Robert Brooke

“Rhetoric: The Essay”: The Teaching Unit

Design, with a teaching partner or at most two partners, a teaching unit centered around a writing concept or approach to essay writing, grounded in the reading of one or more essays. Plan to develop this work in three stages:

Before your Teaching Day: Develop, with your teaching partner, a rough plan for the concept/approach you are exploring and a guided writing activity that emerges from that concept/approach (and, most likely, the reading of one or more essays). At least ten days in advance, hold a conference with me about your developing ideas. Let class know at least a week in advance of any reading/writing assignments to complete before class.

On your Teaching Day: Lead us, as a class, in a run-through and brainstorming session for your developing unit. Take us through your guided writing activity (aim for 50 minutes) and lead us in an open discussion of the concept/approach you are highlighting, its relation to other concepts we’re discussing, and our thoughts on how best to teach these new concepts and our experience participating in your activity.

By the end of the term: Using what you’ve learned from your teaching day and conversations, complete a pedagogical essay that develops a full teaching unit for the approach you’re exploring. This essay should be 3000-5000 words (roughly 10-15 double spaced pages), and should explain your teaching goals, activities, resources for the unit. Think of the unit as at least 4-6 class meetings (2 undergraduate college weeks, or one secondary week), including a mix of your chosen concept/approach, writing, reading specific essays, peer response, and assessment. For those interested in potential publication, I recommend reading some of the pedagogical essays in College English, English Journal, Rethinking Schools and Composition Forum.