

PLAC 524: Collaborative Planning

School of Architecture

Dept. of Urban & Environmental Planning

Thursdays, 3:30 – 6:15 p.m.

Room 135, Campbell Hall

Instructor: E. Franklin Dukes, Ph. D.; Director, Institute for Environmental Negotiation (924-2041; 978-7508; FrankDukes@virginia.edu)

We know that public decisions are generally better when developed by processes that are inclusive of diverse views, transparent to those such decisions affect, and responsive to participant needs. Such processes need to support behavior that builds relationships of integrity and trust and decisions that are creative, effective and legitimate. And communities can only be sustained ecologically, socially, and economically with informed, legitimated participation by citizens engaged in community life.

We often hear that "the public is apathetic." My experience says otherwise; citizens actually care deeply about their neighborhoods and communities. Such caring can engender conflict, which may be harmful, but conflict resolution provides an opportunity to transform civic disarray into civic responsibility. People yearn for accessible places to engage one another productively and safely, to learn the real needs of their neighbors and to speak of their own concerns, needs and aspirations.

Many people are working very hard to provide such places. The focus of this year's course will be upon the collaborative efforts needed to restore and revitalize contaminated sites and communities, with particular emphasis upon Money Point, a 330-acre site along the Elizabeth River. Students will also examine the theoretical basis of collaborative processes and develop a capacity to assess the strengths and weaknesses of such processes.

As a significant part of this planning application class, student groups will be formed to study the issues involved at Money Point and other sites and/or issues and to offer recommendations for addressing those issues. Learning to work effectively in groups, including developing shared expectations for fair workload and productive decision-making, will be an important part of the class.

Course objectives - *Class members will learn to:*

- Understand the nature of public conflict and procedures used to address such conflict;
- Design ethical and effective collaborative processes to address contentious public issues;
- Work effectively in groups;
- Conceptualize the planner role in ways consistent with effective collaborative work;

Texts - E. F. Dukes and K. Firehock. *Collaboration: A Guide for Environmental Advocates* [free, distributed in class].

E. F. Dukes, M. Pisolish, J. Stephens. *Reaching for Higher Ground in Conflict Resolution: Tools for Powerful Groups and Communities*. [NOTE: for students wishing to preserve their hard-earned funds, free loaner copies of the Dukes book are available for the duration of the class]

Selected articles, case studies and exercises will be provided for a copying fee of \$20.

Grades - * Active class participation (25%)

* 10 weekly, cumulative "diary" essays of 700-900 words combining your analysis of reading assignments with your observations of a selected issue or issues in your area

of interest. (50%)

* A group presentation concerning recommendations for addressing a complex issue involving multiple stakeholders and publics. (25%)

Class size maximum: 20 students.

This 4-credit course satisfies the requirement for a planning application course.

COURSE OUTLINE:

This course will have three related tracks.

Collaborative Planning Theory: We will examine the larger forces driving public conflict in our society and the development of collaborative planning tools and the collaborative governance movement. This track includes:

- The Domain of Public Conflict
 - * Societal changes
 - * Themes of governance
 - * Sources of conflict
- The Conflict Resolution Response
 - * Consensus building processes
 - * The institutional response
- Consideration of the Response
 - * What has been accomplished?
 - * What should be done?

Skills A second track will involve the theory and practice of collaborative planning skills. This track includes:

- Diagnosing organizational attitudes towards conflict and collaboration;
- Building shared expectations for effective, principled work;
- Designing collaborative processes.

Cases The third track is the study of planning problems and conflicts and collaborative efforts used to address those problems. This track includes:

- Attributes of public disputes;
- Assessing a dispute (case analysis).

The primary learning tools will be readings, class lectures and discussions, exercises (e.g., simulations), and interaction with classmates, parties to disputes and negotiations, and other invited guests. Your primary requirements to take advantage of these opportunities are attention, initiative, risk and hard work!

GENERAL:

- Attendance and participation in class is very important. Please show up on time, but if you are late don't let that stop you from participating once you arrive! And **please let me know in advance if you will miss a class.** Assignments are made on a weekly basis, and you will need to make appropriate arrangements.

