

COMP 150TW: Assessing Brief, Daily Sessions

The Engineering Method of Technical Writing

November 18, 2016

Basic data

By *writing your initials* in appropriate boxes, please fill in the visualizations on the board.

1. For each writing *session*, was it devoted primarily to active waiting, prewriting, drafting, editing, or something else?
2. For each *day*, what best describes the *duration* of your primary writing session that day?
3. For each *session*, what best describes the *time of day*? Best time, a productive time, or a less productive time?

Assessment of the data

Please answer these questions on the board by placing *an anonymous mark* in the appropriate place:

4. Which best describes the length and frequency of your writing sessions?
 - (a) I'm writing in binges and can't keep my sessions brief.
 - (b) I'm writing comfortably in brief, daily sessions.
 - (c) I write some good sessions, but not every day.
 - (d) I'm writing daily, but sessions are short, and I worry.
5. How many different locations have you used?
6. Is your primary location comfortable, somewhat comfortable, adequate, somewhat uncomfortable, or uncomfortable?
7. Is your secondary location comfortable, somewhat comfortable, adequate, somewhat uncomfortable, or uncomfortable?
8. Check the times of day at which you work. Is the timing of your sessions very regular, somewhat regular, irregular, or very irregular?

Assessment of your subjective experience

Again, please make anonymous marks.

9. Is your writing starting to feel like a habit?
 - (a) Actually, it's a habit already.

- (b) Yes, it's starting to feel like a habit.
- (c) Something has changed, and I feel myself moving in that direction.
- (d) No, nothing has really changed.

10. How well do you feel you can use a writing session of just 5 to 10 minutes?
 - (a) I can use it well.
 - (b) I can get something done.
 - (c) It's not productive, but at least it refreshes my memory.
 - (d) I get no value from it.

11. How well do you feel you can use a writing session of 10 to 30 minutes?
 - (a) I can use it well.
 - (b) I can get something done.
 - (c) It's not productive, but at least it refreshes my memory.
 - (d) I get no value from it.

Ideas you may have tried in your practice

So that we can know who has tried these ideas, please answer the next two questions by *writing your initials* on the board.

12. Have you used some sort of *contingency* (a computer scientist might say "forcing function") to force the new habit of brief, daily sessions?
13. Have you visualized any data from your lab notebook in the form of a chart? Did it help?

Your preliminary results

These questions are for discussion. Don't write on the board.

14. When you start a writing session, you must recall many details: about your project, about what you did last time, or about your technical work.

What changes, if any, have you observed in the process of bringing details to mind at the beginning of a session?

15. Many scientists and academics worry about not getting enough done. *When you're working*, how do you feel about your production? When your production is higher or lower than usual, what do you think? How do you feel?

Have the answers to any of these questions started to change?

16. How has your experience of cognitive load changed? At all?

17. What, if anything, have you learned about time and time management?