

The Writing Center & Reading/Study Skills Lab presents:

Tip Sheet on: The DCODE (decode) Writing Process

The DCODE (decode) process is a system of strategies to help with writing assignments. Detailed in Paragraphs and Essays by Lee Brandon, it is a flexible process that allows for student review and revision. DCODE includes the following steps:

- DELVE: Generate ideas for your topic by delving into your subject area through:
 1. *Brainstorming* – jot down answers to the questions Who? What? Where? When? Why? And How?, then list words and phrases that relate to those answers.
 2. *Freewriting* – write sentence after sentence, nonstop and spontaneously.
 3. *Clustering* – connect bubbled ideas with lines to show strings of relationships, producing each new bubble item in response to the question: What comes to mind?
 4. *Combining* – use any of the above methods, as directed by your instructor.
- CONCENTRATE: Focus your work by limiting your topic to one sentence that is not too broad, too narrow, or too vague. Base this topic sentence on an idea that emerged from the DELVE stage. You may have to try several statements before formulating one that best suits your writing task. Be sure that the final statement considers your audience and covers your assignment or intent.
- ORGANIZE: Complete an outline, a list, or a cluster. The list or cluster should be a refined version of the DELVE clustering. Regardless of the device you use, the organizational pattern should indicate a division of your topic into parts that you will, in turn, subdivide further as necessary for support.
- DRAFT: On your paper, write and then revise your assignment as many times as necessary for unity, coherence (logically connected ideas), emphasis, and strong support of ideas. In the last drafting phase, rework your material for effective sentence and paragraph structure.
- EDIT: Check your spelling, diction, punctuation, capitalization, and other fundamental aspects of writing. Before doing the final draft, read your paper aloud to discover any unintentional omissions and/or awkward expressions.

MCC offers a *Writing Center & Reading/Study Skills Lab* at both the Bedford and Lowell campuses. Tutoring is available weekdays and some evenings, at no charge. Schedules are posted on the doors. Drop in or make an appointment.

In Bedford: AR 214, Tel: 781-280-3727 or 3728.

In Lowell: City Campus Room 406, Tel: 978-656-3364 or 3365.