

1. DESIGNING WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Developing high-quality writing assignments is one of the best ways for professors to improve student writing across the curriculum. A good writing assignment deepens students' engagement with course material, promotes critical thinking, and helps them learn the discipline's discourse--its characteristic methods of inquiry, analysis, and argumentation.

Bean, John C. *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996. 95-96.

TIPS

Giving your writing assignments on handouts separate from other course information has several benefits:

1. It meets the needs of sensing or concrete learners . . . who seem paralyzed by vague assignments that do not specify what the teacher wants;
2. It gives all students something to refer to late at night when their class notes no longer seem so clear;
3. It helps writing consultants [in your writing center] understand what the professor is looking for prior to a tutoring session; and
4. It helps the professor identify potential problems with the assignment and thus clarify its purpose and focus. (Bean 84)