- *Collaboration: A Guide for Environmental Advocates* and additional readings will be distributed to the class. A **\$20.00 fee** is assessed for the other material.

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS:

* 10 weekly, cumulative "diary" essays of 700-900 words combining your analysis of reading assignments with your observations of a selected issue or issues in your area of interest. (50%)

* Active class participation (25%)

* A group presentation concerning recommendations for addressing a complex issue involving multiple stakeholders and publics. (25%)

GRADING:

An A is offered for outstanding work; a B is given for work which is truly satisfactory; a C is unacceptable for graduate participants.

Grading will be based on:

50%: Ten written 700-900 word essays.

These written assignments will be graded as follows:

0	Did not complete assignment, or no apparent effort or thought.
4	Completed assignment. Demonstrates adequate preparation: knows basic facts, but does not show evidence of trying to interpret or analyze them.
7	Satisfactory effort. Demonstrates good preparation: knows case or reading facts well, has thought through implications of them. Offers interpretations and analysis of case material (more than just facts) to class.
10	Demonstrates excellent preparation: has analyzed material and/or dispute exceptionally well, relating it to other readings or material (e.g., course handouts, discussions, experiences, etc.). Offers analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of readings and case material, e.g., puts together pieces of the discussion to develop new approaches that take the class further.

I do give weight to organization, writing style, and mechanics, as well as demonstrated understanding and presentation of issues.

Note: A point is deducted for a late assignment.

25%: Class attendance and active participation.

Active participation in class discussions, assignments, and exercises is expected from each student.

Beginning with class #2, participation is rated for each class on a scale from 0 (lowest) through 2 (highest), using the criteria below. While your participation is important for any class you take, this class by its experiential nature requires considerable involvement, including interaction with your classmates.

We each learn from what you offer to the class. I encourage you to strive for a “2” for your own and others’ benefit.

Participation Grade Basis:	
0	Absent or without contribution.
1/2	Present, not disruptive. Tries to respond when called on but does not offer much. Demonstrates very infrequent involvement.
1	Offers straightforward information (e.g., straight from the case or reading), without elaboration or very infrequently (perhaps once a class). Does not offer to contribute to discussion, but contributes to a moderate degree when called on. Demonstrates sporadic involvement.
1 1/2	Contributes well to discussion in an ongoing way: responds to other students’ points, thinks through own points, questions others in a constructive way, offers and supports suggestions that may be counter to the majority opinion. Demonstrates consistent ongoing involvement.
2	Contributes in a very significant way to ongoing discussion: keeps analysis focused, responds very thoughtfully to other students’ comments, contributes to the cooperative argument-building, suggests alternative ways of approaching material and helps class analyze which approaches are appropriate, etc.

Demonstrates ongoing and very active involvement.

25%: Group Analysis and Recommendations.

Class members will select a complex issue involving multiple stakeholders and publics. Working in small groups, you will report recommendations, which will be presented in class. A portion of the grade will be determined by peer evaluations of contributions to the project.

Instructor Biography:

As Director of the Institute for Environmental Negotiation (IEN) at the University of Virginia, Dr. Dukes designs dispute resolution and public participation processes, mediates and facilitates, teaches and trains in the areas of public involvement, mediation, negotiation, and consensus building, and conducts research. He has worked at local, state, and federal levels on projects involving environment and land use, community development, education, health, and racial and ethnic diversity. He also has helped initiate and is a co-coordinator of the Virginia Natural Resources Leadership Institute, a year-long program that brings together representatives from industry, non-governmental organizations, public agencies, and communities to develop collaborative leadership around environmental issues.

As part of IEN's "Collaborative Stewardship Initiative," he has initiated the "Community-Based Collaboratives Research Consortium" seeking to assess and understand local collaborative efforts involving natural resources and community development, and the "Best Practices Guidance Project" resulting in the publication of *Collaboration: A Guide for Environmental Advocates* in partnership with The Wilderness Society and the Audubon Society in July of 2001.

