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978-0-521-61302-6 - Guidelines: A Cross-Cultural Reading/Writing Text: Teacher's Manual:

Third Edition

Ruth Spack

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Third Edition

GUIDELINES

A Cross-Cultural Reading / Writing Text

TEACHER'S MANUAL

RUTH SPACK

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INTRODUCTION

Guidelines has grown out of my own teaching experiences. What appears in the text is the result of years of experimenting in the classroom as I tried out new readings, writing assignments, and approaches. For that reason, I do not expect any instructor to use all of the material in this text in one semester. Nor do I expect anyone to use only the material in this book. My goal is to present a versatile text that allows instructors to select whatever seems most productive and to add or substitute other readings and assignments that enrich students' experiences in and out of the classroom.

I expect and hope, too, that instructors will not feel compelled to follow the order of the text. Common themes resonate across readings and writing assignments, making it possible for a reading in one chapter to be used for a writing assignment in another, and vice versa. For me, the long-term success of *Guidelines* is reflected in the work of the hundreds of instructors who, over the years, have treated the book as a springboard for the creation of their own imaginative and intellectually challenging curricula for the purpose of involving students in authentic and meaningful work and thus facilitating their acquisition of language and literacy.

Guidelines is based on the idea that students' academic writing can improve dramatically if the following conditions are met:

- Students have regular, substantial, and purposeful practice in reading and writing a variety of texts.
- Students are made aware of varying purposes for reading and writing.
- Students are provided with meaningful examples of reading and writing.
- Students are exposed to the processes of other readers and writers at work.
- Students receive timely, positive, and constructive feedback on their work in progress.
- Students have time to generate, draft, organize, and revise ideas.

I welcome feedback on this third edition. Please feel free to contact me with questions, critiques, new ideas, or samples of students' writing in response to the book's tasks and assignments: rspack@bentley.edu.

Contents and Structure of the Third Edition

This new edition of *Guidelines* incorporates feedback from numerous students, instructors, reviewers, and editors who have used or evaluated previous editions. It retains the features that are most appreciated, including the integration of reading and writing, a generous selection of diverse and thought-provoking readings, pre-reading and post-reading activities that encourage students to interact with what they read, a variety of tasks that motivate and enable students to write, strategies for fulfilling specific essay and research assignments, guidelines boxes that present writing instruction in a format that is easy to understand and use, illustrative examples of student writers at work, and a learner-centered philosophy

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that encourages students to write from their own perspectives as they analyze and interpret what they read.

Within that context, I have made a number of significant revisions. To freshen and update the book, I have omitted eight readings and added seven new ones. I have also added a new student research essay that incorporates Web-based research. In place of the poetry unit, I have created a chapter that includes an assignment to relate reading to experience, which provides a relatively smooth transition from personal writing to writing from sources. All of the essay assignments are now more specific, with clearer instructions, and are paired with checklists that provide corresponding evaluative criteria. The entire text has been reorganized for the purpose of clarity and accessibility, including a separate handbook for writing, and there are clearer guidelines overall. Other changes are outlined in the following explanations of each part of the book.

■ **Part One: Responding to Reading**

Part One consists of one chapter, Strategies for Reading Critically, which provides a variety of approaches to help students strengthen their ability to read critically. New to this chapter are guidelines for clustering ideas from a reading and for taking notes on a reading.

■ **Part Two: Readings and Writing Assignments**

Readings in Part Two are now organized according to specific essay assignments, rather than according to genre: Writing from Experience, Relating Reading to Experience, Analyzing an Argumentative Essay, and Analyzing Fiction. Also new to Part Two are individual discussion activities for each reading selection.

■ **Part Three: Research and Writing Assignments**

This new Part Three brings together two research chapters, Writing from Field Research and Writing from Library and Web-Based Research, and includes updated guidelines for online research.

