

Semester review

Sociology, Communication



Sean Hensarling CHEE ENGI 2304 Mrs. McLay Semester Review Essay Sean Hensarling Semester Review Essay This essay will describe the progress I have made over this last semester to improve my writing ability in order to assess the effectiveness of the engineering technical writing course ENGI 2304, otherwise known as Technical Communications. I will discuss the writing process I have developed over the course of the semester, and then elaborate on how my writing ability has improved. Following that, I will choose my best and worst writing assignment from my portfolio and explain why I feel that these assignments are my best and worst. After discussing my best and worst assignments, I will illustrate to what extent I foresee writing will be involved in my professional career as an engineer, and to what extent I feel prepared to write at the level expected of an engineer. When I began the semester I would write my papers without brainstorming, and with only a brief scan of the document as a substitute for editing. I now write out the main ideas of a paper before I begin to start writing a draft. This allows me to gather my thoughts in a coherent manner and ensure that I meet all the objectives of the writing assignment. These main points are then organized in the order that provides the most fluid structure. Once these ideas are arranged, the actual writing of the paper may begin. Once I finish what I feel completes a paragraph, I reread the paragraph, and then reread the entire document. This repetitive reading ensures that the newest paragraph fits in tone and context to the previous paragraph and relates to the assignment as a whole. I made this change in my writing process so that my writing process could become more efficient and thus save me time and stress. My class schedule is demanding this semester and requires that I

have a larger amount of time for my other classes than I would prefer to allocate. My writing ability has improved over the course of the semester, in that, my writing has a higher degree of clarity and a more organized structure. In previous semesters I tended to ramble a bit in my writing. I would sometimes write several sentences to illustrate a point which could really have been stated in one sentence. My writing has become more concise since the beginning of the semester. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement. I feel that the actual act of writing has become easier since my writing assignments became more structured. I am able to focus more on how each sentence supports a main idea, and worry less about fulfilling the objectives of the assignment. By writing the main ideas prior to starting the paper, I know I have all the necessary information that needs to be included in the paper. I believe that my vocabulary is the strongest part of my writing ability. I am an avid reader and I feel that my diction and vocabulary are a result of my literary experience. The weakest point of my writing ability is my lack of transitions in my writing. When I think of what to write, I visualize the thoughts as bullet points, and I feel that my writing occasionally feels like I am listing these bullet points without a transition to flow from one point to the next. Consequently, I am actively trying to incorporate more transitions into my writing. I believe that the best writing assignment I have produced this semester is my Milestone 6, which is the proposal for my redesign of a whole-house water purification system. I believe this was my best assignment because it was the most organized and thought-out of all of my assignments. Since most of the sections that comprise the proposal were completed in some form or another in the previous assignments, all I had to

do was adapt the previous assignments to the format of the proposal and write the remaining parts of the proposal. To fulfill a requirement of Technical Communications, I set up an appointment at the University of Houston Writing Center. I met with a graduate student majoring in English to help me edit the proposal. I followed the suggestions of the graduate student that assisted me, and when I had completed the assignment I felt very confident in the quality of the assignment. I believe that my worst writing assignment was my Milestone 7, which is the progress report. I had put this particular assignment off longer than was prudent, and, as a result, I did not have the time or patience for writing that I normally have. It had too many mistakes and felt rushed. I feel that I could have done better on that assignment. After I graduate, I will begin my career as an engineer. As an engineer, writing will of course be involved for about 40% of my day. I will have to write reports, notes, memos, presentations and many other types of documents. I understand that it is critical for engineers to be precise and clear in their writing. I feel confident in my ability to complete these various writing tasks. I am also sure of my public speaking skills. I have been in some sort of leadership position in student organizations for the last five years, so I have more experience in addressing groups of my peers than most people my age. I understand that engineers must have good public speaking skills in order to advance in industry. In conclusion, I feel that Technical Communications has helped to foster my writing ability over the last semester. I believe that the class has helped address an important skill necessary to all engineers. I have found that my writing process has become more structured and efficient. I have also found that my writing ability has

grown, and, as a result, I enjoy reading my own writing more. I believe that Technical Communications has helped to prepare me for my future career as an engineer.