

Questions for Writing Process Description Exercise

Please read the following instructions carefully:

The following questions address some of the issues you need to consider as you go about describing your writing process. Please answer the questions in as detailed a manner as possible in a 60 minute typing/writing marathon. Note that you do not need to answer all the questions; choose those that seem most important/relevant to your context. But ensure choose some questions from each of the four categories and the bullet sections.

As you answer these questions, you should consider how, when, where, what, and why you typically write as well as your last major writing task. Do not worry about your grammar, spelling, neatness, or organization, but please write in complete sentences (i.e., avoid describing your process in point form). Type as quickly as possible and do not revise or otherwise correct anything you have written. Quantity is more important than quality in this exercise. Your description along with my comments will be returned in a couple of weeks. Thanks.

1.0 Factors Relating to Your Writing Environment:

- What is your typical writing environment like? Quiet or noisy? Organized or disorganized? School, home or other? Do you like your environment? Would you like to change it? How? Why?
- Do you write your first draft on a word processor? Do you prefer to use paper and pen? Or do you use dictation? Are you a proficient typist or do you use the “hunt-and-peck” method? How skilled are you at operating your word processor? Do you like using your word processor? Why or why not? Do you use the spell-checker, grammar checker, and thesaurus? Style-sheets and templates? Outlining or annotation features?
- Do you write first drafts at one sitting or do you prefer to write it over a period of several days or weeks? Must you often write to deadlines or can you usually pace your writing to suit yourself?

2.0 Factors Relating to Your Audience, Purpose, and Occasion:

- To whom is most of your writing directed? Supervisors, colleagues, or subordinates? Do you often write for an audience with less expertise than yourself? With more? Do you like or dislike writing to a specific audience? Why? Who is that audience?
- What are the purposes for your writing? To persuade someone to adopt your ideas or recommendations? To describe or provide information about a specific situation, issue, or technology? To analyze the results of a particular course of action or the implications of a specific situation? Or a combination of purposes? Do you find writing for some purposes more difficult than writing for other purposes? Which ones? Why?
- What kinds of writing do you undertake? Letters, memos, proposals, reports, specifications, manuals, journal articles, other things? To which do you devote the most time? Do you like or dislike some kinds of writing more than others? Which ones? Why?

3.0 Factors Relating to Your Writing Process:

- Roughly what percentage of time do you devote to the process of inventing (research-ing, planning, or otherwise deciding what to say)? What percentage to drafting? What percentage to revising and editing?
- Do you do a lot of revising and editing at the same time as you do your drafting? Or do you write a complete (or nearly complete) first draft prior to revising? Does this vary according to the writing task? How? Are there some kinds of writing you don't revise? How much time do you usually leave between producing a rough draft and revising? Do you ask a colleague or friend to read over your rough draft and make suggestions? Why or why not?
- Do you become blocked when writing? How often? Can you describe the specific circumstances? When looking for an idea or specific information? When looking for the “right” words? When looking for a way to organize your writing? Can you describe at what point in the writing process? During invention? During drafting? During revision? If you become blocked, what strategies do you use to deal with it? Wait? Try and determine why you are blocked? Keep writing and sort it out later? Other? Do these strategies work?
- What kinds of changes do you most often make when revising? Do you correct spelling and punctuation errors? Do you substitute words? Do you add new information or remove excess information? Do you rewrite sentences? Or paragraphs? Do you make major changes to your organization? Do you change the format? Why do you make those changes that you do? Do you print a hard copy of your document prior to undertaking the final revisions?

4.0 Factors Relating to Your Attitudes about Writing:

- Do you like or dislike writing in general? Or are there specific types of writing and specific things about writing that you like or dislike? Can you describe them? Is writing boring or interesting? Is it difficult or easy? Do you suffer when writing or have fun? Or are you indifferent? How do you feel if and when you encounter writer's block? Anxious? Angry? Frustrated? Depressed? Resigned? Do you procrastinate when faced with most writing assignments? Or only with certain kinds of assignments or audiences? Do you procrastinate a lot or a little? How do you deal with procrastination?
- How important do you think effective writing skills are to your professional development? To your career? Very? Moderate? Not at all? Why? How much effort are you willing to devote to improving your writing? Have you taken other writing courses beyond this one? If so, what were they? What did you think about them? What do you hope to gain from this course?
- Do you think you are a good writer, an average writer, or a poor writer? Has anyone criticized something about your writing in the past two years? If so, what did they criticize? Do you agree with them? Why or why not?
- If you could change any one thing about your writing process, what would that be? Why? If you could master any one writing skill, what would you want it to be? Why?