His book *Resolving Public Conflict: Transforming Community and Governance* (Manchester University Press and St. Martin's Press, 1996) describes how public conflict resolution procedures can assist in vitalizing democracy, by engaging citizens productively in civic and community affairs, by aiding public entities in developing a responsive governance, and by enhancing society's capacity to solve difficult public problems. With two colleagues he is co-author of *Reaching for Higher Ground in Conflict Resolution* (Jossey-Bass, 2000), which describes how diverse groups and communities can create expectations for addressing conflict with integrity, vision, and creativity.

He received a B.A. from the University of Virginia and an M.S. and Ph.D. in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from George Mason University. He was previously operator of a piano restoration business for over 10 years in Albemarle County. He is a founding member and past chair of the Community Mediation Center of Charlottesville-Albemarle. He also serves as advisor to and trainer for University Mediation Services. He is co-chair of the Environmental/Public Policy Section of the international Association for Conflict Resolution. He has two children. His wife, Linda Hankins Dukes, teaches reading to elementary school students.

Office Hours:

My office is at the Institute for Environmental Negotiation in Peyton House, 164 Rugby Rd. Because of the nature of my work regular hours are not possible; however, students are invited and urged to "drop in" for discussion (you may wish to call ahead to make sure that I am there), or you may set an appointment.

Course Topics and Anticipated Readings

An Introduction to Collaborative Planning

U. S. Environmental Protection Agency. *Superfund Community Involvement Handbook*. 2002.

Dukes, E. F. (2000). *Reaching for Higher Ground in Conflict Resolution: Tools for Powerful Groups and Communities*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Dukes, E. Franklin. "Public Conflict Resolution: a Transformative Approach." *Negotiation Journal* 9(1): 45-57. 1993.

Characterizing Collaboration

- How did the collaboration movement emerge? Who uses collaboration and for what types of issues? What types of collaborative processes exist? How wide is collaboration's use? What is its impact?

Dukes, E. Franklin and K. Firehock. *Collaboration: a Guide for Environmental Advocates*.

Charlottesville, VA, Institute for Environmental Negotiation, The Wilderness Society, National Audubon Society. Guide: pp. 1-9.

Ozawa, Connie. "Beyond Environment." In *Critical Issues Papers*, ed. S. Senecah. Washington, D.C., Association for Conflict Resolution: 99-110. 2002.

Conley, Alexander and Moote, Margaret A. "Evaluating Collaborative Natural Resource Management." *Society and Natural Resources*. 16. 371-386. 2003.

Optional:

Dukes, E. Franklin. *Resolving Public Conflict: Transforming Community and Governance*. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1996.

The Case Against Collaboration

- What concerns exist about collaborative processes? Who makes those claims, based upon what forms of knowledge (research, experience, "gray" literature)? How can one determine the validity of claims pro and con?

Guide: pp. 10-12.

Kenney, Douglas S. *Arguing About Consensus: Examining the Case against Western Watershed Initiatives and Other Collaborative Groups in Natural Resource Management*. Boulder: Natural Resources Law Center at the University of Colorado School of Law. 2000.

McCloskey, J. Michael. "The skeptic: collaboration has its limits." *High Country News*. 28 (9), p. 13. 1996.

Golten, Mary Margaret, M. Smith, and P. Woodrow. "Hammers in Search of Nails: Responding to Critics of Collaborative Processes." In *Critical Issues Papers*, ed. S. Senecah. Washington, D.C., Association for Conflict Resolution: 36-47. 2002.

Optional:

Coglianesse, Gary. "The limits of consensus." *Environment*. 41 (3), 28-33. 1999.

Coggins, George Cameron. "Of Californicators, Quislings, and Crazies: Some Perils of Devolved Collaboration." *Chronicle of Community*. 2 (2). 1998.

Amy, Douglas. *The Politics of Environmental Mediation*. New York: Columbia University Press. 1987.

When Might Collaboration Be Appropriate?

- How can one decide when collaboration is appropriate? Are there circumstances in which collaboration would not be appropriate? Are there issues that are non-negotiable? Are there individuals or organizations with whom one would not negotiate?

Guide: pp. 13-21.

Dukes, E. Franklin. "Why – and Why Not - Dialogue?" In *The Dialogue Forum Reflections*, G. Sigurdson. Ed. Vancouver, Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, Simon Fraser University. 2005.

