Threatening Stereotypes

Developed by Nelson Graff

Reading Selection for This Module

Module Description
Threatening Stereotypes was designed for ninth grade students in the second semester and is expected to take approximately three weeks of instructional time. In this module, students read an article about stereotype threat from the Washington Post and investigate the prevalence of stereotypes in their own and their fellow students’ lives. They interview other students to learn about their experiences and strategies for coping with stereotypes. As part of that investigation, students consider both the stereotypes that may be impairing their own performance and strategies they can use to overcome the effects of those stereotypes. They apply their learning to their own writing by compiling the results of their investigation into their own individual news articles.

Module Background
This module functions on multiple levels. In addition to focusing students on the topic of stereotyping and the importance of mitigating the impact of negative stereotypes, it pushes students to think about how audience, purpose, and technique interact in their writing. Using the news article (or some other article from a popular magazine) as a rhetorical model, students will practice a different kind of writing than the traditional school-based essay. At the same time, students learn about rhetoric—the importance of purpose and audience in writing—and how rhetorical considerations shape authors’ decision making. They will also learn to make warranted claims about original evidence.

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Module Objectives

In addition to the focus on Common Core State Standards, the module targets the skill areas listed below.

*Students will be able to*

- Infer audience based on textual clues.
- Infer author’s purpose based on textual clues.
- Explain strategies for mitigating negative stereotypes.
- Apply reading strategies to a news article.
- Generate evidence from interviews.
- Analyze evidence in support of claims.
- Tailor writing to a particular audience and purpose.

*Note:* The activities for students provided in the Student Version for this module are copied here in the Teacher Version for your convenience. The shaded areas include the actual activities the students will see. The use of italics in the shaded areas generally indicates possible student responses and may be interspersed with notes to the teacher that are not shaded. If there are notes to the teacher within the shaded areas, they are indicated by italics and parentheses.
Reading Rhetorically
Prereading

Getting Ready to Read

Choose one of the following activities to help students consider what they already know about purpose and audience—key concepts for this module. Our sense of audience is related to our use of stereotypes. Stereotypes are a natural and necessary part of survival and success. We have to be able to predict how people will respond. When we write for an audience, we are imagining how that audience will respond. When writing for grandma, we have personal experience that will help us, but we also have stereotypical knowledge about how the older generation will respond. Stereotypes are harmful when we apply them too broadly and ignore evidence that contradicts them. Maybe grandma actually would enjoy hearing some of the juicier details about the movie.

Activity 1: Getting Ready to Read

Option 1: Quickwrites

Write as if it were an email, a note, or a series of text messages about a recent event (concert, movie, assembly) to a close friend.

Then, write in the appropriate form (letter, email, series of text messages) to an older relative who does not live with you about the same event.

In pairs or small groups, compare the texts you have produced, considering and preparing to report on the following questions:

1. Did you choose the same form of communication for your friend and your older relative? If not, why not?
2. What information did you tell your friend that you did not tell the older relative? Why?
3. What information did you tell your relative that you did not tell your friend? Why?
4. How did the language you used differ? Why?

Option 2

(Teacher Note: Hand out print advertisements to students. Groups should prepare to present their advertisements in light of the following questions.)

Prepare to present your advertisements in light of the following questions:

1. What is being advertised?
2. Who is being targeted by the advertisement? How do you know?
3. How does the advertisement sell its product?
Exploring Key Concepts

This module focuses on tailoring a message according to the writer’s purpose and audience. The activity students engaged in when getting ready to read prepared them to discuss these terms and consider the relationships among them. First, have students define the terms; then ask them to brainstorm different purposes and audiences for which people write.

Activity 2: Exploring Key Concepts

Based on your work in Activity 1 and your experience as readers and writers, brainstorm ideas of purposes and audiences for which writers may write.

- Purpose
- Audience
- Message
- Technique

After discussing these terms, consider the following questions:

1. When have you seen texts written for more than one audience?

   *Answers will vary. What follows is a couple of examples. Open letters to politicians or companies are often written not only to the named audience but also to the more general audience of whatever publication in which they are published. Likewise, newspaper editorials often speak both to the public and to elected officials.*

2. What texts have you seen that seem to meet multiple purposes? What purposes have you noticed? Does one purpose dominate?

   *Answers will vary. What follows is one example relevant to this module. Newspaper articles in the news sections have as their primary purpose to inform, but because the authors are not purely objective in their reporting, as examples of reporting about the same event from different newspapers will highlight, they usually involve some other more persuasive purpose as well.*

Surveying the Text

Surveying the text gives students an overview of what the reading selection is about and how it is put together. Surveying also helps students create a framework in which they make predictions and generate questions to guide their reading. As students look at the text of “How a Self-Fulfilling Stereotype Can Drag Down Performance,” by Shankar Vedantam, have them complete Activity 3.
Activity 3: Surveying the Text

Look at the text of the article, “How a Self-Fulfilling Stereotype Can Drag Down Performance,” by Shankar Vedantam. Consider the following questions:

1. Where and when was the article published?
2. What does that tell you about the information in the article?
3. What do you notice about the length of the article and its paragraphs?
4. What does that suggest to you about what you will be reading?
5. The article was published in the science news section of the newspaper. What does that tell you about the article?

Making Predictions and Asking Questions

As students look at the text of “How a Self-Fulfilling Stereotype Can Drag Down Performance,” ask them to complete Activity 4.

Activity 4: Making Predictions and Asking Questions

As you examine the title of the article, “How a Self-Fulfilling Stereotype Can Drag Down Performance,” answer and then discuss the following questions.

1. What is a stereotype?
2. What kinds of stereotypes have you heard about different people?
3. What does self-fulfilling mean?
4. What might make a stereotype self-fulfilling?
5. What kinds of performance might the author be talking about according to the title?
6. What do you think the author will say about the relationship between stereotypes and performance?
7. Who do you think is the audience for this piece? How do you know?
8. What do you think will be the purpose of the piece?
9. What questions do you want the piece to answer for you as you read?

Understanding Key Vocabulary

In Activity 5 students will work with vocabulary words they will encounter in the reading.
Activity 5: Understanding Key Vocabulary

The following vocabulary words are used in the article you are about to read.

1. ameliorate
2. aptitude
3. conscious
4. depress
5. discriminate
6. inevitable
7. inherent
8. innate
9. salient
10. society
11. stereotype

Record these words and their definitions in your vocabulary logs, leaving room to copy the sentences in which the words appear in the article. Then write answers to the following questions:

• What does the use of these words in the article suggest to you about the tone of the article?

