

Transcript EDUC172 Part 3-04

Okay, so in this little section hopefully you had a chance to do some time free writing and that you've gotten some good results.

You can see that in typing for three minutes I was able to generate 140 words. I probably wouldn't have won the classes competition with that many, but there you go.

That's just free writing and opening my ideas up my channels of my thinking so that ideas flow freely and quickly and that as a result I can get some ideas on paper, get myself started on the topic, get over the idea of writer's block when you're sitting down and you have to write something, you can't think of what to say.

This is just a good way to put it out there without worrying about what you come up with. It can also, of course, act as a form of early drafting so you, if you're happy with what you come up with, then, you can start to develop that into the first draft of the composition you're hoping to write, and then or whatever you intend to do with it.

Okay, so, and here we had in my little sample I'd identified some brick words there in boldface, and some mortar holding it together, some prepositional phrases, adverbial clauses and all sorts of different things. You don't have to worry about those names. The key is that you're seeing how you're connecting language and structuring it, and in this case we're structuring it in a way that fits an academic style of writing.

So, of course, from here then I could start to mind map things and as I thought through it I kept thinking to myself well what I'm suggesting is that there's a connection between the industrialization

Of... , oh look! Spelt wrong again.

Let's try that again.

"Industrialization of education and the privileging of product over process".

So in this case I can start to put this together.

"This holds ideas"

"the industrialization of education..."

"creates a more.."

"pervasive ideology..."

"one which privileges..."

"product over process."

"consequences for how we view learning. If learning is only to achieve productive goals, we can forget that what matters is"

"not only what we learn, but how we learn to learn".

Ha, ha. Okay.

You can see that what's happening is, by trying to understand some of these concerns I'm now noting my thoughts as I'm reflecting on the text and beginning to be able to now generate ideas and put these together. Probably this text I just created would go before this.

What I've just done and, of course, it lacks coherence. Not yet have I managed to tie these thoughts together.

However, what we're going to do now is we're going to take a look at the way that we can start to edit and revise work. By sitting here and starting to add more to my text I'm already engaging in a revising process.

And of course, I haven't yet decided to mind map out all the ideas but I'm connecting two separate thoughts that were going on in my head at the time, one the fact that the industrialization of education results in an ideology, and that that ideology can be seen both in the way we teach writing in other words we give all the emphasis to the product of the student produces and very little to actually teaching them how to write, how to create and how to enjoy the process of creating written texts.

Revision though can also have a structured process but like the processor of writing itself this particular different sequence of activities doesn't have to happen in just the exact linear sequence that we're expecting. So when we look at the different stages of the that went from planning to prewriting to first-draft writing to editing, to second-draft writing and revising to setting up some proofreading activities and then to publishing so those seven steps they don't necessarily happen in a linear sequence like that.

We might start by trying to write a proper draft and then realize that we have to go back and organize our ideas better or do some planning before we write and each person has a different kind of writing process and employ those different stages at different points in the writing process.

So that's one aspect and that's the composing process we're talking about. Now, let's focus in a little more closely on one stage in the writing process and that's the stage of revising and editing of our work. Revision and editing is particularly difficult to do because it's not very often explicitly taught to people so we don't have somebody tell us oh this is the way to do it. The other thing that makes revising and editing more difficult is when we're doing it to our own writing.

There's many reasons why editing our own work is more difficult than editing another person's work but the key one is again that we have a voice in our head and we tend to a) not see a lot of problems because we gloss over them in reading them we don't stop and notice that we haven't written something the way we think we wrote it but there are other things too.

We can become attached to the way we've expressed an idea. Sometimes we find that in writing we get attached to the very idea that maybe needs to go. The bit of writing that stands out stylistically and may appeal to us but later only to find that in fact it interrupts the flow of the discourse of what we're writing so there's lots of reasons why editing your own work can be a good deal more difficult than editing someone else's.

That kept in mind we need a way of thinking about editing so that we can structure the activity not only so that we can teach it more efficiently and effectively to our students, but also so that we can help ourselves by reviewing or thinking of a checklist of things that we could do to a piece of writing to improve it. When editing I'm now going to borrow an idea that's put forth by a fellow named Kelly Gallagher.

He wrote a book called "teaching adolescent writers" and in "Teaching adolescent writers" Kelly Gallagher offers us a quick acronym by which we can start to think about the different steps or stages in the editing process. And again these don't have to happen in a linear sequence.

