Experiences with Writing, Reading, and Critical Analysis

Particular writing, reading, and critical analysis experiences contribute to habits of mind that are crucial to success in college. These experiences include the following:

Developing Rhetorical Knowledge

*Rhetorical knowledge* is the ability to analyze and act on understandings of audiences, purposes, and contexts in creating and comprehending texts.

Rhetorical knowledge is the basis of good writing. By developing rhetorical knowledge, writers can adapt to different purposes, audiences, and contexts. Study of and practice with basic rhetorical concepts such as purpose, audience, context, and conventions are important as writers learn to compose a variety of texts for different disciplines and purposes. For example, a writer might draft one version of a text with one audience in mind, then revise the text to meet the needs and expectations of a different audience.

Teachers can help writers develop rhetorical knowledge by providing opportunities and guidance for students to

- learn and practice key rhetorical concepts such as audience, purpose, context, and genre through writing and analysis of a variety of types of texts (nonfiction, informational, imaginative, printed, visual, spatial, auditory, and otherwise);
- write and analyze a variety of types of texts to identify
  - the audiences and purposes for which they are intended,
  - the key choices of content, organization, evidence, and language use made by their author(s),
  - the relationships among these key choices and the ways that the text(s) appeal or speak to different audiences;
- write for different audiences, purposes, and contexts;
- write for real audiences and purposes, and analyze a writer's choices in light of those audiences and purposes; and
- contribute, through writing, their own ideas and opinions about a topic to an ongoing conversation.