

Lisa Wiseman

Portfolio Requirement 1

Self-Reflection

Preparing Students to Write Within My Discipline

As an English adjunct, I think I do a fairly good job of getting my students to write within their courses. Naturally, English 053, 101, 102 and Tech Writing are all writing-intensive courses and students have no choice but to write in order to pass the class. I believe I do well in giving assignments that vary in length and difficulty and subject matter and content. I also try to give my students options when writing. I never want a student to write something that is “no fun at all.” I offer multiple choices for writing assignments and always will listen to students who propose an alternative writing assignment.

But, the question to ask is this: How can I make this experience unique, helpful and engaging to my students so that writing is something they enjoy more and get more out of? Most Eng 101 and 102 students take these classes because they *have to*, not because they *want to*.

I find that the greatest obstacle I find is that my students in Eng. 053, 101 and 102 and are only interested in doing the minimum amount of work necessary to pass the class and not one bit more. And often they push back hard to find out how little work they need to do in order to pass. They are not interested in improving. They are not interested in learning. They are not interested in critical thought and analysis. It is simply – *What do I need to do to get through this class?*

Not only is this disheartening to me as a teacher, but it is detrimental to the students. Without learning how to develop a good thesis, craft a unique argument, analyze a difficult reading, interpret a work of

literature and gather information to support project, not only will these students not succeed in English class, they will likely not succeed for the remainder of their academic career. How do I (and all of us teachers) get through to our students that writing is something that is fundamentally necessary for them to master in order to succeed academically, professionally and personally. In an age where we absorb things in byte-size bits and video clips, how do we get them to understand that writing still matters?

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Writing Intensive Syllabus Statement

Portfolio Project 2

This course is what is known as a “writing intensive” course. This means that writing is fundamental to the work that you do. While writing is a part of all English courses here at CCBC and elsewhere, in this class, we focus on improving your writing by measuring it along a trajectory. You will do multiple drafts of each assignment and will receive constant feedback, both written and verbal (either in-person or via phone/video consultation.) Writing is a recursive process. By writing constantly and learning that writing is a *process* and not just a task to accomplish, your development as a writer, student and future professional is more likely to be successful. Learning to write better requires writing often. And learning to write better enables you to *think* better

Portfolio Assignment 3

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Informal Writing Assignments

Based on what you have learned in this workshop, develop an informal writing assignment for your course.

This assignment is one that I typically give at the beginning of the semester to get an overall assessment of where a student is as a writer and a student. On its surface, it is a fairly easy and fun assignment, but students still have to follow some directions.

Assignment: Imagine that you have just received a major award for some significant accomplishment. In 300 words, write a short news article describing what award you won and why. Be sure to give background information on what the award is, what it is for and what someone needs to do to achieve this award.

Purpose and rationale of this assignment: There are several things I am looking for from this assignment. They include:

- *Creativity and imagination* -- What award will you win and why? Have some fun with this!
- *Ability to follow directions* – There are some rules you will have to follow to complete this assignment.
- *Ability to adhere to style guidelines* – Newspaper articles are written in a very specific way. They are typically different than the types of items you have written in an English class.
- *Ability to use proper spelling and grammar* – Try your best to not make any errors. After you write your article, take a break from it and read it over and check your work for errors.

Some things you will need to do for your newspaper article:

- Give some basic information about who you are – name, age, where you are from, where you went to school, etc.
- Be sure to use third person in your writing.
 - **CORRECT:** Lisa Wiseman won the 2021 “Best Adjunct” award at Essex Community college. (Third Person)
 - **INCORRECT:** I won the “Best Adjunct” award at Essex Community college. (First Person)
 - **INCORRECT:** We are all so proud that Lisa Wiseman won the “Best Adjunct” award at Essex Community college. (Second Person)

- Keep your opinion out of your article. Use only facts.
 - **CORRECT:** Lisa Wiseman won the 2021 award based on her performance in the classroom and her dedication to her students.
 - **INCORRECT:** Clearly, all of the other adjuncts don't work as hard as Lisa or care as much as she does since she won the award.

