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1986 Volume IV: The Process of Writing

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## Writing for a Purpose in Senior College English

Guide for Curriculum Unit 86.04.02  
by Marie Patricia Casey

The objectives for this unit come from my own perceptions of the needs of the children I presently teach. The junior and senior college English classes are reading at least two years behind grade level and the writing skills of the majority of these students are also more than three years behind grade level. This paper approaches their problems from two points of view: the first is to concentrate on the beginning stage of the writing process—that is, the idea generating process which becomes the organizational focus for writing the paper. The second is to improve the grammar skills of these students and to bring them to a more independent, self-correcting level of control in the last stages of their writing.

Two books have greatly influenced the focus of this paper: Mina Shaughnessy's "Errors and Expectations" and Gabriele Rico's "Writing the Natural Way." I have also suggested using a diagnostic grammar test to help pinpoint the needs of individual students. (This test is on file at the Teachers Institute.) The lesson plans are based on specific and practical essays for senior year and involve an innovative technique of clustering introduced by Rico to brainstorm or more freely generate ideas and thoughts for all papers to be written.

(Recommended for English 3 and English 4 College and Basic level classes)

### **Key Words**

*Basic Skills Writing Instruction Structure General*

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