

THE PAPER WRITING (PW) MODEL PART 1 ORGANIZATION

These are the four major rules or principles of organization that you should follow when constructing and/or evaluating an argumentative essay in this course. It goes without saying that writers who are not taking English 20 will construct their papers differently. However, most good arguments can be reformatted to follow this outline or something quite similar.

- 1) You should have a clear thesis statement in your introductory paragraph, and this thesis statement must directly address the topic or question. This is the first critical point in your essay. If there is no identifiable thesis statement or your thesis does not address the topic, then there is no point in continuing.
- 2) You should have a clear outline of your supporting arguments in your introduction. The reader should know how you plan to prove your thesis.
- 3) The supporting arguments must be such that if you prove them then the reader should accept your thesis statement. This is the second critical point in the organization of a paper. If the supporting arguments do not logically match or support the thesis statement, then there isn't any point in proving them. Hence, there is no point in continuing.
- 4) The fourth principle of organization is execution. You want the map or outline that you have presented in your introduction to be

reflected in the topic sentences of each of your argument paragraphs. The structure of your paper should clearly follow the plan presented in your introduction.

Some of you may have been taught that the organization of a paper is separate from its logical structure. In our PW model, an organized paper must be logically coherent. Organization is not simply a matter of writing a paper that is clear and easy to follow. A paper that does not have a clear thesis statement that is directly supported by its arguments is not organized regardless of how well it "flows" or convincing it may sound.

Hence, checking the organization of a paper is first and foremost a matter of checking the *logic* of its argument. Our Critical Thinking (CT) Model will provide a set of useful "tools" for helping you to do this.

However, our PW model tells you what to look at and in what order of importance. So you always begin with it. Our CT model will then provide you with the concepts and terminology to help you identify and explain what will or will not work and why.

A WORD OF CAUTION

The general guidelines and rules stated in the PW and CT models are designed for use in English 20. They are not intended to be definitively or universally true or accurate. This is the reason they are called "models." In the "real world," there are many ways to write a paper and structure arguments. However, these are the sets of rules that we will be using in our course assignment this semester. They may or may not be familiar to you or correspond to what you have been taught in the past.

English 20 is designed to build upon what you have learned in 1A, not duplicate it. For this reason, we are just as concerned here with your ability to learn and apply a set of general rules to solve new sets of specific problems as we are with your "writing skills." (See Group A of the

Berkeley model.) So you should not let your past experiences in writing courses interfere with your use of these models. In the "real world," you will be expected to show flexibility and creativity in your approach to new concepts and ideas as well as learn new approaches to problem solving. Teaching you how to do this is our primary goal.

When you leave English 20, you are, of course, free to do as you like. It will not matter at all if you use our rules or forget them. But at least you will all have learned another way of looking at writing, reading, analysis and argumentation. And this experience will add to your repertory of survival skills.