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#### Lesson Plan

**Handout 1:** Sample Introduction

**Handout 2:** Sentence-Level Revision Strategies

**Reference Sheet:** Sample Introduction Revisions

### MATERIALS NEEDED

Whiteboard markers, students' work-in-progress

### LEARNING GOALS

At the close of the workshop, students will be able to:

- Narrow their focus to one or more sentence-level patterns while revising
- Choose and implement a sentence-level revision strategy based on their writing goals

### OVERVIEW

In this workshop, three primary activities take place:

- Instructor leads a sentence-level revision activity and frames a conversation about the importance of choosing a specific focus.
- Students read the introductions to their papers and set goals for revision.
- Students consider several strategies for sentence-level revision and select one to implement.

## LESSON PLAN

### Introduction

Frame this workshop as **an opportunity to begin developing a more efficient and independent revision process**. Emphasize that while students will work on a single draft (and thereby strengthen a specific paper), they will be practicing strategies they can apply again in the future.

Make sure all students have brought in drafts of papers, covers letters, or other written materials for today. **Say:** Today's workshop is focused on independent writing and revising, so it may feel a little different from other Writing Center workshops you have attended. Of the center's more than twenty workshops, many are focused on introducing new concepts or skills. Others, like today's, are focused on helping you apply these skills to revise or develop a specific writing project.

Explain that this workshop introduces students to revision strategies and gives them time to practice at least one. **Say:** Our aim today is to give you time to write and revise, and to create a space where you feel comfortable trying something new.

### Part One: Narrowing Your Focus (15 min)

1. Tell students that *before* we look at their writing, we'll **model the steps for setting revision goals**. We'll begin by looking at an example of one student's introduction. Pass out **Handout 1: "Sample Introduction."** Have students read the paragraph out loud.
2. **Ask: what do you notice about this paragraph? What could be improved at the sentence level?** Record responses on the board, roughly grouping them into categories such as *verb tense, transitions, agreement, run-ons, register/formality, repetition, and time markers*. As necessary, prompt with questions: (e.g. What do you notice about the use of transitions?)
  - *Note to facilitator:* students may simply say "grammar." Ask them to specify what kinds of grammatical errors they notice.
3. **Divide students into groups.**
  - Assign each group just *one* of the collaboratively defined categories.
  - Ask them to revise the paragraph by focusing on the issues related to their group's category.
4. Have students share out responses. (Refer to **Reference Sheet 1: "Sample Introduction Revisions"** to provide further examples of potential revisions as needed.)
  - Lead a discussion of their experience revising. **Ask:** what was the effect of focusing on a single issue?
  - **Elicit the understanding that focusing on any single category for revision can dramatically improve a passage of writing**, even if it leaves some issues unaddressed.

## REVISING AT THE SENTENCE-LEVEL WORKSHOP

5. Explain that revision typically works best when the writer sets focused, achievable goals. While the broad goal may be a stronger, more persuasive, clearer essay, it helps to set smaller goals to get there. **But setting goals for *your own writing* can be challenging when:**
  - You have been looking at a paper so long you can no longer see what needs to change,
  - You're unsure of some grammatical or syntactic rules, or
  - You don't know where to start, and editing feels overwhelming.

State that for the rest of this workshop, **we'll focus on identifying specific strategies that students can implement on their own.**

- **Emphasize clarity in sentence-level revision**, noting that while the strategies introduced today may help address issues with grammar and syntax, our first priority is making sure the ideas are clearly expressed and easy to follow. **Elaborate:**
    - Even if your paper is 100% grammatically correct, that doesn't necessarily mean it is clear.
    - Stylistic concerns like transitions, varied sentence structure, and appropriate language can be just as important as grammar, especially in academic and professional writing.
6. **Segue to Part Two.** Tell students that next, they'll practice finding opportunities for revision in their own papers.

