**Table of Contents**

INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................. 2

SUMMARY DIAGNOSTIC ...................................................................................................... 3

IN-TEXT CITATION DIAGNOSTIC ....................................................................................... 4

IDENTIFYING CONTENT-BASED & AUTHOR-CENTERED SUMMARIES ............................. 5

CRITICAL READING AND PARAPHRASING .................................................................... 7

WRITING AUTHOR-CENTERED SUMMARIES .................................................................... 9

WORKING WITH VISUAL TEXTS ..................................................................................... 10

CRITICAL READING JOURNAL 1 ...................................................................................... 12

CRITICAL READING JOURNAL 2 ...................................................................................... 13

CRITICAL READING JOURNAL 3 ...................................................................................... 15

DISCUSSING AUTHOR-CENTERED SUMMARIES (Handout) ........................................ 17

“WHO CARES?” IDENTIFYING AUDIENCE & ASSUMPTIONS ..................................... 18

AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC ARGUMENTS .................................................................................. 20

IDENTIFYING HISTORICAL AND DISCIPLINARY CONTEXTS ........................................ 22

WORKING WITH TEXTUAL EVIDENCE .......................................................................... 24

CONSTRUCTING EFFECTIVE ARGUMENTS WITH CLAIMS ............................................. 25

WORKING WITH RESEARCH PAPERS (PEER RESPONSE ACTIVITY) ............................ 26

WORKING WITH REVERSE OUTLINES ......................................................................... 27

MECHANICAL CONCERNS RESOURCES ......................................................................... 29
INTRODUCTION

This toolkit is comprised of a variety of low stakes tools to teach our writing abilities and to assess students’ proficiency with those abilities. These tools are designed to be used either in- or out-of-class. They are also designed to be used either early or later in the semester.

Below, you will find a list of the tools. Following that list, you will see an index that places the tools into specific categories (e.g. in- versus out-of-class; early-versus mid-semester; teaching versus assessment).

Because all of the tools are designed to be “low stakes,” they can readily be incorporated into existing assignments and courses. Low stakes assignments offer flexibility in how you assign credit or points for the work. Completing an assignment or activity can be incorporated into a participation grade or be given a small portion of points for a larger, formal assignment. Even if you don’t integrate these tools in your teaching from the outset, you should find it relatively easy to incorporate the on the fly, especially as you become more familiar with the writing strengths and weaknesses of your students.

All the tools in this tool kit are fundamentally conceptual. Mechanical concerns (punctuation, citation format, spelling, grammar, etc.) have not been directly addressed. A variety of existing resources are well suited to address these issues.

See “Mechanical Concerns Resources” for more information.
SUMMARY DIAGNOSTIC

**What is this tool?** This tool assesses students’ ability to summarize key points from a given text.

**Why might you find this tool useful?** This tool is useful because it gives instructors an idea of where students are as a group when it comes to summarizing text as a means of integrating textual support into their assignments.

**Prompt:** please read and write a one-paragraph summary of the article below.
**Evaluation:** Check system

---

**I WAS ANITA HILL**

By Duchess Harris  
The Huffington Post  
October 21, 2010

The political event that had an impact on my young adult life more than any other was the Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas hearings. In October of 1991 I was 22-years-old and in my first month of graduate school. It was the first time I'd left the Eastern seaboard where I'd always used public transportation. Without understanding the Midwestern landscape I moved to Minnesota with no car. I had broken up with my East Coast boyfriend and I was the only Black student in my department. I couldn't afford long-distance calls and Al Gore hadn't invented the internet, so I was often glued to the television.

I watched the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas hearings every day. Even though Anita Hill was a Republican social conservative, she was a Black woman who taught law, and that was my dream. I watched wondering, what if something horrible like this happened to me? No one believes her.

A few years later, I started teaching in a department (that I am no longer affiliated with), and I soon found out. We went on an international research trip. We were in a warm destination during January term, and my department chair asked me to go to a topless beach with him. Similar to Anita Hill, I did not come forward. A well-meaning white colleague (like Nina Totenberg), told the Dean who insisted that I file a grievance. I was not tenured and couldn't imagine defying the Dean.

