Technical Communication 3050
Inter-class Memorandum

TO   Dr. Jared Grogan
FROM   Austin Hunt
DATE   April 30, 2015

SUBJECT   A Brief Synopsis and Review of My Performance In Your Class

INTRODUCTION

This course has offered many profuse benefits, and as a conclusion to the semester I would like to offer you this review of my personal performance in your class. My goal here will be to assess my performance based on the learning objectives you laid out in the syllabus at the beginning of the semester. As a reminder, the objectives or "outcomes" you gave at the beginning of class were for us to learn to "write effectively as individuals and in teams in standard genres of technical writing", to "read, analyze, and evaluate the design of, and the audience(s) and purpose(s) for, technical documents", to "design and conduct primary and secondary research", and to "make productive use of current technologies for reading, researching, writing, and designing technical documents." After discuss each writing circumstance and how it met the objectives of the course, I would like to conclude by arguing that I have fulfilled each your course objectives this semester. After, I will finish this meme by explaining what skills I feel I have gained and how thankful I am to have gained them.

PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Resume/Cover Letter
        For the first time, when writing a resume and cover letter I started to think about audience much more after reading Anderson and listening to your first couple lectures. When I started the process, I began by adjusting my thinking to figure out how I could adapt my current resume to fit the position I found on LinkedIn. Since I have plenty of experience, I decided to write my resume as a experience based resume instead of a skills focused resume. Thinking about audience, design, and criteria really helped me to write with an framework in mind, which greatly improved my writing process. At this point, I might have researched my audience better so that I could have shown an in-depth knowledge of the company I wanted to work for.

Professional Site
        It was a great learning experience to actually create my own personal website. I've developed websites for clients for the past five years, but never did create a personal website. This project did a great job of fulfilling your "Technology" learning outcome by incorporating a modern way to approach resume building. Mostly, what I learned even further, was how to generalize a resume to fit a broader audience and how to design an online resume that was still persuasive. Again, this course has definitely put me down the path of deeply investing time in considering audience and adapting my writing towards that audience. If I were to do this project again, I would probably not have used Squarespace solely because they charge you to put up a site. They actually are not very straightforward about their pricing till after you create your site and invest time into your design.

Wikihow Article

Creating a WikiHow article was a unique and fun experience that taught me a lot about creating effective instruction sets, but the really useful thing I gained from this project was my learning how to create an effective usability test and my learning how useful they are to creating quality instructions. To be honest, I did not realize how much I didn't consider the potential lack of knowledge in the audience. Since I come from a technical background, there are things I assume everyone knows but truly those things are unique to my own experience. This project did a great job of fulfilling your "Research and Documenting" learning outcome for the course by forcing us to do primary research with our target audience to see how effective (or ineffective) our instruction sets were. My set needed much revision, which was great! It meant my process delivered strong results that would improve my instructions greatly. The one thing I would try to improve in this project was that I never went back and modified my original instruction set rectify the issues discovered in my usability report. Unfortunately, we moved forward without having that as required in the course, but that should not have stopped me from doing my best to complete the process.

Short Written Assignments

The inter-class memorandums and other short writing responses both did a great job at fulfilling your course objectives of "Reading and Analyzing". What I thought useful and what I learned from the memos was that I put in to practice what an actual business would be like in the real world. They also helped me to think through why I was in your class, and why your class would be useful to my future. The first memo/email you had us write gave me great respect for you as a teacher and I would like to use that in my classrooms when I teach one day. It definitely improved the quality of my work in the class because it motivated me to be the best student I could be. Also, the short writing responses helped me retain the information necessary to remember from my reading to be effective and have a basic understanding of each genre we were writing on that week. Having that framework and being able to remember that framework were essential in my effectiveness as a student each weak. I feel that there really are not things that I could improve on in this area, although I probably could have been more thorough for each assignment.

Instruction Set/User Test

As previously mentioned, the user test taught me a lot about assessing my audience's understanding of the topic and not assuming they would know things that I would know. As a group project, my peer's review proved somewhat helpful. What I most enjoyed was furthering my skills on providing helpful critiques of other people's instruction sets. It probably helped me more to apply the set of criteria to someone else's instructions because it caused me to re-think my project and go back and adjust areas I realized were flawed. The instruction set writing, on a whole, greatly improved my consideration of audience and my consideration of usability causing my work to be much higher quality.

Project Plan

The project plan, in my mind, was the first truly comprehensive group project because it involved layered revision and editing from each member of the group. This plan well fulfilled the course objectives of "Reading and Analyzing" your audience and purpose, and "Writing and Designing" your report. I feel our creating a research plan did two things for us: First, it solidified our group as a team. We learned what works best for each member of the team and what our strengths and weaknesses were as each team member. This proved exceptionally useful in the

creation of the actual project. Second, it helped our team by forcing our team to think deeply about the problem, formulate a research method, and consider our document's audience. Our team collaborated in this project by assigning sections to each writer which we then revised and edited in a more layered approach. Your giving us reading on how to be good collaborators really helped us think more effectively as a group.

Technical Report

The technical report was the most in-depth and largest feasibility report I have ever been a part of. It was the crowing jewel of the class because it caused us to practice almost every aspect of writing we learned in the class. Learning stasis, revision, genre, and audience helped all of us greatly in our completing of this project. I found the discussion of stasis to be quite useful in having a structured way to evaluate and re-evaluate ideas that we were formulating as a group. Following the feasibility report genre gave us a strong framework to base our project structure on as well as to force us to address every necessary exigence in the project. Our revision process worked quite well if we first broke down the work by section per group member. After each person finished their section, we adopted a layered approach on revision which caused us all to be involved in refining the document. The only thing I wish we had more of was time! The report could have used much more editing and revision, but we all had other classes that forced us to give this project less time that we wish we could have.

CONCLUSION

How I met the learning objectives:

My work this semester most definitely met the course objectives outlined at the beginning of class both in my collaborative and individual projects. In both my personal and collaborative projects, I was pushed to write and design documents and media that covered the standard genres of technical writing. In addition, when creating these technical documents, I read many documents explaining the different genre's of technical writing and analyzed and evaluated my audience and the purpose of the documents I created. For instance, when creating my resume, I searched for information on my potential employer and after analyzing him I focused my resume on highlighting skills relevant to the position and showing my knowledge of his company. Additionally, this course caused me to do much research and documenting using primary and secondary research methods. Mostly, the experience I gained in this was from the final project, but I also needed to research my audience for a couple of the other projects. For instance, I researched my audience when conducting the usability test for my instruction set. Finally, this course helped me to gain an appreciation and caused me to use technology and media to perform technical writing tasks. For instance, I created a website to display my resume. Also, I created graphics to guide my readers in the instruction set.

What I learned specifically:

There are a number of great things I learned from taking this course. First, I adopted a strategy of considering every document I write from the viewpoint of my audience. Oftentimes, I had not considered audience when writing something as simple as an e-mail. Having that drilled in to me this semester is one of the things I am most grateful for. Second, your use of wiki's in the classroom inspired me. I loved the collaborative aspect of our class, and now would like to adopt that process in everything I do that involves group work and team collaboration. Since one of my goals is to eventually become a teacher, I will definitely adopt a teaching strategy that involves collaboratives sites like pbworks.com or google docs. Finally, I now know I have strong

understanding of how to create a good feasibility report. The framework I learned will help me to be a better employee and a better researcher.

My Thanks To You:

Dr. Grogan, I know I have told you this before, but I greatly appreciate the work you put in to the class and have been inspired by your work ethic and teaching strategy to be the best student I can be. Once again, thank you for the class.