**Motivating Students to Be Better Writers**
**TLC Workshop – April 3**

**Introduction**
Motivation: the personal investment that an individual has in reaching a desired state or outcome (Maehr & Meyer, 1997 in Ambrose et al, 2010).

In the context of learning, motivation influences the direction, intensity, persistence, and quality of the learning behaviors in which students engage (Ambrose, et al, 2010)

Students’ motivation generates, directs, and sustains what they do (Ambrose et al, 2010)

![Motivation Diagram]

**Figure 3.2. Interactive Effects of Environment, Efficacy, and Value on Motivation (Ambrose et al, 2010)**
Value

- Importance of a goal (to the student)
  - Attainment - satisfaction from mastery/accomplishment
  - Intrinsic - satisfaction from simply doing task
  - Instrumental - satisfaction as a “means to an end”

What strategies we can use when creating and implementing writing assignments and activities to get students to value writing?

Expectancies

- Beliefs about success in achieving a goal
- Influenced by self-efficacy, difficulty, past experience, attributions, etc.
- Attribution – how students explain their success/failure influences future motivation
  - Internal vs. external locus of control (persistence)
  - Stable vs. unstable (expectancy)
  - Controllable vs. uncontrollable (emotional response)
- Typical attributions: ability, task difficulty, effort, luck
- Magic combination = internal, unstable, controllable (effort)
- Important note: this is about students’ perceptions, not necessarily reality

What factors might be influencing your students’ expectancies about writing?

What strategies can you use to help them expect to be successful when writing?
Environment

- Environment is the broader context (classroom, institution, family, society) in which value and expectancies operate

How can we create a more supportive class/course environment for writing?

Summary

- Shoot for
  - Improving efficacy around writing
  - Creating meaningful writing assignments for students
  - Fostering a supportive writing environment
- Remember that past perceptions influence future motivations!
Appendix: Tips and Strategies for Student Writing

General Strategies
- View writing as essential for learning
- Discuss general standards for good writing
- Show students that you value their writing
- Ask students their perspectives on writing
- Be sensitive to the needs of students with disabilities
- Have students write on topics of interest to them or consider giving them choices

Addressing the Writing Process
- Turn each step of a large assignment into a smaller assignment
- Provide guidance throughout the process
- Remind students that writing is complex and difficult
- Share your own struggles with writing
- Let students talk about their work in progress
- Help students develop a writing schedule
- Explain thesis statements
- Encourage students to be specific and support ideas

Provide Students with Resources on Writing
- Online resources (Purdue OWL or other websites)
- Have a librarian visit your course to show students how to research while writing
- Books on writing
- Campus writing center
- Writing guides from libraries

In-Class Strategies for Improving Writing
- Peer review
  - Structured questions and steps, with detailed instructions
  - Keyed to a grading rubric (if possible)
  - Worth points or otherwise factored into course grades
- Grading rubrics
  - Walk students through criteria before an assignment
  - Use rubric in peer review
  - Require students to submit written self-assessments using rubric
- Samples of student work
  - Have students identify strong features in A-level work
  - Have students use rubric to identify areas of improvement in C-level work
  - Have students suggest revision strategies or revisit student work periodically to discuss efforts
Grading Strategies for Improving Writing

- Start with a quick overview of all of the papers
- Comments
  - Address higher order concerns early in the drafting process
  - Address middle-order concerns mid-way through the drafting process
  - Address lower-order concerns late in the drafting process
  - Type/speak comments with electronic papers; be sure your writing is legible on hard-copies
- Use a rubric or scoring guide to save time and improve consistency
- Use constructive language and try to balance positive and negative comments

In-Class Writing to Learn Activities

- Ask students to write on a topic briefly before discussion
- Ask students to write from a pro or con position
- Pause periodically in class and ask students to write on a topic for 3-5 minutes
- Have students write a brief summary at the end of class
- Practice essay test writing (bonus: use peer feedback)

References

University of Auburn, Office of University Writing: https://fp.auburn.edu/writing/designingclasses.aspx