

To: Faculty Professional Development Center, Kent State University

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

Date of Meeting: 2/6/08

Time: 2:01 to 3:00 PM

Meeting location: POL 134, The University of Akron

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

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

Our primary meeting topic was the draft of the Outcomes and Learning Goals for the Technical Report Writing course. There was some discussion about the sixth Outcome listed and perhaps breaking it into two separate outcomes, one which focuses on critical thinking in student writing and another about the format and content being appropriate for a variety of audiences.

The discussion of critical thinking led to one about data analysis. Irina discussed what she has been doing while team-teaching TRW with Mike Johanyak. It was agreed that this new addition to the TRW course should be continued for all TRW sections. Irina agreed to either train TRW faculty, teach in more sections (for the same 1 hour of load), be video taped or provide some other method for TRW faculty to learn how to perform the data analysis instruction she has been providing in these specific TRW course sections.

In order to continue the work of data analysis, including creating graphs, students need to take some type of data. Our group brainstormed 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:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

- Children's picture books could be analyzed – number of pages per book, average words per page, etc.
- 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.

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

We will meet next on Wednesday February 13th, 2-3 PM in SHS 123 (E&S Tech conference room).