Diagnosing Unclear Writing *(PARTIAL DRAFT Jan. 2010 by Allyson Skene -- for adaptation as needed)*

Aspect of Writing	Possible Source of Problem	How it looks in the text
Understanding of Assignment	Misunderstanding of genre	• Assignment has the wrong format or sections
	Misunderstanding of audience	• Inappropriate tone is used throughout • Contextual or background information is missing / connections to coursework are assumed
Understanding of Material	Poor understanding	• Significant amount of off-topic, irrelevant or wrong ideas
	General or surface level understanding	• Writing tends to be repetitive or contain broad statements with little detail • Writing is vague, missing examples and details that clarify key ideas
Logic and Organization	Logic of argument or point is confused	• Paragraphs read like a list of unrelated ideas • Order of paragraphs seems haphazard
Voice and relation to sources	Unable to effectively integrate research into writing	• Overuse or misuse of quotations • Citations are missing or only at the end of a paragraph • Frequent shifting of perspective
Paragraphs	Poorly organized	• Sentences seem to be randomly ordered • No topic sentence or controlling idea in paragraph
	Cover too many different points or include off topic ideas	• Paragraphs seem muddled or full of unconnected ideas
Sentences	Lack concision	• Sentences seem overly verbose or indirect
	Poorly constructed	• Some sentences require re-reading to understand
	Contain grammatical errors	
Words	Faulty diction	• Words used incorrectly, or lack precision or logical meaning
	Typographical or grammatical errors	• Require guesswork to decipher intended form or spelling