

COVER SHEET

MODELS OF INNOVATION & BEST PRACTICES IN TEACHING & LEARNING AT UND

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DEPARTMENT: History

STRATEGY: In-Class Writing Assignments and Unannounced Peer Reviews

CLASS(ES) AND CLASS(ES) SIZE WHERE UTILIZED SUCCESSFULLY:

I have used In-Class Writing Assignments and Unannounced Peer Reviews in all of my undergraduate classes, including the American History survey (150 students), a 200-level methods course (15 students), and upper-division courses on the Early American Republic, the Civil War Era, and African-American History (30 students).

STRATEGY'S APPLICABILITY: WHAT KINDS OF STUDENTS (FRESHMEN/ MAJORS/ GRADS, ETC.), COURSES, LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS, ETC.?

As noted above, I have employed In-Class Writing Assignments in all of my undergraduate classes. However, because In-Class Writing Assignments are designed to spur discussion and because they can entail extra grading, some might feel they are best-suited to smaller classes. Unannounced Peer Reviews can be used in all courses, regardless of class size or student composition.

ABSTRACT OR SYNOPSIS OF STRATEGY YOU ARE SUBMITTING:

This proposal discusses In-Class Writing Assignments (INCWA) and Unannounced Peer Reviews. INCWA are short, informal "response papers" which allow students to contemplate complex subjects in creative ways, practice their writing skills, and formulate ideas before joining a classroom discussion. Unannounced Peer Reviews involve having students bring what they believe will be their final draft to class, having students review that draft, and giving them one week to make revisions. By refraining from announcing the peer review ahead of time, students come to class with their best work; and in reviewing each other's papers, students see how their classmates approached the paper topic, receive constructive criticism of their own work, learn how to assess such criticism, and ultimately submit better papers.