

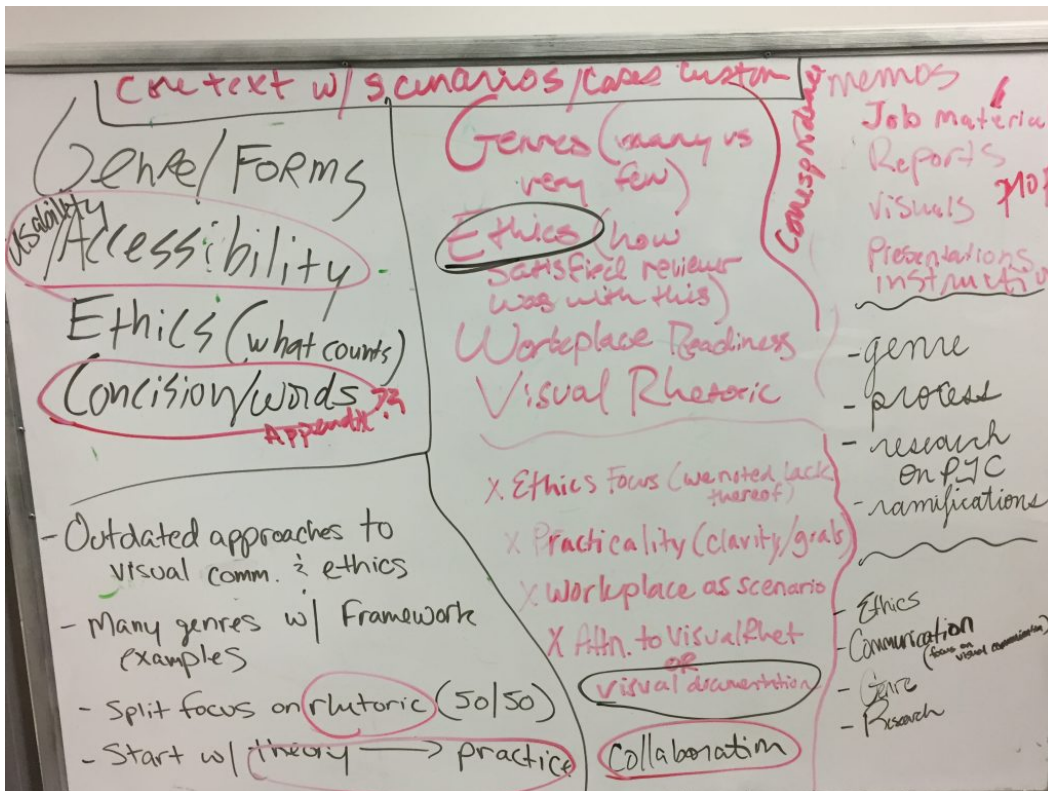
Feedback and Assessment

While today's topic was feedback and assessment, we also needed to do some work toward a couple of the big assignments coming up on the horizon. So while we waited for the time of our guest speaker's visit, we revisited the [textbook assignment](#) as way to start thinking through what we may want to change and update in USF's textbook.

We gathered together some of the common topics from the reviews and then discussed them in tandem with looking at a summary of assignments from 97 institutions across the US. What we learned from these different data points—including your own growing knowledge—was that there are some things that need to be included but lots of room to do things better.

The related conversation about how to code qualitative data and make sense of messy data was a useful one that I was glad that Sara also touched on about the process of coding, how codes are determined, and how many do you need. This is an important conversation we need to continue as we move toward your own research study designs.

Following is the whiteboard where we did out work.



The circled items are topics that need to be included along with the upper right hand corner of an assortment of specific genres that need to be considered. We also settled on a core text with [specialized scenarios or cases](#).

This discussion of topics and assignments was really fruitful because it brought together the two main themes of the course: the content of TPC service courses and how to teach (in general and the service course specifically). Questions about how the classroom exercise was conducted (thanks for challenging the process!!) tied back to previous conversations (particularly last week) about how to purposely create exercises, assignments, and readings that move toward learning outcomes. While the exercise was a little clunky on one hand, it brought together past discussions, assignments, and homework in a way where we could talk about the structure of the course. In particular, the scaffolding of the assignments was made completely transparent in how they all go together. Voila!

Feedback and Assessment

The discussion about the textbooks and assignments lead us into the main topic for tonight, which was feedback (formative comments that are meant to improve student writing) and assessment (summative “things” that are generally a grade).

While we didn't get to the rubrics that you found, we did have a pretty good discussion that seemed to be a bit of a downer. The primary reason for that downer was the ongoing issue of the need to provide feedback but the fact that often students don't read it. The reading for this week were united in showing the areas that need improvement in the current standard of practice.

Sara Doan's visit to class was insightful because she connected her current research on comparing instructor attitudes about feedback to their actual practices to her own teaching practices. This meta-awareness and reflection was a great point to bring into the course because pedagogical reflection is essential to being an effective teacher and working toward finding new ways of engaging students. The intersections of Sara's research with teaching practice make it a seamless transition, but a big takeaway is that this reflective work on practices needs to be done.

It was also great that Sara pointed out some of the same problems with the current research that y'all found as well. And another big takeaway is the desperate need for this type of pedagogical research to drive practice (rather than relying on the lore we live on now).

If we had to have one takeaway is that feedback in a service course is different and that it needs to include an explanation as to why the change needs to happen as well as an example. Like much of what we've discussed all term, TPC pedagogy is driven by examples and then the making of the thing. As Sara rightly pointed out, sometimes we get too

caught in critique in the classroom, and for the TPC service course classroom, making—the writing—always needs to be the central focus. To get students to do that better means implementing feedback practices at the draft stage to assist students in understanding the rhetorical complexities of the writing situations.



To help with this latter idea and to expand on Sara's excellent point about writing being part of a system, we constructed a lawn mower company on the eve of a new product launch and anniversary party. As you played the role of different divisions—from CEO to sales to executive assistant to the assembly line—it was clear how the writing that was needed by each person/division had to be connected to others (in a system) and they worked together to accomplish some action tied to a business goal. In less than 10 minutes, we acted out one of Sara's key points. More importantly, it was a visual and performative representation of how you can make the same connections for students even without work experience and even without knowing anything about making lawnmowers!

Thank you for your attention tonight and continued good work. Have a great week!