Many of these are scientific words, suggesting that the tone of the article is academic and objective.

• What does the use of these words tell you about the author’s perspective on the issue?

Because these do not appear (mostly) to be emotionally loaded words, they suggest an objective perspective.

• What do they tell you about the audience of the piece?

They suggest the audience is well educated and somewhat scientifically literate.
Reading

Reading for Understanding

In Activity 6, students will read to understand the author’s points playing the “believing game.”

Activity 6: Reading for Understanding

During the first reading, you are reading to understand the author’s points, playing the “believing game.” To support your understanding, you will work in pairs. Each person should read a paragraph or two of the article, then stop and say something to her partner. Here are some examples of ways to start the sentences you will say when you pause:

**Asking Questions**
- I wonder why...
- What if...
- How come...

**Summarizing**
- The basic gist...
- The key information is...
- In a nutshell, this says that...

**Revising Meaning**
- At first I thought, but now I...
- My latest thought about this is...
- I’m getting a different picture here because...

**Making Connections**
- This reminds me of...
- I experienced this once when...
- I can relate to this because...

**Forming Interpretations**
- What this means to me is...
- I think this represents...
- The idea I’m getting is...
Once you have finished reading, discuss the following questions with your partner:

- Which of your predictions turned out to be true?
  Answers will vary.
- What surprised you?
  Answers will vary.

Then, working together, write a one-sentence summary of the article.

In the article, “How a Self-Fulfilling Stereotype Can Drag Down Performance,” Shankar Vedantam describes research that suggests negative stereotypes about groups may impair group members’ performance in tasks that evoke those stereotypes, a phenomenon called “stereotype threat.”

Considering the Structure of the Text

These activities call for students to map out or otherwise graphically represent different aspects of the text. By doing so, they will gain a clearer understanding of the writer’s approach to the essay’s content. The activities will lead to further questions that will help students analyze what they have read.

Ask students to use descriptive outlining to map the organization of the text by taking the following steps:

Activity 7: Considering the Structure of the Text

1. Draw a line across the page where the introduction ends. Is it after the first paragraph, or are there several introductory paragraphs? How do you know?
2. Draw a line across the page where the conclusion begins. Is it the last paragraph, or are there several concluding paragraphs? How do you know?
3. Discuss in groups or as a class why the lines were drawn where they were. In this activity, thinking and reasoning about organizational structure is more important than agreeing on where the lines should be drawn.
4. Further divide the body of the text into sections by topics (what each section is about).
5. Write a short description of what each section is about, what it says about that topic (“says”), and the rhetorical function of the section (why the writer put it there, “does”).
6. Copy the “says” and “does” statements onto separate sheets of paper to make one outline of the article according to what each chunk says and one outline according to what each chunk does.

Now, answer the following questions:

- How does each section affect the reader? What is the writer trying to accomplish?
What does each section say? What is the content?
Which section is the most developed?
Which section is the least developed?
Which section is the most persuasive? The least persuasive?
On the basis of your chart of the text, what do you think is the main point?
Is that point explicit or implicit?

Answers will vary.

Here is an example:

**How a Self-Fulfilling Stereotype Can Drag Down Performance**


Here’s a trick question, so think carefully before you answer: If someone mentions the word “beast” to you, which word would you match it with?

1. Afraid. 2. Words. 3. Large. 4. Animal. 5. Separate.

A beast is an animal, of course, so what’s the trick? It’s that getting the right answer may depend on who asks you the question.

*Says:* Relatively simple questions may become tricky depending upon who’s asking them.

*Does:* Sets readers up to consider the problem by engaging them in a mental exercise and setting up a quandary.

Vocabulary questions like this have been routinely posed to thousands of Americans as part of the General Social Survey, a national survey that tracks societal trends. And for years, blacks have scored lower on the vocabulary test than whites.

Sociologist Min-Hsuing Huang recently decided to ask whether the race of the person administering the survey mattered: He found that when black people and white people answered 10 vocabulary questions posed by a white interviewer, blacks on average answered 5.49 questions correctly and whites answered 6.33 correctly—a gap typical of the ones found on many standardized tests.

Huang then examined the performance of African Americans who interacted with black interviewers: He found that black respondents then answered 6.33 questions correctly—the same as white ones. The reason African Americans scored more poorly on tests administered by white interviewers, Huang theorized, is that these situations can make the issue of race salient and subtly remind the test-takers of the societal stereotype that blacks are intellectually inferior to whites.
Says: When African Americans are administered a vocabulary test by African American interviewers, they do just as well as whites, though they do worse when the survey is administered by white interviewers.

Does: Elaborates the puzzle represented in the introduction by reporting on research.

Huang’s findings, recently published in the journal *Social Science Research*, are only the latest in a body of research that has gone largely unnoticed by policymakers, parents and managers: Dozens of field experiments have found that reminding African Americans and Latinos about their race before administering academic tests, or telling them that the tests are measures of innate intelligence, can hurt their performance compared with minorities who were not reminded about race and not told that the results reflect inherent ability.

Psychologists such as Claude Steele at Stanford University came up with the term “stereotype threat” for the phenomenon: When people are threatened by a negative stereotype they think applies to them, they can be subtly biased to live out that stereotype.

Says: The phenomenon described by Huang is part of a wider body of research into a phenomenon called “stereotype threat” by Claude Steele.

Does: Broadens the issue beyond a single vocabulary survey to suggest that the problem is widespread.

The threats do not have to take place at a conscious level: When volunteers in experimental studies that have found huge stereotype-threat differences in performance are told about the phenomenon afterward, they invariably tell researchers that the theory is interesting but does not apply to them.

Nor are the findings limited to blacks and Latinos. The same phenomenon applies to women’s performance in mathematics. Reminding women about their gender or telling them that men generally outperform women on math tests invariably depresses the women’s scores. Similarly, telling test-takers that people of Asian descent score better than other students depresses the performance of white men. The impact of stereotype threats has been demonstrated in several foreign countries, in educational settings ranging from kindergarten to college, and a variety of settings where adults work and play.

Says: Stereotype threats are unconscious and found in a wide range of people.

Does: Further broadens the issue beyond minorities and consciousness of discrimination.

