Merritt Writing Program
Course Evaluation Grade Point Average Analysis

Fall 2010

Understanding the relationship between grading practices and student evaluations is important because these evaluations are commonly the most significantð if not soleð factor in promotion, tenure, and continuing appointments. Yet course evaluation is only one indicator of teaching effectiveness, it works best when connected with other forms of assessment (Marsh & Roche, 1997, Appendix A: Letter to Faculty). Further, it reveals patterns that are most indicative over time, rather than in isolated instances. Hence this form of assessment works best for identifying significant patterns over several semesters, especially combined with other investigations of teaching and learning.
The Writing Program maintains an inventory of grade point averages and includes grade point averages in course evaluations to (1) to provide context for course evaluation averages, (2) discourage grade inflation, and (3) underscore the importance of grading calibration among instructors. We emphasize to faculty that course evaluations, and the GPA factor, are best understood over time, preferably within two years. In addition to course evaluation results (See Appendix B), we provide to faculty a summary chart with averages and standard deviation represented over a two year period.

Works Cited:
Marsh, H. & Roche, L. (Nov 1997). Making Students' Evaluations of Teaching Effectiveness Effective: The Critical Issues of Validity, Bias, and Utility. American Psychologist. 52.11: 1187-97.

Course Evaluation Cover Letter
Fall 2010

Dear Faculty,
Enclosed are course and instruction evaluations from Fall 2008. As you consider this feedback, we would like to suggest a few guidelines:

Best understood over time
Student satisfaction surveys are among the ways to receive feedback about a course. They work best when connected with other forms of assessment. For example, an effective combination might be a studentsô perception of a skill (from the satisfaction survey) paired with sample projects. Also, these surveys reveal patterns that are most indicative over a period of time, rather than in isolated instances. In other words, this form of assessment works best for identifying significant patterns over several semesters, especially combined with other investigations of teaching and learning.

Reading the numbers
At the top of the spreadsheet, you will see a text box containing averages (termed as ñmeanò) for course and program grades. Similarly, the columns next to individual questions include averages for your individual course and the program.

An additional column is for standard deviation, which indicates the consistency of responses ï a useful way to understand the reliability of an average number. For example, a low standard deviation (0-1) might indicate that almost all students rated a skill highly with a ñ4ò while two students gave a ñ2.ò A high standard deviation (above 1) would indicate that there was little consistency in response, which makes the average a less reliable indicator. In most cases the standard deviation is below ñ1ò, which verifies that the student responses indicate a clear and reliable pattern.

Receiving a score that is within the program average is a good aim for consistency among our group. It isnôt necessary to exceed these categories to be an effective teacher. Above all, these numbers provide some insight into patterns of response. For example, if you tend to give slightly lower than average grades relative to the average of those given by other instructors, and your students rate you slightly high for key categories, this might indicate that you motivate your student to achieve high standards.

Instructor uses of course evaluations
All of this information (narrative and numbers) can be used to continue professional and course development. Ideally, it affirms innovations in your strategies and practices that can be documented in a teaching portfolio, along with other assessment measures.

Further questions?
If you have any questions about these materials, please contact Linda Hart Tolley.

Fall 2010 - WRI 1 and WRI 10 Final Evaluation

[redacted]

Results of survey

Started: November 29, 2010

Ended: December 16, 2010

Reply rate: 63% (923 / 1476)

Fall 2010 - WRI 1 and WRI 10 Final Evaluation

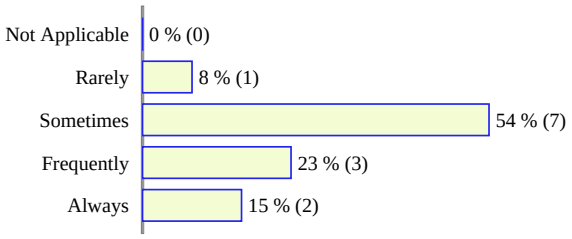
Instructions:
The following course evaluation will take about 20 minutes to complete. This survey provides anonymous but vital feedback to the instructor and our program. All responses are carefully analyzed to inform subsequent instruction in this course and to reshape the entire writing curriculum. Thank you for your thoughtful participation.

