

## Questioning As We Write

To write well is to produce written work that is both clear and well-reasoned. To achieve this end, the skilled writer routinely asks questions of self-analysis and assessment.

### Analyzing Your Reasoning Before Writing

Prior to writing, it is important to understand clearly the logic of your position. You can best determine this by focusing on the elements of reasoning. You can ask the following types of questions:

**Purpose:** What is my purpose in writing this piece?

**Question:** What question(s) am I attempting to answer?

**Information:** What information do I need to support my position?

**Inferences:** What do I want to convince the reader of?

**Concepts:** What are the main ideas I need to use in my thinking to effectively write this piece? Which of these ideas do I need to explicitly define and elaborate?

**Assumptions:** Should I question what I am taking for granted in writing this piece? Should I explicitly state my assumptions?

**Point of View:** What am I looking at, and how am I seeing it? Should I include other viewpoints?

**Implications:** What am I implying? What am I trying to get the reader to believe and/or do?

### Evaluating Your Writing As You Write

To write well, you also need to evaluate as you write.

**Clarity:** Am I clear about what I am saying or is my thinking muddled? For each paragraph, have I stated my main idea, and then elaborated it? Have I written sentences that can be interpreted in different ways or have I made my intended meaning clear?

**Precision:** Have I provided adequate details for the reader to understand precisely what I mean? Do I need more details?

**Logic:** Do all the ideas in my paper fit logically together? Have I used transitional words to make connections between ideas evident to the reader?

**Relevance:** In the paper as a whole, do I keep a clear and consistent focus? Do I wander from the main point? In each paragraph, is everything in the paragraph relevant to the main idea in the paragraph?

**Significance:** What is the most significant question to focus on? What are the most significant concepts? Facts?

**Depth:** Do I clearly understand what makes the issue complex? Have I sufficiently detailed those complexities?

**Fairness:** Have I been fair to all viewpoints relevant to the issue or have I presented opposing viewpoints in a "weak" form, in order to dismiss them?

**Accuracy:** Have I made sure that all the information I have presented as factual is so? Are my sources of information credible?