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**E608: INTEGRATING WRITING IN THE ACADEMIC CORE:**

# **Teaching Journal**

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# Journal Entry #1

* Course name
  + Psy 350: Research Design & Analysis II
* Number of students (rough count is fine)
  + 100
* Do you have any other GTAs in the class?
  + Yes, one other
* Then, write an informal reflection on what you think of your course and your part in it so far. You might answer some or all of the following questions:
  + What duties have been clearly described to you?
  + What are any implicit duties you suspect you are being asked to do by your professor?
  + What part of those duties or tasks are you unsure or worried about doing?
  + Discussed in general, or focusing on just one assignment, what are the writing assignments given to the students in the class?
  + What support is being given to the students to complete those writing assignments?
  + Look at the actual description of the writing assignments, paying attention to the primary verb in the assignment (Describe; identify; tell the story of . . . ; compare; analyze; synthesize) Do you see any progression or scaffolding in the writing assignments given in the class?
  + What is your first impression of your students, and, by extension, first- or second-year students at CSU??
  + What has surprised you so far about any part of your experiences as a graduate student at CSU who is also a GTA?
  + Optional: If you are stuck you might consider writing a series of sentences that begin with, “I am a GTA who . . .

For my TA class I have duties very clearly described for me. I will be grading undergraduates’ ability to write scientifically. I will be grading their results and discussion sections to one of three fictitious studies. My biggest fear is properly grading assignments because I, myself, am not a great writer – so how can I expect to be able to grade someone else’s writing ability? Fortunately, I feel confident in my ability to teach proper research methods and statistical analyses. The important part is that I expect to get multiple drafts of the assignment as the course progresses, which I see as an ability to improve my grading methodology and hone in on what is most important to undergraduate students. To be honest, there are a lot of students in the class, so I found it hard to form first impressions on any of them. In part though, I suppose that is my first impression of the class though. I am aware that it will be hard to get to know every student and be able to help them.

* I am a GTA who wants to see students strive in the world of research
* I am a GTA who wants students to be excited utilize research and statistical methods
* I am GTA that wants to be friendly and approachable to students
* I am a GTA that wants to learn to be a good mentor for future students I may be teaching.

# Journal Entry #2

## Tuesday

I was able to introduce myself to the class today and talk about my past research interests. I really enjoyed this because, honestly, it was the first time I got up and was able to talk in front of a group of students in this setting. Surprisingly I felt a bit more confident doing this because I knew that I was seen more as a leadership role. Afterwards I thought about when I’ve seen other Graduate Teaching assistants in my other classes – They most likely felt just like me. I still haven’t gotten to any grading yet. But I am eager for it.

## Thursday

For this class I have not done too much, and no one asked me questions. I am writing this as I sit in the class., actually. The other GTA, undergraduate TA, professor and me all had a meeting before hand though. I learned that the undergraduate writing is bad. I have trouble believing this though, even when I hear of people talking about it in our E608 class, I can’t believe that it’s true.

# Journal Entry #3

## Tuesday

The students turned in their first assignments on Friday. It was not necessarily a writing assignment, but it was all statistics and coding based. Both statistics and programming are my favorite things to learn, and I hope to teach them both one day. I spent some time looking over them this weekend and, boy, I saw a whole variety of good and bas answers. Some of the answers were paragraph form answers, some of which made no sense, other that were extremely well written. One person even wrote one word… and they spelt the one word wrong! I think I’m starting to understand that every class has a wide variety of students. Some students are more attentive, while others are extremely careless.

## Thursday

Class Was cancelled!

# Journal Entry #4

## Tuesday

This week the students’ first writing assignment is due. This will be my first show at seeing the “terrible” writing that everyone else talks about in our classes. The great thing is, one week before the assignment is due, I have been receiving a fair amount of questions. Personally, I enjoy answering these questions. I know people say they hate it, but so far, I have come to love it. There is something about knowing the answer and displaying your own knowledge that is somewhat satisfying.

## Thursday

Okay, there is such things as stupid questions. Some people that email have not even read the directions. I simply lead them to the directions on the assignment. Other times, students will send me their whole writing assignment saying things like, “Does this look good?”. I sincerely do not have time for this. I will say though, I am still enjoying the experience overall. Additionally, I completed grading my first set of assignments. It went well, I think I am one who likes to comment a lot on their assignments. I found a great strategy of copying and pasting comments that were repetitive across students. Therefore, at the start, my grading of papers took about 15 minutes but closer to the end I was grading assignments in close to 8 minutes.

# Journal Entry #5

## Tuesday

No one has come to my office hours! I really want someone to! It is a great way to force me to grade papers and do work though. In other news, my first set of writing assignments came back. They are horrible! I get it. I completely get what everyone in class was talking about. Here is an example of what one of the students wrote in our class: “The main interest in this study the top three interest areas in psychology for the class and the amount of coffee consumed by the class.” If that sentence was confusing, don’t worry, it does not matter if it is out of context – It just blatantly makes no sense and is incoherent. The professor has been consistently telling students to use an *active voice* when writing and there has been anything but that. In the end I suppose this is the learning process.

## Wednesday

This is the last journal entry for credit in this class. I decided to write it the night before I had to turn it in though. I think I might continue writing these as a way to reflect on my experiences in the future. I am happy to report that someone has officially come to my office hours. Well, the student came *after* my office hours. I was so excited I told them that they can come by anytime within a certain timespan and I’ll be there. True story: I helped them out! Helping a student out was likely the most rewarding thing I can do. It was just technical problems, but I feel that I explained *what* the problem was, *why* the problem occurred, and *how* we fixed it. The fact that I am able to explain something to a student makes me realize that I know more than I think. I just want to end these journal entries in the cheesiest way possible by stating: “While teaching students, it turns out that I was learning more than them.” I can probably turn that into a truism.