Course/Group Items:

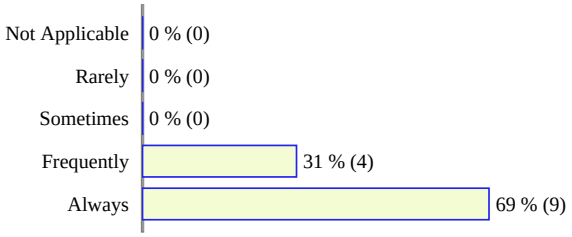
Part 1 -

The following questions are focused on self-assessment. Please rate your level of engagement and progress in the course.

1. I have made use of the instructor's office hours to get assistance with my assignments.



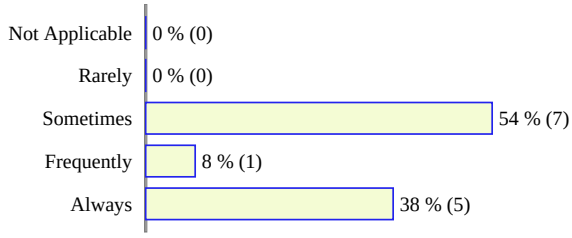
2. I complete the assigned readings and homework on schedule.



3. How would you describe your writing ability now compared to the beginning of the semester? Please explain.

- I have become a better writer and actually understand what the prompt is. I have also gained the ability to write better essays in order to make them flow.
- Compare to my writing ability now to the beginning I know that I have improved a lot. I have an easier time structuring my body paragraphs, my thesis statement and citation.
- It has certainly compared.
- I have developed both as a writer, reader, and thinker.
- Much more improved
- i feel like i have become a different writer as i have compared to the beginning of the semester. My intellect for writing has grown a lot because of my professor's amazing effort to teach us all about the basics of writing.
- In the beginning of the semester my writing ability was very weak. I'm weak in my grammars and sentence structures. I wasn't strong in organizing my thoughts either, therefore I usually get stuck and will simply put anything on my mind down. Now I feel strong when I write because I'm in control of what I put down.
- When comparing my writing ability from the beginning of the semester to now, it has changed. But, I'm still learning how to improve it at the same time.
- I think my writing ability is much better compared to at the beginning of the semester. Now I actually know how to use topic sentences to my advantage and learning how a thesis should work, as in it should be clear and arguable. I also learn how to quote sources and develop my body paragraphs to explain what I'm trying to say, especially using the examples to support my thesis.
- My writing ability is stronger because of fewer gramatical errors, less awkward word choice, and better essay structure.
- At the beginning, I just sit down in a trance, then start writing. Now I change my writing process after researching and do the revising.
- My writing has improved. I am better at revising and critical reading.

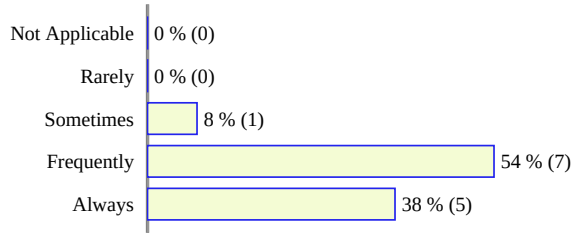
4. I participate actively in class discussions and activities.



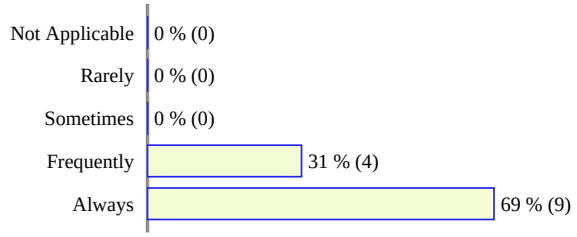
Part 2 - Instructor Assessment

The following questions are focused on your instructor. Please rate his/her effectiveness in helping you improve as a writer and critical thinker.

