom Discussion

One of the concerns I had when I first began incorporating CLA content into my writing classes was how to facilitate discussion on controversial topics. Some scholars have claimed that writing teachers should try to avoid “political” topics (e.g., Hairston, 1992; Santos, 2012), while others claim

that these topics are the very ones our students need to be talking and writing about (e.g., Trimbur et al., 1993)! Instructors working in K–12 settings may face additional pressure from family or community members (or administrators) to avoid provocative or contentious issues. It is worth pointing out, however, that the definition of what is “political” or “sensitive” is very context-specific. For example, a friend of mine who works at a university affiliated with the U.S. military, has to be cautious about expressing her pacifist views. Another who works at a Jesuit-affiliated school is openly critical of U.S. military action but tends to remain quiet about the fact that she is agnostic and has no religious affiliation.

Each teacher has to decide which topics and questions have the most learning value for their students, and to weigh the benefits with the potential risks. But we must also remember that CLA Pedagogy can never be 100% “apolitical”—after all, we’re talking about privilege and power! Besides, even if we choose only “safe” topics for discussion, there are bound to be instances of tension and awkwardness—what Warren (2005) calls “hot moments.” CLA can help us use those moments for learning and growth. As a reminder, “difficult dialogue” was also a focus in Unit 7.2.

This section provides some insights and strategies for facilitating rich, productive discussion—no matter what the topic! It is informed by some of my other research that has examined college students’ conceptions of inclusivity and their experiences engaging diverse perspectives (Shapiro, 2018¹, 2019², 2020³). One key takeaway from that research was that **inclusivity does not happen automatically**. Creating an inclusive classroom space—one in which transformative dialogue can occur—requires intentionality, preparation, and support. And as we will discuss below, CLA can be a useful resource in this process.

Distinguish Among Debate, Discussion, and Dialogue

One thing students reported to me in interviews about their experiences in the classroom is that opportunities for dialogue are rare. Often, as one student put it, “we’re talking *at* people instead of *with* them.” Another noted that we sometimes forget to “see the person as a person and not just a clump of ideas” (Shapiro, 2018). We can use language, then, to **frame the purpose** of our classroom conversations and to set appropriate expectations. If our goal is to lay out ideas, arguments, and evidence, we may use structured debate or another discussion format. But if we want to deepen understanding,

connection, and sense of belonging, we need to craft a more **dialogic** space (Kibler et al., 2020)—perhaps something akin to what Parker (2018) calls a “gathering.” The goal in this sort of dialogue is **not to persuade others** to change their views or beliefs.⁴ Rather, it is to:

- Broaden our knowledge of other viewpoints
- Recognize contradictions or gaps in our own thinking
- Prepare to write about complex issues with nuance and empathy
- Strengthen community bonds

In other words, dialogue is really about what we *gain from others*—not what we want to *change in them*.

Reframe (and Prepare for) Discomfort

Another realization from my research was that many students conflate “inclusivity” with “comfort.” For example, one participant described an inclusive classroom as a place where “Everyone’s happy . . . There’s no tension between anyone.” (Um . . . reality check, please!). We need to work with students to develop a more realistic understanding of what inclusion feels like, including **reframing discomfort** as part of learning and growth, rather than as an indicator of a problem. But normalizing discomfort does not mean abandoning the idea of **safety** in the classroom. There is a “toughen up” narrative that often emerges when some teachers talk about safe spaces. Syllabi, handbooks, and letters home⁵ often include statements such as:

- “You should not expect this to be a safe space.”
- “I do not believe in trigger warnings.”⁶
- “It is not my job to make you comfortable. In fact, I want to make you uncomfortable!”⁷

Rather than adopting this defensive posture about what we *will not* be doing, we need to tell students what we *can and will* do to help create a classroom space where everyone can learn and grow. Some experts use the frame “**brave space**” as a way of capturing this intention (e.g., Palfrey, 2017; Pawlowski, 2018). A brave space is one where students and instructors are curious,⁸ respectful, and open to taking intellectual, emotional, and social risks. In this space, we expect discomfort, but we do not ignore people’s physical, social, and emotional needs. Working through discomfort together, in fact, becomes one of our learning goals.

To help my students and colleagues think about managing discomfort in the classroom, I like to draw an analogy to a physically strenuous task, such as **going on a hike or playing a sport** (see Figure 9.1): We expect some inevitable discomfort, and we gear up accordingly, with supplies (clothing and shoes, water bottles, sun protection, etc.) as well as routines (warming up, stretching, taking breaks). Preparing for discomfort allows us “stay safe” (i.e., not experience injury) while pushing ourselves physically. That is the same dynamic we want in the classroom, as we prepare to take on intellectual and emotional challenges.

The question we need to ask, then, is not *How can we prevent discomfort?* but rather, *What do we need in order to prepare for uncomfortable conversations?* Being explicit about the goals of the conversation, as discussed above, is an important first step. Another is to establish clear guidelines or “ground rules,” possibly crafted in collaboration with students. Some common examples include:

- Only one person should speak at a time
- Speak for yourself and not for a group
- Critique ideas—not people
- Ask curious questions rather than making accusations (e.g., “What in your life has influenced your views on this topic?” vs. “Can’t you see how offensive that view is?”)
- Be willing to “step back” or “step up” as needed, to make room for more voices



Figure 9.1 A Metaphor for Difficult Dialogue. Photo credit to Ana Essentiels

Essential Partners⁹ and Facing History¹⁰ are two of the many organizations devoted to dialogic education. Both offer lesson plans and other resources for creating discussion norms. For more information on creating brave spaces, check out the resources from Aware LA,¹¹ an affiliate of the national group Showing Up for Racial Justice.

Experiment with Groupings and Formats

Another strategy that can help to make our conversations more inclusive is to vary our groupings, formats, and modes of interaction. We saw many examples of this in the Pathways chapters. A more structured approach, such as a Socratic Seminar,¹² “circle share” (p. 192) or “fishbowl” (pp. 235–236) can create openings for students who might otherwise be reluctant to join the conversation, as can freewriting prior to discussion. Using pair and/or small group activities, as well as asynchronous online discussion, also helps to bring forward voices that are less likely to be heard in a “popcorn style” (i.e., voluntary) large group discussion. We can even invite students to reflect on perspectives that are missing from the conversation, using activities such as “Missing Voices” (p. 234).

