

### 1. Strategy for re-focusing your ideas: The WIRMI

If you are feeling like you may be losing focus in your draft, it might be a good time to return to what you are trying to accomplish.

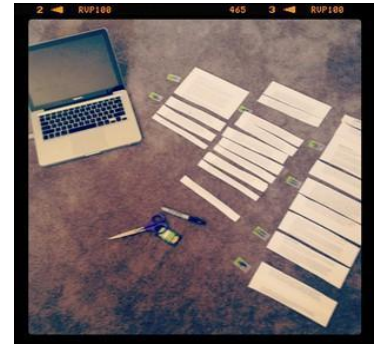
Try completing this statement: ***What I Really Mean Is.....***

Take your time and explain what it is you want to say overall in the paper. Use the language that comes naturally to you to explain, rather than trying to think about this in “thesis” mode. Then go back to your draft, and think about how and what each section of your paper is doing to help lead your reader toward this.

### 2. Strategy for re-thinking arrangement: The Essay Puzzle

At certain moments in the drafting process, it sometimes becomes difficult to decide what the best way to arrange your paragraphs might be, and whether they are building toward a cohesive and interesting final claim.

One interesting technique to find a new vantage point is to make a paper version of your project, and then cut each paragraph apart from the essay (yes, literally cut them). You’ll need a partner for this next part—shuffle the paragraphs from your essay so they are no longer in order, and ask a partner to put the essay back together. This is the important part—ask your partner ***not*** to try to find the original organization, instead, ask them to organize the paragraphs in a way that makes the essay most interesting and readable. If there are paragraphs left over that don’t fit anywhere—maybe they need to go? If the paragraph your partner chooses for the opening (was) your third paragraph, consider making these changes.



### 3. Strategy for cleaning up your syntax: Sentences stand-alone

In this exercise, the writer is working on making sure that each sentence she has written is organized and examined thoughtfully as a single element. You can either use the spacebar on your computer to separate sentences, or, on a paper draft, you might make double hash marks (/ /) between each sentence. In either case, the idea is to stop after each sentence and look at it as a separate entity. Does it make sense? Should it be two sentences, or combined with the one before? Are the references in the sentence clear? Is it in [active voice](#), if appropriate? Is there a more clear way to say this?

#### **4. Strategy for cleaning up your prose: De-cluttering and Getting Concrete**

Choose any paragraph in your essay, and try eliminating 10 words that are unnecessary to the meaning (i.e. “in today’s world..” or “in order to” or “as you can see”). Next, circle the nouns and verbs in the paragraph. Look for any substitutions you could make that would be more concrete and make your prose come alive (i.e. substitute “sauntered” for “walked,” or “her iPhone 6” for “device”).

#### **5. Strategy for re-examining your use of sources and ideas: Highlighting**

This exercise allows you to get a visual sense of what you are doing as a writer, particularly in terms of source use and your own ideas. You’ll need 3 highlighting colors and a partner. (This can be done on a computer with the highlighting function, as well). Ask your partner to choose a color that designates a particular move in your work. For example:

**Pink**= Introduction to source and that writer’s project

**Blue**= Flashpoint or quote from source chosen and explanation of the choice

**Green**=Ideas/claims developed in relation to the source (forwarding or countering, making some new claim from the source)

Now look back at your paper. Are there areas that are underrepresented or over represented? Are there parts that your partner misidentified, that might need a little further explicit clarification?