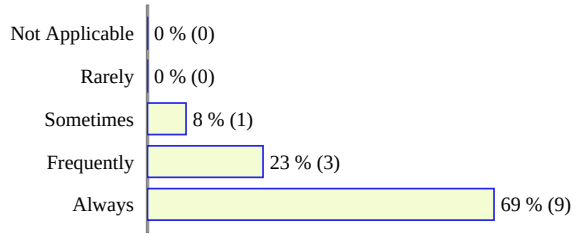
5. My instructor provides clear instructions for ESSAY assignments.



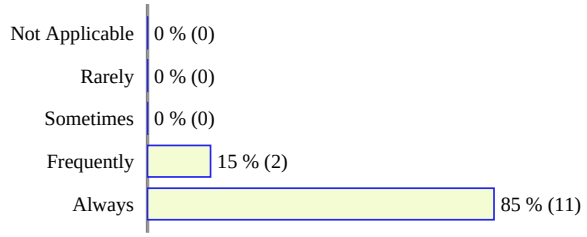
6. My instructor seems AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS.



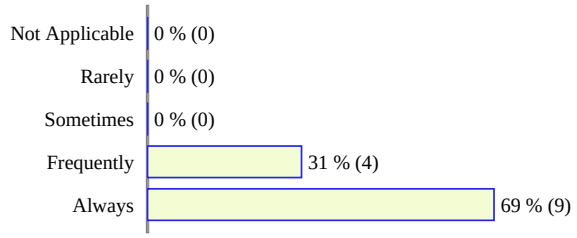
7. My instructor discusses my writing and ideas in ways that help me to improve.



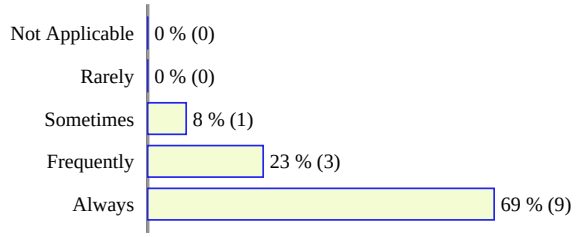
8. My instructor seems willing to ANSWER QUESTIONS.



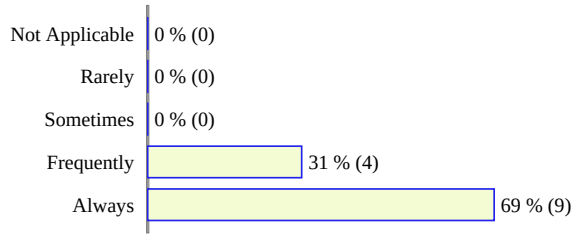
9. My instructor seems COMMITTED TO HELPING ME LEARN.



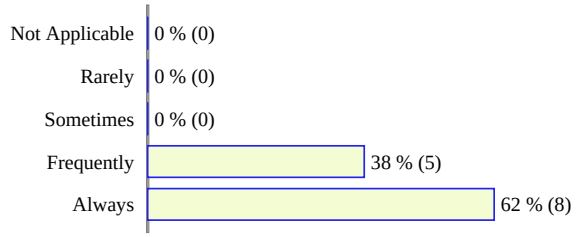
10. My instructor seems ORGANIZED.



