LUCID Essay Writing

The acronym LUCID enables students to remember the qualities of a well-revised paper. Lucid refers to the most important characteristics of writing: understandable and understanding. Definition: clear and easy to understand, able to think clearly.

Lucid writing is understandable, but it also shows that the author was thinking clearly. The argument is rational, well thought out, intelligible, and well expressed. Along with understanding, lucid implies sanity, having full use of one's mental and emotional faculties. Furthermore, lucid means "suffused with light, luminous" and "translucent." The writing is enlightened, or insightful in a "translucent" way that gives light or understanding to the reader.

Each letter of LUCID stands for specific aspects that explain the two general characteristics. In a lucid essay, the language is unified and coherent, and important issues are developed.

L.U.C.I.D.	
Clear (understandable)	**Rational (understanding)**
Language is **U**nified and **C**oherent.	**I**mportant issues/ideas are **D**eveloped.

The basis for this handout was a Cengage revision method called "C.L.U.E.S.S." I thought it looked too much like "Clueless" or that it was asking students to "get a clue," so I reinvisioned the method.

The two models share L, U, and C. Paying attention to Language means "using words appropriate for your purpose and audience (29)." I would add considering your own voice and the constraints of the essay genre. Writing with Unity is "staying on your topic (12)." It also implies use of transition words, repeated key words, and longer sentences. Coherence means that you "connect your ideas (27)." Types of logic include comparison, argumentation, analysis, and narrative.

The Cengage model suggests that we use "Emphasis: call attention to your important ideas (32)" and "Support: back up your controlling ideas with evidence and logic (34)." I merged these issues, because Development of text means supporting with evidence, while Development for audience means making ideas more prominent. But this is where LUCID works better than CLUESS. A piece of writing that is clearly articulated, luminous with meaning, and full of insight naturally shines, so drawing attention to itself is implied. However, if this is a problem for you, consider "Emphasis."

The final point of the Cengage model is "Sentences: Write effective sentences with structural variety (35)." As I mention above, I discuss variety of sentence structure under Unity, which doesn't mean topical unity alone. Rather, it means paragraph unity, which requires varied sentences for flow. The LUCID model is theoretically complete, pedagogically sound, and it makes a lot of sense.

Cengage Publishing. *Paragraphs and Essays: With Integrated Readings*, 12th Edition, 2013.