Principles for Accessible Writing Pedagogy
Haverford College Writing Program

Collaborative Learning
- What tools do we provide students to help them give each other meaningful feedback?
  - *Collaboratively construct an assessment rubric with students*
- Navigating time pressures of drafting, revision, and producing final-for-now drafts can be complex. How might we ethically scaffold and structure some of these processes?
  - *Designate class time before a draft is due as a "workshop period"*
- How do we model ways of synthesizing and responding to feedback?
  - *Instructors can be more active / take a stronger lead in the first tutorial while inviting and supporting students in emulating these strategies in the second tutorial*
- How do we make the classroom into a collaborative space?
  - *Explicitly teach practices and strategies for note-taking and documenting an oral conversation to revisit later*
  - *Collaborative / designated note-taking: opportunities for students who miss class to cover material; opportunities for everyone to review class notes*
- How do we support students in navigating different perspectives?
  - *Ask students to anonymously write their perspective/response to a claim on a notecard. Circulate the cards so that students can view each others' perspectives. Then ask them to read one card aloud and invite reasons/nuances for why they agree or disagree. Then read another.*
- How can we support students in distinguishing between complex questions about a piece of writing from comments such as citation formatting or grammatical structures?
  - *Create a draft commentary sheet for the Tutorials that prioritizes higher order thinking first. Instruct students to underline any sentences, words, or grammar that cause confusion and leave room for respondents to ask questions about the underlining only if there's time at the end of the discussion of the draft. Invite students to clarify what's confusing after the Tutorial.*
- How can we affirm the feedback students give each other
  - *Specifically name how helpful the feedback they offer one another in tutorials is. This can start with asking a student to elaborate on a helpful comment they left on another's draft.*
- In what ways can students participate / share perspectives with one another? How can we make space for student voices?
  - *Pair/Share: Have students discuss a prompt with a partner before sharing with the whole group*
  - *Approach student presentations as an opportunity for them to learn from one another*
    - *Assignments can be framed around the material students learned from others' presentations, such as a comparative analysis of a topic they presented on and another student/group's topic*
- How can we encourage students to be in dialogue with one another in group discussions? In what ways do students have opportunities to come-to-know one another as people?

- - - *Have students learn each other's names and refer to the people whose comments they are responding to by name during oral discussions. Have students create name cards. Instructors can model citationality / responsivity practices students can take up.*
  - How can we include students in conversations about course policies?
    - *Make clear from the beginning that this is a generous place to learn—students should feel encouraged to share ways that the course can be more responsive to their needs. The semester ebbs and flows, things are not constant.*
    - *Co-authored guidelines for community membership*
      - *Have students talk in small groups to generate ideas and identify something shared that they agree on / want to bring to the larger group.*
      - *Ask tutorial groups to come up with their own tutorial participation guidelines.*
      - *Maybe begin with a rubric for the guidelines and ask students in groups what to keep, delete, and modify.*

Flexibility and Adaptability
- How can we engage students with different learning styles?
  - Students who identify as more introverted and extroverted
    - *Create opportunities for written contributions: discussion posts (not required), group notes Google doc, notecards; have students bring in objects/texts of interest*
  - Different levels of conceptual approaches
    - *Open-ended discussion and assignment prompts*
    - *Flexible assignments: creative projects vs. paper vs. presentation etc.*
- How can we offer students multiple modes of representation, expression, and engagement?
  - *Draw on a range of texts, images, videos, podcasts, etc. in course materials*
  - *Offer students opportunities to produce different kinds of outputs (written, oral, conversational, etc.)*
  - *Make syllabus a Google doc (Can be an "evolving syllabus"; Consider disentangling different parts of the syllabus into different (digital) documents; Hyperlinked table of contents).*
- How can attendance policies enable learning instead of being punitive or disciplinary?
  - *Combining attendance and participation into one grading category on the syllabus foregrounds meaningful* presence, *which can be achieved in a variety of ways.*
  - *Frame attendance and participation as a responsibility to others and not only for one's own benefit. This ethic is consistent with Haverford's ethos and with reasons many students choose a small college: interactive classes. It also supports students' interests in opportunities for social and personal growth.*
- How can we cover material while also being open to shifting in the face of significant unexpected events (COVID, the strike, etc)?