11. My instructor seems FAIR.



12. My instructor seems KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT WRITING.

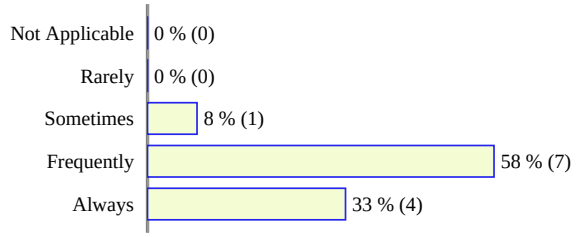


13. In what ways has your instructor helped you improve as a writer? Please explain.

- She has taught me the basics of writing and that writing doesn't have to seem so scary.
- My instructor has helped me improved in my writing areas of: annotating essays, body paragraphs structuring, and helping me explains my quotations within paragraphs.
- Feedback
- She has made herself very available to her students, her office hours help tremendously in writing my papers.
- my instructor helped me improve in many way. In things like coming with clear and strong thesis for my paper
- My instructor has given me many opinions about my writing and how i should change to become a better writer. She also gives useful feedbacks to me that when I think about the feedback she has given me, that is what I should have and would have done if I thought about my writing more critically.
- My instructor is really honest, therefore she will be honest in what I need to improve on. She is also very respectful and will help me in a sense that won't put me down or offend me. She taught me what I need to focus on when writing and to always think about what my purpose is in writing a paper.

- She has helped me by telling me what I should and shouldn't do, and how I should rewrite what I have wrote that doesn't make sense.
- My instructor help me develop my ideas for writing my paper. I usually know what I need to write but I just can't seem to put it into words. She help me write my body paragraphs by talking to me, telling me to actually put what I say to her into the paper. My instructor also help clear out any confusion I had as she was very specific about grammar and certain jump part in my essays.
- My instructor has put in the time to help me during office hours on my writing.
- My instructor helps me a lot about the grammar problems and how to make the essay more clear and persuasive.
- Her willingness to help us succeed made her advice seem genuine and helped me feel as though she truly cared.

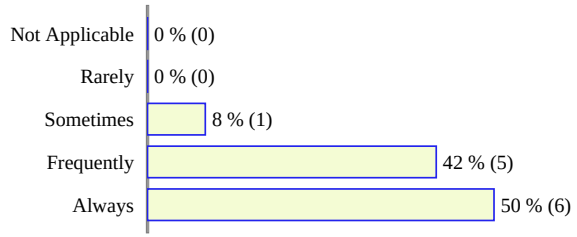
14. This course has taught me how to give and attend to feedback.



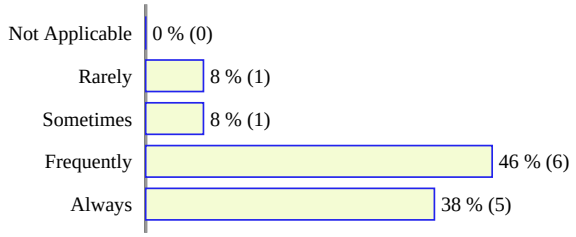
Part 3 - Skills Assessment

The following questions are focused on relevant communication skills. Please rate the course's effectiveness in helping you acquire these skills.

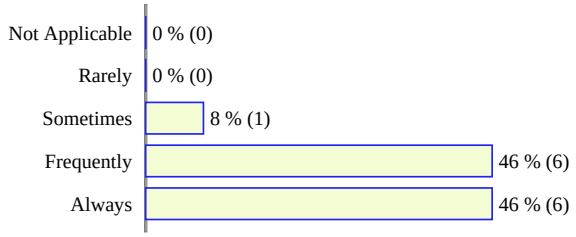
15. This course has taught me how to analyze readings.



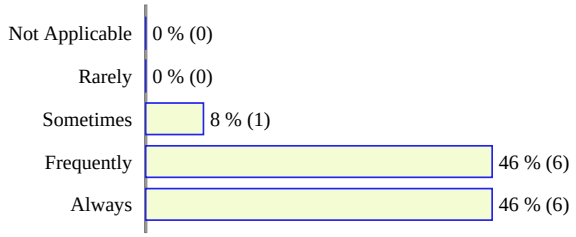
16. This course has taught me how to develop reading skills.



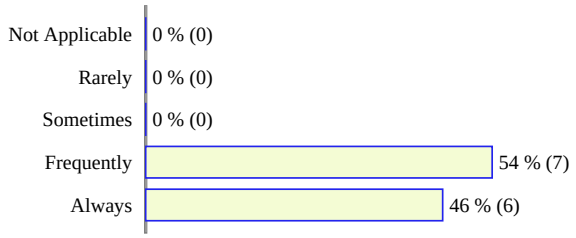
17. This course has taught me how to think creatively.