A few more things to note:

- You can win your award now, at your current age, or you can have the event happen in the future (be sure to mention when, i.e. in the year 2035).
- You are free to be as creative as you want in what award you win (Grammy, Oscar, Heisman trophy, greatest Mambo dancer, etc.)
- You may want to read some newspaper articles to get a feel of the style. Go to www.baltimoresun.com, www.washingtonpost.com or www.nytimes.com to get some understanding.

Portfolio Item 4

Lisa Wiseman

Scoring Rubric for Informal Writing Assignment

Assignment: Imagine that you have just received a major award for some significant accomplishment. In 300 words, write a short news article describing what award you won and why. Be sure to give background information on what the award is, what it is for and what someone needs to do to achieve this award.

Rubric: 25 points total

Criteria	Meets Requirements 13-15 points	Meets Most Requirements 10-12 points	Meets Some Requirements 6-9 points	Does Not Meet Requirements 1-5 points	Not Submitted/ Plagiarized
Content – the story itself	Creative, imaginative and complete. Article tells a complete story and includes all necessary details.	Meets all except one or two requirements	Meets about half of requirements. Is incomplete. Details are missing.	Not enough information is included.	0
Form	Uses third person. Writes in newspaper style. Is consistent.	Meets all except one or two requirements	Meets about half of requirements. Has errors in form.	Is inconsistent or does not follow form at all.	0
Spelling and grammar	Is virtually free from errors,	Has one or two errors.	Has more than five errors.	Has more than 7 errors.	0

Revising directions

Choose a writing assignment that you have used previously in your course and make revisions to the directions given to students so that your revised assignment reflects the best practices included in this Workshop.

Assignment for Eng. 102 based on Ibsen's play "A Doll's House"

After reading A Doll's House, a three act play, students were tasked with writing "act iv." The play ends with a wife leaving her husband. What happens next?

Original Instructions

Your assignment is to write what happens next after Act III in "A Doll's House" when Nora leaves her husband. The fourth act must be 6-8 pages and adhere to the following rules.

1. It must take place on the same set. You can add some props or take props away, but the basic set must be the same.
2. It can be 5 minutes or 50 years after Nora leaves, but it can not take place in the past. If many years have passed between Act III and Act IV you must make sure that the audience knows this through dialogue, costume, set design, etc.
3. No "cheap tricks." No dream sequences, visiting ghosts (like Dr. Rank), robots from the future, audience participation, etc.
4. You can not add characters, but you can give more lines to previous "flat" characters like the children, especially if Act IV takes place many years later.
5. It must be believable. Don't change the personalities of the characters too much. People may change over time, but Kristine Linde won't become an axe murderer hell bent on revenge and decapitate Nora for snubbing her all those years when they were in school together.

Revised Instructions:

Your assignment is to write what happens next after Act III in "A Doll's House" when Nora leaves her husband.

Purpose/Goals of Assignment.

- This assignment will illustrate how well you understand how a play is written and how it is different than the other works of fiction and non-fiction we have read this semester.
- This assignment should show how well you understand the plot of the play, the characters themselves and how they should and what their motivations are.

- Students should be able to write a complete, well thought out act for a play.
- Students should use proper formatting (writing in dialogue style, using stage directions, ensuring the audience can follow the plot of the story.)

Audience:

- Your audience will be adults theater-goers of today. While the original play was written decades ago, it continues to be staged for modern audience.
- Assume the audience has never seen “A Doll’s House” before, but they have viewed acts 1-3 and are now about to see your act 4.

Sources:

- Be sure to consult the original play in your textbook to ensure that characters and details are correct and consistent – things like the spellings of names and places; the physical appearance and mannerisms of the characters; and what the set looks like should be stay the same from scene three to four.
- Your textbook also has guidance on spacing and formatting for writing dialogue and stage directions. See pp. xx-xx.