- ○ *Take a moment to acknowledge global/local events even if the syllabus doesn't change*
  - ○ *Give space for student responses*
- How can professors manage requirements of putting out a reasonably solid syllabus on the first day versus working with students as per their needs?
  - ○ *Using a Google doc as a syllabus both signals the malleability of the curriculum and makes it easy for students to access a consistently updated version.*
- How can we course correct if the classroom environment is not as we and/or the students had hoped?
  - ○ *Class community guidelines created in early weeks; revisit these guidelines when it seems right–mid-semester, etc.-- what are we experiencing? Are these working? What do we need to add or revise about these guidelines?*
  - ○ *Use notecards to ask mid-semester evaluations: what's working for you and others in the classroom? What could work better? Do a share-out of the responses and identify 1-2 things to change.*
  - ○ *Check in with students / ask what they have experienced in other classes. Use those to help students arrive at something for this class that could work. Good policies to discuss might include: attendance policy, participation, late work, revision work, how to respond to each other's work and handle sensitive topics and then add it to the syllabus*
  - ○ *Affirm that we are all in different places with our thinking, affirming the importance of the language that we use without being the language police, importance of a learning space and space for growth/learning. In the same way that we treat our writing as a rough draft that can be revised, so too should class conversation and things we say.*

Students as Whole Persons
- How can we acknowledge that students–and faculty members–have lives (curricular, extracurricular, and personal) outside of the classroom?
  - ○ *Use a pre-class survey or introductory letter assignment to learn more about students*
  - ○ *Consider important dates when designing syllabi and deadlines* (religious holidays, plenary)
  - ○ *Encourage communication with students about potential conflicts and be flexible in managing them*
    - ■ *A week or so before an assignment is due, ask students to let you know whether they anticipate any problems meeting the deadline. Ask how best to problem solve.*
  - ○ *Encourage students to prioritize their health and wellbeing without feeling the need to "justify" making healthy choices (with regard to attendance, deadlines, etc.)*
  - ○ *When scheduling Tutorials, consider asking students to consider their deadline needs as well as their schedules*

- - - *Make sure that students don't feel called upon to have an intimacy that they don't want to share. Ensure that they don't feel called upon.*
    - *Opportunity for students to discuss a safe, neutral third topic (something happening on campus?) instead of personal.*
    - *Bring up parallel instances from current events or history or focus discussion on an experience they read about for class or otherwise.*
      - *This is a reason to include short narratives or essays among the readings. You might ask: What do you think about the author's decision or their response to X?*
- How can instructors model a respect for student time management (as a whole person) while reminding students that they are also balancing multiple tasks, responsibilities, and priorities?
  - Expansive view of classroom behaviors: absences, other academic, campus, personal, familial responsibilities,
- How can we schedule tutorials in a way that respects the many demands people have on their time?
  - *Consider canceling one class period during tutorial weeks - this will mean student commitment remains at 3 hours of in-class time per week and creates a universally available time slot for particularly busy students*
- How can we let students bring parts of those extra-classroom lives into the classroom? When is that useful and/or appropriate? What does that do or enable?
  - *Remember what they're interested in/involved in and ask about it during pre/post class chat*
  - *Create assignment prompts that allow them to write about things they're passionate about*
  - *Make space for strategic use of first-person lived experience as evidence in writing*
- How can the class encourage students to build a relationship with their own agency (rather than normalize the practice of being told what to do)?
  - *Acknowledge that students are adults*
  - *Give students freedom to develop their own projects*
    - *Ask students to write a description of their project for you to discuss with them. Create a worksheet with specific elements that their description should include.*
    - *Explain why their planned project meets or might not meet the assignment's and/or course's goals.*
  - *Encourage them to pursue what excites them*
  - *Trust students to set realistic deadlines and participation expectations*
  - *Make space for students to ask for extension etc for any reason - trust that they know what they need without requiring an explanation*
- How can classes provide opportunities for students to reflect on their larger goals and their agency or motivation within the class context toward those goals?
  - *Frame the semester with reflective assignments*

■ *Intention Letters and Reflection Letters can be a great way for students to name their individual goals and track both their progress and the way these shift over time.*

Relationship Building
- How can we create a welcoming, inclusive, and equitable space?
  - *Make clear that sensitive class discussions are expected to remain in the classroom out of respect for those who've shared*
  - *Don't record classes where sensitive information is likely to be disclosed. If recording, stop. Notetakers should exclude names of students from the notes.*
- How can we get students to understand that this is an experience rather than a set of deadlines and targets and goals?
  - *Professors can try to address how classes need not be so rigid because that isn't particularly helpful to learning nor is it comfortable.*
- How can we avoid imposing our own assumptions and biases on students?
  - *Reflect on times when you, as the instructor, have made assumptions about student intentions and how that may have manifested in the classroom and/or relationship.*
- How can instructors model a willingness to be mistaken, both about class content, and interpersonal dynamics?
  - *Invite students to stop you any time you speak to clarify something or push back or call out something that's not working. Repeat the invitation in the beginning of each "lecture" or close reading. Stop yourself and ask, does anyone want to push back or ask a question?*
- How can instructors model curiosity about course material, student perspectives, etc.?
  - *Share examples of what you've learned from previous students in the course when relevant*
  - *If a student has demonstrated expertise on or interest in a particular topic, invite them to share whenever it comes up and*
  - *Share what you learned from a reading or film or X. Did it confirm or change your thinking or knowledge?*
- How can instructors model openness and approachability with students?
  - *Transparency in classroom activities: i.e. discuss why we are doing the activities we are doing vs "trust me, this is how it's done"*