To make a long story short, an investigation was done, and I was not believed. Similar to Professor Hill, I was publicly vilified. Similar to Professor Hill, my career persevered.

I am sharing this story because a few years later I ran into my perpetrator's wife. Unlike Virginia Thomas, she never called my campus phone and she never asked me to apologize.

If Mrs. Thomas thinks that those of us who have experienced this are sorry that we spoke truth to power, well yes Virginia; there is a Santa Claus.
IN-TEXT CITATION DIAGNOSTIC

What is this tool? This is a low stakes diagnostic activity that can be used as a point of departure for classroom conversations about the proper conventions of doing in-text citations for the type of writing done in your courses.

Why might you find this tool useful? This tool is useful because it communicates to students your expectations for citing sources as textual support in written assignments.

Set-up (instructor notes): Asked students to read three articles, each one presenting a different slant on an issue/debate/key concept. Students are to prepare a 3-4 page essay in which they integrate direct quotes and short summaries of key arguments from the three articles.

Prompts:
TASK 1: Read articles____________, _____________, and _____________.

TASK 2: Have student prepare a 3-4 page essay in which they have to integrate direct quotes as well as integrating short summaries of key ideas from the three articles. Bring 4 copies to class (3 for peer work, 1 to be submitted to instructor).

TASK 3: In-class Portion: Give students 35 minutes to work in groups of four (4). Students are to read each other’s work and assess which of the three essays they read does the best job of incorporating sources. The last 5 minutes of the small group work may be allotted for voting for the essay, from their small group, which incorporates quotes/ideas most effectively.

Class Discussion: After group work is completed, instructor has a chance to ask class to share their votes. This is also an ideal moment to explicitly discuss your expectations and answer student questions about the conventions associated with incorporating quotes from course materials or outside sources.

Due: next session or session after next

Evaluation: Point system/check system. It would be best to divide the overall grade for the completion of this diagnostic activity. (e.g. 60% of the grade for writing produced out-of-class and 40% for the in-class group activity)
IDENTIFYING CONTENT-BASED & AUTHOR-CENTERED SUMMARIES

What is this tool? This tool guides students as they work to effectively blend their own voices with that of authors of scholarly texts. This tool can also veer students away from plot summaries. This tool fosters student awareness of a range of critical tones/voices.

Why might you find this tool useful? Students often allow their voices to be overshadowed by those of scholars and experts. This tool is useful in helping students to integrated scholarly voices and evidence into their own analytical and critical texts.

Prompt: Identify which of the summaries below are content-based (CB) and which are authored-centered (AC) and underline author-tags in summaries that are author-centered.

Due: Next class

Evaluation: Check system

Reminder: Author Tags (phrases such as “the author supports,” “she feels,” “bell hooks shows,” etc.).

Sample 1: The story opens with an unnamed narrator, a young Haitian revolutionary, thinking of his girlfriend. He is on a small boat that has set sail for Miami, Florida. The young man is going into exile because he is wanted by the Haitian government. These details are disclosed by the young woman who is the second narrator of the story. While her lover has left the country, she remains behind with her mother and father. The man and woman tell their stories through a series of letters. Though they cannot mail these letters, they write them to appease their loneliness while apart from one another.---Edwidge Danticat “Children of the Sea”

Sample 2: If there were any one scene that summed up "Children of the Sea," this would be it. Strange things happen regularly in "Children of the Sea," like a young boy dissolving in a shower of light or two children having an odd connection with the ocean. It is ultimately left up to the characters, and the readers, to divine the meaning of what they have seen. Daisuke Igarashi Children of the Sea

Sample 3: The novel begins with Janie returning to Eatonville after a long absence; she tells her story to Phoebe. Janie’s story begins when she is a 16-year-old yearning to fall in love. Instead, her grandmother forces her to marry a local farmer, Logan Killicks, so that Janie will be protected from other men. Janie is unhappy and runs off with Joe Starks, who she believes will give her what she wants. They move to Eatonville, where Joe becomes the first mayor and starts
assuming complete control over Janie, never allowing her any fun or freedom. ---Zora Neale Hurston *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