Dukes, E. Franklin. "From Enemies, to Higher Ground, to Allies: the Unlikely Partnership Between the Tobacco Farm and Public Health Communities." In *Participatory Governance: Planning, Conflict Mediation and Public Decision-Making in Civil Society*. W. R. Lovan, M. Murray and R. Shaffer. London, Ashgate Press. 2004.

Dukes, E. Franklin (with C. Gyovai): "Money Point Assessment."

Anticipated guest: Steve Talley, Canaan Valley Institute

Designing a Principled and Effective Process

- What type of process is appropriate for which types of purposes? What should be done to ensure success? What protocols can be determined by participants themselves, and which by sponsors? How can you determine who needs to be involved, and in what ways?

Guide: pp. 22-28.

Beierle, Thomas C. and Cayford, Jerry. "Dispute Resolution as a Method of Public Participation." In *The Promise and Performance of Environmental Conflict Resolution*, eds. O'Leary, Rosemary and Bingham, Lisa B. Washington, DC: Resources for the Future. 2003.

Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution [now Association for Conflict Resolution]. *Best Practices for Government Agencies: Guidelines for Using Collaborative Agreement-Seeking Processes*. Washington, D.C., Association for Conflict Resolution [formerly Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution]. 1997.

Dukes, E. Franklin. "Mt. Rogers Trails Dispute." In *For the Common Good: Case Studies in Consensus-Building and the Resolution of Natural Resource Controversies*, eds. P. Adler and K. Lowry. Forthcoming.

Elliott, M. "When the Parents Be Cancer-Free: Community Voice, Toxics, and Environmental Justice in Chattanooga, Tennessee." In *Making Sense of Intractable Environmental Conflicts*, eds. R. J. Lewicki, B. Gray and M. Elliott. Washington, D.C., Island Press. 2003.

Optional:

Beierle, Thomas C. and Cayford, Jerry. *Democracy in Practice: Public Participation in Environmental Decisions*. Washington, DC: Resources for the Future. 2003.

Susskind, Lawrence, S. McKernan, et al., Eds. *The Consensus Building Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide to Reaching Agreement*. Thousand Oaks, Sage. 1999.

Best Practices During a Collaborative Process

- What role does a third-party facilitator or mediator play? What constitutes agreement? Is consensus required? How do issues get raised and addressed? How can conflictual relationships be transformed?

What role do the news media play?

Guide: pp. 29-42.

Saunders, Hal and R. Slim. "Dialogue to Change Conflictual Relationships." *Higher Education Exchange*. 43-56. 1994.

Leach, William and Paul Sabatier. "Facilitators, Coordinators, and Outcomes." In *The Promise and Performance of Environmental Conflict Resolution*, eds. R. O'Leary and L. B. Bingham. Washington, D.C., Resources for the Future: 148-171. 2003.

Dukes, E. Franklin. "Why Conflict Transformation Matters: Three Cases." *Peace and Change* 6 (1). 1999.

Optional:

Daniels, S. E. and G. B. Walker. *Working Through Environmental Conflict: the Collaborative Learning Approach*. Westport, CT, Praeger: 2001.

Wondolleck, Julia M. and S. L. Yaffee. *Making Collaboration Work: Sessions from Innovation in Natural Resource Management*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press. 2000.

Determining Success

- How do collaborative groups monitor and evaluate their work? Who is responsible for implementation? Who determines what is success? How is success evaluated?

Guide: pp. 52-55.

Innes, Judith. "Evaluating Consensus Building." In *The Consensus Building Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide to Reaching Agreement*, eds. L. Susskind, S. McKernan and J. Thomas-Larmer. Thousand Oaks, Sage. 1999.

Innes, Judith E. and David E. Booher. "Consensus Building and Complex Adaptive Systems: A Framework for Evaluating Collaborative Planning." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 65 (4), pp. 412-423, 1999.

Birkhoff, Juliana. "Evaluation and Research." In *Critical Issues Papers*, Series Editors Dukes, E. Franklin; Romero, Rosemary; and Taylor, Thomas. Washington, DC: Association for Conflict Resolution. 2002.

Selin, Steve W. and M. A. Schuett. "Modeling Stakeholder Perceptions of Collaborative Initiative Effectiveness." *Society and Natural Resources* 13: 735-745. 2000.

