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THINKING AND WRITING ABOUT FILM
Imagine entering a foreign country where you understand just enough of the language to communicate, but where you cannot quite grasp the customs or the etiquette of the land. Imagine that you have to learn the culture of that country without anyone showing or telling you how. This is what going to college is like for many first-year students. *Higher Learning: Reading and Writing About College, third edition*, appeals to students and teachers because it is written from their point of view. The fiction, poetry, essays, creative nonfiction, lists, journal entries, and articles included here allow students to see how their individual experiences fit into the culturally and historically diverse traditions and perspectives of university life.

Avid readers—students, teachers, and lifelong learners—know that literature is the one place a person is never alone. This collection allows readers to discover people just like themselves, as well as people sometimes so different from themselves as to be almost, at least at first, unimaginable. Students can watch these people struggle with problems and challenges, most of which never appear in any college catalogue or on any class syllabus. Although universities provide an array of student support systems, new students must work through some aspects of university life mostly on their own. Character, maturity, and experience will be as essential to success as high school class rank or ACT scores. Alienation, isolation, and loneliness will be as much of a challenge as English composition or college algebra.

Many college-success textbooks for first-year students focus on time management, critical thinking, active reading, and lecture and text note taking. These survival skills are the nuts and bolts of college success. The collected readings in this textbook display the whole academic machine chugging along in all its imperfect glory. These readings provide good and bad examples, some broader views and alternative takes of individual experiences, parables of the admirable, cautionary tales, and funny stories.

College students, especially first-year students, often feel isolated. The degree to which they feel a sense of place and a way of fitting in, which many teachers and administrators by now take too much for granted, leads to how well the students perform and, in fact, to whether or not they complete a degree. *Higher Learning* offers some of the “inside” stories of college life and university culture, addressing the difficult issues that students face in their transition to college. It also provides students and teachers with a vehicle to explore, reflect on, and perhaps even discover issues about ethnicity, class, age, gender, and sexual diversity.

**Where to Use This Book**

As editors, our first instinct would be to say this book should be used everywhere. Or at least everywhere there are people who ought to be paying attention to college, to university culture, to what an education is and how you get one, and to what all of it
means. More specifically, natural venues may include transition to college/student success courses, composition courses, creative writing courses, critical thinking courses, and high school college prep courses.

**How to Use This Book: A Primer for Careful Reading**

Critical Thinking Points—an arranged in the categories of *As You Read*, *After You've Read*, and *Some Possibilities for Writing*—accompany each selection, challenging students with the kinds of close and active critical reading and thinking required at the college level and providing prompts for contemplation, class discussion, and writing.

The *As You Read* questions will lend focus to a selection, help readers formulate their own questions, establish a historical and/or cultural context, or promote connections to students’ lives. The *After You've Read* questions often require the kinds of debate, perspective, and points of view that make for lively and productive small-group or full-class discussion. *Some Possibilities for Writing*, at the end of each reading, are an opportunity to respond in writing in the broadest possible ways suitable for short assignments or journal entries.

The *Further Suggestions for Writing* at the end of each chapter offer a menu of varied prompts and assignments for longer, more fully developed, and perhaps more formal assignments that build the skills necessary for writing well in college. These writing prompts range from class reports to interviews, from essays to fully developed research papers that employ the traditional rhetorical strategies such as simple exposition, comparative and causal analyses, or argument and persuasion. The point, in some way or another, is to foster the attention and perspective, the self-awareness and self-assessment that are indeed higher learning.

These categories of questions may be necessary and helpful, but any questions from anywhere in the book might be used at any time, in any way. Although each chapter of *Higher Learning* focuses on a particular stage of college life, this book is not necessarily meant to be read sequentially from page one to the end.

**Critical Reading Strategies: Questioning as You Read**

Good readers question as they read, and many instinctively ask themselves “journalists’ questions”—who, what, where, when, how, and why—as their eyes process each sentence. We suggest that students practice asking themselves these questions while reading and that instructors offer students more experience with this strategy by beginning each class discussion by asking students these questions as they pertain to each reading. This exercise will take just five to ten minutes at the start of the class, but it will enrich your discussion considerably.

Below is an example of this method applied to an excerpt from Mike Magnuson’s memoir *Lummox: Evolution of a Man* (pages 76 to 83). Keep in mind that these prompts could elicit many possible answers and that the discussion could prompt many more questions.
Who is this piece about? Who is the author? Does that matter?
Mike Magnuson. We know from his bio that he was suspended from college for one year. He's now a college teacher.