**Sample 4:** Eighty-seven years ago the United States was founded on the belief that all people are and should be treated as equals. A civil war is currently testing both the principle and the nation, and we are there in order to dedicate a portion of a battlefield as a cemetery for those who have died in the war. ---Lincoln “Gettysburg Address”

**Sample 5:** Mr. Norton feels the need for a stimulant, and so Narrator takes him to the Golden Day (and thus jumps from the frying pan into the fire). Narrator thinks he can run in and buy a pint and leave, but Halley, the bar owner, won’t sell unless Mr. Norton comes in. Crazy vets help narrator bring Mr. Norton into the bar. There is a fight between the crazy vets & Supercargo, the attendant, a riot of sorts. Mr. Norton gets his two drinks and gets into a conversation with an inmate, an ex-doctor, who lost his career; he was driven out of town by men because he saved a life. He felt his knowledge could bring him dignity, but it could not. ---Ralph Ellison *Invisible Man*

**Sample 6:** Martin Luther King Jr. greets the crowd assembled at the Lincoln Memorial by expressing his joy over the turnout for "the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation." He refers to Abraham Lincoln, in whose "symbolic shadow" the crowd is gathered. Lincoln was responsible for issuing the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, thus freeing American slaves from "the long night of their captivity." However, King continues, black Americans are far from free one hundred years later. Segregation, discrimination, poverty, and marginalization remain realities for black Americans in the 1960s, and it is for the purpose of dramatizing this "shameful condition" that hundreds of thousands have gathered for the March on Washington.

**Sample 7:** In “No Assistance” Shange feels that women often make sacrifices in the name of love. She illustrates this point by when the lady in red interrupts to tell that in spite of rebuffed love she continues to "debase herself for the love of another." But Shange also emphasizes women empowering themselves by presenting an ending characterized by strength. The lady in red says to her ungrateful partner: "this note is attached to a plant/i’ve been waterin’ since the day i met you/you may water it/ yr damn self." ---Ntozake Shange *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When The Rainbow Is Enuf*

**Sample 8:** Lincoln opens his self-authored Gettysburg Address by noting that it had been eighty-seven years since the United States was founded on the principle that all people are and should be treated as equals. He goes on to point out that the country is engaged in civil war that will determine whether such a nation can survive, and then introduces the occasion of the speech: to designate and dedicate part of a battlefield as a cemetery for the war casualties.
CRITICAL READING AND PARAPHRASING
*Activity adapted from Yuichiro Onishi’s course 2010

What is this tool? This tool encourages students to recognize key concepts and summarize main arguments from assigned texts.

Why might you find this tool useful? This tool is useful because it teaches students that paraphrasing and summarizing are indispensable tools in essay writing. These two skills allow students to include other people's ideas without cluttering up their essays with textual citations.

Set-up (instructor notes)
Below is a useful site you can share with students before they complete this activity.
http://www.utoronto.ca/ucwriting/paraphrase.html

Evaluation: point system/ check system/ worth 5% of course grade

Due: two weeks/session after next

Prompt: Read________________________ (e.g. George Lipsitz, The Possessive Investment in Whiteness) and complete the tasks below.

TASK ONE
As you read this text, take note of words or ideas that repeat themselves. Based on the repetitions you notice, try to summarize the main argument. Also elaborate how the author elaborates this stated argument.

TASK TWO
Identify two key sentences (or analytical insights) that seem to best capture and reinforce the main argument. First, quote these sentences as exactly as they appear and place them in quotation marks. Be sure to note the page numbers. Then, try to paraphrase these key passages.

Original:

Paraphrased:

Original:

Paraphrased:

TASK THREE

Develop one discussion question to help engage peers with ________ (e.g. Lipsitz's *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*).
WRITING AUTHOR-CENTERED SUMMARIES

What is this tool?
This tool presents an approach to practicing analytical voice and teaching students how to smoothly integrate textual sources into student writing.