Optional:

Connick, Sarah and Innes, Judith E. "Outcomes of Collaborative Water Policy Making: Applying Complexity Thinking to Evaluation." *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*. 46 (2), 177-197, 2003.

Western Consensus Council and Consensus Building Institute. "Community-Based Collaboration on Federal Lands and Resources: An Evaluation of Participant Satisfaction." Paper presented at "Evaluating Methods and Outcomes of Community-Based Collaborative Processes," Salt Lake City, UT. 2003.

Report of the Hagerstown Central Chemical Land Use Committee
(<http://www.virginia.edu/ien/publications.htm>), 2003.

Building the Collaborative Community

Can and should collaboration be made a first choice for a community when problems arise? Is

collaborative governance possible? Is collaborative democracy real? What is the future of collaboration?

Innes, Judith. "Planning through Consensus Building: A New View of the Comprehensive Planning Ideal." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 62 (4), 460-472, 1996.

Leach, William, Neil W. Pelkey, et al. "Stakeholder Partnerships as Collaborative Policymaking: Evaluation Criteria Applied to Watershed Management in California and Washington." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 21 (4), pp. 645-670. 2002.

Carlson, Chris and J. Stephens. "Governance and Institutionalization: Sustaining Consensus-Based Processes for Improved Stakeholder Collaboration on Public Issues." In *Critical Issues Papers*, ed. S. Senecah. Washington, D.C., Association for Conflict Resolution: 86-98. 2002.

Bourne, Greg. "Democracy and Civic Engagement: To What Extent Do Consensus-Building Processes Improve Democratic Participation and Decision Making?" In *Critical Issues Papers*, ed. S. Senecah. Washington, D.C., Association for Conflict Resolution: 70-85. 2002.

Optional:

Bernard, Ted and Young, J. *The Ecology of Hope: Communities Collaborate for Sustainability*. Gabriola Island, B.C., New Society Publishers. 1997.

Anticipated guest: Bill Potapchuk, Community Building Institute

Collaboration in Practice: Student Proposals

Anticipated guest: John Stephens, UNC Institute of Government

Writing Well

Following is more guidance for writing and class discussion from a variety of sources. If you need more, then:

- * Come talk to me – call me at 924-2041 for an appointment, I'm glad to talk.
- * Contact the UVA Writing Center www.engl.virginia.edu/wctr/wcinfo.html – 924-6678. They offer free, individual tutoring and are much better writers and teachers of writing than I am.
- * Buy and read Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style* or another good writing guide.
- * Keep working on your writing and don't get discouraged – it will definitely improve with practice and reflection.

Basic Error-Free Writing Tips:

26 Golden Rules for Writing Well

1. Don't abbrev.
2. Check to see if you any words out.
3. Be carefully to use adjectives and adverbs correct.
4. About sentence fragments.
5. When dangling, don't use participles.
6. Don't use no double negatives.
7. Each pronoun agrees with their antecedent.
8. Just between you and I, case is important.
9. Join clauses good, like a conjunction should.
10. Don't use commas, that aren't necessary.
11. Its important to use apostrophe's right.
12. It's better not to unnecessarily split an infinitive.
13. Never leave a transitive verb just lay there without an object.
14. Only Proper Nouns should be capitalized. also a sentence should begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop
15. Use hyphens in compound-words, not just in any two-word phrase.
16. In letters compositions reports and things like that we use commas to keep a string of items apart.
17. Watch out for irregular verbs that have creeped into our language.
18. Verbs has to agree with their subjects.
19. Avoid unnecessary redundancy.
20. A writer mustn't shift your point of view.
21. Don't write a run-on sentence you've got to punctuate it.
22. A preposition isn't a good thing to end a sentence with.
23. Avoid cliches like the plague.
24. Never start a sentence with a number.
25. Always check your work for accuracy and completeness.

[ANON.]

