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**Certificate of Accomplishment in Teaching Program**  
**Workshop Reflection Assignment #6**  
**PTP: Creating Effective Writing Assignments**

**Part I: Describe**

**Title of the Workshop/Event:** PTP: Creating Effective Writing Assignments

**Purpose Statement:** The purpose of this seminar was to introduce PTP fellows to the techniques for creating effective writing assignments. This includes incorporating writing into Engineering classes or other classes that do not typically utilize writing as a form of assessment.

**Lead Presenter(s):** Dr. Chris Anson

**Date(s)/Location of the Event:** 12:00-2:00 PM on 2/21/2012, Tally Student Center

**Approximate Number of People Who Attended the Workshop:** 20

**Brief Description:**

This workshop utilized a classroom setting where Dr. Anson got up and presented to us. This was an interactive workshop in that Dr. Anson gave us assignments to do and topics to discuss. He also gave us writing assignments to analyze. We analyzed those writing assignments in groups and then discussed what we thought of them with Dr. Anson. One of the reasons I picked this seminar is because I was interested in learning how to incorporate writing into Engineering classes, since they are normally mathematics based. I also wanted to learn about the spectrum of writing assignments from informal to formal.

**Part II: Analyze**

1. Why did you choose to attend this workshop? What were you hoping to learn?

I attended this workshop, first and foremost, because as a PTP fellow I make every effort to attend all seminars. I have found them very beneficial to my development as a graduate student and a teacher. My last seven years as an Engineering student have included a very small amount of writing assignments. I was curious to see how Dr. Anson would present writing assignments with an Engineering focus. I was hoping they would be useful for my class, but wasn't sure. Obviously there are not many formal writing assignments for Engineering, but I was curious if informal ones would be useful for my purposes. I have no foundation in writing assignments, so I thought this workshop would help me figure out what the various types of writing assignments are used for.

2. What assumptions did you have before participating in this workshop?

Prior to participating in this workshop, I assumed I would get a great deal of information from Dr. Anson. I figured he would be a subject matter expert able to provide me with information I was curious about. I also assumed this would be an interactive workshop because past PTP workshops have been this way. Going along with my assumption that this would be an interactive workshop,

I thought there would be group work with input from classmates who would provide their experience with writing assignments. I also figured that he would focus on writing assignments for English majors and didn't think he would spend a lot of time on things that I am interested in.

3. Were your assumptions correct or incorrect? Explain how your thinking was either supported (meaning your assumptions were validated) or how your thinking was changed (meaning your assumptions were incorrect)

I was correct in assuming that Dr. Anson would provide an excellent background on the different types of writing assignments. The workshop was interactive and did utilize group work and group thinking throughout. I was incorrect in assuming that Dr. Anson would focus primarily on English writing. He did not focus on things from an English perspective and instead gave examples of writing assignments that could be done in any class to benefit both teacher and student. Some of these were short assignments asking students what could be improved about class that day or other simple questions. This information was especially useful because these types of assignments seemed like ones that would be able to engage any student in the course.

4. What information was most meaningful for you? Be specific.

I think that one of the best things I got out of the workshop was the information about informal writing assignments. Dr. Anson explained that these are an immense help for the teacher. The student gets to explain any frustrations they may have and the teacher gets information about how their class is perceived. This workshop definitely shifted my perspective to help me see that I can incorporate writing assignments into my Engineering class. Information on formal writing wouldn't have helped me nearly as much. Additionally, the process Dr. Anson gave for reading and grading writing assignments was incredibly useful.

5. How do you think you will use this information? Be specific.

I will definitely be able to use the information Dr. Anson provided us with when it comes to my class. I will be able to design informal writing assignments for the class and get feedback from my students. Hopefully, the writing assignments will enable me to learn what the class is understanding well and what they don't have such a great understanding of. Aside from informal writing assignments, Dr. Anson's discussion of formal writing assignments will also help me immensely. I will now be able to grade formal writing assignments, such as the final project that my class will be given at the end of the semester. I will also use the information that Dr. Anson provided us in order to write the best formal writing questions that I can for that final project.

6. What information do you still need to learn related to this workshop? What is your plan for learning more about this topic?

While Dr. Anson gave me a great deal of information as to how I might possibly be able to use informal writing assignments, I feel that I still need to learn more about how I can apply these writing assignments to my Engineering class. I need to learn the specific ways that other Engineering teachers use informal writing assignments in their classes. I'm still not sure of the best way to do this. I plan on talking to Dr. Wilson and also seeking out other professors who use informal writing assignments in their Engineering classes. Hopefully, these resources will be able to help me develop specific uses for the informal writing assignments.