

Evaluation Resource Central: Peter Elbow

 evergreen.edu/writingcenter/handouts/evaluationsself-elbow

We're offering more in-person learning for Fall 2021!



Some Suggestions by Peter Elbow

It helps to write evaluations in two stages. The first stage is really for yourself. So you can get things straight in your own head without worrying yet about what to write for the second stage: a transcript document aimed at the outside world. For the first stage, write quickly, loosely, and as much as possible without stopping. Don't even worry about mechanics, organization or whether it makes sense. Don't even worry about whether it is true: sometimes blatant exaggeration or distortion is the only way to get your hands on a half buried insight. The idea is to get your thoughts and feelings down on paper where you can see them and learn from them.

Wait until AFTER you get that interesting mess written before going back over it to decide which things are true and which of those true things you want to share with strangers who will read your transcript. It will be easier to write appropriately for a transcript reader when you get the false and private things down on paper so they don't make fog and static in your head to confuse and slow you down. Save this first stage writing for your portfolio. It will have lots of important insights that won't be in your transcript. Think about sharing much or all of it with your faculty member so as to help him or her write a better, fairer evaluation of you.

Useful Questions for Your First Stage Self-Evaluation

- How do you feel now at the end?
- How accurate are those feelings?
- What are you proud of?
- Compare your accomplishments with what you hoped for and expected at the start.
- Did you work hard or not? Get a lot done or not?
- What kinds of things were difficult or frustrating? Which were easy?
- What's the most important thing you did during this period?
- What bits of reading or lecture stick in your mind?

- Think of some important moments from this learning period: your best moments, worst moments, typical moments, crises or turning points. Tell 5 or 6 of these in a sentence or two each. What can you learn or did you learn from each of these moments?
- Write a letter to an important person you studied thanking them for what you learned from them. Or telling them how you disagree with them. Or telling them how good a job they did.
- Who is the person you studied you cared most about? BE that person and write that person's letter to you, telling you whatever it is they have to tell you.
- What did you learn throughout? Skills and ideas. What was the most important thing? What idea or skill was hardest to really "get?" What crucial idea or skill just came naturally?
- When they make the movie, who will play you? What's the movie really about?
- Describe this period as a journey: to where? what kind of terrain is it? A complete trip or part of a longer one?
- You learned something crucial which you won't discover for a while... Guess it now.
- Tell a few ways you could have done a better job.
- What knowledge and skills will you need in five years? Did you learn any?
- What advice would some friends in the program give you if they spoke with 100% honesty and caring? What advice do you have for yourself.

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