

Summary and Analysis of Writing Practices

Brief Daily Sessions

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The Engineering Method of Technical Writing

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This handout explains how to demonstrate that you have met an essential objective of the course: you can work in brief, daily sessions. Your demonstration should be based on contemporaneous data from your lab notebook and from your analysis of the results you have produced.

Please review your lab notebook for the following intervals:

- Monday, November 3, 2014 to Friday, December 5, 2014
- Monday, January 12, 2015 to Friday, March 13, 2015

Please begin with this information:

- Number of weeks for which you have data
- Number of weeks in which you wrote
- Number of weeks in which you did not write

Next, please identify some time periods to analyze in more depth:

- Your best week¹
- Your worst week (among weeks that you actually wrote)
- The week that is most representative of your typical week
- The week in which you most closely approximated the ideal of working in brief, daily sessions
- The three-week period during that represents your experimentation with working in brief, daily sessions²

Having identified the weeks, please gather these data:

- The *start times* and *durations* of your work sessions for all of the weeks under study
- For each week under study, a statement of what your goals and what you produced

¹You decide whether “best” means “most productive” or “most comfortable” or something else. Explain how you chose your best week.

²The period recommended on the course calendar was the three weeks beginning November 3.

When prewriting, drafting, or editing, you produce tangible artifacts; when waiting actively, you produce only thoughts. Either way, knowing what you produced is more informative than a simple statement or numerical summary of how productive you felt during the session. For this reason, information about goals and production is probably best conveyed narratively.

Please put the start times and durations in a single master chart, graph, table, or other visualization. The visualization should show your work patterns at a glance, and it should make it easy to compare what happened in different weeks at different times. Please refer to the visualization and answer these questions:

1. Where is data missing?
2. Can you identify a two-week or three-week interval that shows consistent practice with brief, daily sessions?
3. Overall, what does the pattern of start times look like?
4. Overall, what does the pattern of durations look like?
5. How do your work patterns compare in your best week, your worst week, and your most representative week?
6. What, if any, is the relationship between work patterns and production?
7. What, if any, is the relationship between work patterns and satisfaction?

Some of this information will be in the letters to your future self that you have written earlier in the year.