

While you are waiting...

Imagine you're in a new job with a new manager and you've been asked to write a report. Aside from the content, what would you want to know about the expectations for the report?

Please contribute your suggestions to this session's Etherpad:

https://etherpad.net/p/SET_Presents_March_2019

Clearly Communicating Expectations for Student Writing



© Dahlquist-Axe Design Ltd

Jo Axe, PhD
Professor
School of Education
and Technology



© Royal Roads University

Theresa Bell, MA
Manager, Blended
Learning Success



Royal Roads
UNIVERSITY

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TRADITIONAL LANDS

Royal Roads University acknowledges that we live, learn and work on the traditional lands of the Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) and Lkwungen (Songhees) ancestors and families, who have lived, hunted, fished and gathered here since time immemorial, and who shared these traditional land resources with the neighbouring Scia'new (Beecher Bay) and T'Sou-ke (Sooke) Nations.

It is with gratitude that we now work and learn on these lands, where the past, present and future of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, faculty and staff come together.

Hay'sxw'qa si'em!

Agenda

- A. Goal and outcomes
- B. What does the literature say?
- C. What do RRU students say?
- D. Panelists' strategies
- E. Discussion with the panelists
- F. Discussion
- G. Remaining questions

Session goal:

Participants will have new strategies for clearly communicating expectations about writing to students.

Specific outcomes:

After taking part in this session, it expected that the audience will be better able to:

- Understand the importance of providing clear expectations about writing
- Identify and use a variety of strategies and resources that will assist in explaining expectations to students

What does the literature say?

“Communication of expectations and evaluation is
the cornerstone of success”
(Harris, 2006)

“The instructor’s expectations and the students’
understanding must align.”
(Soiferman, 2018)

What does the literature say?

Faculty

“[Their] own disciplinary history had a clear influence on [their] conceptualisations and representations of what were the most important elements to look for in students' writing”

(Lea & Street, 1998)

“[They] were able to identify when a student had been successful, but could not describe how a particular piece of writing 'lacked' structure.”

(Lea & Street, 1998)

What does the literature say?

Students

“They often felt unsure and confused about what they had done wrong.” (Lea & Street, 1998)

“Students reported they had most difficulty grasping ... how to write specific, course-based knowledge for a particular tutor or field of study.” (Lea & Street, 1998)

“Often they are unaware that the writing assigned in many of their courses requires them to address a problem, to provide reasons and evidence rather than just opinions, feelings, or experiences, to be clear about claims and assertions rather than relying on unquestioned authority, and to assume a measured qualified tone that acknowledges the situatedness and complexity of problematic issues.” (Clark, 2005)



What do RRU students say?

- How can I understand my instructor's expectations for my writing when I'm writing for someone new?
- I often don't know about the expectations until one or two assignments have been returned, and by then, I've lost marks.

Let's hear from our panelists...

What is one strategy
you've found successful in
clearly communicating
expectations for writing?



Royal Roads
UNIVERSITY



Discussion with our panelists



Royal Roads
UNIVERSITY

Discussion

- When students start writing for you, how do you communicate what you expect from their writing that could be different from other instructors?
- How do you express expectations for writing in different types of assignments, such as research papers, reports, reflective work, Moodle posts, blog posts?



?



**Thank you
for joining
us today.**



Royal Roads
UNIVERSITY

Contact us

Jo Axe, PhD
Professor, School of
Education and Technology
jo.axe@royalroads.ca

Theresa Bell, MA
Manager, Blended Learning
Success
theresa.bell@royalroads.ca
(250) 391-2600, ext. 4353



References

- Clark, I. (2005). A genre approach to writing assignments. *Composition Forum*, 14(2). Retrieved from <http://compositionforum.com/issue/14.2/clark-genre-writing.php>
- Graves, R., Hyland, T., & Samuels, B. M. (2010). Undergraduate writing assignments: An analysis of syllabi at one Canadian college. *Written Communication*, 27(3), 293-317. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0741088310371635>
- Harris, M. J. (2006). Three steps to teaching abstract and critique writing. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 17(2), 136-146. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuropharm.2009.04.012>
- Lea, M. R., & Street, B. V. (1998). Student writing in higher education: An academic literacies approach. *Studies in Higher Education*, 23(2), 157-172. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079812331380364>
- Soiferman, L. K. (2018). *Commentary on interpreting university instructors' writing prompts: How students' struggle with understanding post-secondary assignments*. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED586163>