Why might you find this tool useful?
Students often fall into the temptation of masking their own voices with that of experts in the field. This tool allows students to practice how to smoothly integrate their own voice with the voices of experts in the field. It also veers them away from plot summary. This tool can be a useful part of a preparing a response or position paper, annotated bibliography, writing a concise statement of the main idea, or establishing the context of an argument.

Read one (1) of the following texts by W.E.B. Du Bois: Norton AA: “A Litany of Atlanta,” “Song of the Smoke,” and “Two Novels.”

Prompt: Write a five-sentence author-centered summary on the text you selected. Your audience for this assignment is a peer who has not read the essay. Tell your audience what the author is doing in the text. Be sure to use author tags whenever relevant (e.g. “DuBois argues,” “Angelou describes” “Louis Gates observes, etc.)

Due: Next Class Session

Evaluation: Check system
WORKING WITH VISUAL TEXTS

What is this tool? This tool is an exercise in multi-modal means of articulating ideas.

Why might you find this tool useful? This tool is useful because it encourages students to share their personal experiences with others through the use of voice over narration and self-reflexive writing. Students find that they can engage with the course materials by using blogs, presentations, spoken work, as well as social networks.

Set-up (instructor notes):
Remind students that they have several options for approaching and completing this assignment.

Prompts:
Option 1: Using Photo Images

A. Look through 5-10 images. Think and feel as you browse them. Pick one image that “grabs you” at this particular time.

B. Answer the following prompts (in order):
   1. Describe the image using adjectives and short phrases. For example, “It’s cold,” “It’s blue,” “It’s new,” “I’m happy.”
   2. What do you see in this image? What is in the photo? Examples: blue Chevy, street sign, two people.
   3. What is the story here? What does the picture tell us? Example: “I took a bike ride on the first day of spring, the day after all the snow melted.” Be as detailed as possible. Can use phrases and sentences for this section, like “this is the story of….”
   4. What is the story OF the image? What’s the story behind the story (what is the context we can’t get from the image itself)? Example: “The picture was taken by a friend who did not really want to be there.”
   5. How does this image make you feel? What does it make you think about? Examples: “I feel happy.” “It makes me think about what makes a great city bike trail.”

C. Read through the answers, and circle 5 key phrases or sentences. Read the circled items aloud. Read through this list three times.

D. Expand the circled items into 1-2 pages of written text (250-500 words). Can also use other information from the prompts, as well as new thoughts generated by the reflection on the process.

Option 2: Using Index Cards
A. Get a 4 x 6 index card. Set a timer for 10 minutes. Using only the front and back of the card to write whatever comes to mind. Don’t stop until either time runs out or the index card is filled.

B. A focusing option may be to consider the index card as postcard. Choose a person that you think the story is for and write him or her a postcard about the story. Start with “Dear __:”

C. Expand the index card text into 1-2 pages (250-500 words).

**Option 3: Using a Theme to Tell a Story**

A. Choose a theme for the story. For example, “my favorite place,” or “my first time trying something really difficult.”

B. Answer the following prompts (in no particular order):
   - Why did you choose this topic?
   - Why is the topic important to you?
   - What story do you want to tell about this topic?

C. Expand the answers into 1-2 pages of written text (250-500 words).

**Due:** Next class

**Evaluation:** This assignment will be evaluated using the check system.
CRITICAL READING JOURNAL 1
*Questions adapted from Pamela Flash 2010

What is this tool? Guides students through the process of critical reading.

Why might you find this tool useful? Such an exercise articulates precisely how we expect students to read and reflect on critical texts (these can include written, visual, or audio materials) from our courses.

Set-up (instructor notes): Select one of the critical texts from your course that students are to read in the early part of the semester. Ask them to answer the questions below. This sets up the stage for an in-class discussion on your expectations of student engagement with course materials.

Prompt: Read ______________ (e.g. Carlos D. Morrison’s “Death Narratives from the Killing Fields: Narrative Criticism and The Case of Tupac Shakur”) and answer the questions below. Be prepared to share your answers in class.

Due: Next class

Evaluation: This assignment will be evaluated using the check system.

WHAT QUESTIONS IS THE AUTHOR ATTEMPTING TO ANSWER?