Use Language to Manage Social and Emotional Dynamics

As we discussed in Chapter 7, language can be a powerful tool for understanding and processing our emotional experiences. During class discussions, we can model how to use language to **name what we are feeling** (e.g., “I’m noticing some frustrations coming up around. . .” or “I’m a little nervous to ask this question, because. . .”). We can model language for **seeking clarification** as well (e.g., “It sounds like you’re saying . . . Is that accurate? Can you explain a bit more?”).

Students also need instruction and support for **holding each other accountable, recognizing harm, and repairing that harm** when it occurs. As we touched on in Chapters 6 and 7, critiques of “call-out culture” (or “cancel culture”) are prevalent, but the discussion rarely shifts to alternatives. Loretta Ross (2019),¹³ a feminist historian and community activist, uses a “calling in” approach—one that is focused on learning rather than shaming (see examples below).

Examples of “calling in” language, from Loretta Ross’s (2019) article in *Learning for Justice*

- “I need to stop you there because something you just said is not accurate.”
- “I’m having a reaction to that comment. Let’s go back for a minute.”
- “Do you think you would say that if someone from that group was with us in the room?”
- “There’s some history behind that expression you just used that you might not know about.”
- “In this class, we hold each other accountable. So we need to talk about why that joke isn’t funny.”

We can also teach and model for students some ways to respond when we are “called in” for something we have said or done. In an excellent podcast episode about shaming vs. accountability,¹⁴ Brené Brown describes how she uses **self-talk** (see Unit 7.1) to work through the feelings of shame that arise when she realizes she has made a mistake. One statement Brown uses is: “*You’re not here to be right. You’re here to get it right.*” I’ve developed my own adaptation of that statement, which is: “*No one is perfect. You’re here to learn and grow.*” (Saying this aloud really helps me!) Sending these compassionate messages to ourselves—and sharing them with students, when appropriate—can help all of us develop “shame resilience” so that we respond from a place of care and curiosity, rather than defensiveness (Brown, 2018).

Another way we can use language is to **process what is happening in our bodies** when we are engaged in difficult conversations (e.g., Menakem, 2017; Taylor, 2018). I use short **mindfulness exercises** at the start of most of my class sessions, as a grounding practice. These usually include chair-based stretches (e.g., shoulder and neck rolls) and guided breathing, but I occasionally incorporate body scans, visualizations, or words of affirmation (e.g., pp. 226–227). I also ask students to do body-based inquiry, with questions such as: “Where in your body are you carrying stress right now?”

I see these **mindfulness moments** as a crucial tool for building brave spaces. They offer us a connecting ritual, as well as a strategy we can use when

tension rises (e.g., “*Let’s all return to some deep breathing, so we can notice what we’re feeling right now.*”). For instructors who might be apprehensive about doing mindfulness activities with their students—I was quite nervous the first few times I did it!—it might be reassuring to know that there is research showing that most students have very positive reactions to these experiences (e.g., Bamber & Schneider, 2020; Carsley et al., 2018). One of my favorite resources for integrating mindfulness into the classroom is the “tree” of contemplative practices¹⁵ from the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society. I hope to share and learn about other resources at the Hub!

Another contemplative activity included in the aforementioned “tree” is **reflective writing**. Sometimes the best way to respond to a difficult moment is to give students a few minutes of silence for processing through freewriting or even drawing. Some questions we can use as prompts for written processing include:

- How is the discussion landing with you thus far?
- What have you found interesting in this discussion?
- What have you found difficult or confusing?
- What questions is this conversation raising for you?

For more on working with discomfort in writing classes, also see Prebel (2016) and Stewart (2017).

Promote a Growth Mindset Toward Inclusive Language

We cannot conclude a section on CLA and class discussion without talking about **inclusive language**, which we also touched on in Unit 7.2. This is another topic where there is a great deal of finger-pointing and binary thinking. Proponents of inclusive language often accuse critics of not caring about how words can hurt, demean, or exclude. Critics accuse proponents of caring more about “policing language” than about having open and meaningful conversation (the *Psychology Today* blog¹⁶ offers a helpful overview of the debate).

A lot of nuances get lost in these debates: First is that the most pertinent question is not *What words should we use?* but rather, *How can we create a learning environment where everyone feels respected?* In other words, inclusive language is not an end in itself; it is a tool we use to remove barriers to engagement.

Another point that often gets lost is that inclusive language has to be learned. We need to approach conversations about inclusive language from a **growth mindset** orientation (e.g., Hochanadel & Finamore, 2015)—one that assumes we all have room for improvement in our ability to use language in the most accurate and humanizing way possible. One way we can reinforce that mindset is by directing students (in our syllabi or other instructional materials) to resources that explain and teach inclusive language. Chapter 7 mentioned two resources that bear repeating here:

- 1 Karen Yin’s *Conscious Style Guide* (see Figure 9.2)¹⁷ which has been recommended by the Chicago Manual of Style, NASA, and the Society for Professional Journalists (see Figure 9.2), and which uses the slogan “Keep Learning”
- 2 Hanna Thomas and Anna Hirsch’s *Progressive’s Style Guide*¹⁸

It is also important to acknowledge that **linguistic profiling**, which we explored in Chapters 4 and 5, happens in response not only to particular accents, dialects, or speech styles, but also to politically charged language. If I use the label “pro-life” vs. “anti-abortion” or “gun rights” vs. “gun control,” my interlocutor (or reader) may make assumptions about my political affiliation. They may miss out on *what I am saying* because they are so focused on the *words I am using*.

Words matter—of course they do! But students are often unaware of the political implications of their linguistic choices. For example, some of my

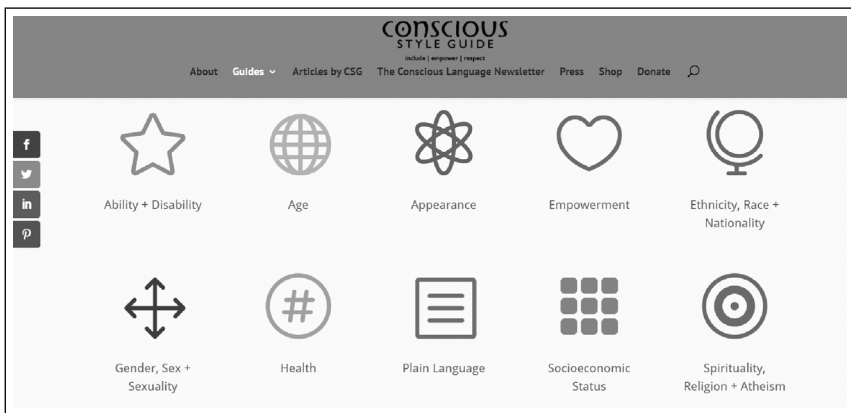


Figure 9.2 Screenshot of Yin’s Conscious Style Guide

students hear the phrase “illegal immigrant” as xenophobic and/or dehumanizing, while others in the same class will tell me—usually privately—that they thought it was a politically neutral label. Those in the latter group are often open to hearing critiques of the descriptor “illegal” and to learning alternatives, such as “undocumented” or “unauthorized.”

