Professor Vincent Prohaska used the following in-class writing prompts in his Psychology of Learning course (PSY 310). These were low-stakes assignments that were collected and returned with comments. Students typically received credit for submitting writing in response to these prompts.

Generating Examples Following a Lecture on a New Topic
After covering the basics of classical conditioning, Professor Prohaska asked students to generate their own examples of this phenomenon and to label each constituent part. Incorrect examples were still given partial credit. Students were also given the opportunity to revise their responses, based on the instructor's feedback, in order to receive full credit.

Writing to Introduce a New Concept
After covering classical and operant conditioning separately, the class was asked to consider ways that these types of conditioning interact. To begin this topic, the instructor referred to a study in classical conditioning that had already been covered in class and showed how the same data might also be explained by operant conditioning. Students were then asked to write which form of conditioning offered the better explanation. The instructor told them there was a "correct" answer but that he was more interested in their reasoning. This writing helped the instructor make the point that in the real world (the world beyond carefully controlled laboratory experiments) recognizing different types of conditioning can be difficult. This assignment also helped prepare students for the next major written assignment, in which they were given data, asked to provide both classical and operant conditioning explanations of that data, and then asked to decide which explanation was better.

In-class Writing to Interpret Data
After covering intra- and extra-dimensional shifts in discrimination learning, Professor Prohaska presented a study and then put a table of the resulting data on the board. Instead of explaining these data, he asked them to write their interpretations of them. Although the data did show evidence of the expected intra- and extra-dimensional shifting, there also was another factor present (specifically, that one stimulus dimension always was easier for the animals than the other). So, this writing assessed: first, whether students could recognize the effects just discussed generally in an actual dataset; and, second, whether they could recognize the non-discussed factor.

Writing in Response to a Reading Assignment
After covering a chapter on encoding processes in memory, the instructor asked students to write about what they found most surprising in the chapter. Several students explained their choice of a section by comparing the text's account of learning with their own experiences with learning.