

To: Faculty Professional Development Center, Kent State University

Re: Faculty Learning Community Activity meetings for Improving Technical Report Writing

Date of Meeting: 4/2/08

Time: 2:03 to 3:02 PM

Meeting location: Polsky 134, The University of Akron

LC members present: Sue Ramlo, Mike Johanyak, Kelly Webb, Irina Chernikova, Jeff Schantz

*Please describe the topics covered at the meeting or a summary of the event:*

The discussion started with outcomes and whether or not meeting a major outcome should result in either passing or failing the course. For instance, Mike stated that students who do not submit their research-related assignments or submit them with no evidence of research (e.g., no references, no citations, and so forth) fail the course since it's an important course outcome (and he has in his syllabus that students will fail if they do not meet this component).

Sue suggested that smaller assignments throughout the semester are less threatening to freshmen students; students who struggle can get feedback that can help them improve upon the next research assignments. However, feedback is not a guarantee that students will improve their work. As we had agreed upon for TRW in earlier meetings, multiple assessments for an outcome are more appropriate than one large assignment. We also spoke about possible language disconnects between what faculty say and what students hear or understand (e.g. evidence may not mean the same thing to faculty as it may mean to students).

We discussed the critical thinking assignments that Sue used last semester as part of an NSF grant with David McConnell and how she is using them again this semester. Jeff discussed a decoding type of assignment he uses to help students demonstrate critical thinking skills. Sue said that she will send out an article on critical thinking to the FLC.

Mike and Irina are going to present at CELT (Celebration of Excellence in Learning and Teaching) on their team teaching of TRW.

We're still waiting for activities from faculty / programs outside of our FLC. These activities may not be completed during the semester but during the summer, instead. We discussed research / writing across the curriculum. The TRW faculty have found, from discussions with faculty within and outside our college that some undergraduate programs have eliminated research components (e.g. writing a paper) because of the quality of the assignments and/or they do not know how to best grade them.

**FOLLOW UP:** *We still need TRW activity authors to add sections to their activities no later than our next meeting (1 week from today at 2 PM, SHS 123 K).*