

COMP 150TW: Summary of Midterm Evaluations

The Engineering Method of Technical Writing

October 28, 2016

Aspects of the course that enhance learning

Multiple mentions:

- Group discussions [4 students]
- Seeing our own work used as examples in class [3 students]
- Seeing other people's writing; getting peer feedback [2 students]
- Exercises, especially on specific editing skills [3 students]
- Assigned exercises, which blend well with daily life
- The lab notebook, which forces me to reflect on what I just did, further clarifying what I'm understanding and what's working [2 students]
- The encouragement of regular practice; being forced to write [2 students]
- Using regular practice to discover what works best in a student's daily routine
- The pace of the class, which allows time to assimilate ideas and to practice (one class per week allows in-depth learning to happen and to have great substance) [2 students]

Single mentions:

- Class time going in depth into principles applied on assignments (can acknowledge difficulties as well as share viewpoints and epiphanies)
- Gaining mindfulness (also helps with research and other work)
- The quieting response (focus on a good memory and smile)
- The ideas, skills, and exercises, which help with other classes and projects
- The assigned readings (viewed as valuable, especially Williams)
- Guided reading
- Keeping a portfolio to track progress
- Helps me create time to write and think about my project

- The course handbook (teaches the methods)
- My peers, who let me feel comfortable with writing and confident of writing
- The [ACTION] emails, which help stay on track with tasks
- Seeing the instructor's solutions
- Talking to the instructor

Things that could improve learning

Multiple mentions:

- Consolidating email announcements with the course calendar [2 students]
- Knowing beforehand how work will be evaluated
- Clarify expectations for writing outside of the assigned practice
- Do more writing
- Do more prewriting and try different types of prewriting
- More guidance from the instructor on prewriting

Single mentions:

- Using Williams's techniques in greater depth
- More focus (course appears to meander in terms of concepts learned)
- More targeted feedback (though that may be happening anyway)
- Inviting Donna Qualters back to teach another session in the spring
- Pair homework (e.g., trade editing)
- Get thoughts or feedback on writing success and practice from people (instructors, colleagues, or peers) outside the class
- More help developing good habits, especially in the face of other responsibilities

- Exercises which do not assume that my writing project is at a certain stage
- Utilize Piazza more or better
- Extra help for international students
- Knowing the instructor's office hours

Things that are not possible at this time:

- A smaller classroom
- A better version of Boice (which would be short and concrete and not drag on)

Things students could do

- Be more active on Piazza; respond to requests there [3 students]
- Get to know each other; share writing, thoughts, feelings, and experiences; meet regularly with a group [3 students]
- Share small bits of progress outside of class
- Share revisions with before/after examples [2 students]
- Continue to have well balanced, intellectual discussions in class
- Continue to facilitate healthy and equal discussion
- Volunteer students' own writing for analysis and discussion
- When struggling with a concept, speak up early and often
- Arrive on time
- Help set up the classroom (board, chairs)
- Read syllabus more thoroughly