What happens in this piece? Imagine you're writing a two-line description to go on the back of a DVD case (if this were a film)... what do you absolutely need to know about what goes on in the piece? What is the basic plot?
Mike gets arrested and spends Labor Day weekend in jail. He loves the food and wants to take in all the details of his experience. He reads a book that changes his life. He decides to be an intellectual like the Big Swede.

Where does this take place? Does place matter?
Eau Claire County Jail. Spending a weekend in a small town jail might be much different from being locked up in a city like New York or Chicago. Magnuson is never afraid or even intimidated.

When does it take place? Does the time period influence the piece? Does it matter if it was written recently or twenty-five years ago?
The essay takes place around 1983. If it were set in the present day, Magnuson's jail experience might be more frightening, and his sentence would likely be stricter. If this occurred today, his attempted theft would be on his record forever.

How was the piece written (poem, story, essay, etc.)? Does it matter if this is written in the first-person or third-person? Why do you think the author chose this format?
Magnuson writes his memoir about “Mike” (rather than in the first-person, “I” voice that a traditional memoir would employ). He might do this because he has evolved into “new Mike,” and he's looking back at his experiences as “old Mike.”

Why do you think the author wrote this? Who is the audience the author had in mind? What might have been his purpose for writing this? Who cares about the piece?
Magnuson writes about a transformative experience, something with which many readers can relate. One of the reasons that reality television is so popular in the United States is that people tend to care about stories in which characters evolve (I was this, I had this experience, and now I'm something different). Readers care because his story is funny and interesting: college guy gets drunk and thinks it's a great idea to steal a chair in the shape of a hand... when the cops come he throws his wallet in the bushes and tells them he's “Bart Starr”... he spends a long weekend in the county jail, where he decides he's going to be an intellectual or at least become a good student and do what he's supposed to do.
An effective way to write a quality summary of anything—a short story from this collection, a chapter in a psychology textbook, or an article on stem-cell research—is to ask “who, what, where, when, how, and why” and answer each with concrete details. See our Web site http://www.uwec.edu/taylorb for other approaches to critical reading strategies.

A Note on the Third Edition

Significant changes have been made to the literature gathered here and to the Critical Thinking Points, Some Possibilities for Writing, Further Suggestions for Writing, and Selected Films for each chapter. We are especially pleased to add selections from Kao Kalia Yang's *The Latehomecomer: A Hmong Family Memoir*, Daniel Wolff's *How Lincoln Learned to Read: Twelve Great Americans and the Educations that Made Them*, and Alfred Lubrano's “Bricklayer's Boy,” to name just a few. We have also added readings that explore alcohol abuse and other risky behavior; study-abroad experiences; Greek life; disability culture; and gay, lesbian, transgender or questioning issues. Nearly twenty of the readings are by authors who are what universities categorize as “first generation” (neither parent graduated with a bachelor's degree). Since that background often affects a person's overall experience, and since about 30 percent of entering first-year students are “first gen,” we designate those authors with an asterisk in the table of contents (*).

We have a new feature in each chapter—“This Was the Assignment”—which includes a classroom-tested writing assignment and a “model” student response to that assignment. We also provide two quality student research papers on timely topics for college students—one on college students’ use of Facebook and one on the difficulties of coming out—as well as “student responses to readings” for each chapter. Though the chapter titles remain the same as in our second edition, some pieces have been cut, and three to five new pieces have been added per chapter. Some questions have been deleted, and some new ones added to ask students to dig deeper and look further. The writing prompts have been rescaled so that smaller, more informal ones appear at the end of each selection, whereas longer and more formal ones are at the end of each chapter. The annotated filmographies for each chapter have been expanded and revised. Our goal in providing this book continues to be that students will not only be motivated to read, but they also will be moved to reflect and write about their own experiences, their campus, their college life in general, and the world around them.

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our book in various stages: Joseph Eng, California State University, Monterey Bay; Elisa Michals, Sacramento State University; and Jennifer Rosti, Roanoke College.

Finally, thanks to our students in the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire’s developmental education, introduction to college writing, and creative writing courses, who were our first and ongoing audience.

For additional information, activities, and resources intended to enhance the readings in this book, be sure to visit our website:

http://www.uwec.edu/taylorb.
About the Authors

Patti See teaches courses in critical thinking, learning strategies, transitions to college, third-wave feminism, and masculinities studies at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire. She also supervises tutoring programs for first-generation /low-income students, multicultural students, and students with disabilities.

