

COURSE ASSESSMENT REPORT

Course Number: 2020 222 701

Instructor: Gary Bays

Course Title: Technical Report Writing

Semester: Spring

Year: 2005

1. Course Learning Outcome(s) Being Assessed

Organize writing effectively (GE 3)

Improve critical thinking and reading skills (GE 1)

2. Instructional Techniques to Achieve the Course Learning Outcomes

A number of class sessions are devoted to design elements in technical communication, among these, white space, paragraphing, titles, fonts, features (bold, italics, underlines), graphics, page balance, headings, and sidebars. Students are asked to re-design a number of pages, both collaboratively and individually, based upon the content and audience.

3. Assessment Activity(ies) to Measure Student Learning (pre- post-tests, quizzes, exams, projects, assignments, self-assessment, in-class exercises)

Students analyze a piece of technical text and are asked to improve the design elements in order to ease reading and comprehension for a general audience. They do this on the first and last day of class.

4. Results/Observations on each activity

First-day results are predictably poor. On average, the class scored just below two design suggestions per page. On the final day, student averaged more than seven design suggestions, many of them augmented by commentary supporting their choices.

5. Based on above Results/Observations, Suggestions for Better Achieving Course Learning Outcomes

I believe students are making marked improvements in working with text and rudimentary design elements, and their sense of visual rhetoric is far more developed when they leave the class. I will continue to use this level of assessment to gauge those rhetorical skills. In addition, I hope to introduce multimodal elements (audio, video, photos) that have become increasingly vital in web-based communication.