WHAT IS THE AUTHOR’S CENTRAL CLAIM OR THESIS?

WHAT DOES THE AUTHOR ASSUME ABOUT READERS?

WHAT IS THE AUTHOR’S APPARENT PURPOSE IN WRITING?
CRITICAL READING JOURNAL 2
*Questions adapted from Pamela Flash 2010

**What is this tool?** This tool guides students through the process of completing a deeper level of critical reading.

**Why might you find this tool useful?** By now, students are used to your critical expectations. This tool is useful in that it reinforces skill learned in Critical Reading Journal 1, while also encouraging students to sharpen their critical reading skill. This tool drives students toward performing more sophisticated level of thinking and interacting with course materials.

**Set-up (instructor notes)**
Point out to students the ways audience and context often influence the ways we construct debatable arguments by using a segment from course texts.

**Prompt:** Use________(e.g. Tracy Ore’s “Maintaining Inequalities”) to answers critical questions below.
Be prepared to share your answers in class.

**Due:** Next class

**Evaluation:** This assignment will be evaluated using the check system.

HOW SIGNIFICANT IS THE QUESTION THE AUTHOR IS ATTEMPTING TO ANSWER?
TO WHOM?

IS THE AUTHOR’S CENTRAL CLAIM OR THESIS DEBATABLE?

WHAT CAN WE ASSUME ABOUT THE TEXT’S HISTORICAL AND DISCIPLINARY CONTEXTS?
WHAT DOES THE AUTHOR’S TONE AND STYLE OF WRITING INDICATE ABOUT HER/HIS EXPECTATION OF THE READER?

WHAT IS THE AUTHOR’S APPARENT PURPOSE IN WRITING?
• Provide information?
• Demonstrate knowledge?
• Persuade readers of the merit of an idea/change readers’ way of thinking?
• To express herself or himself?
Critical Reading Journal 3
*Questions adapted from Pamela Flash 2010

What is this tool? This tool is a chance for students to practice isolating and extracting key evidence from critical course materials.

Why might you find this tool useful? This tool is useful because it signals to students the ways scholars select evidence that readers will find persuasive and relevant to issues being explored in a given text. It is also presents instructors with a chance to discuss the relationship between relevant, strong evidence and the construction of persuasive arguments.

Goal: Read_________( e.g. Carlos D. Morrison’s “Death Narratives from the Killing Fields: Narrative Criticism and The Case of Tupac Shakur”) and answer the questions below.
Be prepared to share your answers in class.

Due: Next class

Evaluation: This assignment will be evaluated using the check system.

WHO ELSE HAS ASKED/ANSWERED THE QUESTION (S) THE AUTHOR ATTEMPTING TO ANSWER?

DOES THE AUTHOR QUALIFY HER/HIS CENTRAL CLAIM OR THESIS? WRITE DOWN THE SENTENCE WHERE THIS IS DEMONSTRATED.

WHAT DOES THE AUTHOR’S CHOICE OF EVIDENCE INDICATE ABOUT HER/HIS EXPECTATIONS OF THE READER?

HOW RESPECTABLE IS THE EVIDENCE?
SO WHAT (DESCRIBE WHAT YOU BELIEVE IS THE OVERALL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE IDEAS PRESENTED IN THIS TEXT)?
DISCUSSING AUTHOR-CENTERED SUMMARIES (Handout)
Adapted from Pamela Flash 2010

What is this tool? This tool promotes active reading, learning, and note taking strategies. It is a chance for class discuss about instructor-expectations to take place and makes it possible to demonstrate the kinds of summaries that are most useful when preparing critical analysis.

Why might you find this tool useful? Students need specific instructions and examples early in the semester on exactly how they are expected to engage in active reading and how they are to extract information from critical texts.

Instructor-Led Mini Workshop

*Could possibly accompany any critical reading tasks (e.g. journal articles or critical essay)

Summarizing a source text involves three (3) steps:

- Comprehending the material
- Reducing it to its major points(s)
- Synthesizing those points down into a new condensed form

There are two basic types of summaries: content summaries (chronology) and author-centered summaries

You’re already familiar with content summaries. Let’s focus on the characteristics of author-centered summaries.

