Suggestions for Designing Writing Assignments

**Give students a clear and explicit sense of purpose.** Connect the assignment explicitly to course objectives, the students’ goals, disciplinary and professional writing and thinking, etc.

**Consider asking students to write for real or hypothetical audiences beyond the instructor.** Most school writing is to the teacher as audience. Consider creating hypothetical audiences (for example, having students write a memo to the CEO of a company or an article for a business journal), real audiences (for example, having students keep a business blog), or audiences that the students choose themselves.

**Make the grading criteria of the assignment clear.** Consider using grading rubrics, listing evaluation criteria in the assignment description, and providing students with good and/or poor examples. Match grading criteria with the purpose of the assignment.

**Be clear about what you don’t want.** Mention possible pitfalls and discuss the kinds of things you don’t want them to do in their writing (for example, if you don’t want them to use a specific type of evidence or you don’t want them to use personal experiences).

**Make the conventions of the assignment clear.** In the assignment description, mention citation expectations, level of formality required, genre structure conventions, etc.

**Account in some way for a revising and editing process.** Consider using peer response, responding to drafts or topic proposals, giving students extra credit for visiting the University Reading and Writing Center, breaking large and complex assignments into smaller, more manageable stages, etc.
Teaching Writing Using Technology  
Dan Melzer and Mark Stoner  

Technology and Composing Resources for Teachers and Students  

For individual writing  

- Creating blogs  
  http://www.blogger.com  
  http://wordpress.org/  
  http://ithacultureblog.wordpress.com (student blog)  
  http://www.livejournal.com/  

- Creating websites  
  http://www.webs.com  
  http://geocities.yahoo.com  
  http://www.tripod.lycos.com/  

For collaborative writing  

- Wikis:  
  http://www.wikispaces.com/  

- Sharing:  
  google docs (http://www.google.com/intl/en/options/ for information)  

Brainstorming/invention tools:  
http://bubbl.us/  
http://www.cosketch.com/  
http://cmap.ihmc.us/conceptmap.html

Writing Process Resources  
CSUS University Reading and Writing Center  
http://www.csus.edu/writingcenter

Son of citation machine  
http://citationmachine.net/index2.php?start=#

Capital Community College  
http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/
Purdue
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/index2.html
This is an extensive set of handouts explaining everything from how to use a comma to how to write an essay. The listing is thorough and easy to use.

On-line Help for Writing Academic Papers
http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/home.html

Washington State University
http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/

Scroll past the book image to the bottom of the page to find an alphabetical list of common writing errors explained in brief notes. Easy to use.

Vocabulary
If you can't think of a word you want, but you can describe to what it relates, OneLook's reverse dictionary lets you describe a concept and get back a list of words and phrases related to that concept.

Creating rubrics:
http://rubistar.4teachers.org/

Other potentially useful sites:

Creating online magazines:
http://www.openzine.com/aspx/

Creating surveys and polls:
http://www.csus.edu/atcs/tools/flashlight/index.stm
http://www.surveymonkey.com/
http://polldaddy.com/
http://www.pollhost.com/

Social networking/communication tools:
http://www.csus.edu/atcs/tools/imeet/index.stm
http://twitter.com/
http://www.skype.com/
http://groups.google.com/
http://www.facebook.com/

For Fun
Creating word clouds: http://www.wordle.net/

A document with "hot" links available at: http://www.csus.edu/indiv/s/stonerm/information