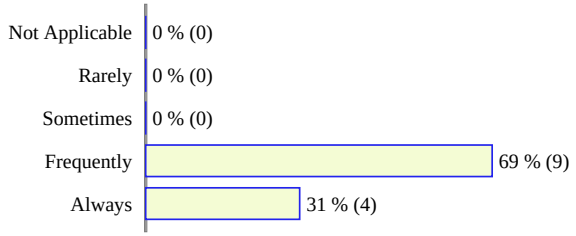
18. This course has taught me how to develop a topic.



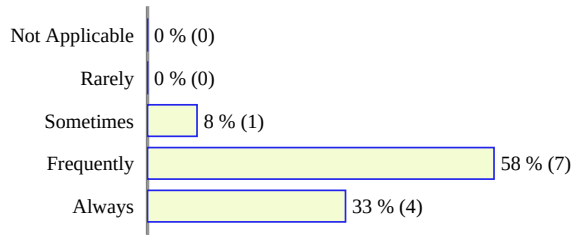
19. This course has taught me how to INTEGRATE EVIDENCE.



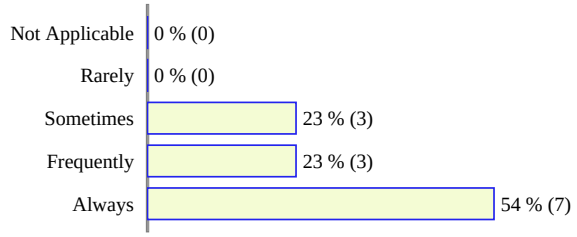
20. This course has taught me how to COMPOSE AN ARGUMENT.



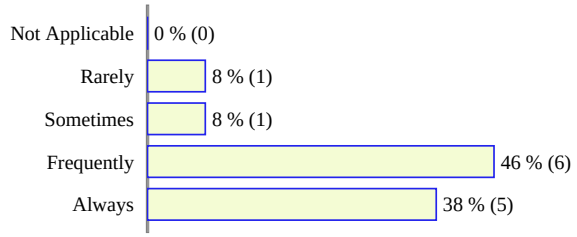
21. This course has taught me how to CRAFT AN ESSAY.



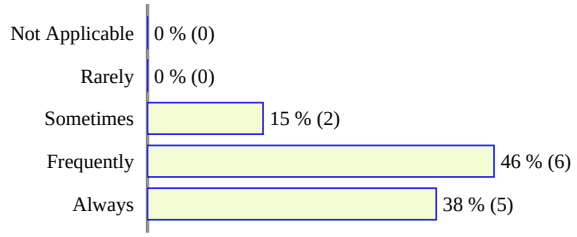
22. This course has taught me how to write to an audience.