Students—and instructors, at times—sometimes also use new terms or acronyms without explaining them. One example is “BIPOC” (Black, Indigenous People of Color). Students need to know what these terms mean and why some people prefer them to the “older” terms (e.g., “People of Color”¹⁹). Otherwise, a conversation about inclusion might actually exclude many of the people in the room!

A CLA approach thus reminds us to **pause and focus on language**, to make sure everyone understands what our words mean and how they might be heard by different groups of people. Having honest, learning-centered conversations about inclusive language is, in fact, another way of enacting our commitment to self-reflection, social justice, and rhetorical agency. In my classes, I have begun experimenting with using Ross’s (2019) “calling in” approach to talk about language. Here are a few examples:

Examples of “calling in” with attention to inclusive language

- “I noticed that you used the term/phrase X. Could you explain that, for students who are new to that term?”
- “I want to pause and make sure everyone understands what X means, and why many people prefer that to Y.”
- “I heard you use the phrase X rather than Y. Was that an intentional choice?”
- “In case it’s helpful, I’ve learned that most people in that community tend to prefer the label X, because. . .”

We can also pause to explain some of our **linguistic rituals**. For example, in many college classrooms (and an increasing number of high school ones as well), students are asked to share their personal pronouns (e.g., “she/her,” “they/them”) when they introduce themselves. But many students—especially international students—have never encountered this practice and may not understand the purpose. A few years ago, an international student from Russia stayed after my Sociolinguistics class one day to ask me about the ritual. Once she understood, she was excited to learn more, and eventually decided to design

a survey for her final project, asking U.S. students about their pronoun-sharing practices in both academic and social settings! I now take a few moments in class to explain the practice. And as I have continued my own learning, I discovered some important critiques (e.g., from *Inside Higher Ed*²⁰), which is why I now **invite** students—rather than requiring them—to share their pronouns. And if I misgender a student, I offer a sincere but brief apology, demonstrating that I continue to learn and grow as a language user.

Broaden Our Conceptions of “Participation”

A final note about CLA and class discussion: Often, participation grades can work against our goal of dialogue, putting the focus on **frequency of speaking** rather than on quality of engagement or depth of learning. We can frame participation more broadly—and grade it more equitably—by taking into account other indicators, such as:

- Using verbal and non-verbal cues to indicate empathic listening
- Connecting one’s spoken contributions to those of other students (or to the text/media)
- Engaging actively in pair and small group work (e.g., helping to facilitate, take notes, report back)
- Recognizing themes and patterns from the discussion (e.g., via “fishbowl” or written reflection)
- Incorporating learning from class discussion into written work
- Participating in small group or online discussions.

See Shapiro et al., 2014/2018 (p. 81) for a longer checklist of behaviors that can be included in class participation grades.

CLA and Oral Presentations

There is a robust body of scholarship on how speaking and writing instruction enrich one another (e.g., Selfe, 2009; Siczek, forthcoming). Many schools, in fact, have shifted toward a “Communication Across the Curriculum” model for their writing programs and/or writing centers (Dannels & Housley Gaffney, 2009; Yook & Atkins-Sayre, 2012). Oral communication is not a major

area of expertise for me, but I do incorporate oral presentations and other academic speaking assignments into many of my classes. Here are some pedagogical suggestions informed by CLA:

- 1 **Be intentional in designing and scaffolding speaking assignments:** I will admit that I have at times “added on” an oral presentation to a writing class, without thinking much about my intentions and expectations. Thanks to professional development I have received from specialists in this area, I now know that this lack of transparency **disadvantages** students who are less confident or experienced with public speaking. My “add-on” approach to speaking assignments may have worked *against* my commitment to social justice and rhetorical agency! I am now much more explicit about what I want students to do—and why—with oral presentations, just as for written assignments, answering questions such as:
 - Why are we doing oral presentations? Are they an end in themselves, a step in the writing process, or both?
 - Who is the intended audience, and how formal should the presentation be in terms of register and structure?
 - What am I looking for in a successful presentation? How much of the focus is on content vs. delivery/performance? If the latter is a major focus, what instruction or resources can I offer to level the playing field for students who have less experience with public speaking?
- 2 **Scaffold the process:** Just as with writing assignments, students need clear steps and supports in order to develop and deliver oral presentations. Some examples of instructional scaffolding I use include:
 - Handouts with expectations and grading criteria, tailored to the purpose and genre of the speaking assignment
 - Tips for how we can use mindfulness and body awareness to manage anxiety and build confidence
 - Workshops—in class or out of class—with oratory coaches²¹
 - Opportunities to practice and receive feedback—e.g., with coaches or classmates
- 3 **Recognize our assumptions and biases about “good speaking”:** This point is best explained by a short anecdote: Several years back, I had a Latino student in “Language and Social Justice” who gave an excellent oral presentation on educational support for English Learners,

a topic he was passionate about. In my feedback, which was largely positive, I noted that he was pronouncing the word “ask” in a non-standard way, using a variation (“aks”) that is common in African American Vernacular English (Baugh, 2020). I wrote something like, “I just wanted to point that out, in case you weren’t aware.” Although I did not use the word “error,” my comments certainly implied that I saw this linguistic feature as “inappropriate” for academic settings—a stance that scholars have critiqued as complicit with systemic racism (e.g., Flores & Rosa, 2015).

The student came by my office later and explained (gently and generously) that *of course* this was intentional. Teachers had commented on it before, and he had kept it as part of his idiolect—including in academic and professional settings—because it indexed important aspects of his racial identity and political ideology. We went on to have a fascinating meta-conversation, in which I realized that I held **prescriptivist beliefs** about academic speaking that I had never questioned before. And in the years since, I have noticed other prominent figures, such as the writer Ta-Nehesi Coates, using that same phonological feature in public speaking. Although I am a bit embarrassed by this story, I am so grateful to the student for taking the time to talk with me. And retelling this anecdote gives me a chance to practice my **positive self-talk**: *I’m here to learn and grow!* For more on anti-racist approaches to academic speaking, check out Ladva (2020).

