

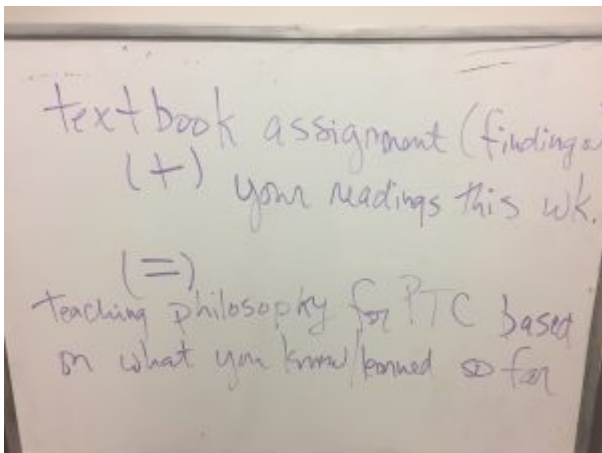
Outcomes and collaboration

Tonight (2-6), we needed to catch up and do some of the teaching and pedagogy things that we haven't been able to get through. This sometimes happens when discussions are rich and lively, which is what has happened in our case.

But from a teaching perspective, you have to be prepared to make adjustments to the schedule as things go along. So I'll be doing a pretty substantial shifting of things over the next few days, and I'll also need to find ways (classroom exercises and discussions) to make sure that we build on the readings you've done (cause as y'all made clear you don't like to read things that we don't use ☐

Freewrite

We started class with an old school free write that had the following prompt:



This led to a discussion about the purpose of this sort of exercise in the classroom and then a separate (related) discussion about the necessity for each of them to orient themselves with their own "philosophy" toward the course and the approach of teaching it (rhetorical and genre based).

As one of the students so perfectly stated, this type of free write exercise is definitely a metacognitive exercise that is

encouraging synthesis of a number of ideas. We took the recent assignment plus the readings for this week to find ways those things intersected and actually could be applied to how to teach the service course.

This focus on teaching this week was a good emphasis point to indicate that we are moving from the bigger concerns of the field to how those concerns actually play out in the classroom. What was so great about your free writes was that you were working toward a “philosophy” of how you could apply some of the things we’ve talked about and read in meaningful ways in the service course.

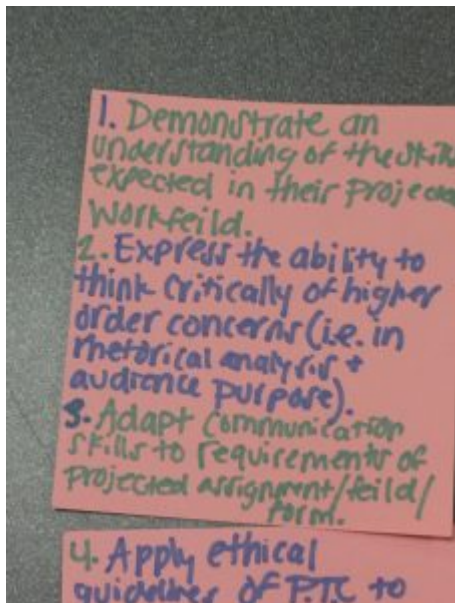
The free write exercise was also a good segway into a discussion of outcomes, which brought in the readings from last week. IN pairs, you were asked to write five outcomes and focus on crafting ones that fit with your philosophies and integrated the idea of writing verbs oriented outcomes. The verbs match to levels of learning and help to craft assignments that can actually measure the outcome.

Outcomes And Assignments

We were thinking through outcomes that started at the bottom of the taxonomy and moved to the top. The ones to specifically focus on are

- define and understand
- analysis (evaluate)
- create (synthesis)

Considering the service course in terms of these sorts of outcomes moves them from understanding basic concepts to creating workplace types of documents. To do this effectively means that assignments need to be created and scaffolded to match the student learning outcomes.

