Hierarchy of Writing Concerns

The URL for the SCSC and to make appointments is http://comskillscenter.ba.ttu.edu

PURPOSE: What is the goal or objective for this piece of writing?

Sample questions for Purpose:
- What is your goal for this paper?
- What are you trying to accomplish?

AUDIENCE: To whom are you writing?

Sample Questions for Audience:
- Who is your primary audience? Secondary audience?
- How knowledgeable is your audience about your topic?
- Who will benefit from this document? Who might be hurt?

ORGANIZATION: Does the paper progress in an organized, logical way? Does each paragraph develop a unified idea?

Sample questions for Organization:
- Can you tell me why you've arranged things this way?
- Where do you think the paper flows well? Where do you think it gets off track?
- How does this section (paragraph, sentence) relate to your purpose?
- What's the main point in this paragraph, and how does each sentence connect to it?

DEVELOPMENT: Are there places in the paper where more support is needed?

Sample questions for Development:
- What else could you say about_____?
- This idea or claim could use more support. What evidence could you use to back it up?
- What else will your reader want to know about?
- This idea is unclear; can you explain it more?

SENTENCE-LEVEL CONCERNS: Are sentences clear? Is parallelism used? Are transitions used to connect ideas? Are sentences concise?

Sample questions for sentence-level concerns:
- I'm having trouble following the logic here. Can you tell me more about it?
- These two ideas don't seem to be connected. Can you explain the connection?
- This sentence is somewhat wordy. How can you make it more concise?

WORD-LEVEL CONCERNS: Is verb tense consistent? Do subjects and verbs agree? Pronouns with antecedents? Is diction appropriate?

Sample questions for word-level concerns:
- Do you see where you've shifted tense here?
- Have the student read the sentence aloud to see if he/she "hears" the inappropriate syntax.

MECHANICS: Is correct punctuation used?