# **Diagnostics**

* *These represent a variety of ideas, not so much “camera ready” prompts. They can be done through surveys or free writes; in my experience, you’ll get more helpful feedback by letting them say whatever they want for 10-15 minutes in writing.*

(academic writing diagnostic)

* On the second class (or the first one if you’re teaching long sessions) pass out a prompt and ask them to write an intro, analysis, personal response, and conclusion in response to the prompt, with zero instruction from you. When grading, tell them what they do well and areas where some work is needed to either pass or get to the A level in the course. Keep in mind that many students are not confident, afraid of your criticism, or outright terrified of college. Some teachers refer to this as deficit-model teaching, in other words telling the student how they fall short of the course standards. I agree, but still feel it is helpful for them to get acquainted with expectations. Emphasize it is okay if they feel lost, and that this is only one small part of the class and that you are here to help; they can do it.

(attitude diagnostic)

* Ask them about their attitude toward school, and reading/writing (both academic and personal), the role college plays in their lives, past relationships with teachers, their academic and professional interests, and where they think they are strong or weak, the level of support and mentorship they have received on and off campus, both now and in the past. What type of support would they like that they are not getting?

(metacognitive diagnostic)

* Ask students what their distractions are at home, when they have time to do schoolwork, how much time they devote to school, their out-of-school obligations related to work and family, how they get to school, and any challenges that seem to make it harder for them to invest in college life. Are the people in their lives supportive of their education? Knowledgeable about attending college?

(preparation diagnostic)

* Ask them how well their previous academic experiences have prepared them for college, their knowledge of the campus, how the first paper you assigned compares to the last one they wrote for an English class, what was it about their last school (or schools) that was effective, that was ineffective, what teachers have been good teachers and why, or bad teachers and why, what their favorite subjects or reading materials are and why.

(postwrite diagnostic)

* Ask students what they felt was difficult about the paper, what they felt they did well, what they liked or didn’t like, if they thought the essay was really easy, or too hard, or boring, anything they learned about their subject, what they learned about their writing process, obstacles they had getting the work done, their level of confidence in their ability to complete the class, how this essay compared to the last one they wrote for an English class.