Her stories, poems, and essays have appeared in Salon Magazine, Women's Studies Quarterly, Journal of Development Education, The Wisconsin Academy Review, and HipMama, as well as other magazines and anthologies. In addition to Higher Learning: Reading and Writing about College, third edition, she is the author of a poetry collection, Love's Bluff (Plainview Press, 2006). She speaks at universities and conferences on a variety of topics, including first-year experience, critical thinking, third-wave feminism, and the depiction of masculinities in popular film. She was the recipient of the 2004 Academic Staff Excellence in Performance Award from the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire and the 2006 University of Wisconsin-System Regents Award for Excellence.

Bruce Taylor, Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire, has taught courses including first-year experience, introduction to college writing, creative writing, American literature, as well as in the Honors Program throughout his thirty-five years as a college teacher. He is the author of six books of poetry, including Pity the World (Plainview Press) and This Day (Juniper Press); he is the editor of seven anthologies, including the UPRIVER series of Wisconsin Poetry and Prose, and Wisconsin Poetry, published by the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters. His poetry, prose, and translations have appeared in such places as Carve Magazine, The Chicago Review, Exquisite Corpse, The Nation, Nerve, The New York Quarterly, The Northwest Review, Poetry, and E2ink-1: the Best of the Online Journals 2002.

He has also served as a member of the Literature Panel of the Wisconsin Arts Board and host of The Writer's Workshop: Wisconsin ETN, and he has served as program scholar and consultant for the Wisconsin Humanities Council, the Lila Wallace Foundation, the L. E. Phillips Library, and the Annenberg/CPB Project. He has won awards and fellowships from the Wisconsin Arts Board, Fulbright-Hayes, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Bush Artist Foundation. He was the recipient of the 2004 Excellence in Scholarship Award from the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire, and the 2006 Major Achievement Award from the Council of Wisconsin Writers for his lifetime of work as a poet, teacher, and community arts advocate.

We would love to hear from you. Please e-mail the authors with any feedback or suggestions at seepk@uwec.edu or taylorb@uwec.edu
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Chapter One


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Why is this course important?
This course will help you transition to college, introduce you to campus resources, and prepare you for success in all aspects of college, career, and life. You will:

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• Apply Concepts from College to Your Career and Life
• Learn to Use Media Resources

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Apply Concepts from College to Your Career and Life
• Provides learning techniques
• Helps you achieve your goals

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It can accompany any Student Success text, or be sold as a stand-alone course offering. To become successful learners, students must consistently apply techniques to daily activities.

How will MyStudentSuccessLab make a difference?

**Is motivation a challenge, and if so, how do you deal with it?**

**Video Presentation** – Experience peer led video 'by students, for students' of all ages and stages.

**How would better class preparation improve the learning experience?**

**Practice activities** – Practice skills for each topic - beginning, intermediate, and advanced - leveled by Bloom’s taxonomy.

**What could you gain by building critical thinking and problem-solving skills in this class?**

**Apply (final project)** – Complete a final project using these skills to create 'personally relevant' resources.
MyStudentSuccessLab Feature set:

**Topic Overview:** Module objectives.

**Video Presentation - Connect:** Real student video interviews on key issues.

**Practice:** Three skill-building exercises per topic provide interactive experience and practice.

**Apply - Personalize:** Apply what is learned by creating a personally relevant project and journal.

**Resources:** Plagiarism Guide, Dictionary, Calculators, and Assessments (Career, Learning Styles, and Personality Styles).

**Additional Assignments:** Extra suggested activities to use with each topic.

**Text-Specific Study Plan (available with select books):** Chapter Objectives, Practice Tests, Enrichment activities, and Flashcards.

MyStudentSuccessLab Topic List -

1. Time Management/Planning
2. Values/Goal Setting
3. Learning How You Learn
4. Listening and Taking Class Notes
5. Reading and Annotating
6. Memory and Studying
7. Critical Thinking
8. Problem-Solving
9. Information Literacy
10. Communication
11. Test Prep and Test Taking
12. Stress Management
13. Financial Literacy
14. Majors and Careers

MyStudentSuccessLab Support:

- **Demos, Registration, Log-in** - www.mystudentsuccesslab.com under “Tours and Training” and “Support.”
- **Email support** - Send an inquiry to MyStudentSuccessLab@pearson.com
- **Online Training** - Join one of our weekly WebEx training sessions.
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Introducing **CourseSmart**

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<th>Institutions &amp; Partners</th>
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