Seven (7) characteristics of effective author-centered summaries:

- Are succinct, getting at the main points rather than details
- Report the thesis and the main ideas as objectively as possible (your reactions do not belong here)
- Are neutral; later you will be justifying your assessment of this essay’s success
- Are independent; they should stand alone
- Are written primarily in third person (with tags) “DuBois argues…” “Angelou describes…” “Lipsitz refutes the claim that…”
- Introduce the author and title of the text
- Use direct quotations of key words, phrases etc.
“WHO CARES?” IDENTIFYING AUDIENCE & ASSUMPTIONS

What is this tool? This presents an approach to identifying assumptions authors make about their audience when constructing an argumentative.

Why we find this tool useful: Since all writers make assumptions about their audience, this tool reminds students to read carefully in order to first, identify any assumptions the author is making and next, decide whether or not the assumptions are valid. This tool alerts students to the fact that active reading involves more than just understanding what an author is saying, and reminds them that they must question and evaluate for themselves what the author is saying and thus form their own opinion on what is being said. This tool encourages students to look for facts, examples, and statistics that provide support for the author’s argument. It also motivates students to recognize any differences between their values and those presented by the author. When students write with an intended audience in mind, they themselves are more likely to be more mindful of the evidence they select, knowing that this is an essential element in persuading their audience to accept their argument.

Prompt: Work with a peer to determine:
Who is the intended audience?
List three ideas the author assumes about her/his audience.
Describe any differences you note between your values and those presented by the author

Due: End of Class

Evaluation: This assignment will be evaluated using the check system.

WHAT DOES THE AUTHOR ASSSUME ABOUT THE AUDIENCE IN THE CLAIMS BELOW?

The classroom is the only place in society where so many different, young, and restless individuals are crowded into close quarters for an extended period of time day after day. To preserve order, most teachers used established classroom conventions such as raising your hand if you want to talk (Ore 279).
Although tobacco is admittedly addictive and ultimately harmful to health, it should not be classified as dangerous drug because its immediate effects are far less damaging to the individual and society than those of heroin, marijuana, and cocaine (LRW 160).

Giving college admissions preference to children of alumni is an example of class discrimination because most such policies privilege families that are rich and already advantaged.

Assisting a gravely ill person to commit suicide should not be considered murder when the motive behind the act is to ease a person’s suffering, not to do harm or to benefit from the death.
AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC ARGUMENTS

What is this tool?
This presents an approach to situating argumentative writing for a specific audience.

Why might you find this tool useful?
Constructing well-supported arguments is always challenging. Specifying the audience to whom students are writing helps students focus on what is necessary and persuasive for their target audience. Often, academic writing assignments don’t specify an audience; implicitly, the intended audience is college-educated readers who are generally interested and informed about the topic—a pretty amorphous audience. But students will often assume that they are writing for their teacher, which can lead them to make guesses at what the professor/instructor wants to read—at what is the “right” answer. Making an audience more explicit can help to animate and focus students’ arguments. They become empowered to make important choices about what evidence is persuasive, what assumptions they can safely make about their readers, and how to address objections and oppositions that their readers may have. Being aware of audience is a key characteristic of rhetorically-savvy writers.

Just changing the audience for a particular assignment can give students fresh purchase on their writing. For example, in preparation for writing a research paper for a scholarly audience, students can be assigned to write a short summary of their research findings for a fifth-grader. Such a writing task will force the writer to organize and simplify their research in preparation for complicating and nuancing their argument for their ultimate audience.

EXAMPLE A

AFAM 3597W
Goal
Have students become aware of the importance of purpose and audience with students through a discussion of student answers of critical Reading Journal (see Critical Reading Journal tools for questions given to promote student’s thinking and engagement with a class text) on Carlos Morrison’s article.

Set-up (instructor notes)
Inform students that they will have 15 minutes to write. Remind them that they are writing freely, and should be more concerned with gathering their ideas and trying to frame a strong argument rather than writing perfect prose. Tell them that you will collect their writing at the end of class, and that it will be grading on a low-stakes scale (check, check-plus).
Prompt
Some scholars may consider rap/hip hop lyrics as unworthy of serious analysis. Based on your reading of Morrison’s article, write a 1-2 sentence argument that speaks back to these unconvinced scholars, persuading them to perhaps take a closer look.