In a soon-to-be-published study, researchers Gregory M. Walton at Stanford and Steven J. Spencer at Waterloo University in Ontario explored a question
with even thornier implications. What does stereotype threat tell you if you are a college admissions officer debating between a man and a woman who both have an SAT score of 1200?

SAT scores are typically seen as measures of aptitude and predictors of a student’s performance. Colleges have long known, however, that women and minorities typically underperform relative to their SAT scores.

“Let’s say on the SAT you have a score of 1200,” Spencer said. “What would that predict about your GPA at university? It would predict a 3.2 GPA. What has been observed in high-stereotype-threat environments is that that 1200 does not predict a 3.2 GPA but a 3.”

In a pure meritocracy, the college admissions officer ought to pick the man, since his score predicts he will do better in college than a woman with the same score.

But in two meta-analyses involving nearly 19,000 students, Walton and Spencer found that when schools and colleges go out of their way to ameliorate stereotype threats, the performance of women and minorities soars—it’s as if these students are athletes who have been running against a headwind. Without the headwind, Walton and Spencer found that minorities, and women in math and science, do not just do as well as whites and men with the same SAT scores—they outperform them.

“We would argue if you simply use test scores, you are building in discrimination into a system,” Spencer said. “The test scores underrepresent what minorities, and women in math and science, can do.”

What makes this thorny, of course, is that Walton and Spencer are effectively saying a score of 1200 means different things depending on the background of the student. Couldn’t that quickly descend into special pleadings and all kinds of claims about disadvantages and stereotype threats?

Says: A new study shows that SAT scores are also subject to stereotype threat and that equal scores may not predict the same performance for students from different backgrounds if schools mitigate stereotype threat.

Does: Applies the concept of stereotype threat to college admissions and SAT scores.

Walton acknowledged the challenges but said there is one implication of the research that is noncontroversial: Several simple measures appear to be highly effective at reducing stereotype threats—and everyone can agree that schools and companies should get students and workers to perform at their full potential.

Stereotype threats are diminished when race and gender are not made salient in academic or workplace settings, and when people are told that tests are not measures of inherent ability. One study tried to combat stereotype threats by asking junior high school students to regularly remind themselves in essays about a value that they hold dear, such as the importance of family—
presumably bolstering their confidence in the face of stereotype threats. A core idea in many interventions is to give people a sense of belonging.

Says: *Schools can and should take actions to mitigate stereotype threat.*
Does: *Proposes a solution to the problem.*

Stereotype threats seem to emerge in large part because certain settings can subtly make particular groups feel out of place: A woman in a math class, a black or Latino man confronted by a vocabulary test, a white man trying to make a basketball team. When confronted by challenges that inevitably arise in these contexts, people threatened by stereotypes get the false message that they ought to be doing something else.

Says: *Situations that evoke stereotype threat make people feel unwanted and like they’re doing the wrong thing.*
Does: *Sums up by defining the issue in an emphatic way.*

**Analyzing the Students’ Findings**

1. Discuss with the class how the text is organized (text structures).
2. Ask students to work in pairs or small groups to identify the major parts of the text and discuss the purposes of those parts.

**Noticing Language**

At this point, it will be helpful to students to revisit the key vocabulary and consider the different forms many of the words can take, especially those words that appear in a different form in the article itself. Have students try to fill out the following table, creating the forms that fill the missing columns using their knowledge of word forms. Not all boxes will contain words.

**Activity 8: Noticing Language**

Change the forms of the vocabulary words to complete the table. If no form of the word exists to fill a particular slot, put an X in that box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>amelioration</td>
<td>ameliorate</td>
<td>ameliorative</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aptitude</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>apt</td>
<td>aptly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consciousness</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>conscious</td>
<td>consciously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depression</td>
<td>depress</td>
<td>depressed</td>
<td>depressingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discrimination</td>
<td>discriminate</td>
<td>discriminated</td>
<td>discriminating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reading – Informational Text

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

Language

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
   a. Use parallel structure.
   b. Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival,
This may be a good point for progress monitoring and formative assessments, especially to assess students’ understanding of key vocabulary in the readings. How well do students understand the definitions appropriate to the context of the readings? How well can students use the vocabulary? How have their understandings of key concepts in the module developed after their first reading?

**Annotating and Questioning the Text**

During the initial reading, students read “with the grain,” playing the “believing game.” In the second reading, they will read “against the grain,” playing the “doubting game.” This is part of beginning a dialogue or conversation with the text and the author.

**Activity 9: Annotating and Questioning the Text**

1. Label the following points in the left-hand margin:
   - Introduction
   - Issue or problem being addressed
   - Author's own points
   - Points the author cites from others (scholars, research)
   - Conclusion

2. Write in the right-hand margin your reactions to what the author is saying.
   - Personal connections that support or refute the author's points
   - Reflections on the quality of the evidence or examples
   - Questions about the author's ideas or assumptions
   - Questions about missing perspectives
   - Challenges to the author's inferences or conclusions

*(Teacher's Note: You may want to begin this activity by having students work collaboratively as a class. Then ask them to exchange their annotations and compare their labeling and responses in small groups or in pairs. Once students have discussed their annotations, discuss the following questions as a class.)*
Now, answer the following questions:

1. What is the author’s apparent main purpose?
   To inform readers about a phenomenon discovered through research.

2. What clues indicate this purpose?
   The author cites research about the phenomenon and elaborates on that research with reference to other studies. This article appears in a news section of the paper, which suggests its purpose is primarily to inform.

3. What other purposes do you see the author pursuing?
   The author appears to be asking readers to consider the implications of the research and the phenomenon. The piece is almost persuasive in its support for the existence of the phenomenon.

4. What clues suggest these other purposes?
   The author does not merely report on the results of a current study but backs up that research with reference to previous studies. Although the author acknowledges possible challenges raised by this research, he does not cite any challenges to the research or expert opinion that undermines it.

Analyzing Stylistic Choices

Have students consider all of the following aspects of the author’s technique by answering the questions below, or creating a jigsaw, in which groups of students focus on particular aspects of the author’s technique and report on them to the whole class. Each aspect includes several questions to consider. (Sample answers provided.)

Activity 10: Analyzing Stylistic Choices

Consider all of the following aspects of the author’s technique by answering the questions below. Each aspect includes several questions to consider.