A CLA Approach to Reading

Writing teachers tend to spend a lot of time talking about the writing process, providing strategies for each phase of writing—brainstorming, drafting, revision, etc. However, when it comes to academic reading, students receive much less strategic instruction after elementary school, despite the fact that the length and complexity of assigned readings continues to grow (e.g., Alexander, 2005). We can increase students’ rhetorical agency as readers by teaching reading as a **complex, dialogic interaction** (Wilkinson & Son, 2011)—i.e., a social process, rather than a solitary one.

Below are some suggestions for scaffolding each phase of the reading process. Although all of our students benefit from this explicit instruction, it is particularly helpful for students who are reading in a language, dialect, style, or genre that is less familiar to them. Many of these points apply as well to **audio (vs. print) media** (e.g., lectures, podcasts, etc.).

Before Reading: Use Linguistic Sleuthing

I often tell students that the most important part of the reading process is what we do *before we read*. Many students think that “browsing” or “looking over” a text indicates laziness or lack of focus. But quite the opposite is true: Good readers devote a lot of time to **previewing the text**. To explain why, I use the analogy of assembling a jigsaw puzzle (Figure 9.3): We start by putting together the edge pieces, because those give us an “outline” of the big picture. Previewing serves the same function, creating a mental map we can use to navigate and piece together the text.

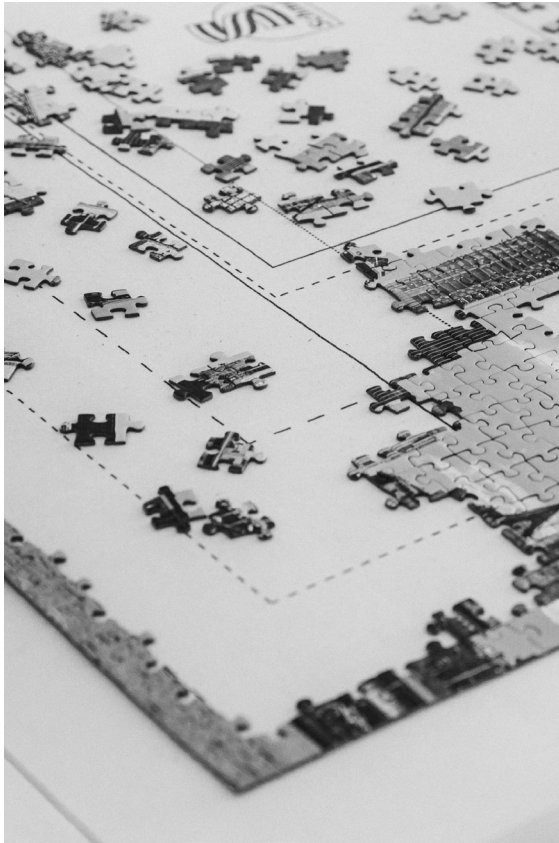


Figure 9.3 A Metaphor for the Reading Process. Photo credit to Bianca Ackermann

As they preview, students can use their linguistic sleuthing skills (see pp. 142–143), to infer the rhetorical context: *What type of text is this, and for whom was it written?* Noticing **textual features** such as abstracts, section headings, glossaries, and bolding or italics can help us figure out, for example, whether we are reading a journal article written for experts or a textbook chapter for students. We can also use some of these genre features (e.g., subheadings), and even the language of the text (e.g., transitional words/phrases such as “Moreover” or “Nevertheless”) to help us recognize the **organizational structure** of the text or argument. For students who worry that previewing takes more time, I remind them that it **saves us time** in the long run—and it can ensure that the time we do spend reading the text is invested wisely.

While Reading: Keep Momentum Going—and Aim for 3–2–1!

Many students—particularly those reading in a less-familiar language or dialect—pause frequently while reading to highlight or look up unfamiliar words from the text. This seems like a logical strategy: Don’t we need to know all of the words in the text in order to understand it? The answer, actually, is no. Good readers often **skip over words and phrases they don’t know**, because stopping to write down and/or look up those items causes them to lose their grasp on the main ideas or argument of the text (Grabe & Stoller, 2019). When explaining this to students, I use the analogy of running: If we stop every few minutes to stretch or take a drink of water, we may lose our physical momentum (this is certainly the case for me, at least—I’m more of a tortoise than a hare, when it comes to exercise!).

This is not to say that students should never consult additional sources to help with reading. But they should do so **purposefully**, in ways that further their goals as readers—not out of some sense of duty or obligation. Yet part of the problem is that many students are so overwhelmed as readers that they lack a sense of purpose. To help them stay on track, I created a mnemonic I call “3–2–1” that my students *love*. Here it is:

When reading in preparation for class lecture or discussion, we should aim to come away with at least:

- 3 key points or concepts
- 2 connections—to *self*, to other *texts*, and/or to the *world* (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997)²²
- 1 question or point of confusion.

Now of course, I hope that students take away more than this from their assigned readings. But having a “threshold” for reading in preparation for class can really build students’ confidence and curiosity. The Hub has a worksheet that students can use to log their 3–2–1 points, which was created by peer tutors with Middlebury’s Office of Learning Resources.

After Reading: Talk About It

Research tells us that metacognition—the ability to assess one’s own comprehension—is a critical skill for effective reading (e.g., Dabarera et al., 2014). Yet often, students need to **talk about a text** before they know whether and what they have understood. We can make opportunities for this oral processing in class. Students can work in pairs or small groups to compare their 3–2–1 points or to read aloud passages that resonated with them. Other activities from the Pathways chapters, such as jigsaw reading (p. 96) and critical role-play (pp. 119 and 156), can also be useful for post-reading. We can encourage students to have these conversations outside of class as well, by assigning “reading buddies” or using the “Imagined Interlocutors” assignment (p. 242).

A final note: Academic reading is an area where disparities in access can become particularly prominent (e.g., Malomo & Pittaway, 2020). We should think carefully about the **quantity and type** of readings assigned and include audio and visual supplements or alternatives to print readings whenever possible. In these ways, we uphold our commitment to inclusion through Universal Design, which we discussed in Chapter 8.