You might try using an argument stencil to open or organize your thoughts.

“While some scholars believe that_________, it can be argued that____________.”

Due: end of class

Evaluation: This assignment will be evaluated using the check system.

EXAMPLE B
[a paper prompt for a longer, out-of-class paper to a specific audience]

OR
[write two versions, one to audience A, another to audience B]
IDENTIFYING HISTORICAL AND DISCIPLINARY CONTEXTS

*Questions adapted from Pamela Flash 2010*

What is this tool? This tool focuses on how historical and disciplinary contexts shape the way scholars in the field address the matrix of domination (race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, religion, etc.).

Why might you find this tool useful? This tool is useful in promoting student understanding of the matrix of domination and strategies for resistance to domination. It also presents a chance for instructors to unpack the historical and disciplinary contexts from which these issues are addressed.

Set-up (instructor notes)
This Tool should be used as part of Facilitator Led Discussion on the importance of taking into account the historical and disciplinary contexts of a given text:

Discussion: Arguments are not made in a vacuum. Identifying the historical and disciplinary contexts of a given text.

Project the following information or place on a handout.

WHAT CAN WE ASSUME ABOUT THE TEXT’S HISTORICAL AND DISCIPLINARY CONTEXTS OF THE FOLLOWING EXCERPTS?

“During this period, white people differed from colored to me only in that they rode through town and never lived there” (HLG 1030).

“Mainstream media continues to render lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals invisible while it presents a varied representation of heterosexuality” (Ore 198).

“The development of the American environmental movement over the last four decades of the twentieth century provides instructive insights into the fate of the social movements of the 1960s (R. Putman 155).

“A work does not get better because it is responsive to another culture; nor does it become automatically flawed because of that responsiveness (HLG 2312).
“Our war like most gang wars, was not fought for territory or any specific goal other than the destruction of individuals, of human beings (C. Morrison 196).

“…Changes in the structure of the economy significantly impact other institutions. At times, these changes offer new opportunities and privileges to some, and at others these changes foster continued oppression (Ore 203).
WORKING WITH TEXTUAL EVIDENCE
*Questions adapted from Pamela Flash 2010

What is this tool? This tool is a close examination of the relationships amongst primary claims, sub-claims, and evidence.

Why might you find this tool useful? Instructors give students a chance to work in peer groups. Students are able to exchange information on how they see the connections amongst primary claims, sub-claims, and evidence being presented in a particular course text.

Set-up (instructor notes)
Discussion & Small Group Activity
Instructor prepares handout to distribute to students and also projects questions on overhead.

Discussion question:
DOES THE AUTHOR QUALIFY HER/HIS CENTRAL CLAIM OR THESIS? COPY SENTENCES FROM THE TEXT TO SHOW WHERE THIS IS DEMONSTRATED.

Morrison argues that rappers such as Tupac Shakur depict a world where young African American men are at war with each other in their communities.

Prompt: Working in groups of three, find and write down four sentences that qualify this claim in the Morrison article. Please be sure to use appropriate signal phrases such as (“As Putnam argues,” “Robertson states,” or “According to Walters”) to introduce evidence. You may submit your group work on one paper. Remember to write all group members name at the top right corner.

Due: end of class

Evaluation: Check system
CONSTRUCTING EFFECTIVE ARGUMENTS WITH CLAIMS

*Questions adapted from Pamela Flash 2010

**What is this tool?** This is a mid-semester tool that engages students with preparing effective arguments and gets them to practice making claims and sub-claims as they develop an argument.

**Why might you find this tool useful?** This tool is useful in helping students see and practice the connection between a primary argument and the subsequent claims that support it.

**Goal:** Formulating cohesive arguments.

**Set-up (instructor notes):** Inform students that they are to come to class prepared to share and submit two paragraphs. Remind them that claims are not facts but rather INTERPRETATIONS of facts or CONCLUSIONS that the writer draws from facts. Consequently, students should select evidence that will persuade their readers of their claim.