1. **Relationship Between the Writer and the Reader**
   - Does the writer ask or expect the reader to do anything?
     *No. The writer is reporting.*
   - Does the writer address the reader as an expert speaking to other experts, or as an expert speaking to the general reader?
     *An expert speaking to the general reader. He explains the studies and their implications of the studies.*
   - Does the writer make sure that the reader follows the discussion?
     *Yes.*

Reading – Informational Text

1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

5. Analyze in detail how an author’s ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).
Language
3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
   a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyze their role in the text.
   b. Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.

Speaking and Listening
1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
   a. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
   b. Work with peers to set rules.

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- Does the writer engage the reader through humor, drama, or unusual examples?
  *The opening engages readers by inviting us to think about a simple vocabulary questions and how it might be a trick.*
- Is the writer hesitant or assertive?
  *Assertive.*
- How much knowledge does the writer assume the reader has?
  *The writer assumes a generally educated audience but assumes no specialized knowledge.*

2. Content Choices
- What parts of the subject does the author discuss in great detail? What parts are summarized?
  *Two studies are summarized: Huang's of the national "General Social Survey" and Walton and Spencer's of the SATs. They are described in some detail (focused on findings). Descriptions of other studies are summarized, including the general label of stereotype threat and extensions to other groups.*
- What statements does the writer assume as given (and therefore does not back up with extensive support)?
  *The writer assumes that readers will agree that the situation is a problem and that equality of opportunity is a legitimate goal.*
- What relevant topics are ignored?
  *He does not quote any researchers challenging the validity of claims about stereotype threat. Nor does he describe any environments that have successfully implemented the solution to the problem he discusses.*
- What topics could have been discussed but were not?
  *Same as previous question.*

3. Expansion of Topics
- In what ways are individual topics developed? Are arguments given? Are anecdotes told?
  *The article describes findings, uses quotations from scientists, and uses the analogy of athletes running against a headwind.*
- Is the reader asked to believe certain ideas or to take certain actions? Is the reader asked to imagine consequences?
  *The reader is asked to imagine consequences both of accepting the results of a study "What makes this thorny . . ." and of relieving conditions of stereotype threat.*
- Does the expansion of statements prove the statements or help the reader understand? Does it keep the reader interested or amused or obscure the issues? Does it develop implications?
  *The expansion of statements clarifies the information presented and suggests implications.*
4. **Choice of Evidence**
   - What types of information are used to support main statements: statistics, anecdotes, quotations, original observations, scientific theories, legal or philosophical principles, definitions, appeals to emotion, appeals to the imagination, or appeals to common sense?
   
   Some quotations, some analogies, and some original observations are used. Definite appeals are made both to logic and emotions: “Everyone can agree…”

5. **Use of Reference**
   - How extensively does the writer rely on other sources? (Are there frequent mentions of other books or articles?) Do you notice any indirect reference to the work of others?

   The article mostly consists of references to other sources, including a significant amount of summary (indirect reference) to a body of research.

   - What methods are used to refer to other works? Do they include reference by title only, paraphrase, summary, or direct quotation?

   They include summary and direct quotation, and some paraphrase.

   - How complete is the documentation and the bibliography?

   No documentation except references to scientists’ names and affiliations are included.

   - What kinds of material does the writer cite: contemporary newspaper accounts, private diaries, government documents, specialized scholarly studies, theoretical works, best-selling nonfiction books, statistical reports, or literary works?

   Specialized scholarly studies are cited.

   - What purpose does the reference serve in the writing? Does the reference provide specific evidence? Quote directly a person being discussed? Provide an assertion by an authority? Present an example for analysis? Explain a point? Supply the background of a new idea? Distinguish between conflicting ideas? Place current work in the context of previous work? Present an idea to be argued against?

   Because the article is ostensibly a report of research, the references either provide the content for the report or the context of the information.

6. **Level of Precision**
   - Is the subject simplified or presented in all its complexity?

   Most of the information is simplified.

   - Are all important distinctions brought out?

   Some important distinctions are brought out between conscious and unconscious effects, between universal effects and those limited to minorities, and between possible concerns about implications and implications that “everyone can agree on.”
• Are many supporting details given or are only broad principles stated?
  Some supporting details are offered, generally in the form of statistics.
• Are potential difficulties in the argument discussed?
  One potential difficulty in terms of the implications of the findings is discussed.

7. **Sentence Structure**
• Are the sentences short or long? Simple or complex?
  Most of the sentences are moderately long, and most are simple and declarative.
• Are the sentences declarative statements? Do they set up a complex condition (if ... then ...)?
  They are mostly declarative, and some set up complex conditions (questions or “when....” situations).
• Do the sentences have qualifiers (even though . . .)?
  Few have qualifiers.
• Do the sentences describe actions?
  Not really, although some phrases (“...running against a headwind”) imply action. (Teacher note: Examples, which are not from the article, of sentence structures that describe actions include “Sandra runs” or “Gear C transmits the power to the drive wheel.”)
• Do they describe physical qualities?
  Not really. Other than to discuss people in terms of race or gender, there's very little discussion of physical qualities. (Teacher note: Examples, which are not from the article, of sentence structures that describe physical qualities include “Sandra has a pulse at rest of 63” or “Gear B and gear C are in a reduction ratio of 12:1.”)
• Do they relate actual events to abstract ideas?
  The sentences relate the performance on tests (events) to more abstract ideas about stereotypes. (Teacher note: An example, which is not from the article, of a sentence that relates actual events to abstract ideas is “The disagreement of the leaders over the terms of the treaty marked the beginning of new tensions between the two countries.”)
• Do they discuss only abstractions?
  Mostly, the sentences focus on the relationship between actual events (performance) and an abstract idea (stereotype threat) (Teacher note: An example, which is not from the article, of a sentence that discusses only abstractions is “International organizations are formed in part to resolve disputes between countries without resorting to war.”)

8. **Word Choice**
• What are the denotative and connotative meanings of the key words?
  The key words stereotype and threat have negative connotations. The first implies a socially unjust situation, and the second implies danger.
• How do the specific words the author has chosen affect your response?
  The writer uses the words black and African American interchangeably, uses
  Latinos and “people of Asian descent,” all of which imply sensitivity to the
  situations of people of color. The use of “thornier” to describe the implications
  of this research suggests pain and discomfort, not just controversy.
• Which words or synonyms are repeated? Why?
  “Stereotype threat” is repeated because it is the central concept; “thorny”
  is repeated perhaps to highlight that this is not merely an intellectual
discussion. The word “performance” is repeated, perhaps used instead of
  “achievement” to suggest performativity.
• What figurative language does the author use? What does it imply?
  Both “thorny” and “performance” are metaphors, implications already
discussed. The author also uses the analogy of “athletes who have been
  running against a headwind,” with stereotype threat identified with the
  “headwind.” He also uses the analogy of “place” in terms of social location.