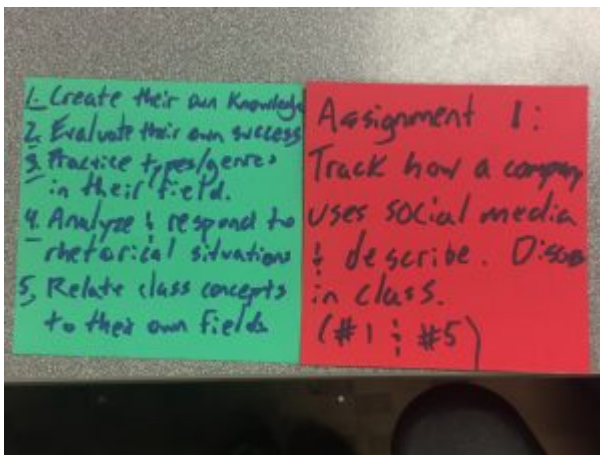
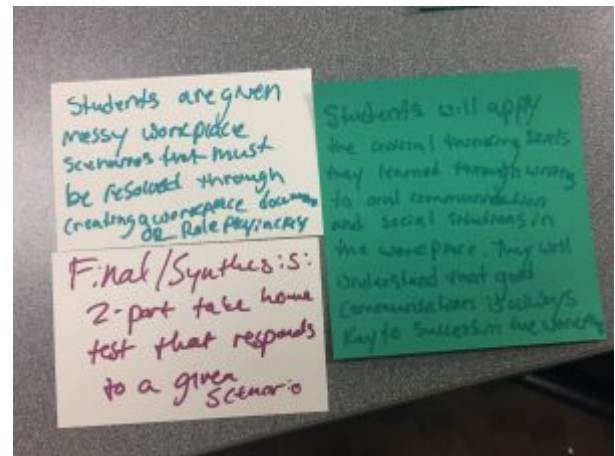
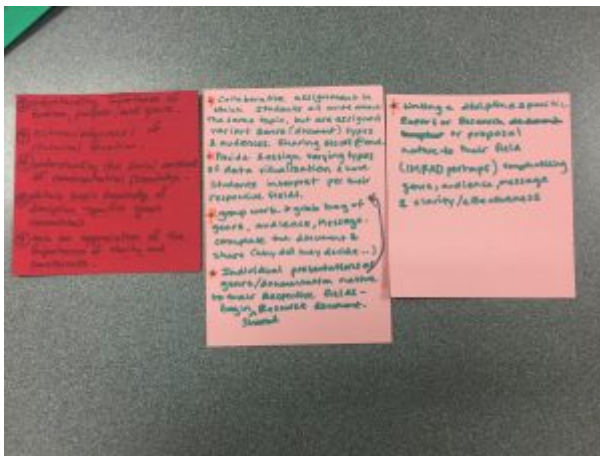
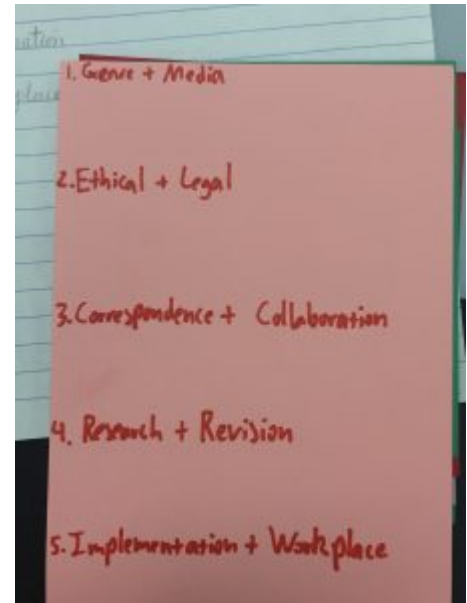
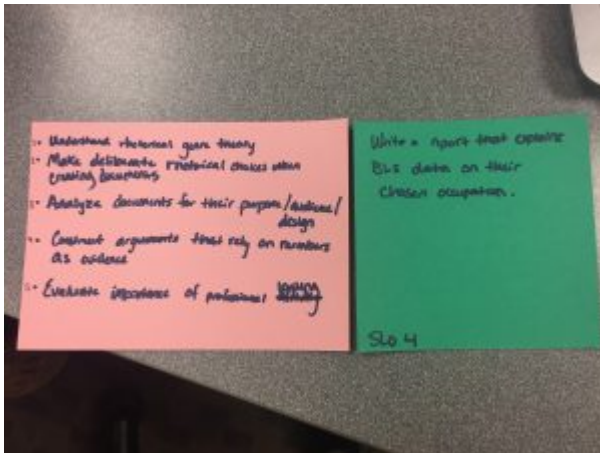


