

Workshop 1.1.2: Seeing the Questions

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Revision 1.1.2 asked you to push your ideas one step further. Using your ideas in papers 1.1 and 1.1.1, you were to develop one main point or one main argument to revise into 2-4 fully developed paragraphs incorporating solid topic statements, evidence, and critical thinking. Continue to think about how your own personal experience and how your readings can be incorporated as support for your main point. Furthermore, consider what your audience will think or how they will react to your writing. Consider how other writers like Douglass or Alexie or the authors of *Writing Analytically* would respond to your writing.

For this workshop, exchange copies of your 1.1.2 revision with your peers. Keep in mind that these are not finished, polished products—do not spend too much time worrying about grammar, spelling, or punctuation. What you want to pay attention to is the writer's ideas, argument, details, examples, and sense. Use the following questions and writing tips (based on the *Writing Analytically* readings you have done thus far) as you read your peer's paper (and as you reread your own paper later). Write as many related suggestions as you can on your peer's paper.

Observation

1. Find a section where the writer seems to be narrating her/his experience. Does the writer adequately cover the “W” questions (Who, What, When, Where, Why, How)? Write down the “W’s” that could be addressed in more detail.
2. Remember that we are trying to improve our processes of observation and avoid making generalized judgments. Look for places where the writer generalizes. What kinds of details could the writer include to support her/his points better? Write comments on the paper.

Seeing the Questions

3. Find a spot where the writer has answered a lot of the “W” questions, but you are left wondering, “So what?” What are the consequences of this experience? Why did it matter? Mark “So what?” on the paper.
4. Any statement should be met with questions. Choose a few sentences that stand out to you. Write down further questions you have for the writer. What do the sentences make you think of? What else could the writer think about? Be *conversant* (see WA 55) with the writer.

Judgments and Assumptions*

5. Look for words that sound like judgments: like, dislike, hate, love, boring, good/bad, great, ugly, beautiful, and so on. These are words that will need to be unpacked or developed further so the reader can better *see* the writer's thought process. Circle these words.
6. Again, choose a statement the writer makes. What assumptions is the writer making? (For example, write on the paper: “Assumption: literacy is a scale with different levels of proficiency.” Or, “Assumption: literacy means writing. What about discussing writing?”).

*Remember that all judgments rely on certain evaluative criteria, which might differ drastically from person to person! It's important to make your reader aware of what criteria are you using, or what assumptions are you relying on, when you make judgments. A lot of these judgments also rely on either/or thinking, yet, more often than not, the subject is much more complex.