Use this analysis to come to a class claim about the author’s stance toward
the topic and to outline or draft a class rhetorical analysis of the piece. The
rhetorical analysis will support a claim about main and subordinate purposes
of the article and how the author accomplishes those purposes.

Here is an example:

**News Report or Persuasion: An Analysis of “How a Self-Fulfilling Stereotype Can Drag Down Performance”**

In the science article, “How a Self-Fulfilling Stereotype Can Drag Down Performance,” published in the *Washington Post* (2009), Shankar Vedantam describes a body of research he claims “has gone largely unnoticed” on a phenomenon called “stereotype threat.” He reports on two studies of the phenomenon—one recently published and one yet to be published at the time of his article. While Vedantam’s overt purpose is to report on scientific research, his rhetorical choices suggest an attempt to convince readers this is an issue worth taking seriously.

Vedantam encourages readers to take this issue seriously by using language to invite readers to identify with those dealing with stereotype threat. He does so, first, by opening the article with an explicit invitation to participate. He addresses the reader as “you” and uses conversational language to set up the problem: “Here’s a trick question, so think carefully before you answer.” His description of the “trick” in the question places readers in the position of a
  test taker, someone who might experience stereotype threat in answering the
  question. Readers are also put in the position of identifying with those who
  feel threatened by stereotypes because Vedantam highlights that “the threats
do not have to take place at the conscious level” and that “the findings [are
  not] limited to blacks and Latinos.” No matter who the reader is, he or she
may have experienced stereotype threat without even knowing it. Later in the article, Vedantam directly addresses the reader with “you” again, but this time, readers are to imagine themselves in the position of a college admissions officer: “What does stereotype threat tell you if you are a college admissions officer debating between a man and a woman who both have an SAT score of 1200?” This change of position puts readers on both sides of the issue—feeling the risk associated with stereotype threat and feeling the quandary that stereotype threat may raise for evaluators.

Beyond his use of pronouns to engage readers with the issue, Vedantam uses other linguistic tools to help readers imagine the issue. He repeats the metaphor of “thorniness” to refer to the difficulty of judging ability in the context of stereotype threat, which extends the challenge from intellectual to physical, a connection he emphasizes with another analogy, “it’s as if these students are athletes who have been running against a headwind.” Because both of these analogies are physical, they make the issue of stereotype threat not only vivid but also visceral for readers. He also assumes readers will agree with him when he writes, “everyone can agree that schools and companies should get students and workers to perform at their full potential.” Because this agreement comes at the cost of agreeing that measures should be adopted that “appear to be highly effective at reducing stereotype threats,” Vedantam secures readers’ agreement that stereotype threats should be reduced.

But Vedantam uses not only emotional tools to sway readers but also statistics and quotations from researchers to illustrate the seriousness of this issue. He details the specific findings of two of the studies to make the issue concrete, borrowing credibility from the researchers by citing their statistics and quoting them directly. Yet he also emphasizes the wide applicability of the research by noting, “dozens of field experiments” have established the existence of stereotype threat, and it has been found in women, white men, and “several foreign countries.” This broad application of the concept of stereotype threat provides more support for Vedantam’s suggestion that this is an issue worth taking seriously.

Though Vedantam does not cite any of these more widespread studies directly, his reference to them implies that the issue is widespread and also suggests his own broad knowledge of the research, which extends his credibility. Thus, when he sums up with a loaded definition of stereotype threat as “making people threatened by stereotypes get the false message that they ought to be doing something else,” readers should accept his perspective. Similarly, he garners credibility from his audience by explaining his points and the research clearly, leaving little to be misunderstood and by using racially sensitive language. For instance, he uses African American and black interchangeably, Latino, and “people of Asian descent”; all are terms that suggest sensitivity to the issues of people of color.

Vedantam’s use of linguistic tools that encourage readers to engage with the issue of stereotype threat from the perspectives of both sufferers and
policy makers, his use of evidence, and his own credibility help to extend his purpose beyond merely informing readers about two recent studies about the phenomenon of stereotype threat. By employing these tools, he encourages readers to take the issue seriously, to notice what has been unnoticed. As he hints in his penultimate paragraph, there are solutions to the problem of stereotype threat. Perhaps readers should consider those as well.

Postreading

Summarizing and Responding

In a rhetorical précis, students write a brief analysis of the content, purpose, and persuasive strategies of a text using the pattern below (from Reading Rhetorically by John C. Bean, Virginia A. Chappell, and Alice M. Gillam).

Activity 11: Summarizing and Responding—Rhetorical Précis

Write a brief analysis of the content, purpose, and persuasive strategies of a text using the pattern below:

**Sentence 1:** Note the name of the author, the genre and title of the work, and the publication date in parentheses; a rhetorically accurate verb; and a that clause containing the major assertion or thesis statement in the work.

**Sentence 2:** An explanation of how the author develops and supports the thesis, usually in chronological order.

**Sentence 3:** A statement of the author’s apparent purpose, followed by an “in order to” phrase.

**Sentence 4:** A description of the intended audience, the relationship the author establishes with the audience, or both.

Here is an example:

**Rhetorical Précis**

In the science article, “How a Self-Fulfilling Stereotype Can Drag Down Performance,” published in the Washington Post (2009), Shankar Vedantam describes a body of research he claims “has gone largely unnoticed” on a phenomenon called “stereotype threat.” He focuses most of his attention to two recent studies, one demonstrating that the race of an interviewer affects the likelihood that African Americans will answer vocabulary questions correctly and one on the academic success of women and minorities based on SAT scores that finds, “when schools and colleges go out of their way to ameliorate stereotype threats,” framing these elaborate descriptions with summaries of other research on the phenomenon. The author reports on this research in order to raise awareness about the phenomenon, perhaps
to overcome its absence from consideration by business leaders and policy makers. He writes as an expert on social science research informing a general audience.

Reflecting on Your Reading Process

Reflection is an essential component in learning. Students benefit from discussing what they have learned about how to read and sharing that information with the rest of the class. Reflecting on their own reading process helps students consolidate what they have learned about being thoughtful and active readers.

