**Instructions for Revising Without a Partner**

Sean Carswell

*Print your essay and use it to perform the following tasks.*

1. Read your paper quickly.  When you finish, turn it over and write on the back.  What stood out to you?  What felt less relevant or less powerful?
2. Cover up all but the opening paragraph.  Read it several times.  Does it draw you in and make you want to keep reading?  What happens if you cut out the first sentence or two? What happens if you cut it entirely?  What needs to be rewritten?
3. A couple of good introductory techniques to avoid are:
   * 1. The dawn of time-type introduction.
     2. Dictionary definitions.
4. Cover up all but the closing paragraph.  Read it several times.  How redundant is it of what’s already been said?  Cross out the redundancies.  Cross out clichés.  See what’s left.  What does it leave your reader thinking?  What’s the answer to the “so what” question?
5. Jot down your intended purpose for the paper: What did you set out to do?  Now read it.  What did you do? Can you tell?  If not, what might be causing this problem? (Lack of focus?  Too many ideas?  Unnecessary sections of text?  Unclear text?)  Finally, does your intended purpose match your written one?  If not, how might you change this paper to get it to fit your purpose?
6. Organization.  As you read over it yet again, jot down a list in the margin of what each paragraph does.  Then look at that list.  How does the paper seem to be organized?  Is it effective?  Are there pieces missing?  Is there a more effective strategy?
7. Is there anything in your margin list that doesn’t seem to fit or belong?  If so, why not?  Does it disrupt the flow?  Not fit in with the purpose or goal of the paper?  Try removing it.  What happens?
8. Have you considered the naysayer in your text?  What alternative perspectives or points of view have you introduced?  What alternative perspectives or points of view should you address?
9. Write for five minutes addressing your ideas for change.  Don’t worry about the coherence of these ideas.  Don’t worry if what you’re writing doesn’t make perfect sense or fit a grammatically correct mold.  Just write as much as you can as fast as you can for five minutes.
10. On your own, consider additions, deletions, and transpositions (moving items within the text).  If this makes you nervous, try using track changes or physically cutting, pasting, and adding onto text.