Scaffolding Peer Review

Peer review is another way to encourage more intentional reading—and it of course results in better writing, too! However, peer review needs to be set up effectively; otherwise, students may be uninvested, disengaged, or unskilled in giving feedback to their peers (e.g., Brammer & Rees, 2007). There are also complex **power dynamics** that emerge around language difference, which need to be acknowledged: Students from more privileged linguistic (and racial and socioeconomic) backgrounds tend to assume more authority in peer review interactions, which can leave other students feeling that they have nothing to offer (e.g., Keating, 2019; Leverenz, 1994). Here are some ways we can make peer review more engaging and equitable:

- 1 **Talk openly about power and privilege:** Because power is already a central focus in CLA Pedagogy, we can transfer that learning toward a discussion of power in peer groups. One way into the conversation is to ask: *What makes peer review challenging? Why might some of us be more comfortable or confident providing feedback than others?* We can also highlight particular assets that multilingual and multidialectal writers bring to the peer review process, such as linguistic creativity and cross-cultural awareness.
- 2 **Provide clear goals and foci:** Students often misunderstand the role of peer review, thinking the aim is “correction” rather than “collaboration” (Brammer & Rees, 2007). When I introduce peer review, I highlight the etymology of the word “**review**” (i.e., to “look again”), to underscore that receiving feedback from other readers can help us see our work through fresh eyes. And reading others’ work can open us up to new rhetorical possibilities. Studies have found, in fact, that writers learn more as *givers* of feedback than they do as *receivers* (e.g., Lundstrom & Baker, 2009).
- 3 **Be intentional about sequencing:** I tend to use peer review early in the writing process, when students are still working through ideas, organization, and use of details/evidence. I do this in part to discourage students from taking on the role of “editor” or “proofreader,”²³ which is what they often default to (McGroarty & Zhu, 1997). This helps to level the playing field for multilingual and multidialectal writers, who may feel unprepared or uncomfortable offering sentence-level feedback. Sometimes, peer review may consist mostly of **talking through** arguments, findings, research processes, etc. When we do look at written drafts, I remind students to focus on content questions, such as: *Was this piece of writing engaging, informative, and clear to me?* (See below for more on “clarity” as an alternative to “correctness”).
- 4 **Create checklists or guiding questions:** One way to prevent students from getting “in the weeds” is to create a tool to guide their review. Such tools should be tailored to the goals of the assignment, as well as to the phase of the writing process. Below is a lightly edited version of a checklist I have used for Position Papers (see Chapter 5, pp. 157–8). and other persuasive writing assignments. This is used with the first full draft of students’ work, after they have talked through and/or presented their main ideas, but before they have received feedback on a written draft.

Sample peer review checklist

- Underline what you think is the thesis or main argument of the paper
- Label (with “E”) examples or evidence that you found persuasive
- Put a ★ next to places where the stakes or implications are coming through clearly
- Put a ? next to one point or sentence that you found confusing, or one place you got lost in the organization
- List 2 (or more) things you appreciated or learned from this paper
- List 2 (or more) suggestions or next steps for this writer

- 5 **Make time for guided practice:** Students are much more effective in using checklists like the above if they have a chance to practice—for example, with a paper from a previous class (with the writer’s name removed, unless that student wants to be named).
- 6 **Invite meta-feedback.** As with other types of feedback, students need opportunities to reflect and report back on their peer review experiences. This can be done via a reflective writing assignment, in a Writer’s Memo (see below), or during an in-person conference. Themes from student reflections can be channeled back into future class discussions or workshops.

Technology can also be a tremendous asset in the peer review process. If students provide comments in a shared file (e.g., via Google Docs), we can review and even respond to their feedback. We can even ask the writer to respond to each of their peer reviewer’s comments, so we know whether and how they took the feedback into account. There are other tools as well that can help, such as Eli Review—a cloud-based program that provides built-in scaffolding, including a three-part feedback heuristic: “Describe-Evaluate-Suggest.”²⁴

Responding to Student Writing

Providing our own feedback to student writers is one of our most important responsibilities as teachers. It is also a part of our job that many of us dread. Responding to student writing requires both **mental and emotional labor**: Often, we find ourselves trying to balance a variety of roles that seem to conflict: reader, motivator, coach, critic, and—at times—evaluator (Benesch,

2017). Another challenge is deciding what to prioritize in our feedback, which can vary depending on the nature of the assignment, the point in the writing process, and the student's goals and needs. And then on top of that, we have the tensions around **norms and standards** to work through, as we discussed in Chapters 1 and 3. No wonder so many of us find this work exhausting! This is in part why there are entire journals devoted to the topic, by the way, such as the open-access *Journal of Response to Writing*²⁵

There are a number of ways we can infuse CLA into our feedback policies and practices, as enumerated below. First, though, one overarching principle: **Aim for quality over quantity of feedback. Always.** Research has found that student writers often get overwhelmed by the amount of feedback they receive on their work (e.g., Anson, 1989; Harris, 2017). And let's be honest: How many of us as students loved getting work back covered in red pen? (By the way, I beseech you: Please do not use blood-colored ink to do this work. Use pencil! Or type, if your handwriting is as terrible as mine. ;-)).

In taking a **less is more** approach, we become kinder to ourselves and to our students. Here is what works for me: I allot a particular amount of time for responding to each student's work, depending on the length and complexity of the assignment, as well as my other responsibilities. I provide a few comments and suggestions per page during that allotment of time (see below for more on types of comments), leaving a few minutes at the end to write a note summarizing strengths and next steps. When I return the work to students, I remind them that I did not comment on everything. I then say: "*If you feel like you did not get enough feedback from me, please re-submit your paper, and I would be happy to add more comments and suggestions.*" Guess how many times a student has resubmitted that same draft for more feedback? Once. Just once! And that was a senior preparing to go on the job market—not my typical student.

I see my approach not as a withholding from students, but as a wise investment of time and energy. I want my students to be inspired and challenged—not overwhelmed—by my feedback. I also want my comments to be useful in the writing process, which means I need to get them to students as soon as possible. In other words, **timeliness matters more than thoroughness** of feedback (e.g., Lee, 2013). I devote much more time to feedback on midway drafts than on final versions. In fact, my feedback on the final draft is often quite minimal—it may be just a completed rubric and a few sentences recognizing what the writer has accomplished and what they should keep in mind for future assignments. I may also include a growth/reflection grade, as discussed below.

Another way to manage the workload of providing feedback is to **give students choice** in the mode and/or timing of feedback (e.g., “*Who would like written feedback before the weekend?*” “*Who would like to meet in person next week?*”). This gives students some agency in deciding when and how they want feedback from us, and it helps us prioritize which assignments to respond to first. I don’t tend to use audio or videorecorded feedback, but that is another choice we may offer to students.

The gist here is that CLA pedagogy invites us to **give ourselves a break** when it comes to feedback—not intellectually, but logistically: We don’t have to address everything. And we certainly **don’t need to proofread or copyedit student work**—more on that below. In fact, research has shown that “correcting” papers results does not result in much transferable learning (e.g., Kang & Han, 2015; Lee, 2013). Below are additional strategies for providing effective feedback, informed by CLA and other scholarship.