Guidance borrowed from Prof. Michael Trotti:

1. Keep your audience in mind; know exactly the knowledge level and scope of interest of those who will read your paper. Speak with the appropriate level of technical language while, at the same time, keeping the line of argument clear and simple.
2. Know precisely the conclusions that you want to state. These are the thoughts that you intend to place inside the reader's mind. State them. These points become the question(s) for the line-of-argument that drives the paper.
3. Make sure your paper has a clearly identifiable beginning, middle, and end. The beginning should go from the sweeping and global to the specific concern of this paper.
4. If your paper requires examples, make them vivid and varied.
5. Picture portions of your argument like a funnel, wide on the top, narrowing on the bottom, and write it that way. Structure your argument to move from the macro (general statements), to the medium, to the more micro (the specific issues addressed).
8. Use transitional sentences to link the preceding discussion to a new discussion of very different material that follows. Make it smooth, make it smooth. When in doubt, smooth it out.
9. Keep a sense of rhythm, of flow in your language. Reading your words should be easy and pleasurable, not hard and stiff.
10. Say plainly what you mean, no more, no less. As a rule of thumb, use short words instead of long ones, and use one word in place of several. For example, never say "due to the fact that," say "because." Instead of saying "they interpreted their findings to mean that...," say "they concluded." There should be no unnecessary words, no words that do no work. Keep it sharp, tight, crisp. You get the point.
11. Know your material thoroughly. Each word and each study cited is there because it does a piece of work. If it doesn't, then cut it; it's clutter.
12. Don't say "Second" unless you have first said "First." And Never Never Never say "Lastly" (or "Firstly").

Important Components to Strong and Effective Writing

* **Clarity** Don't try to make your argument or your evidence do tricks, but do follow all rules of grammar and usage. A complicated argument is often less clear and effective than a simpler one. The art of good writing is to play by the rules of grammar and usage, and to be concise. Get a copy of Strunk and White's *Elements of Style* for help with this. I read it regularly, just to remind me of what effective writing consists.

* **Evaluation** As important as getting the facts straight. A paper needs to be accurate, but as important, it needs to show that you see just what is important, what it is connected to, and what evidence best supports that important point. History is about bringing meaning to past events - you do that through how you characterize those events and what you connect them to.

* **Outline** Before you write, spend time thinking about your argument and how to make it flow logically from one point to the next - what points are connected? what is the most important one and why? Think this through before writing.

* **Short Assignments** If you are feeling overwhelmed, take a small piece of your paper and work on it, get it done, then move on to another small piece. Divide and conquer. You will need to fit these pieces together - a paper of many small pieces is no paper at all. But it is not only OK, it is the best way to write to divide up a larger issue into more manageable smaller ones. After outlining, simply take one point you plan to make and develop it; move on to the next. Before you know it, you have most of a paper written.

"Thirty years ago my older brother, who was ten years old at the time, was trying to get a report on birds written that he'd had three months to write, which was due the next day. We were out at our family cabin in Bolinas, and he was at the kitchen table close to tears, surrounded by binder paper and pencils and unopened books on birds, immobilized by the hugeness of the task ahead. Then my father sat down beside him, put his arm around my brother's shoulder, and said, "Bird by bird, buddy. Just take it bird by bird."

"I tell this story again because it usually makes a dent in the tremendous sense of being overwhelmed that my students experience. . ." -- Anne Lamott, *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life* (Anchor, 1994), 18-19.

* **Speak it** This one sounds weird, but trust me - reading your paper out loud will show you what is not working, where the rough places are. You use a different part of your brain when you hear/speak than when you look, and hearing the words gives you a different perspective.

* **Skim** After you write a paper, read the introduction, the first line of each paragraph, and the conclusion. In a clear, concise paper, this should give you the flow of the argument, and such a skim will reveal where you have problems, where the argument is convoluted.

* **Rewrite** There is nothing that will improve your work more than writing a draft early, letting it sit for a day, then coming back to it and looking at it afresh. If you want to improve your writing, this is how.

Anne Lamott on First Drafts:

"People tend to look at successful writers, writers who are getting their books published and maybe even doing well financially, and think that they sit down at their desks every morning feeling like a million dollars, feeling great about who they are and how much talent they have and what a great story they have to tell; that they take a few deep breaths, push back their sleeves, roll their necks a few times to get all the cricks out, and dive in, typing fully formed passages as fast as a court reporter. But this is just the fantasy of the uninitiated. I know some very good writers, writers you love who write beautifully and have made a great deal of money, and not one of them sits down routinely feeling wildly enthusiastic and confident. Not one of them writes elegant first drafts. All right, one of them does, but we do not like her very much . . ."

