ACRSS for Thesis Statements
by José Luis Cano
Texas Southmost College

I teach writing courses at Texas Southmost College, a public community college in South Texas that, as of fall 2017, serves 6,220 students with over 94% identifying as Hispanic and about 73% enrolling part-time. Following writing strategies that employ acronyms, I created an acronym to assist students with construction of their thesis statements.

ACRSS (pronounced "across") stands for "Answer," "Claim," "Reasons," "Specificity," and "So what?" I introduced this concept as a practical approach for students to apply to thesis statements. I explained that ACRSS functions as a guideline for creating strong thesis statements because in my course, a thesis statement 1) answers the prompt, 2) provides an arguable claim, 3) presents reasons for the claim, 4) meets specificity for the length of the assignment, and 5) relates to an important community issue.

After presenting ACRSS to students, I modeled its application by identifying these components on a few sample thesis statements. As I slowly read through them, I wrote feedback using the vocabulary established with ACRSS. Then, I asked students to practice this same process, including the feedback. In groups, students read several thesis statements and wrote feedback. For example, they wrote short phrases, "reasons?" or "broad claim." After they completed this process, we reunited as a class and shared responses. I wrote the thesis statements on the board with black marker and used different colors for each component of the acronym to emphasize visually each component. Lastly, I tasked them with individually writing a thesis statement while considering these guidelines.

In applying this instructional strategy, I encountered a couple of challenges. I hesitated in applying the acronym as an instructional strategy because of my lack of confidence in it, for I had never implemented it. At the last moment, I almost changed my lesson plan to exclude it; however, I decided otherwise. Once in the classroom, I delivered ACRSS with confidence, so the students bought into the method—as did I. While the students completed the identification of these components quite accurately, the transition from identification to construction of thesis statements proved more challenging for them. However, I anticipated and welcomed these challenges since they require different skills.

I feel encouragement and optimism because students through discussion and in writing exercised the vocabulary presented through ACRSS. They also voiced appropriate concerns toward thesis statements, "I don't think this statement is specific," or "Where are the reasons for it?" Aside from creating guidelines on thesis statements, this acronym and exercise positioned students to develop vocabulary useful when conducting peer responses on their own essays to be created later in the course.

When they worked in groups, students were asked to submit one document per group. In the future, I will distribute index cards, so the groups can discuss the components of the thesis

statement, but individually will practice writing feedback. Also, I want to create a visual for the acronym to improve retention of it.

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