They can happen, you know, all at the same time or mixed, they don't have to happen all at once. But Kelly Gallagher's idea is based on the acronym STAR. STAR stands for the following. It stands for: Substitute, Take-out, Add and Rearrange.

Those four little ideas, of STAR that is, to substitute certain words or expressions for other words or expressions to take out what seems redundant or unnecessary, and this can be important especially when students are unfamiliar with writing in academic styles since oral styles tend to engage in much more repetition, of ideas or of words and phrases than we tend to do in academic writing, so that's an important one.

We can add where we've expressed something that lacks detail or lack sufficient subtlety to be a realistic point. We maybe have written something that comes as a bit of generalization and doesn't make a lot of important meaning come across because it's too general. In those cases, we might need to add more clarification; we might need to add definitions to what we're talking about, we might need to clarify and what have you, and also to rearrange and the rearranging of the text as I did with the first little example might mean not only adding to what's, you know, adding to the end of it, but it could mean moving paragraphs around.

Of course, example I have in front of us now is only one-paragraph. Well, I've been adding a second one, but we might move paragraphs around, we might move sentences around within the paragraph in order to give it more flow and punch.

You know, a little observation I've made after many years of being an editor and working with students on their writing, is that sometimes the most important sentence can come toward the very end. Sometimes it is the last sentence

in a written piece of work. And that sometimes we can take that, where we've brought everything together, that culminating statement, and we can move it to the very front of the essay. Why to the very beginning of the essay and why that could be important is that it helps to grab the reader right away and it gives them a sense of where they're going with the topic. It's important to create writing that immediately engages the reader because readers have much to read and why read something that is moving slowly and doesn't, first of all, spark our curiosity or get our attention in some fashion or other.

So, how we begin is always important and sometimes the place where we could begin is where we've actually end it. That's common in a lot of essay-writing structures for students anyway since we often say that the introduction sets up what goes on and the conclusion restates it with an appreciation of the argument made in the body of the essay. So, one of the general ideas is that we need to be able to rearrange and restructure our work as well and to move it fluidly, so that it adds coherence for the reader. Again, a lot of the revising and editing work that we want

students to do is to help us, as the teachers and readers of their work, to be able to understand the ideas that they'd expressed, and to understand them even if we have to read quickly, so that they come across coherently and clearly.

These different steps then can all be set up so that students really think: What did I mean? Is this the best expression? What other words might also say the same thing and get the ideas across more clearly?

We were practicing doing that back in the first section of this course when you created the compare-contrast chart and created word clusters. And the word clusters looked at similar words and dissimilar words that also expressed similar or dissimilar ideas from the one helped us create a better schema to understand the brick terminology that you're busy introducing from the textbook that you're working with.

And so, in this case we've already taken a look at different kinds of substitutions that are possible. We can also, of course, take things out that don't really work for us. If I was to, for example, to start using substitution in the first paragraph, removing things, I might think "Oh, well, when I say something like here "for the state"... oops! "for the state of California and Texas as well" that is a kind of colloquial expression. It's

not that formal or academic. I would probably be better off to say

"for the states of California and Texas" and get rid of that little adverbial.

Okay, so, there we go. Just to quick form of substitution, very low level and grammatical change but a kind of substitution.

I think instead of "countries" here, I think we should say "any nations educational budget" again, that should be a possessive, oops! There we go. "Any nation's educational budget".

These are just examples that we can use and as kinds of substitutions. In the case where we're saying, "well this is still the case today", we can, we can say, make that change more dramatic if we want and say "today the internet has become a central focus of many new curriculum developments" and there I've taken out some of the subtlety, in fact, that differentiates between the traditional industrialized model of textbook production of learning out of text books and reading and responding with what the textbook is taught us in order to show our understanding or comprehension. And to say okay, now there's a different media that appears to be operating within educational paradigms.

So, today there is a different medium operating within many educational paradigms. Okay and what I've just done there is to focus on the A part of STAR, that is the adding of different texts. So, I've substituted, I've taken some things out, I've added, I might need to rearrange what I'm saying. Maybe this sentence holds more impact for the reader than just to start off by stating my chief subject of the industrialization of education and saying what it's resulted in. Maybe I could introduce that was something to help grab the reader's attention so here I'm going to move this forward, up to the beginning of it.