Maximize Rhetorical Effectiveness

Sometimes we are focused so much on “getting through” student papers that we are not thinking carefully about how our feedback will be received by the writer. We may even lapse into “defensive mode,” using our feedback to justify a grade or express disappointment, rather than to promote student learning. Research tells us that students learn the most from feedback that is **specific and actionable** and that they are most receptive to criticism when it is accompanied by **concrete suggestions for improvement** (e.g., Dobler & Amoriell, 1988; Hyland & Hyland, 2006). The table below provides some additional guidelines.

Table 9.1 Guidelines for Rhetorically Effective Feedback

| <i>DO</i> | <i>DON'T</i> |
|--|---|
| Use feedback to increase students’ understanding of their strengths and goals as writers. | Use feedback simply to “justify” the grade. |
| Respond to the content with “I statements.” (e.g., I really enjoyed the part of your narrative where . . . I thought this was a clever way to illustrate. . .). | Ignore what the student is saying, and focus only on how it is expressed. |

| <i>DO</i> | <i>DON'T</i> |
|--|--|
| Offer praise on both process and product (e.g., “I can tell you have worked hard on this revision. I see a lot of improvement in the structure of the argument”). | Offer only vague praise or nitpicky criticism. (e.g., “You’ve got some good ideas here. But you are not using commas correctly”). |
| Tie your comments to specific points in the writing (e.g., “Here is one place where I see summary but not much analysis”). | Write general comments without pointing to specific points in the text (e.g., “I would have liked to see more analysis of the text”). |
| Provide specific critiques and suggestions (e.g., “I have highlighted in blue several places where more evidence will strengthen your argument”). | Make general judgments about the writer (e.g., “You need to improve your research and citation skills”). |
| Accompany questions with action steps (e.g., “What are some other implications of your argument? That is something I’d like you to add to your conclusion”). | Disguise suggestions as questions (e.g., “Are there other implications for your argument?”). |

Remember the Power of Our Words

CLA also compels us to keep in mind that the particular words we say to students have real **social and emotional power** (Pollock, 2017; see also Unit 7.1). Because language is a tool we use to build identities and relationships, our comments on students’ “linguaging”—i.e., their uses of language—can damage the relationships we are trying to build with them. When I used to work as a professional writing tutor, I sometimes sat with students while they tried to process (often in tears) feedback from another instructor. I began to see how the harsh tone of certain comments can hinder students’ learning and growth. The table below offers some representative examples:

Table 9.2 Student Interpretations of Instructor Comments

| <i>Instructor Comment</i> | <i>What the Student Heard</i> | <i>What the Instructor Probably Meant and Might Have Said Instead</i> |
|--|--|--|
| "You don't seem to understand the argument in the reading." | "You are either lazy (didn't do the reading) or stupid (unable to read)." | "I think there are some points in the reading that are unclear to you. Please revisit it to clarify. Let me know if I can help!" |
| "Anyone hoping to learn something new from your paper would be disappointed." | "You have nothing to offer to this class. How did you even get admitted to this school?" | "This paper felt more like summary than response to me. I really want to hear what <i>you</i> have to say about the text." |
| "You need to visit the writing center to get help with grammar!" | "Your language is so bad that I can't even deal with you. Go get it fixed somewhere else!" | "I am having trouble understanding this piece of writing, but I don't have the skills to pinpoint the specific issues, probably because I myself have never learned an additional language." |
| "No." (I have seen this one word written in the margin next to entire paragraphs) | "I am so exasperated with you and your writing that I can't even complete my own sentences." | "No, that's not what the author is saying." or "I disagree with this claim." (But honestly, who the heck knows what that instructor meant?) |

Critical feedback that does not convey a tone of **care and support** can exacerbate the "imposter syndrome" that many students already experience at school (e.g., Denny et al., 2018). This is particularly true for first-generation students, as well as for multilingual and multidialectal writers, who are often already marginalized at school, as we discussed in Chapter 5. The psychological equation goes something like this:

"Bad" writing = "Bad" student = I don't belong here.

And is it any surprise that students might arrive at this conclusion, given all we know about how people judge one another based on language? (See, for example, the rest of this book!) My point is not that we should avoid giving

critical feedback. But we should assume that students can and will **read into what we say**. By focusing on **quality over quantity** of feedback, as suggested earlier, we give ourselves more time and energy to think about the impact of our words.

Create a Feedback Loop

On the positive side, we can create a feedback loop that actually strengthens our relationships with students and increases their sense of academic agency and belonging. We can be sending **micro-affirmations** (Rowe, 2008) to students throughout each phase of the writing process! Here are some ways to make feedback an ongoing and affirming dialogue:

- 1 **Build “check-ins” throughout the writing process.** I build in frequent “mini-meetings” and/or written updates as students are working on a complex assignment, to ensure that they stay on track. Yes, these take time, but this time is well-spent—and usually results in a better outcome down the road (Shapiro et al., 2014/2018; Tomaš & Shapiro, 2021). The Pathways chapters included a variety of scaffolding activities and assignments that can serve this “check-in” function.
- 2 **Require “Writer’s Memos,”** or what some call “assignment wrappers,” to accompany student submissions—particularly for longer assignments and/or revised work. These are short pieces of writing in which students tell us a bit about their writing process, or about their views on what they have produced. I may give them a particular question or two to answer, such as:
 - How did the writing/research process go for you on this assignment?
 - What was most challenging about this assignment?
 - How do you feel about the draft you’re submitting? What do you see as its strengths and areas for improvement?
 - What would you most like feedback on and why?

Sometimes after reading a student’s memo, I decide not even to read the paper, instead reaching out to them with an offer of support. For example, a student may write something like: “There are some things happening back home that are taking a lot of my time and energy, and I wasn’t able to do as much as I wanted to with this paper.” That student doesn’t need a bunch of comments from me telling them what they already know. They need time and support to produce a draft that better reflects what they are able to do as writers!

- 3 **Invite feedback on our feedback.** There is nothing more frustrating than spending hours writing feedback on student work, and then wondering whether students have even read what we have written. It is worth making time in class for students to review our feedback and ask clarifying questions. We can even request some meta-feedback on questions such as:
- What is working well in your paper, as indicated in the feedback?
 - What are some areas for improvement or growth?
 - What surprised you in the feedback?
 - What should you keep in mind for the next draft—or the next assignment?
 - Were any of the comments or suggestions confusing?