■ **A Handbook for Writing**

The new handbook includes guidelines for citing, incorporating, and documenting sources; guidelines for drafting, exchanging feedback on, and revising essays; and guidelines for locating and correcting errors. The handbook is designed to be used as a resource in conjunction with the essay assignments in Parts Two and Three.

Content and Structure of the Chapters

Chapter 1 includes three readings and corresponding reading tasks, with several suggestions for using writing to discover meaning in a text and to generate ideas. Chapters 2 through 5 each begin with four or five readings that are followed by guidelines designed to help students fulfill the chapter's corresponding essay

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assignment. Chapters 6 and 7 consist of guidelines for fulfilling each chapter's respective research assignment.

■ Readings

All of the readings in *Guidelines* have received strong responses in my classes and thus have led to interesting class discussions. I find that a class is most successful when students see that their ideas are valued, that there is not one correct response, and that multiple perspectives can be brought to bear on the readings. At the same time, I encourage close reading so that the class does not perpetuate ideas or facts that are not true to the text.

The three reading selections in Chapter 1, *Strategies for Reading Critically*, provide sources to which students can apply numerous guidelines for reading critically. These readings anticipate some of the larger themes that emerge in subsequent chapters, including teaching and learning, living in multiple worlds, communicating across languages and cultures, and acquiring new ways to gain knowledge.

The five reading selections in Chapter 2, *Writing from Experience*, demonstrate a variety of ways to convey an insight or express a viewpoint that grows out of personal experience. Written by authors who have lived in multiple worlds, these readings convey what it actually means to acquire new ways of living and communicating across languages and cultures.

The four reading selections in Chapter 3, *Relating Reading to Experience*, including three research studies, can become sources for students' own essays as they test an author's ideas against their own experiences. These readings address issues related to communicating across languages and cultures and adapting to new approaches to learning and literacy.

The five reading selections in Chapter 4, *Analyzing an Argumentative Essay*, can become sources for students' own essays as they determine the strengths and weaknesses of an author's argument. The authors of these essays tackle controversial issues related to education: what students should be taught, how they should be taught, and how their learning should be assessed.

The five reading selections in Chapter 5, *Analyzing Fiction*, can become sources for students' own essays as they analyze a short story to develop an interpretation that grows out of the details of the work. Spanning more than 100 years, these fictional pieces reflect some of the problems and possibilities of living in the United States as the authors take readers inside the minds of their characters to show what it means for them to live as slaves, immigrants, or exiles.

Each chapter of readings in *Guidelines* is informed by a particular theme and assignment, but common themes and writing possibilities resonate across the chapters. For example, the readings in Chapter 2 can be used with the essay assignment in Chapter 3. Alternatively, students can synthesize readings from two

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or more chapters, drawing ideas and examples for their own writing from a variety of genres: personal essays, research studies, argumentative essays, and short stories.

In this Teacher's Manual, I summarize each of the readings in *Guidelines*, but these summaries do not represent the final word on the essence of a particular selection.

A thematic arrangement of the readings can be found on page 57 of this manual.

■ Accompanying the Readings

Each reading is accompanied by three tasks: a pre-reading task that asks students to reflect in writing on the title or topic of the reading, a post-reading writing task that asks students to reflect on and briefly summarize what they have just read, and a post-reading discussion task.

Write Before You Read

Preceding most of the readings in *Guidelines* is a Write Before You Read activity that directs students to write about the title or content of the selection they are about to read. If there is time, I ask students to write at the end of a class period, before the assigned reading is due, and we discuss their responses in order to construct shared knowledge about the subject matter. If there is no time for in-class writing, I ask them to write a response outside of class or just to think about the topic. This activity is designed to stimulate interest in the reading and, ideally, to facilitate comprehension. Students can compare their own texts with the professional texts and analyze similarities and differences in content and style. This process has the added benefit of helping students develop a deeper understanding of how language can be used both to create and to comprehend a written text.