### Part Two: Setting Goals for Revision (10 min)

1. **Ask students to take out their introductory paragraphs.** Tell them that their job is to re-read their introductions and set goals for revision.
  - Note that sometimes, when we've been working on a text for a long time, it can be helpful to try a new reading strategy. They might:
    - Change the font and re-read on their computers
    - Read it out loud (or have a partner read it out loud to them)
    - Read backwards, one sentence at a time.
2. Give students time to read their introductions and **write down at least one sentence-level revision goal.** (*Note to facilitator:* circulate and help students who want to work with a partner to pair up. If there is an odd number of students, create one group of three; partner up with a student if there is only one.)

### Part Three: Revision Activity (40 min)

1. State that next, we'll look at some strategies that can help students achieve the goals they wrote down. **Pass out Handout 3: "Sentence-Level Revision Strategies."** Give students time to read independently, and explain that their job is to select a strategy.

2. Discuss the strategies, addressing when each may be useful.  
*\*Note to instructor: depending on the length of the workshop, determine how much to discuss each strategy and its accompanying models. Italicized information might be cut.*
  - Choose #1, “Focus on the most important sentences first,” if you’re pressed for time or don’t know where to start.
  - Choose #2, “Revise one sentence,” to work on a sentence you’ve been struggling with and identify a pattern for further revision.
  - Choose #3, “Work on transitions,” if you want to make sure the logic of your argument is easy to follow.
  - Choose #4, “Vary your sentence structure,” if you tend to write sentences that are all the same length.  
*Complex ideas require complex structures, and variation can improve flow and readability.*
  - Choose #5, “Revise for a specific audience,” to make sure you’re meeting your reader’s expectations.
  - Choose #6, “Work on clarity,” to make your sentences and logic easier to follow.  
*First row: note that the sentence on the right moves its subject, Sandberg, closer to the beginning. It also introduces a new verb—“caused.” When you re-order your own sentences, feel free to introduce new words or phrases as needed!*  
*Second row: note that “leaders” is a simpler subject/concept than “working to recognize one’s own emotions.”*
  - Choose #7 to continue the work you began on your introduction, especially if you feel confident making sentence-level revisions as you go.
3. Give students time to employ one or more of the revision strategies.
  - *Note to facilitator:* Circulate to support students who need help, and be available for questions. If time allows, feel free to implement a revision strategy on your own writing.
  - Give students time markers halfway through.
4. **Have students reflect on the work they did and their next revision steps.**
5. **Solicit questions and wrap up.**

## SAMPLE INTRODUCTION

2017 was a rough year for Uber. The CEO Travis Kalanick yelled at a driver and then stepped down. Uber drivers picked up customers from the airport during the travel ban. They have bad accounting errors and various other problems. Employee treatment, the CEO, and employee screening has created problems. Uber needs to build customer trust and improve their public image. They need to do research about what consumers think, CEO Dara Khosrowshahi should build public trust, and they should offer incentives and special programs to build good relationships with cities and customers.

## SENTENCE-LEVEL REVISION STRATEGIES

### 1. Focus on the most important sentences first:

Find your thesis, topic sentences, and any other sentences that introduce a key claim or connection. Rewrite each as many ways as you can. Then, look at your list of sentences and decide which versions are easiest to understand. Can you identify what makes them clearer? How could you use this knowledge in future writing?

### 2. Rewrite one sentence:

Choose one sentence you feel is unclear. Write it out as many ways as you can. Then, identify the clearest version. Once you're done, notice what you changed (an agreement error, wordiness, etc.). With any remaining time, look for that pattern in the rest of the paper.

### 3. Work on transitions:

To help your sentences move more clearly from one idea to the next, try using one of the following transitions to show:

<i>Cause and Effect:</i> accordingly, as a result	<i>Conclusion:</i> as a result, hence, therefore
<i>Comparison:</i> along the same lines, similarly	<i>Contrast:</i> although, however, in contrast
<i>Addition:</i> also, in addition, as well as	<i>Concession:</i> admittedly, granted
<i>Example:</i> as an illustration, consider	<i>Elaboration:</i> by extension, furthermore
<i>Summary:</i> in short, this is to say	<i>Emphasis:</i> indeed, of course, certainly

### 4. Vary your sentence structure:

- **If all or most of your sentences are long, try breaking up one or two.** Read your paragraph out loud, pausing after each period, and notice how this changes the flow of ideas.
- **If you tend to write short sentences, try sentence combining.** Short “kernel” sentences like the following can be combined in several different ways:

The *Odyssey* is an epic poem by Homer.