Writing as a Learning Process
- How do we help students become aware of their own learning process?
  - *Metacognition–that they become aware of their learning process, but also their learning–use of reflective writing*
  - *Discuss modalities of "reading like a writer" and "writing as a reader"*
  - *practice attending to the writing of the course-content authors we are reading also (in addition to peer writing)*

- ○ *Discuss how writing is a powerful way of learning content and of learning to think more critically and complexly than speaking. It captures your ideas in progress and enables you to review and reconsider them.*
- How do we model a variety of processes for students at every stage of the writing process? (note-taking, idea generating, outlining, revising)
    - ○ *Have brainstorming sessions where students share their own experience and approaches with note-taking, topic brainstorming, outlining, etc.*
    - ○ *Use index cards–small writing on small cards, share around the class*
    - ○ *Show students your own in-process work*
    - ○ *Share examples of effective writing from previous iterations of the course*
    - ○ *Consider scheduling an in-class writing workshop day for each draft (a full class period to work on writing).*
- How do we help students feel comfortable with uncertainty? (of ideas, arguments, etc.)
    - ○ *To encourage revision: change and response in your own writing and thoughts.*
    - ○ *Having low stakes assignments (with "check" lowstake grading systems)*
    - ○ *Assignment scaffolding that breaks larger projects into concrete smaller tasks*
    - ○ *Using the language of "provisional thesis" (and discuss first drafts as coming to understand what you want to write about)*
    - ○ *Bring in examples affirming that tossing a claim or paragraph or large chunks of a draft or a draft is not failure. It's what leads to success.*
    - ○ *Ask students to write a brief commentary when they turn in their final draft that explains what they like about it and what they learned about their process of writing.*
    - ○ *Emphasize that perspectives and opinions they express in their writing are not set in stone, but instead are situated, tentative and conditional. "This is what I think at this moment, after considering our readings, discussions, and my present knowledge and values."*
- How do we make space for students who write (and learn to write) at different paces?
    - ○ *Encourage students to come to Tutorial regardless of how much work they have completed; they will still benefit from the conversation*
    - ○ *Facilitate students who turn in late drafts to connect with each other outside of class for peer review*

Classroom as Embodied Space
- How can we make the classroom a space for free and open dialogue?
    - ○ *Organize desks or chairs in a circular shape*
    - ○ *Closing the door can help create a focused space and a sense of community*
    - ○ *Minimize use of open computers and put away phones.*
        - ■ *This may create other access barriers though, so ensure it is a community conversation.*
- How can we differentiate between informal and formal class time? (Before and after chatting and self-care are important!)

- - *Some sort of signal to students, maybe like a simple "Okay let's come together" or a very obvious conclusion of class preparation turning into class time (as a professor closes a notebook or computer, shuts the door). Some sort of visual and audio queue.*
- How can we make the classroom a welcoming space for different kinds of bodies and motion?
  - *Start the semester with some kind of conservation about the freedom of movement, bathroom breaks, water/food, etc.*
  - *Have a conversation about mask wearing*
  - *Have a conversation about technology in the classroom (computers, phones, etc.)*
- How can we attend to the role of the nervous system in learning? (i.e. emotional regulation, calmness, tightness, etc as all enabling and/or closing down the ability to take in information with curiosity)
  - *Attending to breathing by incorporating class mindfulness exercises*
    - *Silent writing can be used at moments of heightened tension to slow down the body*
    - *Moments of literal deep breath*
  - *Movement*
    - *Relocating for group work as an opportunity to reset the vibe*
    - *Creating defined stations for certain types of thinking*

Sample Language re: Support Resources / Accessibility

- I am committed to working creatively and collaboratively to help you succeed in this course. By making our class more accessible, we enhance everyone's experience, so please let me know if anything is standing in the way of your learning. This can include your learning style, course dynamics you find disruptive, ELL-related challenges, disability or chronic illness, or any other issue that impacts your work. Additionally, as a member of this course, you are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive community for one another. We are all responsible for fostering an accessible and sustainable learning environment, and collaboration will be key to making this course a generative and enriching experience for all.

