

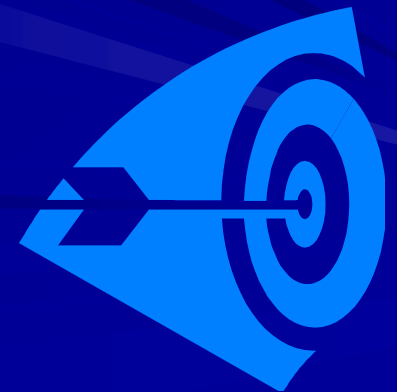
**Professional Development
Workshop presented by Jenna
Garcia and Sumita Lall, Spring
2009**

Professor Wikipedia

What our students may be thinking?



Who are our students, and why do they need more writing and reading outside of the English composition classroom?



Have you ever heard your students blurt out any of the following questions?

“Will this be on the exam?”

“What exactly do you want me to know?”

“How many pages do we have to read for this class?”

“Can’t you just tell us the answer if you know it already?”

“Why are you making us do this?”

“How would I know?”

Why we need to ask for more writing and reading from our students:

- . . . Understanding how to communicate is fundamental to learning, but this skill requires practice in many different contexts.
- . . . Many of our students believe that their personal views are the “truth” (i.e. that they have the right to their own opinion) and think in polarized terms.
- . . . Many of our students read for facts and avoid ambiguity and complexity. They expect easy answers and think that knowledge is factual.
- . . . Many of our students have been conditioned to expect they will be graded for effort and the quantity they produce in a writing sample instead of the soundness of their ideas and arguments

All of these traits indicate . . .

. . . what the State Chancellor's *Center for Student Success* (2007, February)* has presented in ***Basic Skills as a Foundation for Success in California Community Colleges:***

“It is the responsibility of **all faculty**, teaching in **all disciplines at all levels**, to **communicate appropriate expectations and utilize effective methods for communicating information**, support students' **growth in reading and writing skills**, **develop critical thinking processes**, and evaluate student work to advance **the overall state of our students' basic skills**” (9).

*(Center for Student Success. (2007, February). *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Success in California Community Colleges*. Sacramento, CA: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. Retrieved < 2/10/2009>, from <http://www.cccbsi.org/publications>

The State Chancellor's study also cites a report by The National Research Council's Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education,

How People Learn (Bransford and Brown, 2000)* (p. 71)

1. Students come to the classroom with **preconceptions** about how the world works.
2. To develop competence in an area of inquiry, students must: (a) have a **deep foundation of factual knowledge**; (b) **understand facts and ideas** in the context of a conceptual framework; and (c) **organize knowledge** in ways that facilitate retrieval and applications.
3. A “**metacognitive**” **approach** to instruction can help students learn to take control of their own learning by **defining learning goals** and monitoring their progress in achieving them.

*(Center for Student Success. (2007, February). *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Success in California Community Colleges*. Sacramento, CA: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. Retrieved < 2/10/2009>, from <http://www.cccbsi.org/publications>

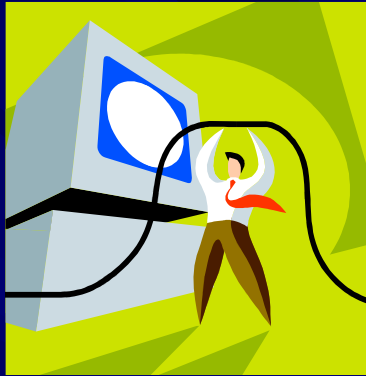
Group Work

- Think about assignments and activities you use in your classroom. What is one frustration you have experienced because students didn't understand the assignment? (ex. misinterpretation)

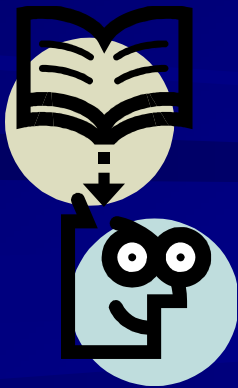
**Focus on a “frustration” that
can be fixed by Monday.**

Why do our students think this way?

- From powerful ideas to PowerPoint.
- Word processing vs. thinking.
- Taking things at interface value.
- Simulation and its discontents.



We are all teaching “**literacy**” at some level.



The National Literacy Act of 1991 defines **literacy** as

“an individual’s ability to **read, write, and speak** in English, and **compute and solve problems** at levels of proficiency necessary to **function on the job and in society** to achieve one’s goals, and **develop one’s knowledge and potential**. ”

(*National Literacy Act of 1991*, Sec. 3— cited in ***Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges*** 12).

"Learning to Write" and "Writing to Learn" . . .

- are two, mutually enabling objectives in a composition classroom
- “writing to learn” needs to continue outside of the composition classroom if students are to develop critical thinking skills
- the more students write, the more empowered they become as learners and thinkers

A Vision of Students Today:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGCJ46vyR9o>



One possible model of
teaching across the curriculum...

Group Work

- Share your sample assignment with your group. (Please, keep your explanation to 2 minutes or less.)
- Discuss how your assignment addresses one challenge mentioned earlier. (Please, keep your explanation to 1 minute or less.)
- As a group, choose an exemplary assignment to share with the whole group.