This reflective writing can then be channeled back into the “Writer’s Memo” with the next draft, just as those of us who write for scholarly journals might summarize feedback from reviewers when resubmitting a manuscript.

- 4 **Think carefully about how to sequence feedback.** As mentioned above, I provide more feedback to students midway through the process than I do at the end, but I also sequence my feedback with what students receive from peers and writing center tutors. Often, by the time I read their work, students have already received a round or two of feedback and have revised accordingly. With more difficult or complex assignments, however, I may reverse the process, giving students more of my attention early in the process, so that they have a strong start.
- 5 **Consider uptake of feedback when assigning grades.** When I grade the final draft of an assignment, I often provide an additional “growth/reflection grade,” which I calculate based on three criteria:
- The quality and thoughtfulness of their Writer’s Memo
 - The amount of revision/improvement I see from the first to the final draft²⁶
 - The extent to which their revisions respond to the feedback they have received

One thing I like about assigning these growth/reflection grades is that the students who have struggled the most usually get the highest grades. More experienced writers, in contrast, have to work a bit harder to show me that they are challenging themselves—for example, by making revisions beyond the suggestions they received from me or their peers. Grading based on process and labor is not only in line with our CLA goals of self-reflection and

rhetorical agency—it has also been proposed as a more equitable and anti-racist approach to assessment (Inoue, 2015, 2019), since it rewards effort and intentionality, meaning that every student can receive a “good grade” for the hard work they have done in our classes. Below I will discuss how I sometimes use “proxy grades” within a labor-based approach, so that students receive useful feedback on both process and product.

Providing Feedback on Language

A question I am asked frequently by colleagues in both secondary and post-secondary settings is: *When and how should I provide feedback on language issues in student writing?* This is one area in which the tensions about norms and standards can be particularly salient: Should we be “marking” student work for “errors” in grammar, style, or mechanics? If so, when and how? If not, do we simply ignore these aspects of writing? There are no easy answers to these questions, but here are some general guidelines, which I unpack further below:

Guidelines for providing feedback on language

- 1 Focus on choice rather than “voice”
- 2 Teach (and evaluate) grammar rhetorically
- 3 Set grammatical priorities related to the assignment
- 4 Focus on clarity rather than correctness
- 5 Distinguish between feedback and grading

Choice Over Voice

Many students I have worked with—particularly multilingual and multi-dialectal writers—have received comments from another English/writing teacher expressing concern that their “voice” was absent or underdeveloped in their writing. Comments like these usually leave students with more questions than answers, such as:

- *Where can I go to “find” or “develop” my voice?*
- *How will I know if I’m making progress?*
- *And . . . is this just another way of saying that my writing seems “fake” or plagiarized?*

Perhaps for creative writers, having a singular “voice,” or what linguists would call a **written idiolect**, is a goal worth aspiring to. But when it comes to academic writing, the notion of “voice” is not particularly helpful (e.g., Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999). It is also linguistically inaccurate, since, as we have explored in previous chapters, we all have many voices: For example, my “voice”—i.e., register or style—is a bit more colloquial in this book, compared with my articles in scholarly journals (although who knows about future publications—maybe we can start a revolution!?! ;-))

Even Peter Elbow, one of the biggest proponents of “voice,” has admitted that the concept is “fuzzy” and that good writers tend to draw from “an array of voices” (1994, p. 20). A CLA approach would suggest that rather than sending students on a quest for the elusive “authentic voice,” we should aim to give them the knowledge and opportunities they need to make **informed linguistic choices** and to evaluate the impact of those choices (e.g., Gere et al., 2021).

A Rhetorical Approach

What I am arguing (again) is that we need to implement a **rhetorical grammar** approach, which we explored in Chapter 5 (see also Kolln & Gray, 2017; Micciche, 2004). But investigating, making, and evaluating grammatical choices is a lot of work, no? The easy way out, of course, would be either to present grammar norms as universal (e.g., *Avoid passive voice! Never use first person pronouns!*) or to avoid the topic of “language” altogether and just talk about the writer’s “ideas.” But if you’ve reached this point in the book and somehow think I would support either of those approaches, you must have missed a few things along the way!

Teaching students to grow as language users is indeed hard work—but it is fun and rewarding work as well! One way we can manage the complexity is to **set rhetorical grammar priorities in keeping with the assignment at hand**. For example, when my first-years are learning to write summary/response papers (not the most thrilling assignment, I admit, but something they need for their other classes), we talk about the pros and cons of using past tense vs. present tense verbs to capture “authorial action” (e.g., “They argue” vs. “They argued”). When students are writing up their “methods” for an empirical research report, we discuss the option of using passive voice (e.g., “The survey was distributed”) or first-person (“I distributed the survey”). Chapter 5 included other examples of how grammatical patterns can vary by genre and discipline.

I even bring grammar awareness into thesis development! To help students struggling with crafting arguable thesis statements, I sometimes invite them to start their thesis with the word “Although.” This sets them up for a grammatically complex sentence, resulting—sometimes, at least—in a more interesting thesis statement. I also encourage less experienced writers to explicit transitions (e.g., “However,” “Nevertheless,” or “In other words”) to make the structure of their argument more explicit. I draw on resources such as Graff and Birkenstein’s (2018) *They Say, I Say* and Kolln and Gray’s (2017) *Rhetorical Grammar* to build students’ knowledge of how ideas and language work hand-in-hand.

Clarity Over Correctness

When I do provide sentence-level feedback beyond what we are working on as a class, I try to focus on **clarity rather than correctness**. In the English language, lack of clarity often has to do with one of these three issues:

- Subject/verb agreement
- Word form (e.g., using a noun such as “discrimination” instead of the verb “discriminate”)
- Verb tense (e.g., switching unintentionally between past tense and present tense)

And what do all three of those bullet points have in common? **VERBS!**

That’s right, folks: My answer to the ubiquitous question of “Where should I start when working with students on sentence-level grammar?” is “verbs!” Well, first I give my little spiel about a rhetorical grammar approach, but eventually we end up at “verbs.”

Verbs contain much of the content of sentences in English. Thus, incorrect verb usage—or rather **unconventional** usage, since the focus is on choices, and students may have a rhetorical reason for “breaking” with convention—can hinder the clarity or effectiveness of the writing. There are other grammatical elements that are much less impactful, such as use of articles (a, an, the) and prepositions (above, after, against, etc.). If I see a persistent pattern of unconventional usage with these or other structures, I may point it out. But often, the grammatical rules are so idiosyncratic that there are not many opportunities for transferable learning. Studies have shown, by the way, that students learn more when they **make edits themselves** prompted by highlighting or other marking from us than when we “correct” the writing for them (e.g., Chandler, 2003).