So, what is it that I look for when I grade your papers? What I am most eager to find there?

* thesis - have you answered the question clearly and completely?

* support - is the essay factually correct and does it refer to the appropriate and relevant names,

dates, concepts, sources, and events as needed?

- * argument - is the writing clear, concise, and well-organized around the argument of the thesis?
- * context - does the paper demonstrate your knowledge of the broad range of course materials and concepts relevant to the issue at hand?

Avoiding Gender Bias in Pronouns

Achieving unbiased language so that readers will concentrate on what you have to say rather than how you say it is an admirable goal. It's also, I might add, a necessity. For example, businesses and individuals have been sued because job descriptions used "he" and seemed to exclude women -- whether or not the exclusion was intended. Therefore, gender free language is a requirement of the workplace and the university.

It may be easy to avoid gender-biased nouns by replacing sexist nouns with more neutral ones: chairman with chair, mailman with paper carrier, and congressman with senator or representative. But how can you avoid the pronouns he, him, and his when you refer to nouns meant to include both genders?

The following five options will enable you to revise your writing so that your use of pronouns is both gender-free and correct. As you review this list, compare the biased language of the original sentences with the gender-free phrasing of the revisions.

1. Use the plural form for both nouns and pronouns (preferred).

Biased Language: Studying the techniques by which a celebrated writer achieved his success can stimulate any writer faced with similar problems.

Gender-free Language: Studying the techniques by which celebrated writers achieved their success can stimulate any writer faced with similar problems.

2. Omit the pronoun altogether (also preferred).

Biased Language: Each doctor should send one of his nurses to the workshop.

Gender-free Language: Each doctor should send a nurse to the workshop.

3. Use *his or her*, *he/she*, or *s/he* when you occasionally need to stress the action of an individual. Such references won't be awkward unless they're frequent (less preferred).

Biased Language: If you must use a technical term he may not understand, explain it.

Gender-free Language: If you must use a technical term she or he may not understand, explain it.

If you must use a technical term he/she may not understand, explain it.

If you must use a technical term s/he may not understand, explain it.

4. Vary pronoun choice when you want to give examples emphasizing the action of an individual (less preferred). Ideally, choose pronouns that work counter to prevailing stereotypes.

Growing Child Newsletter (1982) decided to use this strategy throughout its publication, which focused on children's developmental levels.

Biased Language: Gradually, Toddler will see the resemblance between block creations and objects in his world, and he will begin to name some structures, like "house," "choo choo," and "chimney."

Gender-free Language: Gradually, Toddler will see the resemblance between block creations and objects in her world, and she will begin to name some structures, like "house," "choo choo," and "chimney."
 [THE NEXT EXAMPLE WOULD USE “HE” AND “HIS”].

Biased Language: The kitchen can serve as a center for new experiences, an interesting place where important things happen, and where she has a chance to learn about the way big-people things are done.
Gender-free Language: The kitchen can serve as a center for new experiences, an interesting place where important things happen, and where he has a chance to learn about the way big-people things are done.
 [THE NEXT EXAMPLE WOULD USE “SHE” AND “HER”].

5. Switch from the third-person (he) to the second-person (you) or a (you) understood when this shift is appropriate for what you're writing. (also preferred)

Biased Language: Each manager should report his progress to the undersigned by May 1.
Gender-free Language: You should report your progress to me by May 1.
 Report your progress to me by May 1.

 © 1997, 1998, 1999 The Write Place

This page was written by Sharon Cogdill and Judith Kilborn for the Write Place, St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, MN, and adapted by E. Franklin Dukes of the Institute for Environmental Negotiation, University of Virginia, and may be copied for educational purposes only. If you copy this document, please include our copyright notice and the name of the writer; if you revise it, please add your name to the list of writers.

Original: <http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/style/genderbias.html>

Student Information

Your name: _____

Home town: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Year: _____

Major or Graduate Program: _____

Career Interests

Other Interests (sports, music, drama, etc.):
