WAC Writing Tasks

Assignment

Consider the WAC techniques and approaches discussed in the readings and the seminar that you could use in a course you are teaching, will be teaching, or might teach. Think about when, how, and why these techniques might be used in this course. For tomorrow morning, bring in six extra copies of a plan for a key writing task in your class that incorporates some of these WAC approaches. The plan should involve either a regular task that students would engage in at multiple points in the semester or an extended activity (e.g., a series of steps for a major project). You might consider the following questions.

❖ What are your goals for this activity? How does it fit into the course? The program?

❖ How would you introduce it?

❖ What processes and resources would students be expected to use to accomplish the activity?

❖ What products would students be expected to generate?

❖ How (and to whom) would the product be communicated?

❖ How would the product be responded to/assessed? What criteria would you use?

The plan could take the form of an assignment that you would give students, of a plan you would use, or both. Tomorrow morning, you will divide into groups to share and discuss these plans.
Some questions for analyzing a writing task

Contexts

What is the purpose for the assignment? Why are you giving it to students?

Assignment

What terms are used to describe the form of the final product (or its parts) and the content? Is the purpose of the assignment provided for students? Is any particular audience (besides you as instructor) specified?

Process

Will the assignment specify any process or steps in the process? How much time do students have to do the entire task? What activities (e.g., reading, observation, notetaking, research, and so on, besides the writing itself) do you expect students to engage in? How will students know about these activities?

Resources

What resources (knowledge of content and form, other texts—the students' own, models, or source materials, peer/instructor feedback, collaborative work, etc.) do students have available to undertake their writing?
Consequences

What consequences does this assignment have for students? (Who will read it? How does it connect with other writing they will do in school or beyond? How much personal investment do you expect students to have in this task?)

Potential Problems

What problems do you anticipate having with:

a) students understanding the task,

b) students undertaking the task and producing the final product, or

c) your own reading, response to and evaluation of the task?