Evaluation Criteria

- This will be a 20 point assignment and will count towards the homework/ in class work portion of your grade, which is 25% of your overall final. Note: unlike your other homework assignments which are 10 points, this counts more as it is more involved than other assignments. The points are broken down as follows:
 - 10 points – storyline – Does the storyline follow the arc of the play established in acts 1-3? Are the characters consistent? Does it make sense? Are the characters and their actions believable? Is the dialogue engaging?
 - 10 points – formatting – Are stage directions clear? Could an actor follow them? Are they adequate for the audience to understand what is happening? Is the set correct? (example – is the office on the correct side of the stage? Are doors where they are supposed to be? Does the whole play still take place in the couple’s home?)
 - 5 – Spelling, punctuation and grammar

Formatting and Length

- 6-8 pages in play-writing style (reference your textbook pp. xx-xx)
- Your name, date, and Eng 102 should be on each page of the play in the top, right corner. Pages, except the title page, should be numbered.

Additional Guidance

1. Your play must take place on the same set. You can add some props or take props away, but the basic set of the couple's home must be the same.
2. It can be 5 minutes or 50 years after Nora leaves, but it can not take place in the past. If many years have passed between Act III and Act IV you must make sure that the audience knows this through dialogue, costume, set design, etc.
3. You can not add a narrator to act 4, since one does not exist in acts 1-3. Again, you will have to let your characters explain things that have happened.
4. No "cheap tricks." No dream sequences, visiting ghosts (like Dr. Rank), robots from the future, audience participation, etc.
5. You can not add new characters, but you can give more lines to "flat" characters from acts 1-3 (like the children) especially if Act 4 takes place many years later.
6. Your characters and plot must be believable. Don't change the personalities of the characters too much. People may change over time, but Kristine Linde won't become an axe murderer hell bent on revenge and decapitate Nora for snubbing her all those years when they were in school together.
7. Stage directions are for the actors, not the audience. A stage direction should read, *Nora crosses stage right and picks up a child's blanket from the floor* NOT *Nora misses her children and wonders what happened to them*.
8. Your audience can't read minds. If a character is having a thought, they will have to say it out loud!

Portfolio Item 6
 Lisa Wiseman
 Scoring Rubric for Formal Writing Assignment

Assignment for Eng. 102 based on Ibsen’s play “A Doll’s House”

After reading A Doll’s House, a three act play, students were tasked with writing “act iv.” The play ends with a wife leaving her husband. What happens next?

Rubric: 20points total

Criteria	Meets Requirements 8-10 points	Meets Most Requirements 5-7 points	Meets Some Requirements 3-5 points	Does Not Meet Requirements 1-3 points	Not Submitted/ Plagiarized
Storyline	Storyline follows the arc of the play established in acts 1-3. Characters are consistent and their actions believable. Story makes sense. Dialogue is engaging.	Meets all except one or two requirements	Meets about half of requirements. Is incomplete. Details are missing.	Not enough information is included.	0
Formatting	Stage directions are complete and clear for actors and audience. Text is written in proper play format. Stage is correct.	Meets all except one or two requirements	Meets about half of requirements. Has errors in form.	Is inconsistent or does not follow form at all.	0
Spelling and grammar	Is virtually free from errors.	Has one or two errors.	Has more than five errors.	Has more than 7 errors.	0

Portfolio Item 7
Lisa Wiseman
Peer Review

Essay Writing Peer Review Sheet

Writer's Name: _____

Proofread by: _____

Directions: In groups of three, switch papers with the other two students of your group. Each of you should read the other papers and complete this worksheet. **Make sure you do a careful, thorough job when you're proofreading**, because the other person is hoping you catch his/her mistakes just like you're hoping that person will catch yours *before* you turn in your final copy that will be graded.

- Underline twice what you believe to be the thesis sentence.
 - Underline any topic sentence once.
 - Circle all spelling errors, run-on sentences, fragments, and any other grammar errors. If you are positive that you know how to correct the error, make the change. If not, just circle the item you believe is incorrect.
1. Introduction -- Did the writer start with an image or idea that made you want to read more?
Circle YES or NO, AND write the image/idea they started with in the space below.

