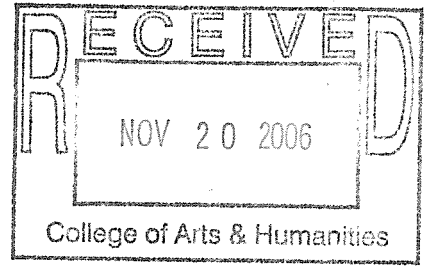


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**IPESL Grant Application**  
(Initiative to Promote Excellence in Student Learning)  
Minnesota State University, Mankato



**PROPOSAL COVER PAGE**

Title of Project: **Revising Revision: Connecting Thinking and Writing**

Name: Cathryn Bailey

Are you full-time faculty in 2006-2007?      Yes    No  
(fixed-term faculty are not eligible to apply)

Do you plan to return to MSU in 2007-2008?      Yes    No

e-mail: bailey@mnsu.edu

Campus Address: AH 227

Campus Phone: 389-5518

College: Arts & Humanities

Department: Philosophy

Spring Semester Schedule:

List times when available to participate in Learning Communities and workshops.


Mondays: 10:00 – 2:00


Tuesdays: 4:00 – 6:00

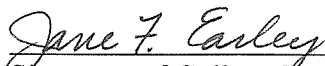
Wednesdays: 8:00 – 3:00

Thursdays: 4:00 – 6:00

Fridays: all day (Also available most evenings during the week)

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Department Chair/Director/Supervisor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of College Dean/Vice President

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## Proposal Details

[Please do not use your name(s) in the proposal for purposes of blind review.]

**Please address the following in your proposal:**

1. Title of Project: **Revising Revision: Connecting Thinking and Writing**
2. Explain the purpose of your project (e.g., need, project goals or outcomes, significance, affected student population) and include a definition of “critical thinking” as appropriate to your project.  
(maximum 250 words)

Although many philosophy courses require that students write, not enough has been done to creatively incorporate revision strategies to best exploit revision’s potential to develop critical thinking. My goal is to study how English professors understand and utilize revision, devise new revision strategies of my own, implement them in my writing intensive “Philosophy of Race, Class, and Gender” course, evaluate them with respect to their impact on critical thinking, present my findings to interested colleagues, and write a paper about revision for a teaching-focused journal. Definitions of “critical thinking” commonly accepted by my discipline emphasize capacities to critique and construct arguments with an eye to conceptual clarity and logical consistency. I accept this, but, influenced by my work in feminist and critical race studies, also believe that meaningful critical thinking demands self-reflection, that it identifies and interrogates social and historical presumptions, as well as logical ones. As I see it then, “critical thinking” is an activity aimed as much at examining one’s personal beliefs and biases as well as one’s logical presumptions. This project is significant because it will result in structured revision activities specifically tailored to philosophical material. Students will learn to use revision as a means of thinking critically as I have defined it. Since I ultimately intend to use these strategies in all of my writing intensive courses (and nearly all of the classes I teach are writing intensive) the student population affected will be as many as 90 lower-level general education students each semester.

3. Describe your project and how it will enhance students’ critical thinking through one or more of the following activities:  
(maximum of 250 words)
  - development, implementation, and assessment of new instructional or curriculum materials
  - development, implementation, and assessment of new support mechanisms
  - development and implementation of new assessments

Since authentic revision involves much more than mere editing, its possibilities are much richer than many students learn to appreciate. As one rethinks one’s writing, alone and with peers, orally and in writing, one may not only sharpens skills of reasoning and argument, but also engage in self-criticism. Laying bare the

connections between thinking, writing, and self-scrutiny will be achieved by drawing upon work already underway by English colleagues. I will develop structured peer critique (and self critique) activities appropriate to the philosophy classroom asking: To what extent are the insights of writing workshops and peer critiques as utilized in English classrooms applicable to philosophy students? How might insights from peer critique activities in philosophy classes be transferred back to students' English classrooms? How are our disciplines' ideas of critical thinking as reflected in our revision strategies similar and different? I will develop new materials (especially workshops and assignments for written critique), implement them in "Philosophy of Race, Class, and Gender" and formally assess them (as described below). I will also develop structured self-critique activities, aimed at encouraging students to experience their own writing as tangible (albeit fluid and temporary) instantiations of their own thinking. I will develop new instructional materials aimed specifically at helping students approach their own work with the kind of critical perspective often reserved for the work of others. Through written and oral activities, independent and group-focused, students will develop their skills of reasoning and self-reflection.

4. How will you assess the results of your completed project?  
(maximum of 150 words)

The results of my completed project will be assessed in several ways: First, I will compare the written work of students who have participated in the new activities with that done in earlier semesters. How, if at all, does student writing reflect students' enhanced ability to critically evaluate the ideas of philosophers, their classmates, and themselves with respect to both logical concerns and prejudices or other preconceived notions? Second, I will ask knowledgeable colleagues in philosophy and English to similarly compare my students' work. Third, I will provide students with the anonymous papers of classmates and ask them to do evaluations according to specific criteria associated with critical thinking, for example, the classmate's ability to detect inconsistencies or unwarranted cultural assumptions. Finally, I will seek feedback from peers on the paper that results from project.

5. How will you disseminate your project and its results? (e.g., department colloquium, professional conference, college colloquium, university-wide colloquium, publication, IPESL website)  
(maximum of 100 words)

My project and its results will be disseminated as follows. I will share my results with colleagues who are equally committed to critical thinking and writing innovation in the classroom (through a colloquium involving both English and Philosophy). I will make all of my curriculum innovations (and reflections on them) available online, linked through the site of the philosophy department. I will submit a paper for publication about the project to a teaching-focused journal. Finally, I will make my work available to IPESL to be included with that of my colleagues.

6. How will your project support department/university goals?  
(maximum of 50 words)

My department shares the university's commitment to critical thinking, writing, and diversity. Philosophy, sometimes defined as critical thinking, provides almost 25% of MSU's writing intensive seats and offers diversity-focused courses. Consequently, my project supports three of the most basic goals of my department and of the university.