

Efficient and Transformative Feedback on Writing Building Healthy Mindset and Writing Confidence

James Murray - Department of Economics - UW-La Crosse
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See more at:

<http://murraylax.org/wtfs>



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Abstract: In this teaching-improvement project I develop and measure the effectiveness of a feedback process on student writing with the purpose to not only help students improve their work and writing skills, but also help students see themselves as becoming capable writers in their careers. I give my students two significant authentic writing assignments. In the first, students respond to a fictional, but realistic, request for grant proposals. I authored the request for proposal (RFP) documents and tailored them for my class, but they are based on actual RFPs for business research. In the second assignment, students work with a real data set and an actual local business client and produce a professional business report. For both writing assignments, I put students through a feedback process that includes peer (fellow student) review, instructor feedback letters, and face-to-face instructor mentoring. At the end of the term, I use a survey to measure student mindset, sense of belonging, and confidence to tackle future writing. I administer the survey to all sophomores and juniors college of business administration to make comparisons to students in my own sections versus other sections, to compare my students to those who have not yet completed the course, and take into account students who have completed other courses on professional writing and communication.

Authentic Writing Assignments

Activities / Skill Development: Developing a research question, developing a survey, describing and visualizing data, statistical analysis, oral and written communication

Request for Proposals: Students work in groups of two, select one of two case studies, each of which is a request for proposals (RFP) for conducting survey business research, and write a research proposal. The RFP is fictional, but I designed it based on actual RFPs from similar types of organizations. I rewrote descriptions of the the organizations to more closely resemble organizations that our students may be familiar with in the La Crosse, WI area.

Client Research Report: Students work in groups of three or four and are matched with a real client organization in the La Crosse, WI area who visit my class, describe themselves, their organizations, and what they hope they may learn from my students' work. The project requires students to analyze the data, create data visualizations, give an oral presentation to their client in an authentic business setting and produce a professional research report in a format like what is circulated in the real business world.

Clients include:

- Grand Bluff Race Management
- Mutual of Omaha
- La Crosse Area Dahl Family YMCA
- Northwestern Mutual
- La Crosse County Health Dept
- UWL office ItMake\$Cents

Formative Feedback

Important, but not really the goal: Students produce quality written work for their assignments

The real goal: Give students the critical thinking skills, mindset, and confidence to produce quality written work throughout their careers.

Feedback Mechanism:

1. **Assignment descriptions** with rubrics, fictional criteria for evaluating research proposals, client class presentations
2. **Formative peer feedback:** Focusing on one strength & one weakness each from rubric and evaluation criteria. Emphasis on revision suggestions.
3. **Formative instructor letters:** Request revision, identify strengths and weaknesses, generated with Breevy
4. **Instructor meetings:** Students bring revision plans
5. **Summative feedback:** Overall grade, rubric scores

Survey: Administer in May 2018, May 2019

Outcome variables:

- Mindset: Level of agreement on how much people can change their intelligence, writing ability, math ability
- Belonging: Sense of respect and support of peers and instructors
- Writing confidence: Level of agreement on being capable of producing quality writing in future assignments in business, science, humanities, *in academia and in career.*

Explanatory variables:

- Having taken ECO 230 with me
- Having taken ECO 230 with anyone (we all have similar goals and strategies)
- Other course experience in writing and communication
- Experience with formative feedback in other courses
- Demographics

Research questions:

- *Does the experience in my class lead to healthier mindset and greater writing confidence?*
- *Does more formative feedback, more experience in communication courses, improve mindset and writing confidence?*



RFP Task RFP Rubric Report Eg. Letter Peer Obs Survey

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