Activity 12: Reflecting on Your Reading Process

Quickwrite: Your teacher will ask you to freewrite for a short time about one or more of the following questions. When you have finished, prepare to share your ideas with the class.

1. What have you learned from joining this conversation? What do you want to learn next?
2. What reading strategies did you use or learn in this module?
3. Which strategies will you use in reading other texts? How will these strategies apply in other classes?
4. In what ways has your ability to read and discuss texts like this one improved?

Connecting Reading to Writing

Discovering What You Think

Considering the Writing Task

Many students have trouble with writing assignments because they do not read the assignment carefully. Here are some strategies that might help students overcome this problem:

Read the assignment carefully with students. Many problems with student work, particularly in timed, high-stakes writing situations, arise because students fail to completely understand what the writing assignment asks them to do. In particular, it may help to teach students to identify key verbs in writing assignments and define the nature of the support they should provide.
Activity 13: Considering the Writing Task

Now that you’ve read Shankar Vedantam’s piece about stereotype threat for the Washington Post, you will investigate stereotypes at our school and write an article like Vedantam’s of your own. You will gather evidence as a class. Each of you will interview at least two peers at the school and share your results (anonymously) with the class. Then, you will use the class’s evidence to write your own article. Model your article after the rhetoric in Vedantam's article, shaping yours as he does his, so you use similar techniques, writing for similar purposes and a similar audience.

1. Read the assignment carefully.
2. Identify key verbs in the writing assignments. What do they say you should try to accomplish in your essay?
3. What kind of support must you provide?

Alternative Writing Task

Instead of having students use the Shankar Vedantam article as a rhetorical model, have students work in groups to select their own rhetorical models from popular magazines (e.g., Time, Rolling Stone, New Yorker). In their groups, they should complete a rhetorical analysis essay for their chosen article. Then, each student in the group can write his or her own individual article based on that analysis. This alternative would extend the length and challenge of the module significantly.

Gathering Evidence to Support Your Claims—Engaging with Evidence

For this writing task, students will be doing original research—interviewing their peers about their experience of stereotypes. Because the task of making sense of this kind of evidence may be new to students, it will be helpful to pursue the work in stages. It may also be useful to model the activity of each stage with the students, conducting an interview with a colleague, for instance. For stages 2 and 3, create posters on the wall, labeled with the categories students generate, where they can post their sticky notes to allow easy tabulation by the class.

Activity 14: Gathering Evidence to Support Your Claims—Engaging with Evidence

Stage 1—Class-wide Collection of Evidence

To begin, use the same interview protocol with your peers in class and outside the class.
Interview Protocol

1. Note the student’s grade level and gender.
2. What stereotypes are you aware that relate to people like you, however you define “people like you”?

   *It will be important to help students understand the variety of ways participants can define “people like you.” For instance, the same person may see herself as belonging to the group of women, teenagers, Latinas, youngest siblings, and so on.*
3. Under what circumstances do you most notice or think about those stereotypes?
4. How do you respond when you notice or think about those stereotypes?
5. What strategies do you have for dealing with those stereotypes?

Stage 2—Analyzing and Making Claims from Evidence

Write the answers to each of the questions from your interviews on sticky notes (one idea per note).

In groups, generate categories for your answers either on your own or by answering the following questions:

1. What kinds of stereotypes have you listed?
2. What kinds of situations have you described?
3. What strategies have you developed for coping with stereotypes?

Stage 3—Collecting School-wide Evidence

Interview at least two students from the school (making sure that no one else has interviewed those same students) using the same questions we used in class. Post your results on the class evidence posters in the same way you did with the class results, making sure to add your tally to the total number of respondents.

Stage 4—In-class Analysis of Results

Examine the complete results of our class’s research, and answer the following questions:

1. What kinds of results can you report from the class research?
2. What do you want to emphasize for your article?
3. What stance will you take with respect to the results?

Getting Ready to Write

Activity 15 will help students move as smoothly as possible from reading to writing. They may want to refer to their reading notes before engaging in these activities:

- *Invention strategies designed to generate ideas, points, and arguments.* Typical strategies include brainstorming, informal outlines, quickwrites, webbing, or clustering.
• **Strategies to help students consider the audience for the essay.** Students should think about what most people know and think about the topic of their papers. If they want to change the opinions of the audience, they will need to think about persuasive techniques, both logical and emotional.

Discussions in groups and pairs can be helpful for this activity.

**Activity 15: Getting Ready to Write**

In your small groups, discuss the following questions:

1. Who is your audience, and what is your argument?
2. What types of evidence and appeals does your audience value most highly?
3. How can you establish your own authority to address this issue? What credibility do you have with this audience?

In “Considering the Writing Task” above, students are guided to read the writing assignment carefully and consider the assignment’s purpose and genre. That consideration has carried through their engagement with evidence and must now guide them as they begin composing their drafts. For this particular assignment, students will need to revisit their rhetorical analysis from Activity 10 of Vedantam’s article to make decisions about their own composing. Activity 16 has questions for students to consider as they begin their writing.

**Activity 16: Getting Ready to Write—Composing for Rhetorical Purpose**

As you begin your composing, revisit the rhetorical analysis of Vedantam’s article from Activity 10 and Vedantam’s article itself.

1. Use that analysis to list criteria for what makes a successful version of the kind of article you will be writing.
2. Look in the article itself to find example sentences for the kinds of claims, evidence, analysis, and transitions appropriate to meeting the rhetorical demands of such a text.

Using the criteria students generate from their examination of Vedantam’s article, begin collectively generating a rubric for the final product.

Here is an example:

| Purpose—How well does the article inform, with a subtle slant toward persuasion? |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|                | 1         | 2         | 3         | 4         |
Writing Rhetorically
Entering the Conversation

Composing a Draft

Now that students have reviewed their analysis of Vedantam’s article and brainstormed about the points they will make and the stance they will assume, they are ready to compose a first draft. At this stage, they should simply try to bring their ideas together into coherent drafts that may still represent largely writer-based prose. The next section begins their composing.
Considering Structure

Students will use the questions in Activity 17 to help them compose the first draft of their essay.

Activity 17: Considering Structure—Organizing the Essay

1. Looking back at your rhetorical analysis of Vedantam’s article, what should be your rhetorical purpose?
2. What stance will you take with respect to the topic?
3. How does Vedantam begin? Does he explicitly state an overall point in his introduction? Should you?
4. On what topics will you focus the chunks of your article?
5. What sources will you use? How much will you reference Vedantam’s article? Other articles?
6. How formally should you write? What level of vocabulary will you use?
7. How does Vedantam conclude? How will you?