Write After You Read

The Write After You Read instructions that follow each reading in *Guidelines* ask students to make a journal entry on the reading and to summarize the reading in one or two sentences. The journal guidelines, which appear in Chapter 1 on page 11, tell students that they may write whatever they want in response to the reading or follow one or more suggestions, which range from exploring what interested or confused them to answering the Discuss After You Read questions. Students usually write the summaries of the readings in their journal entries. Students' responses in their journal entries are the springboard for class discussions, and the summaries become part of the class discussion when a student volunteer shares a written summary or just summarizes orally, and other students join in to provide what they perceive to be a more accurate or complete account. Summaries differ, of course, and by looking at or hearing each other's summaries, students can come to see that readers focus on different aspects of a reading for different reasons and purposes. Although my aim is not to come up with the "right" answer, I am careful to filter out inaccuracies; and often students do agree on the essence of a reading.

Discuss After You Read

The Discuss After You Read questions are designed to guide students to analyze the text in some depth. My experience has been that students may have significantly different responses to any given reading. Some students may identify with a writer while others may disagree with a writer's philosophy. I first ask students to share their initial reactions to what they have read. Often that is all that is needed to get the discussion going and continuing for quite a while. Sometimes I ask each student to share a journal response; other times a few students respond and then others join in. My goal is for most students to contribute before the discussion of the reading ends. I try to do as little talking as possible so that students are the ones who raise questions, read aloud, and explain baffling passages to one another. Students have a tendency to direct their comments to me even when they are responding to or challenging another student's comment. Since I want students to interact with one another, I look at the student who just spoke while the next student is speaking. Ideally, that causes the second student to turn and speak to the first student rather than to speak directly to me. Then – if it works – the two students talk to each other.

■ Guidelines

Each chapter includes guidelines to help students strengthen their reading or writing. These guidelines are meant to be just that: guidelines – not rigid formulas that students must follow. The guidelines in Chapters 2 through 7 explain different ways to explore a topic; to focus ideas; and to develop a structure for the assigned essay in that chapter, illustrated by a corresponding flow chart. At the end of each chapter, students are presented with a checklist that provides evaluative criteria for that particular essay.

Guidelines in Part One: Responding to Reading

Part One includes guidelines for students to make predictions about a reading's content, develop reading fluency, closely examine an author's ideas and experiences, and capture their own reactions to those ideas and experiences.

Guidelines in Part Two: Readings and Writing Assignments

Part Two includes guidelines for students to fulfill assignments to write from experience, relate reading to experience, analyze an argumentative essay, and analyze fiction.

Guidelines in Part Three: Research and Writing Assignments

Part Three includes guidelines for students to fulfill assignments written from field research and from library and Web-based research.

Guidelines in A Handbook for Writing

A Handbook for Writing includes guidelines for students to cite, incorporate, and document sources; to draft, to exchange feedback, and to revise; and to locate and correct errors.

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[More information](#)**■ Accompanying the Guidelines**

The Guidelines sections provide a considerable amount of guidance to help students fulfill the specific assignment for the chapter. Students are invited to examine how other students have engaged with the processes outlined in the guidelines. They are then asked to apply the guidelines to their own work and to analyze sample writings.

A student reader at work / A student writer at work

A unique feature of *Guidelines* is the opportunity for students to observe examples of how other students have undertaken the reading and writing tasks assigned in the book.

Your turn

Having observed how other student readers and writers have worked through the guidelines, students are invited to apply the guidelines to their own reading and writing. An arrow in the margin of the text directs students' attention to these tasks.

Activity

Numerous activities engage students in the processes of reading critically and summarizing, paraphrasing, quoting, synthesizing, documenting, and analyzing or correcting examples of professional and student writing. Further activities direct students to exchange feedback on each other's writing, proofread their own writing, examine the causes of their own errors, and edit their own texts. An arrow in the margin of the text directs students' attention to these activities.

