

To: Faculty Professional Development Center, Kent State University

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

Date of Meeting: 2/13/08

Time: 2:01 to 3:00 PM

Meeting location: SHS 123 K, The University of Akron

LC members present: Sue Ramlo, Kelly Webb, Jeff Schantz, John Nicholas, Roland Arter, Tom Lukach

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

Mike told us that Sheldon has approved the idea of Irina teaching in various technical writing sections with a focus on full-time instructors. She will be taped so that it can be shared with all TRW faculty.

Our group continued to brainstorm about what types of activities students could perform that would include measurements yet without a lot of specific equipment or mathematics. Here is a summary of this discussion including person who will write up an example assignment (shown in red).

Quantitative Data Collection Ideas:

- Coefficient of friction – angle of incline. Tom can provide materials. **TOM**
- Burn candles – time the burning of the candle / height as time passes (at specific increments). Compare candles by diameter, material (soy, paraffin, etc). **TOM**
- Pennies' weight changes at specific years because of changes in the metal makeup used. Students could measure a wide range of pennies, from a fairly large time line, and look for the changes in weight at certain years. **SUE**
- Students could buy a 1 lb bag of “mini carrots” to perform measurements. Measurements could easily include mass (weight), length, and thickness. This would provide data for finding averages, standard deviations, frequencies, and graphs. **SUE**
- Students could compare paper towels – 4 to 5 different brands. Their comparisons could include how much water each holds (possibly multiple measurements; students could squeeze the water out to measure in a measuring cup), how many pennies each can hold before breaking, etc. **SUE**
- Children's picture books could be analyzed – number of pages per book, average words per page, etc. **JOHN**
- Magazine ads – the number of ads in a variety of magazines. This could be altered to include how many ads targeting women, men, children, etc. **ROLAND**

Qualitative data collection:

- Surveys – survey your family, friends, classmates about wearing seatbelts, eye color, etc.

We discussed the typical contents for a lab report. Sue passed out copies of her formal lab report rubric. ET faculty agreed that the format was generally the same as what they expect their program students to use.

We discussed the idea of dedicated sections of TRW for engineering / engineering technology majors. The main issues have to do with different schedules for different programs and getting students to take a course at a specific time in a specific semester. Lori brought up the idea of learning communities and how that would get students to take the TRW course together as a learning community.

Our next meeting will include further discussion of ideas for these types of data collection activities.

We will meet next on Thursday February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2-3 PM in SHS 123 (E&S Tech conference room). Jeffrey Pellegrino will be attending. Our tentative agenda is:

Discussion of:

1) assessment procedures

- a) Q study
- b) Formal physics labs
- c) Creation of learning outcomes / objectives for Technical Report Writing
- d) Other?

2) learning artifacts (shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered practice)

- a) Creation of authentic TRW assignments
- b) Students collection of data for relevance in reporting and analyzing data along with drawing conclusions and citing supporting evidence.
- c) team teaching of TRW - Mike J (Technical Writing faculty) & Irina (Technical Math faculty)

3) how our home institution is buying into the work of the Learning Community.

- a) GEAC - learning outcomes / objectives
- b) Funded travel - OATYC, I4S, AAPT, MWERA
- c) Other?

4) SERC, wiki, etc.

5) Data collection activities - distribution (hardcopy / electronic).