Great. Alright. Well, you can see I'm working with a very short text just in order to facilitate my example for you of using STAR, but now I've rearranged it. So, of course, what I need to do now, once I've done that and I'm working on my revision or, that is, my second or third whatever

draft of my statement, I would need to stop and read it aloud again to get a sense of is this working? Have I lost some of the meaning? or is this still improving it, making it more clear, making it more appealing to the reader, grabbing their attention more quickly?

So now I'll just read it quickly and we'll see how it goes.

Today there is a different medium operating within many educational paradigms, the Internet has become a central focus of many new curriculum developments and students are as likely to have online forms of education be central to their information acquisition as they are to be carrying home large educational tomes. The industrialization of education has resulted in a multi-billion dollar business for the states of California and Texas. Because... oh, look! It didn't work! Why not? Because I've ruined the coherence.

They needed to follow in sequence. So I can't do that. And there you go, an example, that it's not always true that edits improve the text. I might need to do something else to grab people's attention. What else can I do that will add or rearrange or shape things? Well, one other thing that I can do is add more vitality and excitement to a text.

And when I do so often what I'm trying to do is to add more concrete examples. When I add more concrete examples often they come with proper names, so instead of just saying "the car" or "to have online forms of education" here, I could say "to have...",

let's say "to have.."

"Google..." oops! "Google searches and maps, Facebook profiles..."

"Twitter feeds and... or weblogs". Those are online self-generated journals, usually self-generated journals, which people share different ideas on an ongoing basis that they're thinking about.

So in this case I've offered specific examples instead of using the one brick word concept of "online forms of education". That whole thing should have been bolded, but... Instead of just saying "online forms of education", which is an abstract concept and doesn't necessarily give a clear visual picture of what writing is about I've now offered some proper nouns, some names that name specific things that people are likely to be familiar with, and to give them a much clearer idea of what I'm talking about.

Of course, I could have generated a whole list of those and then chosen specifically, and again I'm doing this to be expedient with our time but in that case "Google searches, maps, Facebook profiles, Twitter feeds, or weblogs" - this provides people with more concrete understanding and gives a clearer picture of what's been spoken of. And this is another kind of substitution that you can do to really help to give more vivacity to the composition you're working on.

So, you know, although I would say in this case, my text is still too short to be doing a lot of rearranging. We tried that, and it didn't really work. But that's mainly because I didn't have enough to work with yet. Again, I'm working with what was a free write rather than having taken us gone through other stages of pre-writing, prior to then drafting an actual piece of, actual composition to start doing this STAR method of editing I'm borrowing here from Kelly Gallagher.

What I'd like you to do, is to start to do some of this yourself. Take the writing you've done and just practice going through these editing steps and rearranging, if possible but definitely substituting giving some more specific clarity to the words you're using, taking out any redundancies or repetitions you might have, adding detail and adding more clarification, maybe adding, if you chose and at this point you can really start to shape the writing for the specific genre that you are writing in.

If you are adding you might be adding to a narrative in which you're describing other events that are going on at the same time, or parts of the narrative you forgot, or you were not able to include in the time of the writing exercise. So you could add a lots of detail, you could add narrative elements, you could add character description, you could add, again, more description of various things going on. When going and adding description, for example it might be useful to look at adjectives. Often we can add a more vivid description as another means of giving people, giving the readers a more clear understanding and a more vivid visual picture to work with, when they're reading and to, therefore, get a better sense of it and have more pleasure in the reading activity as they read our writing.

So one thing to do would be to look for words here, I got words like "proper". There's an adjective, which could be replaced with a whole adjective sequence, if I wanted. "In need of, "clear, exciting, contemporary and crucial"

Okay, "information". That's not again necessarily an improvement. I'm thinking while I'm writing but, again that's just another kind of increasing the vivacity of the information that you're sharing with somebody in order to give it more description, make it more clear what you're talking about, have a framework that helps the relevance to be communicated and all that sort of thing.

So, as we go through I'd like you to practice these different steps of STAR here. Let's make that big and bold so that you can be sure to keep that in mind in the future and can think to yourself "Wow! That's what I gotta do every time I've done some writing or my students have done some writing. The next step is to help them to really start to become much, much better writers. They need a lot of practice at STAR, which is once again, you should say it with me: Substitute, Take-out, Add and Rearrange.

By doing that you're really starting to take a piece of writing that is just a quick one-off that you will never read again and turn it into something ultimately publishable.

So, let's do that now.