- Below is the updated, recommended accessibility statement issued by Haverford College Office of Access and Disability Services. I comply with this statement and wish to support each member of the course as a whole-person with different situations and learning needs. Above all, I encourage proactive communication, respectful boundaries, reflection and accountability, self-generosity, and the affirmation of your personal agency within the classroom and beyond. We can discuss shifting needs on an ongoing basis.

Please also recognize that I will have limited capacities as well. As such, I encourage you to take advantage of the institutional resources listed below when they make sense.

- I am committed to creating and supporting a classroom community that is inclusive, equitable, and conducive to learning for all students. Amidst an ongoing pandemic, I fully anticipate that this may continue to be an unusual and perhaps unpredictable semester. Nevertheless, I am excited about the opportunity to learn with all of you. I promise that I will do my best to design course activities and assignments to help you grow as a student in ways that are flexible and personally meaningful. In return, I ask for your patience and understanding as we navigate the challenges of an unusual time.

  Above all, I ask for your communication and feedback. If you are struggling, or if something is not working for you, please let me know, in person, by email, or by filling out the (anonymous) feedback form posted on Moodle. Whenever possible, if you are unable to complete an assignment by the due date, I ask that you let me know ahead of time and work with me to determine when you will complete the work or to let me know what assistance you need, so that we can work together to determine a good course of action.

Sample Language re: Extensions and Late Work

- Because of our tutorial structure, it is important to submit your first drafts on time. Remember – these are drafts! You'll have plenty of time to revise and polish your work before submitting the final version. For final drafts of your essays, I will always grant extensions, no questions asked, as long as you contact me with your request at least 24 hours before the assignment is due. It will be up to you to select a deadline that you feel will enable you to produce your best work. Assignments submitted past the time and date specified (including extensions) will be marked down one grade for every work day (Mon-Fri) late (i.e. A- to B+ if it is one day late). Please contact me if you feel your situation warrants an exception to any of these policies.

- General "Oops!" Policy: You have the option to exercise one "Oops!" in two different categories. You can miss ONE IDP for whatever reason. The second category of "Oops" is for paper due deadlines. You can take an extra 24hrs ONE TIME for a formal assignment due date, no questions asked. Just let me know you are taking your "Oops!" This includes due dates for working drafts and final drafts of your papers. Yes, I know I said I don't accept late papers, but I also understand that we are all human and that life happens. It's okay. Do your best. You don't have to take an "Oops!" but if you need one, it's there.
- "If you need an extension for any reason, email me up to the original due date to set up a new deadline. Please be aware that the new deadline will be constrained by needing to give your Tutorial group enough time to read and comment on your essay. If you need a second extension, you must meet with me first so I can make sure you're on track."

- Late work will not face a penalty as long as you communicate clearly with me about your need for an extension in advance, ask for whatever help you may need, and let me know when you expect to complete the work. If you need extra time, please do not wait until a deadline has passed to speak to me about it. I will always be happy to work with you to come up with a schedule and determine the best course of action. I ask those of you who need more than a one-week extension to talk with both your Dean and me to arrive at a practical and workable plan for completing the work.

Sample in-class activities re: Creating Community Agreements

- Use the prompts below to fill in the chart.
    1. *What do you need from your **instructor** for this class to be a positive and inclusive learning environment?*
    2. *What do you need from your **peers** for this class to be a positive and inclusive learning environment?*

    Write your responses in the columns below. If someone writes an idea you agree with, please write a **"✓"** indicating that you agree. If you have a question, please write a **"?".**

    (Below is an EXAMPLE to show you what the exercise will look like when done)

What do you need from your **instructor** for this class to be a positive and inclusive learning environment?	What do you need from your **peers** for this class to be a positive and inclusive learning environment?
● Clear expectations about grades and assignments ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	● Ask clarifying questions ✓ ✓
● Active listening; encouraging commentary ✓ ✓	● Open to other's perspectives and ideas ✓ ✓ ✓
● Stays on topic✓	● Monitor air time ✓ ✓
● Timely feedback from instructors ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	● feedback from peers/instructors ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
● Cares about my learning experience✓	● Everyone is engaged in the discussion ✓
● Friendly and supportive ✓	● Friendly and supportive ✓ ✓

● Respect ✓✓	● Respect ✓
● Own your impact ✓✓ ?	● Own your impact ✓ ??
● Accessible office hours ✓✓	