In this exercise, the instructor gives students permission to writing freely and be reminded that at the early stage of preparing an analytical essay, they should be more concerned with gathering their ideas and trying to frame a strong argument rather than writing perfect prose. Tell them that you will collect their writing at the end of class, and that it will be grading on a low-stakes scale (check, check-plus).

**Prompt:** Using the information from ____________’s article write two paragraphs, each one starting with a debatable claim about how the institution of education helps maintain systems of oppression and privilege. Using the *Toulmin* model below to write each paragraph.

*Toulmin’s Model*

Claim:
Reasons:
Warrants:

**Due:** Next class

**Evaluation:** This assignment will be evaluated using the check system.
WORKING WITH RESEARCH PAPERS (PEER RESPONSE ACTIVITY)

What is this tool? This tool promotes early organization of ideas for research papers.

Why might you find this tool useful? Small group work can promote accountability and foster fruitful conversations that encourages a deeper engagement with individual research topics. Such an activity may also signal to student elements that can be strengthened with more reflection, drafting, and research before research deadlines.

Set-up (instructor notes): This tool is most effective when used over the span of three (3) class sessions.

Session 1: The Claim
- Does the claim clearly call for action? Is the proposal as clear and specific as possible?
- Is the proposal too sweeping?
- Does it need to be qualified? If so, how?
- Does the proposal clearly address the problem it intends to solve, if not, how could the connection be strengthened?
- Is the claim likely to get the audience to act rather than just to agree? If not, how could it be revised to do so?

Session 2: Evidence
- Is enough evidence provided to the audience to support the proposal? If not, what kind of additional evidence is needed?
- Does any of the evidence provided seem inappropriate or ineffective? Why?
- Are any objections readers might have to the claim or evidence adequately addressed?
- Are all quotations introduced with appropriate signal phrases (“As Putnam argues,” “Robertson states,” or “According to Walters”)?

Session 3: Organization and Style
- How are the parts of the argument organized?
- Are more transitions words or phrases needed to make clearer the connections among the claim, supporting reasons, and evidence?
WORKING WITH REVERSE OUTLINES

What is this tool?  This tool facilitates the formulation of a title and a primary focus or argument after students have drafted several paragraphs with sub-claims. It also promotes a reflection on the purpose of counterclaims.

Why might you find this tool useful?  This tool is useful in getting students to locate the primary argument and purpose of analytical text prepared by a peer. Such an exercise allows students to work collaboratively toward the goal of clearly communicating their primary argument to their peers. Faculty can use this activity as an opportunity to get students to suggest to each other possible counterclaims to primary argument and sub-claims in peer work.

Set-up (instructor notes)

Peer exchange Activity (20 min)

Task 1: Underline all your peer’s sub-claims (topic sentence of each paragraph).

Task 2: Using all the sub-claims underlined, prepare an outline to submit to your colleague at the end of the class session.

Title (?)

Introduction  (2 sentence summary of Thesis/main argument)

Body Paragraphs

Sub-claim 1:

Sub-claim 2:

Sub-claim 3:

Sub-claim 4:

Sub-claim 5:

Sub-claim 6:

Sub-claim 7:
Etc.

Conclusion (2 sentence summary)

Circle counterarguments. Select the strongest counter argument and copy it below.
MECHANICAL CONCERNS RESOURCES

Commercial handbooks (Diana Hacker’s *A Writer’s Reference*, Andrea A. Lundsford’s *The Everyday Writer* and others)

Diane Hacker & Barbara Fister—Research and Documentation Online
http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/

For *pdfs* and links that provide student writing support refer to:

University of Minnesota
http://www.writing.umn.edu/sws/quick_help/index.htm

Purdue University
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl

Harvard University
http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k33202&tabgroupid=icb.tabgroup84444

Essay Writing Center
http://essayinfo.com

Punctuation made simple
http://lilt.ilstu.edu/golson/punctuation/

Writing Across the Curriculum
http://web.arc.losrios.edu/~wac/pages/mechanics.html