23. This course has taught me how to speak to an audience.



24. This course has taught me how to apply professional and academic ethics.

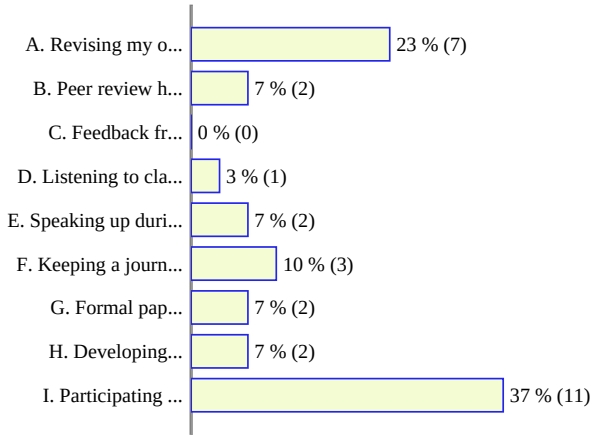


25. How effective is the design of this course in helping you improve as a writer? Please explain.

- Using assignments and other key ideas this course has taught me to grasp each main idea. It has taught me to understand that there is always an audience for your papers it's not always the teachers
- As an improvement as a writer I would say I am a lot better off now then I was before I entered this class. I learned writing skills that also helped me improved in my grammar and that was a huge issue to me.
- I have seen great improvement not only in my writing course in addition to my psychology courses.
- it helping my writing ability and i am see much more improve that i have not had at the beginning of this course
- It is really effective to me because before coming here to write, i had no idea there are various instructions to follow to write a paper.
- The design of this course has helped me much. I was able to improve on my peer feedback skill and be as useful as I can. I was able to understand the structures of writing to an audience and the expectations out of it.
- It has helped me because, what I learned in high school wasn't things that would prepare me for the college level writing. So writing 001 has helped me by understanding how college professor want my paper to be.
- The design of this course help me improve as a writer because it guide me through first critical reading, and then to critically read my paper and give peer feedback to it. Then, how to integrate evidences from the reading hw I have to support my ideas within my essays. The course even let me do research and that is critical in writing. As a writer, I should be able to research something and interpret what I learn from my research into my essay.
- The design of the course is very effective to myself because it allows me to grow as a writer.
- This course helps me build firm writing beginning of the college writing, and teach me how to create a good essay.
- The close contact and small class size made it easier for me to get feedback and learn what I needed to do to improve my writing.

Part 4 - Activities Assessment

26. Which of these class activities have been LEAST USEFUL in your development as a writer and critical thinker? Select up to three.

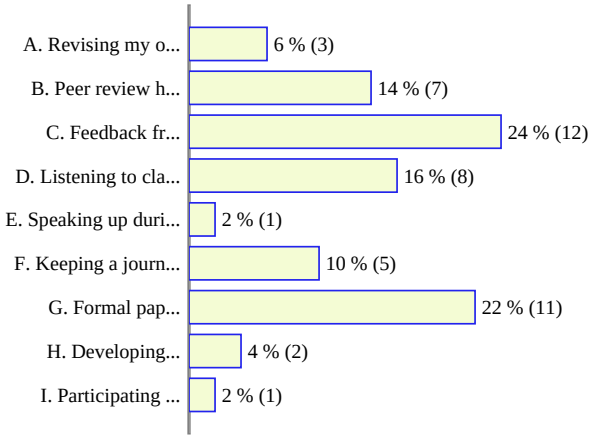


Comments:

- I did not really participate in online activities, but I feel like it wouldn't be useful for me because I'm a visual person. Formal paper drafting was somewhat useful because I learned what is and is not formal to put on paper.

- I don't really like speaking up much, just only when I have questions, comments, or concerns. I haven't participate in any online activities either so it does not help my development as a writer and as a critical thinker.

27. Which of these class activities have been MOST USEFUL in your development as a writer and critical thinker? Select up to three.



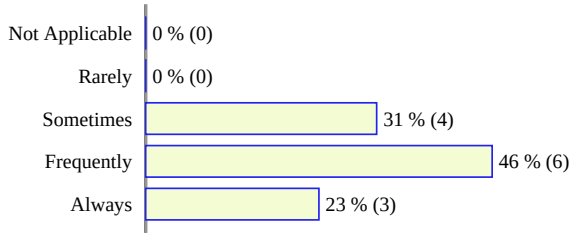
Comments:

- These activities were useful in my development as a writer. Peer review was very helpful because I get to compare and see the difference of my peers' works to mine. Instructor's feedback were also very helpful because I get to see my mistakes and learn from them. Keeping a journal is very useful in future use, therefore I enjoy keeping a journal and recording my work down.
- I think all of the above does, especially feedback from my instructors. By listening to class discussion as well as keeping a journal, I was able to learn how to argue and how to speak up my opinion. I like drafting formal papers because I learn a lot in those sessions.

