
In this excerpt, it is mentioned by Bartholomae that when students write for the various departments of the university, they must learn to speak the language and write in ways in accordance with the academic discourse set for that particular community. Bartholomae makes the argument that students are expected to do that without even being fully prepared and knowing and learning such a skill. Linda Flower’s opinion is brought forth in this writing by the idea that the struggles that inexperienced writers face in their writing can be determined as a struggle in deciding the shift between writer-based and reader-based prose. Bartholomae also makes the point that students will not learn to acquire such a way of communication all at once, but that a sequence of particular assignments and anything that would bring about progressive and bettering knowledge of the academic discourse would be the solution for the teaching of students to get them where they need to be.

Bartholomae’s writing is a somewhat dated yet decently current evaluation of college writing. This evaluation specifically focuses on what is required of students in their writing when entering college. The excerpt from Bartholomae is an excellent introduction into the college
writing theme. Taking on relevancy in the arguments, Bartholomae presents his idea of what makes good college writing. He also makes an impact in the argument by sharing his belief that students aren’t ready for the expectations at hand when entering a college writing program, and that there are measures to be taken in order to better prepare them. Also, Bartholomae’s logic that involves students needing to take on the advanced discourse in higher academia is somewhat of an opposing force to other arguments.


Peter Elbow is a strong believer and proponent of the individual’s “mother tongue,” or a student’s home and most comfortable dialect. He believes in making the classroom a place of protection for that native language, while also introducing students to standard and accepted English that is primarily the expectation of college composition programs. Elbow holds to the feeling that the mother tongue is very important, even if considered wrong or illegal, because it is still the best and comfortable way for writers to deeply provide personal input and explorations on a topic. With that being said, Elbow does see an importance and obligation in providing students with access and learning in proper and sophisticated dialect, or Standard Written English.

Peter Elbow’s article is a fairly current take on the topic, giving ideas on things that should be acceptable within the world of college composition. While he does believe in the set standard of vernacular, and while he does see it as important, Elbow also strays away from the firm and stubborn expectations of college writing courses, inviting the author to make use of his home language and native dialect. Much like Murry’s article, this one fosters the theme of greater freedom to the writer. This article is indeed relevant in the discussion by presenting ideas
of how teachers and administrators should go about evaluating what is, or should be, acceptable in student writing. Authority is shown through accurate points of what is considered good college writing versus what should be permitted and explored that may make for effective student writing.

Huot, Brian. “Toward a New Discourse of Assessment for the College Writing Classroom.”


The write up that is titled “Toward a New Discourse of Assessment for the College Writing Classroom,” by Brian Huot, takes a new outlook on the assessment of writing and how teachers and students should treat it in their English and composition programs. The point is made by Huot that too often grading, testing, and assessing writing are all used interchangeably. The giving and receiving of grades has overtaken what people see as an assessment, when in reality, effective assessment of a student’s work focuses on the true quality of the material and evaluates the deep and rhetorical aspects of the content, which helps in developing better writers. Also, students have been misled in ways that make mechanical issues the primary focus of what is to be assessed in writing, and, honestly, those are just issues on the surface that anyone might be able to identify, and the stuff that really digs into the writing seems virtually unimportant with this ineffective method of evaluation.

The writing of Brian Huot is very authoritative in its point of what will produce good writing and better writers. It is an up-to-date spill on methods to improve college composition, carried out by way of Huot’s idea of effective teaching in the college classroom. Huot gives off the notion that writing can be better, and the way writing is assessed is often ineffective in presenting true evaluation and developing stronger writers. This article implies, like others, that
college writing is not as good as it could be, and there are ways to make it better that require certain behaviors from college English instructors.


In his article, Donald Murry keys in on teaching writing as a process, not just a product. Writing consists of the author establishing and discovering his own beliefs, and utilizing them in whatever way is best in reaching his audience through his own creative exploration and process. Murray believes that the author doesn’t do that by following a book of rules, but by his own testing of what works and what doesn’t work for applying his writing to life and defining truth. Murray shows in his writing that the best way for teachers to effectively bring about the writing process in their students is for them to be quiet and wait for the student to explore their own intellectual and strategical paths in composition.

Although Donald Murray’s article is fairly old, it doesn’t lack relevancy or authority in the debate dealing with principles and characteristics in and surrounding good college writing. Much like the Elbow article, the proposal of greater writer independence and freedom is apparent. This article makes the point that in order to produce good writing among students, instructors must give the students a stronger authority and control over what and how they write, teaching writing as a process. Murray’s proposal can be seen as challenging to the ideas of others, and some would probably see it as sloppy and unstructured, thus creating issues to others by way of organization.
George Wykoff writes his article in opposition to those that say that a strong grasp of correct grammar and sound mechanical correctness is irrelevant and less important in comparison to the pure content of a student’s writing. He gives examples of student writing that is written by, from a grammatical standpoint, inadequately prepared students. There are students, college students, that have, to some degree, serious issues in their writing mechanics, however some of these students might go on to pursue writing as a career one day, and Wykoff wants his audience to consider if it really makes sense to say that their content is actually proficient enough to overlook the numerous grammatical flaws. Wykoff brings up the question that asks what teachers are to teach and how are they supposed to teach if grammar in not taught and practiced in the classroom. Students need to be educated on what works and what doesn’t work with true reason and teaching on why something is functional or not, and making it available for them to apply a solid knowledge of grammar and mechanical principals will help, not hinder, their advancement as writers.

George Wykoff takes the lead for the having the oldest argument of them all in the current debate. However, like Murray, that doesn’t push off any of its relevancy or authority. Wykoff takes a strong position in making points that grammar is in fact a crucial part of writing. His ideas are rather combative in comparison to other arguments. For example, Peter Elbow is rather promotional with writing that is seen as incorrect, because he sees some positive elements that it can hold. Wykoff, while not bashing content aside from grammar, does see surface area mechanical issues as a problem that can and should be repaired. Wykoff wants people to
recognize strong writing as something mechanically sound, and there is work to be done to ensure that grammar is something that constitutes good writing to a higher and better degree.