Reflections on Teaching Writing

I always experiment with different approaches in my classes and then reflect on the effectiveness of the new strategies. Over the years, for example, my approaches to assigning journals, conducting conferences, and grading student writing have undergone change. I also periodically change the order of the essay assignments presented in *Guidelines*, combine chapters, or organize the material according to thematic categories rather than essay assignments. For examples of different ways to assign the material in *Guidelines*, see "Planning a Writing Course" in this Teacher's Manual (pages 51–56).

■ Student Journal Writing and Teacher Journal Writing

The journal project on pages 10–12 primarily entails students' capturing their responses to the course readings. Often, though, I encourage students to write about their own writing as well, for example by asking them to discuss how they might go about fulfilling an essay assignment, how they did fulfill an assignment, or how they assess their own writing. I ask students to type each journal entry on a separate sheet of paper. I collect journal entries, which are typically two to three double-spaced pages, at the end of the class, comment on them, and return them

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at the beginning of the next class. Students later include these entries, with my comments, in their course portfolios.

Students may have difficulty understanding exactly what *journal* means if they have never kept this kind of journal before. Some may not fully understand what is expected of them until they have written and received feedback on one or two journal entries.

Over the years, I have experimented with several approaches, all successful, including the following:

- I ask students to write entries both in and out of class.
- I assign entries only as homework.
- I assign two entries a week, one for each class meeting.
- I assign one entry a week, with all students writing about the same reading or readings.
- I assign one entry a week but give students a choice of day on which to hand in an entry, with different readings assigned on the different days.
- I assign entries throughout the semester.
- I assign entries for one-half or three-quarters of the semester.

Whatever approach I have used, my pattern has been to respond positively to the content of each entry, identifying strong points, answering questions, expanding on a point, providing suggestions, or asking either clarifying questions or questions intended to challenge the student further. Most of my responses are in the margins. My end responses range in length from a few words to a paragraph, depending on my time allotment and on my reaction to what I have read. I do not grade the entries, although I do keep a record of them: I give the entries a number (Entry 1, Entry 2, and so on) and simply make a check in a roll book when they are handed in, noting if they are late. I expect students to hand in the assigned number of entries in order to pass the course. Online journals in which students respond to one another's writing provide an ongoing written interchange that reinforces their efforts, make it possible for students to consider their own interpretations in light of other readers' analyses, and enable them to draw on their own authority to respond back.

One of the great values of journal writing in my classes is the role it serves in fostering class discussion. The opportunity to shape ideas in writing before a class discussion allows students to rehearse and articulate their thoughts and thus enables their classroom participation.

I believe that individual grades on journal entries (such as A, B, C) are counterproductive, implying inappropriately that there are right and wrong responses. And I believe that correction of all errors on journal entries sends the wrong message: that error should be the central focus of writing. In fact, I rarely correct errors on the entries. If I correct at all, it is usually only to write the correct spelling above a word. I want students to learn early in the course that exploratory writing is valued, that taking risks to develop ideas is a worthy process. By responding to what students say rather than to the particulars of how they say it, I

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can convey interest in the students' viewpoints. If that interest carries over to the more formal essay assignments, students may be motivated to compose essays not only to do well in the course but also to communicate ideas.

Sometimes I keep a journal along with the students, responding to the course material and photocopying my entries to share with the class. By including excerpts from students' journal entries in my journal, I extend the interaction, which can lead to a more dynamic group awareness and exchange of ideas. Of course, the length and number of journal entries I write is dependent on the amount of time and energy I can devote to the project. (For further reading on this project, see *TESOL Quarterly*, December 1983, pp. 575–593, for an article I co-authored with Catherine Sadow titled, "Student-Teacher Working Journals in ESL Composition.")