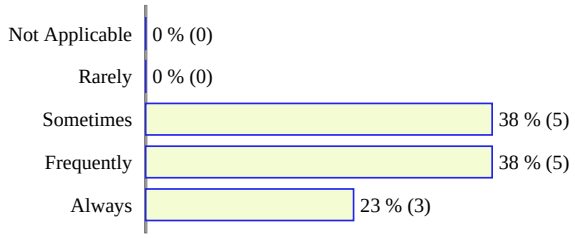
Part Five - Program Learning Outcomes Assessment

Program learning outcomes are evaluated on an annual basis. This year in the Merritt Writing Program, we are focusing on the following outcome: Students will be able to apply the conventions of relevant personal, academic, or professional forms of expression. Please rate how well the following elements:

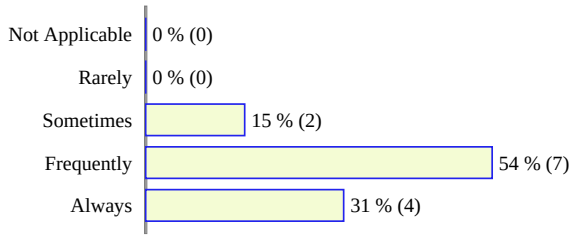
28. How often has the course reinforced your engagement with the conventions of personal expression?



29. How often has the course reinforced your engagement with the conventions of academic/professional expression?



30. How often has your instructor noted specific relationships between class instruction and student learning outcomes for your course?



Part 6 - Overall Assessment

The last two questions are open-ended, asking you to comment on aspects of the course that have been especially helpful and on aspects that could be improved.

31. Describe aspects of this course that you would change, if you had the opportunity.

- i don't think that there should be a portfolio given it doesn't seem to make sense because I understand what has helped me and what hasn't
- I wouldn't change much because overall I learned a lot from discussion in class.
- i would change none
- I wouldn't change anything about this course, maybe the prompt essays since the soldier one was a little difficult to write about but another than that it was a great class.
- Make the class shorter
- Nothing.
- I feel that this course was very organized and how it should

be. It wasn't tough,but it easy either. I feel like in the future it will definitely be tougher, therefore this course is well structured.

- If I can change this course, I would change the fact that the classes are too long. It's ok to have long classes but, have breaks inbetween them too. A student cannot stay in one seat for such a long time.
- I don't think I would change anything seriously. Although, if I had the opportunity, I think I would change the portfolio idea. I want to make it so that we do it throughout the semester, not wait until the last couple weeks of school, in order to do it. Because I get procrastinate easily and I would be doing the portfolio within two or three days. Yes, I think I would change on working the portfolio throughout the rest of the semester.
- I would change the students in the class, because majority were not active speakers in class which was hard to think creatively at times.
- More practices about the public speaking in class.
- More flexibility on subject matter and longer time to work on the portfolio.

32. Identify and evaluate aspects of this course that have been especially helpful to you.

- Meeting with my professor has been the most helpful.
- What has been especially helpful to me was interacting with my professor and getting his/her feedback.
- peer feedback
- Learning and applying critical reading, outlining, feedback on my papers helped me the most in my writing class.
- Writing essay and developing a clear thesis for my paper
- Teacher's feedback, critical reading, peer feedback from other students.
- All I can say is the peer feedback was very helpful. I can easily sit with a class member and discuss my work with them with no embarrassment. Peer feedback should be continued in this course if possible.
- This course has been helpful for me because, it has prepared me for the next up coming writing classes and how to write out professionally.
- I think class discussion really help since it help me organize my thoughts and ideas about writing for a specific essay. Journals also does this but it elaborate more on my ideas. Also, peer feedback to others help me improve since I could then try to critically read my paper and judge it. The reading hw assignment also help as well as the research. Reading help me write better, and doing research help me with evidences to support my thesis in my essay.
- The office hours, and help on my essays from my teacher have definitely helped me grow as a writer.
- Talk to the instructor.
  Discussion in group or class.
- Feedback from the instructor and drafting essays have been most helpful in improving my writing.