PREPARING SUCCESSFUL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS INSTITUTE
AUGUST 11, 2016
WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM
BPETERS@NIU.EDU
6 QUESTIONS

• What are common problems with student writing?
• How can informal writing help?
• Why do some assignments invite problems?
• Why design a series of “repeated” assignments?
• Why break down a longer assignment into short “linked” assignments?
• What are proven elements of successful assignments?
COMMON PROBLEMS WITH STUDENT WRITING

- Poor grammar
- Disorganization
- Inappropriate sources
- Unheeded instructions
- Lack of critical thinking
- Shallow research
- Missing the purpose
- Procrastination
- Plagiarism
- Over-summarization
- Underdevelopment
- Failure to proofread or edit
- No revision
- Grade complaints
TRY IT: How does this assignment invite problems in student writing?

Write a 10-page paper on a topic relevant to this course. Obtain my approval for your topic by midterm. Use APA documentation. Due date: December 5. Provide proof that you went to the University Writing Center.

INFORMAL WRITING

Use frequent, short, ungraded responses to spark thinking about course content and to enhance class discussions.
DESIGN TYPES OF ASSIGNMENTS WORTH REPEATING

• Case studies
• Article reviews
• Lab reports
• Reflections
• Position papers
• Care plans
• Websites

Repetition is not repetition,... The same action makes you feel something completely different by the end

— Pina Bausch —
TURN LONGER TERM PAPERS INTO SHORT, LINKED ASSIGNMENTS

• Easier to grade
• Allows time for feedback and revision
• Improves student learning
EFFECTIVE ASSIGNMENTS ADDRESS THESE ELEMENTS

• Content & scope
• Organization & development
• Audience & communication
• Engagement & choice
CHECK OUT OTHER WORKSHOPS ON WRITING!

Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center

• Fall-Spring Series
• May Workshop on Designing a Writing-Infused Course

http://www.niu.edu/wac/index.shtml
http://www.niu.edu/uwc/