Use Vedantam’s article and your answers to these questions to help you compose a first draft of your article.

As students move from writer-based to reader-based prose, they will need to understand that writers of expository prose work to limit readers’ possible interpretations and guide readers to understand and consider the writer’s perspective. They do this in several ways:

1. Explicitly connect each chunk or body paragraph with what has come before and with the thesis or overall claim:
   - Students can look back at Vedantam’s article to see how he transitions between paragraphs within the same chunk and between chunks of his article.
   - These transitions often review the most immediate prior points, project what is coming next, and highlight the ideas and reasoning that connects chunks or body paragraphs, thus, developing logic of the essay.

2. Provide evidence in the form of examples, illustrations, statistics, anecdotes, etc., and analyze the meaning of the evidence;
3. Anticipate readers’ objections and address them;
4. Allow the logic of the argument and the available evidence to shape the number and content of the paragraphs;
5. Consider what the audience needs to be engaged, to understand, and to be persuaded.
Using the Words of Others (and Avoiding Plagiarism)

One of the most important features of academic writing is the use of words and ideas from written sources to support the writer’s own points. There are essentially three ways to incorporate words and ideas from sources, as shown below:

1. Direct quotation: Jeremy Rifkin says, “Studies on pigs’ social behavior funded by McDonald’s at Purdue University, for example, have found that they crave affection and are easily depressed if isolated or denied playtime with each other” (15).

2. Paraphrase: In “A Change of Heart About Animals,” Jeremy Rifkin notes that McDonald’s has funded studies on pigs that show that they need affection and playtime with one another (15).

3. Summary: In “A Change of Heart About Animals,” Jeremy Rifkin cites study after study to show that animals and humans are more alike than we think. He shows that animals feel emotions, reason, make and use tools, learn and use language, and mourn their dead. One study even shows that pigs need affection and playtime with one another and enjoy playing with toys (15).

Learning to cite accurately and determining how best to incorporate the words and ideas of others are essential for students to establish their own ethos. Students need practice choosing passages to quote, leading into quotations, and responding to them so that they are well integrated into their own text. Paraphrasing passages, which some students avoid because it requires an even greater understanding of the material to put it in their own words, is another important skill in academic writing. Students can practice these skills by choosing quotations, paraphrasing them, and then discussing whether they agree or disagree, and why. This can be done in a pair or group activity in which students choose quotations and then help each other paraphrase them.
Negotiating Voices

The goal of negotiating voices is for students to be able to distinguish their ideas from those of their sources and to make clear their stance in relationship to those sources. In the section above, students practiced selecting useful and interesting material, punctuating direct quotations, and recasting the language for paraphrases and summaries. The following activity can help students put direct quotations, indirect quotations, concepts, facts, ideas, and opinions from other writers into their own texts while keeping all the voices distinct.

Using Model Language

Students are often confused when they discover that their sources disagree. How can they put these dissonant voices in conversation with one another? One strategy to help your students orchestrate voices from varied sources is to give them models of introductory language, such as the following templates or frames:

- The issue of ______ can be viewed from several different perspectives.
- Experts disagree on what to do about ______.

You might then give them language that introduces ideas from particular writers:

- Noted researcher John Q. Professor argues that . . .
- In a groundbreaking article, Hermando H. Scientist states that . . .
- According to Patricia A. Politician . . .

Contrary views can be signaled by adding transitional phrases:

- However, the data presented by Hermando H. Scientist shows . . .
- On the other hand, Terry T. Teacher believes . . .

The student writer then needs to add his or her own voice to the mix:

- Although some argue for ________, others argue for ________. In my view . . .
- Though researchers disagree, clearly . . .

Many similar frames for introducing the words and ideas of others and signaling a stance on those ideas can be found in *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein. This is an excellent resource for helping students enter the conversation in academic writing. Your students might also create their own set of frames by looking at language used by professional writers.
Identifying Model Language and Signal Phrases

Give your students a newspaper article or an editorial in which the writer summarizes or synthesizes several different perspectives and argues for his or her own position. Ask them to underline phrases that signal relationships between and among different ideas and perspectives, and make a list of these phrases that they can use in their own writing.

Revising and Editing

Revising Rhetorically

Students will now need to work with the organization and development of their drafts to make sure their essays are as effective as possible. Students should produce the next drafts on the basis of systematic feedback from others.

These drafts will be more “reader-based” than the first draft because the students will take into consideration the needs of the readers as they respond to the text. For ninth graders, it may be worth modeling each step of the process as a whole class before students work together. The process includes the following: 1) Peer Group; 2) Paired Work; and 3) Individual Work.

Activity 18: Revising Rhetorically

You now need to work with the organization and development of your draft to make sure that your essay is as effective as possible.

Peer Group Work

In groups of three or four, each of you should read his or her essay aloud to other members of the group. Then complete Part I of the Evaluation Form for each essay.

Paired Work

Work in pairs to decide how you want to revise the problems that group members identified.

Individual Work

Revise the draft based on the feedback you have received and the decisions you have made with your partners. Consider these additional questions for individual work:

1. Have I responded to the assignment?
2. What is my purpose for this essay?
3. What should I keep? What is most effective?
4. What should I add? Where do I need more details, examples, and other evidence to support my point?
Considering Stylistic Choices

After students have addressed global issues in their writing (e.g., response to the prompt, organization, and development), they will be ready to analyze their own arguments rhetorically. Revision is often spoken of as “re-seeing,” that post-drafting perspective that allows writers to view their writing from a different vantage point. This process can be thought of as being similar to that used by a director who makes final cuts after a live audience has previewed a film. Revising rhetorically means “re-seeing” the writing through key aspects of the rhetorical situation, including the audience, the writer’s persona, and the occasion.
A rhetorical approach to revision can help students understand that revising involves more than just including instructor or peer feedback in a new draft. A rhetorical approach recognizes that revision is a strategic, selective process; what writers choose to revise depends on the ultimate purpose of their writing. Not all potential improvements will be required by the rhetorical situation. Thus, the process of revising rhetorically can help students determine the essential characteristics of effective written communication in a specific context.

Rhetorical revision can be divided into two tasks: 1) rhetorical analysis of the draft; and 2) review of the evaluation criteria in relation to the writing’s purpose and context.

