

Misconceptions (from Bean, 2nd edition)—**add Debunking and Testimonials**

1. I have content to teach and can't take time out for communication

It is not "either-or". Prioritizing the essentials of the courses content – rather than trying to cover it all – will provide room to give the students the skills to continue to access content when the course is over. That it, integrating writing and critical thinking components can actually increase the amount of subject matter a student can learn. Instead of making the course material static and one-sided, you make it dynamic, ongoing and collaborative.

2. Writing and speaking assignments aren't suitable for my course.

Writing assignments can be used in every course – even quantitative courses. Simply reframing the concept of "writing assignment" from standard term-paper essays to assignments that help with the *process* of knowledge acquisition and understanding helps with this transition.

For example, writing assignments can be nongraded, very short and designed to promote students understanding of course concept. In addition, the writing assignments can have a metacognitive aim in which the writing assignments help the students reflect on their own thinking processes. In short, writing to be a way to help promote learning content, as well as to continually engage with the process of writing.

3. I don't want to spend all my time grading writing.

Peer review is your friend. A meaningful way to engage students is through peer-review process. Outline your expectations through a clearly defined rubric and then allow the students to assess each other's drafts. This serves multiple purposes. It first, gets the students in the habit of working on their drafts early on. Two, it provides them with the skills of learning how to provide useful and constructive criticism. Three, it allows the students to work through some of the bigger issues before you need to see it. This reduces time on your end and also provides the students the empowerment to learn how to assess and learn how to use the peer-review system to their advantage.

4. I'm not a writing or speaking expert so how can I teach or grade on communication?

The best teacher commentary focuses on ideas and development – rather than technical advise. For example, comments like: "I got lost in this part", "you need more evidence here", and "Excellent Point" provide excellent feedback to students in terms of their ability to communicate their ideas either orally or in writing, but does not require specialized training in English literature or Oral Communication, per se.