



Teaching Script: Mastering Discursive Writing

Topic: Mastering Discursive Writing

Grade Level: University Students

Duration: 90 minutes

Prior Knowledge Required: Basic essay writing, academic vocabulary

Key Skills: Critical analysis, argument construction, evidence evaluation

Learning Objectives:

- Evaluate and analyze evidence using the CRAAP test methodology
- Construct well-structured academic arguments
- Apply critical thinking to source evaluation
- Develop peer review and self-assessment skills

✓ Evidence evaluation
handouts

✓ CRAAP test worksheets

✓ Digital presentation

✓ Argument structure
templates

✓ Academic text excerpts

✓ Peer review forms

✓ Assessment criteria sheets

Opening Segment (0-5 minutes)

[Enter classroom with energy, ensure digital display is ready]

"Welcome everyone! Today we're diving into the art and science of discursive writing. Let's start with a provocative statement:"

Display on board: "Social media has more negative than positive effects on society"

"Take 30 seconds to write down whether you agree or disagree, and one reason why."

Opening Strategy Tips:

- Scan the room during writing to gauge engagement
- Note particularly engaged students for later discussion
- Watch for signs of confusion or hesitation

Evidence Evaluation (5-15 minutes)

"Let's examine two pieces of evidence. Listen carefully to both."

Evidence 1: "My friend told me social media is destroying our ability to communicate."

Evidence 2: "A 2023 longitudinal study published in the Journal of Digital Psychology, involving 10,000 participants across five countries, found a 40% increase in reported anxiety levels among daily social media users."

[Pause for effect, then...]

"Turn to your neighbor. Which piece of evidence is stronger? Why?"

Discussion Prompts:

- What makes the second piece more credible?
- Why might personal anecdotes be problematic in academic writing?
- How could we verify these claims?

CRAAP Test Introduction (15-25 minutes)

"Let's explore a systematic way to evaluate evidence - the CRAAP Test. This might sound amusing, but it's a powerful tool for source evaluation."

CRAAP Components:

- **Currency:** When was the information published or posted?
- **Relevance:** How well does it relate to your topic?
- **Authority:** What are the author's credentials?
- **Accuracy:** Can you verify the information?
- **Purpose:** Why does this information exist?

[Distribute CRAAP Test worksheets]

Demonstration Strategy:

- Model evaluation process with a real academic article
- Think aloud while analyzing each component
- Highlight potential red flags

Common Student Challenges:

- Assuming all published material is credible
- Overlooking publication dates
- Not identifying potential bias

Argument Construction Workshop (25-40 minutes)

"Now that we can evaluate evidence, let's build powerful arguments. Think of this as constructing a building - each component must be strong and well-connected."

Argument Structure:

1. **Claim:** Your main point or position
2. **Evidence:** Supporting facts or data
3. **Warrant:** Explanation of how evidence supports claim
4. **Backing:** Additional support for warrant
5. **Counterargument:** Opposing viewpoints
6. **Rebuttal:** Response to counterarguments

Model Argument:

"Let me demonstrate with our social media topic..."

- **Claim:** Social media significantly impacts mental health
- **Evidence:** 2023 study showing 40% anxiety increase
- **Warrant:** Daily exposure to curated content creates unrealistic comparisons
- **Backing:** Psychological research on social comparison theory
- **Counter:** Social media provides valuable connection opportunities
- **Rebuttal:** Quality of online connections often superficial

Practical Application (40-55 minutes)

"It's time to put these skills into practice with a structured writing exercise."

Group Writing Task:

1. Form groups of three
2. Each group receives a controversial topic
3. Apply CRAAP test to provided sources
4. Construct argument using template
5. Present findings to class

Sample Topics:

- Remote learning vs. traditional classrooms
- Artificial intelligence in education
- Standardized testing effectiveness
- Technology integration in schools

Facilitation Strategies:

- Circulate between groups
- Ask probing questions
- Monitor time management
- Encourage source criticism

Peer Review Process (55-70 minutes)

"Now we'll strengthen our critical analysis skills through peer review."

Peer Review Guidelines:

- Evidence strength (CRAAP criteria)
- Argument structure completeness
- Logical flow between points
- Counter-argument consideration
- Rebuttal effectiveness

Feedback Template:

- "The strongest part of your argument is..."
- "This evidence could be stronger if..."
- "Have you considered this counterargument..."
- "The connection between X and Y could be clearer by..."

Advanced Argument Techniques (70-80 minutes)

"Let's explore sophisticated techniques that elevate discursive writing."

Concession:

"While [opposing point] has merit, [your argument] proves more compelling because..."

Qualification:

"Under specific circumstances, such as [context], this argument holds particular significance..."

Synthesis:

"Combining [source A]'s findings with [source B]'s methodology reveals..."

Real-World Application:

Academic Journal Example: "The Impact of Social Media on Academic Performance"

- **Basic Argument:** "Social media hurts grades."
- **Enhanced Argument:** "While social media platforms offer valuable educational networking opportunities, research indicates that unrestricted access during study hours correlates with a 23% decrease in academic performance (Smith et al., 2023). However, this effect appears moderated by structured usage guidelines..."

Assessment and Reflection (80-90 minutes)

Self-Assessment Rubric:

Criterion	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Evidence Quality	Single source type	Multiple credible sources	Diverse, scholarly sources
Argument Structure	Basic claim-evidence	Complete framework	Sophisticated integration
Critical Analysis	Surface evaluation	Thoughtful analysis	Deep synthesis

Exit Reflection Questions:

- How has your approach to evaluating sources changed?
- Which argument technique feels most natural to you?
- What challenges remain in constructing academic arguments?

Further Practice:

- Analysis of peer-reviewed journal articles
- Creation of argument portfolios
- Participation in academic debates
- Writing workshop attendance

Recommended Resources:

Digital Tools:

- Google Scholar for academic research
- Zotero for citation management
- Hemingway Editor for clarity
- Academic phrasebank for language

Reading Materials:

- "They Say / I Say" by Graff and Birkenstein
- "Critical Thinking: Your Guide to Effective Argument" by Tom Chatfield
- "Writing Arguments" by Ramage, Bean, and Johnson

Progress Tracking Tools:

- Writing development portfolio
- Argument analysis log
- Source evaluation checklist
- Peer feedback compilation

Practical Application (40-60 minutes)

"It's time to put these skills into practice with a structured writing exercise."

Group Writing Task:

1. Form groups of three
2. Choose one controversial topic from provided list
3. Apply CRAAP test to evaluate three sources
4. Construct complete argument using template
5. Prepare for peer review

Facilitation Notes:

- Circulate between groups
- Listen for misconceptions
- Provide targeted feedback
- Encourage depth in analysis

Closing Reflection (60-90 minutes)

"As we conclude, let's reflect on our learning journey today."

Exit Ticket Questions:

1. What is the most valuable tool you learned today?
2. How will you apply the CRAAP test in your next assignment?
3. What challenges do you anticipate in discursive writing?

Extended Learning:

Complete one full discursive analysis (500 words) applying today's frameworks. Due next session.