The *Odyssey* is about Odysseus's journey home.

Odysseus encounters many obstacles on his journey.

*Homer's epic poem the Odyssey is about Odysseus's journey home and the many obstacles he encounters.*

*In Homer's epic poem the Odyssey, Odysseus journeys home, encountering many obstacles along the way.*

## 5. Revise for a specific audience:

Based on your reader's expectations, revise sentences for **word choice**, **concision**, and **tone**. Look for:

- Formal vs. informal language
- Wordiness
- Key words your audience expects to see
- Repetition
- Anything your professor has pointed out in prior feedback

## 6. Work on clarity:

If you've been told your writing is unclear, try changing the order of information within individual sentences. **Look at the following sentence pairs:**

At the center of the controversy, Sheryl Sandberg, COO of Facebook, chose to endorse the candidate.	COO of Facebook Sherly Sandberg caused controversy when she chose to endorse the candidate.
Working to recognize one's own emotions as well as others' can help a leader develop their emotional intelligence.	Leaders can develop emotional intelligence by working to recognize their own emotions as well as others'.

The sentences in the right-hand column are clearer than their counterparts on the left because **easy-to-understand information appears first**.

To revise, change the order of information in a sentence. Then, compare your sentences and decide which version is easiest to understand.

## 7. Change Your Reading Strategy:

- **Listen**: Read your paper out loud (or have a partner or computer program read it to you). Pause anytime you notice a confusing sentence, find yourself saying it differently from how it is written, or notice that you've used the same word or phrase several times. Work to revise any sentence that catches your attention.
- **Read in a Different Format**: If you've been reading and re-reading a draft, try one of the following strategies to get a fresh look:
  - On your computer, **change the font** of your draft. Try using a new font, or making the current font very large. Now re-read your draft, noticing where revision is needed.
  - **Read your draft backwards**, sentence by sentence, starting with the final sentence (you can do this reading out loud or silently). Underline the sentences that catch your attention and revise them.

REFERENCE SHEET: SAMPLE INTRODUCTION REVISIONS

**Revisions, noticing transition words:**

2017 was a rough year for Uber. The CEO Travis Kalanick yelled at a driver, then stepped down. In addition, Uber drivers picked up customers from the airport during the travel ban, while accountants made bad errors and various. Employee treatment, the CEO, and employee screening are all problems. Therefore, Uber needs to build customer trust and improve their public image. To build this trust, they should do research about what consumers think, and based on this research, CEO Dara Khosrowshahi should offer incentives and special programs to build good relationships with cities and customers.

**Revisions, noticing formal and informal language:**

2017 was a difficult year for Uber. The CEO Travis Kalanick yelled at a driver, and the negative PR led him to step down. Uber drivers picked up customers from the airport during the Trump administration's travel ban. They have serious accounting errors and various other problems. Employee treatment, the CEO, and employee screening has created problems. Uber needs to build customer trust and improve their public image. CEO Dara Khosrowshahi should build public trust: the company should conduct consumer research offer incentives and special programs to improve relationships with cities and customers.

**Revisions, noticing verb tense and the passage of time:**

2017 was a rough year for Uber. Former CEO Travis Kalanick yelled at a driver then stepped down. Uber drivers picked up customers from the airport during the travel ban. They had bad accounting errors and various other problems. Employee treatment, the CEO, and employee screening were all problems. Therefore, now, Uber needs to build customer trust and improve their public image. The next step is to begin research about what consumers think: current CEO Dara Khosrowshahi should build public trust, and they need to offer incentives and special programs to build good relationships with cities and customers.

**Revisions, noticing agreement (pronoun use, verbs, switching between subjects):**

2017 was a rough year for Uber. The CEO Travis Kalanick yelled at a driver then stepped down. Uber drivers picked up customers from airports during the travel ban. The company had bad accounting errors and various other problems. Employee treatment, the CEO, and employee screening have created problems. Uber needs to build customer trust and improve its public image. The company needs to do research about what consumers think and build good relationships with cities and customers by offering incentives and special programs.