

### **Course Objectives:**

As an adjunct in the composition program, I am so often frustrated by the lack of curiosity and originality in student essays, yet, due to the nature of such mandatory classes, I find that there is little room for alternative approaches to teaching in the classroom. With the spring 2011 semester, I intended to guide the students through the critical thinking process from gathering information to fine tuning their final paper. Students practiced how to search relevant material first to find a topic and then a focusing question for their term paper. They practiced useful annotating techniques: double-entry journal, believing-doubting journal, summary writing and rhetorical analysis of a text, so they could learn how to evaluate the source and how to synthesize the text. In addition, they practiced the art of writing last minute. Skills significantly improved before their assignment is due, and they would improve their information

### **Assessment and Timeline:**

I gave the students a rather informal pre-test at the beginning of the semester. First, we watched a you Tube clip that demonstrated how two college students paid their tuition in dollar bills at one university in St. Louis. (Preliminary discussion and) reflection on why they chose the students do

their future career. Since many did not know much about the actual job they might take upon after graduation, we spent one class in the library where I gave the students a vague prompt (on purpose) to research their intended career in any way they felt comfortable. Without exception, they all stayed glued to their computer screen and turned to Google for help.

Then they had to write one journal about a personal challenge and another one about their values. The fourth assignment asked them to interview someone with work experience possibly in the field they are considering working. In the meantime we spent three more classes in the library. First, the students were simply asked to read just about anything within the context of work. This sounds like an elementary task, but it proved to be hard for them. I recommended print sources, but almost all of them resisted and kept searching on line with vague search terms. Few stumbled upon great articles that later inspired