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Reflecting on “Introduction to Writing”

Abstract

The premise of this paper, per the course syllabus, is to have students provide examples of cogitations¹ about their previous paper on “perceptions of college writing as you enter the course” [3, p13]. That is once the ENC-102 students had read chapter one of *Writing for Success*, titled *Introduction to Writing*. My previous paper, Written Assignment #1, titled *College Writing: Perceptions & Past Experiences*, can be found on my website as a PDF. To summarize my ending sentiments in *College Writing: Perceptions & Past Experiences*: (1) “writing at a college level, statistically speaking, is troublesome to most students” and (2) “I do not view college writing as anything too hard technically speaking, just that it requires a considerable amount of focus and discipline to do what it theoretically requires” [1, p2]. These two notions were agreed upon by the redacted author of *Writing for Success* and subsequently explained in more detail in the book’s chapter. However, that “expansion” is logically expected when comparing a two page to 37 page “paper.”

Cogitations on Sections 1 through 3

Section 1, *Reading and Writing in College*, creates an overview of expectations of college writing, from both the professor and student’s perspective. Table 1.1, found on page 3, details some of the major and minor differences in High School (HS) and College (CLL) assignments. Picking one particular row on personal responsibility, reviewing “for your exams is primarily your responsibility” in CLL, where as in HS teachers “often provide study guides ... to help ... prepare [students] for exams” [4, p3]. In my opinion, this is probably the biggest area that the normative student will have to “shift” their work ethic on a fundamental scale from HS to CLL. If they fail to do so, they are likely to suffer from lower grades than they are technically capable of with proper time management (in relation to time spent on CLL academic tasks). The rest of the section goes over time management strategies (see page 4) and the *SQ3R Strategy* (see page 9) for helping students comprehend what they read. It repeats much of my (2) sentiment, just in more detail, to further support (1).

Section 2, *Developing Study Skills*, expands upon learning styles (visual, verbal, auditory, and kinesthetic), time management, and generalized note-taking methods (like charting or Cornell Notes). The section’s only applicable portion to the paper’s premise being time management in my opinion. What it primarily tries to point out to the reader is that we should expect to work on CLL tasks for 30 to 40 hours a week if we are a full-time student [4, p19]. As well, recalling that expository writing² should be emphasized in CLL courses [4, p12]. Therefore, in the 30 to 40 hour CLL work week a majority should go towards expository writing. This section didn’t change my perception, rather just gave some hard numbers to expect.

Section 3, *Becoming a Successful College Writer*, can be summarized in a learning technique called *Spaced Repetition*.³ Specifically, Section 3 states that we should have “at least two sessions of writing time per assignment,” but that five is far more preferred [4, p31]. The idea behind this is that you should set aside time for parts of the five step writing process found on page 30. The worst case the book “allows” being Steps 1-3 on one day and Steps 4-5 on the other. Obviously many students will do a “cram write” the night before in a couple hours, when they should’ve spent anywhere from two to four times as much time on the paper/project realistically. Therefore, I have to disagree with the book on the two day minimum, but I do understand the principles behind it. Overall, the section just tries to outline logical and doable schedules that students can and should take to make their CLL experience optimized.

Conclusion

Chapter 1, *Introduction to Writing*, essentially provided the fundamentals for my argument laid out in *College Writing: Perceptions & Past Experiences*. By that I mean that the redacted author goes over, in detail, rational reasons CLL writing is different based on things like responsibility changes, the nature of the professor compared to the HS teacher, etc. (1) and (2) are the core ideas at the heart of the chapter, something I did not intend to do, but am glad that it is so. In so much that my sentiments on the CLL experience, on the primacy of its requirements, are not misguided and therefore should help me on my journey, due to being able to set realistic goals. Something the chapter specifically calls for on pages 32 and 33. Overall, my perceptions have not shifted in the slightest, rather confirmed by 37 pages of numerous reasons and applicable examples.

Notes

¹“to meditate deeply or intently” [2]

²“writing that explains or informs” [4, p12]

³See a great video on this technique by Ali Abdaal via <https://youtu.be/Z-zNHHpXoMM>.

References

- [1] **Chester, Christian D.** “College Writing: Perceptions & Past Experiences.” *C. D. Publications*, 6 December 2020, <https://bit.ly/3mYJ78m>. Accessed 6 December 2020.
- [2] “Cogitate.” *Merriam-Webster*, <https://bit.ly/2JT6Esm>. Accessed 5 December 2020.
- [3] “ENC-102: ENGLISH COMPOSITION II Guided Study Syllabus.” *Thomas Edison State University*, 24 June 2019, <https://bit.ly/2VHHVKg>. Accessed 5 December 2020.
- [4] “Writing for Success.” University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing ed., *University of Minnesota*, 2015.