CUNY Assessment Test in Writing (CATW)

Provided by: Helene Dunkeleblau, Ph.D. and Jeffrey A. Kurnit, Ph.D.

Basic Educational Skills Dept.; Queensborough Community College; The City University of New York

* Students are provided with a reading passage and asked to read it, underline significant ideas, and make notes of how they plan to organize their response.
* Based upon the reading, students are asked to identify one idea and explain its significance.

Students must support their ideas with evidence or examples from “what you have read, learned in school, and/or personally experienced.”

* In the CATW analytic scoring rubric, the category “Structure of the Response” looks at how well the students organized their response and demonstrated connections between ideas. Students are told “it is important that your sentences and paragraph connect one to the next, so the reader can follow your thinking. You don’t want the reader to fall into a hole between sentences or paragraphs.”
* Students are asked to select main point of a given paragraph: “Is it the first or the last one? Or is it not stated? If not stated, write a sentence stating a main point and revise other sentences in the paragraph to fit it.”
* Students are required to “summarize the reading passage” in their own words and state the author’s own ideas. Directions read: “It is important that you do not copy the author’s ideas directly from the passage when writing your summary. Your goal…is to demonstrate how well you understand the reading passage, using your own words.” Approximately six sentences were selected for students to paraphrase.
* Finally, students are provided with a written response to the reading and told to underline and correct **fifteen** grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors in the response. Student are also expected to determine if the response was “well organized,” employed “transitions to connect ideas,” and provided an “adequate summary of the key points in the reading.”