■ Student-Instructor Individual and Group Conferences

I used to write detailed comments in the margins and at the end of students' drafts until a student pointed out that I had written more than she had! She may have been telling me that she appreciated the time and effort I had put in, but I started to think that there was something wrong with what I was doing. Wasn't the idea to have the students, not the instructor, do the writing? Now, instead of taking so much time responding to early drafts with lengthy written comments, I read them, write only brief positive comments ("good point"; "nicely expressed") in the margins, and then make a list of notes at the end, which are actually written primarily for myself, to remind me of what I want to cover when I meet with the student in a conference.

I typically begin the conference with the statement, "Tell me about the process you went through to write this draft." I then sit back and listen to what is often a revealing tale. In describing what they have done, many students actually reveal what they *intended* to do, not what they accomplished. They then realize that the paper may not reflect what they want it to, and we discuss how they can revise the paper to reflect their intentions. I keep a pen and lined notepad on my desk so that students can write down what they want to add to or change in their drafts. I feel a conference has been successful if a student does most of the talking and leaves with a paper full of self-generated ideas for revision. Such an approach provides students with the opportunity to stretch and grow as writers. Of course, I do speak in the conference, usually to ask questions, to answer the student's questions, to engage in a conversation about the course reading, and/or to share my initial reactions to what the student wrote. I give direct advice when I think it is appropriate. Some students need such instructional intervention in order to learn how to proceed. I also use some time to address language errors, especially those that interfere with comprehension, so that they won't be carried over into the revisions.

As an alternative to the one-on-one conference, I have found it valuable to meet in conference with small groups of students who have read each other's papers ahead

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of time and who have filled out a Feedback Form (page 277) for each paper. In the conference, we discuss one paper at a time. Students take turns explaining their papers and then listening to the students in their group as they provide positive feedback and constructive recommendations for revision. Ideally, students engage in conversation with each other about the strengths and weaknesses of their own writing. To promote that interaction, I take notes during the discussion – an approach that makes it necessary for students to talk to each other rather than to me. I occasionally guide the conversation, for example, by asking the writer how he or she might revise the paper in order to address a piece of criticism; but I let the students do most of the talking until every paper has been discussed. At that point, I raise any questions or add any insights that were not covered by the students themselves. I also take the opportunity to provide some overall writing instruction, which grows out of common features in the student drafts.

Toward the end of a conference, I hand students a yellow highlighter and ask them to do two tasks. First, I instruct them to underline the last sentence of their introduction. If they have trouble determining where their introduction ends – or if they have no introduction at all – I tell them that their readers will have trouble as well, and that is a sign that they need to revise the opening. Second, I instruct them to highlight the first sentence of every paragraph after the introduction until they come to the conclusion. They should now have a visual map of the ideas in their essays. Although there are exceptions, the idea in this first sentence should link what was just said in the previous paragraph to what is about to be said in the new paragraph, and the new paragraph should include details and quotations that serve to develop that idea. I look at the highlighted sentences with the students and help them decide if their sentences have fulfilled their expected tasks. Ideally, these first sentences show readers the thinking process of the writer and allow for a more fluid reading.

■ Grading Student Writing

I no longer grade individual papers. I agree with Peter Elbow, who argues that ranking individual papers is arbitrary and uninformative (“Ranking, Evaluating, and Liking: Sorting Out Three Forms of Judgment,” *College English* 55.2, February 1993, pp. 187–206). I do express judgment of students’ papers by commenting on their strengths and weaknesses, without having to justify a grade. I typically have short midterm conferences with individual students to discuss their portfolio of work (all of the writing they have done for the course, with my comments), which they bring to the conference; give them what I call “a ballpark figure” for a portfolio grade; and suggest what they can do to strengthen the portfolio, if needed. At the end of the semester, the whole class generates criteria for evaluation of the portfolio, and students evaluate their own portfolios accordingly. I then collect the portfolios and self-evaluations and grade the body of each student’s work. The final course grade, then, reflects what the student has accomplished over time rather than only what the student has done or failed to do at any given moment.