Feedback ≠ Grading

A final reminder—a restatement, in some ways, of what I've said thus far—is that **feedback and grading are not the same thing**. We may focus much of our feedback on a student's linguistic or stylistic choices, particularly if attending to these aspects would make the writing clearer or more rhetorically effective. But we as teachers usually get to decide how much—if at all—this is reflected in students' grades. **Grading rubrics** allow us to assign separate grades to different aspects of the writing. The Pathways chapters included a number of rubrics from my classes. Nearly all of those rubrics include a section on “language” and/or “clarity,” but that section never accounts for more than 20% of the overall assignment grade.

For colleagues who are resistant to rubrics but are seeking more linguistically equitable means of evaluation, I suggest simply assigning two grades—one for **content** and the other for **clarity**—and I weight the former at least twice as much as the latter. A student who has a high “content” grade but has room for growth in “clarity” should, when possible, be allowed to keep improving the latter. I do not want to “punish” students who have had less experience or instruction with academic writing in English, but I do want to give them an incentive to keep improving as writers. The “revise for clarity” approach is my way of balancing these two commitments.

And of course, not all of my assignments follow the norms of standardized or academic English. As we discussed in Chapter 5 and 7, I also use “Writing Beyond the Classroom” assignments, in which **students decide** their purpose and audience, including the appropriate genre and language conventions. I have had students who were quite confident with writing academic papers but struggled mightily to convey the same ideas in another genre, because “academese” was the only tool in their writing toolbox. As has been highlighted several times, our goal is **not one-size-fits-all writing**. Rather, we want students to be able to use language flexibly and creatively, in keeping with their aims as writers and their understanding of rhetorical expectations.

Ungrading or Proxy Grading

There are some experts who propose **not assigning grades at all to student writing**—either as part of a labor-based approach to improve equity (e.g., Inoue, 2019) or as a means of increasing students' intrinsic (vs. extrinsic) motivation (Blum, 2020). I still assign grades to student papers, although I do take labor, growth, and reflection into account, as explained above.

However, when responding to drafts that will be revised, I assign only a **proxy grade**—i.e., an approximation of what the grade *would be* if I were grading the writing as a final draft. That way, students have a reference point that can inform their revision. Perhaps in an ideal world, students would keep working indefinitely on every piece of writing, no matter what the impact on their grade. But that is not the world I live and teach in. The proxy grade can be a useful way to address one of the concerns raised about “ungrading” (Blum, 2020) which is that students may feel they are missing out on feedback about how their work might be evaluated by future instructors.

Conclusion

I hope this chapter has helped to excite and prepare you to infuse a critical understanding of language, identity, power, and privilege into your classroom instruction. I am certain that there are topics I did not address—perhaps we can talk about them online at the Hub?! We will build on many points from this chapter in Chapter 10, which considers how CLA can inform our work outside the classroom.

Notes

- 1 www.insidehighered.com/views/2018/06/18/middlebury-professor-surveys-student-attitudes-about-free-speech-opinion
- 2 www.insidehighered.com/views/2019/05/13/exploring-student-views-inclusivity-campuses-opinion
- 3 <https://publications.coventry.ac.uk/index.php/joaw/article/view/607>
- 4 Research shows in fact, that intellectual debates rarely change people’s minds. In fact, the presentation of new evidence or flaws in logic can sometimes lead to a “backfire effect,” in which people hold even more tightly to their original beliefs (e.g., Nyhan & Reifler, 2010).
- 5 One prominent example is a 2016 letter sent to incoming students at the University of Chicago, which said the university did not “support so-called trigger warnings” or “condone the creation of intellectual safe spaces.” Backlash led some other institutions (e.g., Bowdoin and Yale) to adopt a softer tone. More at www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/08/29/u-chicago-letter-new-students-safe-spaces-sets-intense-debate
- 6 For a nuanced discussion of trigger warnings, see www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2019/03/do-trigger-warnings-work/585871/
- 7 One example of this one: www.insidehighered.com/blogs/just-visiting/i-want-make-students-uncomfortable
- 8 Fun fact: Curiosity increases dopamine in our brains! How cool is that?! Learn more, and take a quiz to determine your “curiosity type” at: <https://curiosity.britannica.com/science-of-curiosity.html>

- 9 <https://whatisessential.org/resources/first-year-agreements-lesson-plan>
- 10 www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-inspector-calls/building-classroom-community
- 11 <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/581e9e06ff7c509a5ca2fe32/t/58f25fa937c58130853337df/1492279209799/04+AWARE-LA+Brave+Space+Guidelines+and+History.pdf>
- 12 www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/socratic-seminars
- 13 www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/spring-2019/speaking-up-without-tearing-down
- 14 <https://brenebrown.com/podcast/brene-on-shame-and-accountability/>
- 15 www.contemplativemind.org/practices/tree
- 16 www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/speaking-in-tongues/202011/why-do-we-hate-politically-correct-language
- 17 <https://consciousstyleguide.com/>
- 18 https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.sumofus.org/images/SUMOFUS_PROGRESSIVE-STYLEGUIDE.pdf
- 19 For a thoughtful yet accessible discussion of “BIPOC” as an alternative to “POC,” check out this episode of the NPR Codeswitch podcast: www.npr.org/2020/09/29/918418825/is-it-time-to-say-r-i-p-to-p-o-c
- 20 www.insidehighered.com/views/2018/09/19/why-asking-students-their-preferred-pronoun-not-good-idea-opinion
- 21 We have a group called “Oratory Now” run by my colleague Dana Yeaton, who trains coaches to offer class workshops and provide one-on-one feedback and support related to oral communication. More information, as well as their “Peer Coaching Playbook,” can be found at: www.oratorynow.org/
- 22 For more explanation of these types of text connections, check out: www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/text-text-text-self-text-world
- 23 My colleague Catharine Wright has a useful handout explaining the difference between revision, editing, and proofreading, which is available at the Hub, and at www.middlebury.edu/system/files/media/Revision%2C%20Editing%20and%20Proofreading.pdf
- 24 <https://elireview.com/2016/08/03/describe-evaluate-suggest/>
- 25 <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/journalrw/>
- 26 Many teachers are unaware of the “compare drafts” feature of Microsoft Word. I use this feature as a visual starting place to see where students have made the most changes between one draft and the other. Google Docs introduced a similar “Compare Documents” feature in 2019.

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