Rhetorical Analysis of a Draft

A rhetorical analysis of a rough draft requires the writer to carefully study the purpose, argument, persona, and audience of the text. Students may use the following strategies to complete their rhetorical analysis:

- A Purpose/Argument/Persona/Audience (PAPA) Square graphic organizer
- A rhetorical précis
- Descriptive outlining
- Thinking critically questions on ethos, pathos, and logos

A rhetorical analysis, in other words, asks students to consider the who, what, how, and why of their argument.

“Re-seeing” the Rhetorical Situation and Assessment Criteria

Once students have analyzed their drafts rhetorically, they will be ready to consider the evaluation criteria they and their readers will use to assess the effectiveness of their arguments. As students evaluate the overall success of their drafts thus far, it is important for them to review the key requirements of the rhetorical situation, including the assessment criteria.

Here are some possible questions for students to consider:

1. What is the rhetorical situation? Who is my audience, and what is my argument?
2. What types of evidence and appeals does this audience value most highly?
3. How can I establish my own authority to address this issue? What credibility do I have with this audience?
4. What are the most important factors contributing to either the success or failure of the argument?
5. Are stylistic maturity and complexity as important as content in this situation?
6. What is the most relevant feedback I have received for this audience and context? What is the least relevant?

7. What are the implicit values of the rubric or assessment criteria (if available)?

Here are some possible activities:

• Ask students to read the scoring commentary on a sample essay. They may then self-score or peer-score their essays and write their own descriptive commentaries justifying the scores they gave.

• Provide instructor or peer feedback on only one paragraph in a draft. Then, have students selectively apply that feedback to the remainder of the essay, making critical decisions about which improvements are the most essential to the composition’s purpose. Students may then write a justification of those decisions as a quickwrite or journal entry.

• Have students revise their essays in light of their responses to the questions above. Ask them to write a reflection in which they explain the changes they have made and why they made those changes.

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**Editing the Draft**

While the first draft of an essay is generally writer-based, as writers revise, they create writing that has the reader in mind, writing that is more reader-based. At this point, they will need to address surface level issues such as grammar and usage errors, sentence clarity, sentence variety, word choice, and various other stylistic features. Students benefit from instruction that targets particular constructions and asks them to make observations about those constructions. Identifying and practicing these constructions and conventions constitutes a major part of an individual’s editing knowledge.
Responding to Feedback

Students need feedback on their writing. Some of this can be from peers during the revision stage, but instructor feedback is essential. Although responding to drafts and conferencing with students is undoubtedly time consuming, it is important to intervene in the writing process at the most useful points and to make comments that are well-targeted to both the assignment’s demands as well as to the student’s needs and language development processes. For suggestions on managing this process, see the Assignment Template, Appendix M: Handling the Paper Load.

The most valuable point for students to receive feedback is before they revise and edit, so they can actively apply what they learn from your response to the next draft. One particularly effective time for instructor response is after students have produced their first revised, “reader-based” draft. Students can then use instructor feedback to revise and improve the final draft they will submit for a final grade. As students see their own writing evolve, an improved grade can serve as additional motivation for them to put sustained effort into revisions.

Most writing instructors make a distinction between “global” issues such as thesis, focus, and arguments, and “local” issues such as grammatical and usage errors. While all students need both global and local responses, English learners will benefit from more frequent and extended opportunities to receive and respond to feedback. English learners may also benefit from instructor response to specific aspects of the English language, for example, particularly difficult or idiosyncratic grammatical forms that English learners are still in the process of acquiring.
Below are some common ways to respond:

- Use a preprinted evaluation form (rubric) to respond to your students’ writing, and include notes in the margin that correspond to the marks on the evaluation form.
- Annotate the paper, focusing on the two to three most important aspects or features of the text (so as not to overwhelm students with too much feedback at once), and make a summary comment at the end that supports the annotations in the body of the paper.
- Meet one on one with each student and review the strengths and weaknesses of the paper. In this situation, you and your student might each keep an index card to track the kinds of changes being made on each paper over time.

**Minimal Marking**

Sometimes there is no time, or no need, for the full responses noted above. A more minimalist response can address global concerns by answering the two questions below and underlining a few targeted errors.

- What is the best thing about this draft?
- What is the biggest overall difficulty with this draft, and how could it be improved?

Local concerns can then be addressed by underlining errors and having students attempt to identify and correct them. For students with few errors the instructor might underline all of them. For students with many errors, the instructor might identify a particular type of problem that is causing the most confusion or distraction and underline only that pattern of error. In other words, the instructor might write something like “I am underlining sentence fragments. Please try to correct them. If you have questions, please ask,” and then underline fragments throughout the paper. Some instructors simply put a checkmark in the margins to indicate that there is a problem in a particular line.

**Acting on Feedback**

When students get their papers back with feedback, ask that they consider all of the feedback they got from various peers, instructors, and others and make decisions about what changes they are going to implement. Here are some questions for them to answer:

- What are the main concerns my readers had in reading my draft?
- Do all of the readers agree?
- What global changes should I consider? (thesis, arguments, evidence, organization)
- What do I need to add?
- What do I need to delete?
The strategies in this section of the ERWC are designed to reinforce students’ learning of the content of the CCSS for ELA/Literacy in the preceding sections of the template.

**Writing**

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

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- What sentence-level and stylistic problems do I need to correct?
- What kinds of grammatical and usage errors do I have? How can I correct them?

It is useful for instructors to model this revision process with a sample paper. When students can observe and collaboratively participate in how to move from feedback to revision, they are better able to internalize the moves proficient writers make in revision and subsequently engage in these moves independently.

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### Reflecting on Your Writing Process

Reflection is an essential component in learning. Students benefit from discussing what they have learned about how to write and sharing that information with the rest of the class. This activity supports shared understanding of key terms, important moments and moves in developing writing, and generalizations that organize students’ approaches to writing. Reflection allows students to articulate their attitudes and assumptions about literacy and the role it plays in their developing academic identities.

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**Activity 19: Reflecting on Your Writing Process**

**Quickwrite:** Your teacher will ask you to freewrite for a short time about one or more of the following questions. When you have finished, prepare to share your ideas with the class.

1. What have you learned about your writing process?
2. What were some of the most important decisions you made as you wrote this text?
3. How did “writing about your writing” influence the way you developed your text?
4. In what ways have you become a better writer?

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