Thus, after writing a series of five outcomes, you then had to write a brief assignment that would match the sudden learning outcomes and the assignments needed to scaffold.

The series of images that follow are some of the outcomes and assignment pairs. All in all the exercise was quiet successful.

The biggest problem was that in many cases the assignments that were created were more like exercises that would be done in class to introduce and reinforce the key concepts. It seemed that in some cases, you didn't fully grasp that assignments are different. But that's to be expected the first time you're really thinking through the ideas of how *readings, exercises, assignments and assessments all need to point toward the student learning outcomes.*

The other critique of the assignments was in some case they were too complex and actually one of the assignments could have been broken apart into three smaller scaffolded assignments that still achieved the student learning outcomes. This too is to be expected because it takes time to work through the nuances of course building.



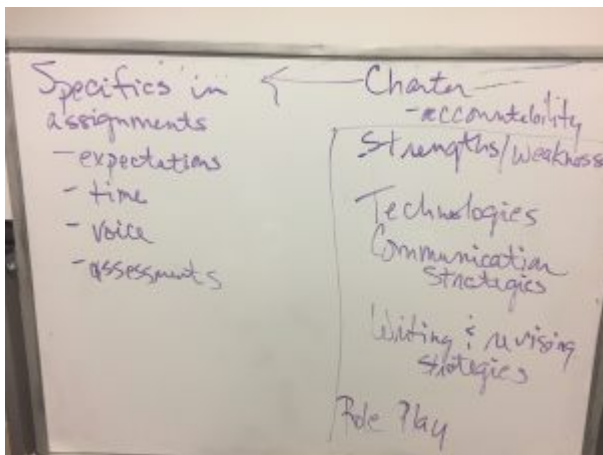
Using the smaller colored paper and pens helps with visualization and in aligning ideas. We'll be revisiting these things in a couple of weeks before you have to finish your syllabus assignment.

Collaboration

The last part of class we focused on talking about collaboration. We all seemed to agree that collaboration was a particularly important outcome for the service course, but it raised the question on how to teach students how to collaborate.

I have always been adamant about helping students learn how to collaborate. You just can't tell them they are doing a high stakes collaborative assignment and not give them the skills to do that work.

My strategy boils down to have specific assignments and incorporating a series of classroom exercises specifically about collaboration strategies. The latter of which are in the sort of box below and also described in more detail here: <http://tek-ritr.com/group-projects-in-the-classroom/>



The thing we focused on tonight was having students role play different difficult personalities that are often found in group projects (the czar, slacker, nagger, and jerk). The personality types can come out of a discussion (which we did a mini-one) of the worst collaboration experiences. [note: ** yes, these are broad stereotypes and this approach can be critiqued. But, if explained and this fact admitted, it helps students get into the exercise and accomplishes the idea of addressing head on bad past experiences AND opening ways to address these problems.]



The slacker group in progress.

I was impressed with the way you embraced the exercise, and as long as you remember how weird and awkward you felt, it will work fine in any classroom. You laugh a lot –just like we did–but it does help students understand some strategies for dealing with problems that arise. And that’s what we’re here to do, to give students some strategies they can use.

The greatest line was the in character slacker (seated above) who said, “a lot of work is up here” pointing to his head.

Great work, everyone!!