 2. Who is the audience for this paper?

 4. What is the topic the author wrote about? Did the thesis adhere to the thesis?

 5. Does the order of the essay make sense? YES or NO
If no, **write a big question mark** on the paper next to the areas where you are confused.

 6. Find four places in the essay where the writer included a detail that was significant to the thesis.
Draw a big smiley face on the paper next to the areas where the author included details that were important and tied to the main point.

Checklist

Place a check mark next to the items that the author successfully included in the paper

Beginning

- Started with an image or idea that captures readers' interest (made them want to find out more) _____
- Identified the incident, characters, and setting in the introduction _____

Middle

- Used details that appeal to the senses to describe characters and setting ____
- Included dialogue that developed and revealed the characters' personalities ____

End

- Concluded by summarizing paper and thesis without re-stating it. Did not add anything new ____/

Other

- 500-700 words in length ____
- Used correct grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation (especially with dialogue) ____
- Turned in and completed a peer editing sheet ____

Give this paper back to the author when you are finished. You should receive feedback sheets back for your essay as well. Your homework is to revise your paper based on your peer suggestions and bring to me.

Portfolio 8
Final Pedagogic Statement
Lisa Wiseman

On Completing the Writing Fellows Program

I've been an English adjunct off and on for 20 years. Why would I take this class? For one, I believe in the transformative power of learning, and second, I believe that one can always improve.

I know how to teach writing. I'm pretty good at it. But the problem I have is when I have students who are really, really struggling. How do you help a college freshman who writes at fifth grade level? How can you talk about developing a thesis when your students don't know how to write a paper in paragraphs? How can you teach MLA style when your students can't even follow a basic instruction like, "put your name, date and class in the upper right hand corner"?

It's frustrating, to say the least. But I keep at it. I'm an adjunct, so this is not my "day job." I began teaching 20 years ago as a way to make extra money while working for a nonprofit. I stayed because I want to make a difference. I tell my students that I am not teaching them how to write just so they can pass Eng 101. I'm teaching them writing so that they can succeed in college and in their professional lives. Writing is important. Writing matters. If my students don't learn to write coherently at the end of my class, they will never make it.

As a writer, I know the best way to get better at writing is to keep it. That's why I wanted to be a part of this group – I wanted to add to the dialogue about the benefits of writing across the curriculum. Writing shouldn't be reserve for English Class. I learned through this program that formal and informal writing in a multitude of classes (and not just in the humanities) will help students improve as writers and as students. Of course, I always suspected that to be the case, but it's nice to see the research backing this up. Moving forward, I'm going to continue to give multiple writing assignments to my students to improve. Instead of a just 4 big papers in Eng 101, we will do a lot of smaller assignments –

including informal assignments. This will give students more practice and help “normalize” the act of writing. Writing will be something they just do. It should be a natural part of being a student. Over time, my hope that writing will no longer be the overwhelming task that many students make it to be. Many students don’t like to write because of fear. We fear what we don’t know. If students write frequently, the fear will subside.

The other big lesson I learned through this course and I applied in my Eng 101 course this fall is the importance of more detailed instructions and thorough rubrics. This helps students understand the “why” behind an assignment and the “how” they will be evaluated. I used to take a holistic approach to grading essays. Average work got a C. Slightly better work got a B. Outstanding work got an A. I used to think if I put lots of comments on the paper, that would explain things, but it didn’t. Students still questioned why they got a B and not an A. Having a rubric and showing students exactly how they can get a good grade (and show my math!) helps guide my students and helps me in grading. It requires more advance setup, but once the rubric is set, I’ve found grading to be easier. There is less confusion and questions from students with a well written rubric.

I am proud of the assignments I created for this course. Some were new and others were revised and modified based on what I learned. As I mentioned earlier, putting in what I am looking for from students makes a better assignment. I always thought I had some pretty fun and creative ideas for writing assignments, now I know that they are even better.

I hope that I have contributed some things of worth that others can use in the future. I am passionate about writing and helping students become better writers. I hope that my insights will also help other professors increase their appreciation of writing as well.