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Lander University's

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White Board



Become An Effective Teacher & Save Your Valuable Teaching Time and Energy

Center for Effective Undergraduate Teaching (864) 388-8426

Business Writing

"Please See Attached"

JONATHAN FROM CALIFORNIA wrote to me last week asking and then answering his own question. I like it when readers are so efficient!

Here is what Jonathan grappled with:

Today I was looking for an answer to my question about the correctness of the term "please see attached," but I could not find a post about it. So I am writing to ask you, but in thinking about it a little more, I think I know the answer. Even though people use the term all the time (at least in my industry), it is an incomplete sentence and should be avoided. It takes a few seconds longer to type out "please see the attached document (or spreadsheet, proposal, etc.)", but it is the right thing to do.

I agree, Jonathan. "Please see attached" sounds incomplete.

To people who send nonstop text messages or emails, the phrase probably seems efficient. But I suggest boosting efficiency with more energetic, focused sentence starters such as:

The attached diagram shows . . .

The attached spreadsheet contains . . .

When you review the attached proposal, you will notice . . .

As promised, I have attached a revised . . .

Please let me know if the attached draft . . .

"Please see attached" is simply too dull-and it's inaccurate. We don't want our readers to "see" the attachment. (I "see" a pile of papers on my desk, but my next step is to hide it in a file drawer.)

We want our readers to review, improve, approve, save, forward, or recommend it-not "see" it.

We also don't want them to find it. (It's not lost or hidden, is it?) So "Please find attached" is no improvement.

Are people at your organization, like Jonathan's, attached to "Please see attached"?

Lynn Gaertner-Johnston, Syntax Training, Seattle, Washington, Business Writing Blog, July 20, 2009, [http://www.businesswritingblog.com/business_writing/2009/07/please-see-attached-.html], July 27, 2009.

How to Avoid Silly Errors in Email

A PROCUREMENT MANAGER from Washington, D.C., asked for ways to avoid silly errors caused by too little time to proofread and too much reliance on the grammar and spelling checker. I am happy to share my strategies:

1. Rethink your attitude toward proofreading. Proofreading is not a luxury. It's as essential as bread and water. The 45 seconds it may take to carefully proofread an email can save hours of resending messages, clarifying, and getting over embarrassment. The manager who wrote to a new employee "Please bare with me while I learn the ropes" probably still shudders when he thinks of it.

2. Proofread aloud, reading every word. Aloud may mean just whispering to yourself, but do voice each word. Doing so will help you find errors as well as sentences that don't make perfect sense.

3. When you make a change while proofreading, proofread the changed paragraph or sentence again. Frequently edits are the cause of additional errors. For example, if you change "Thanks you for the gift" to "Thank for the gift," you have a new error.

4. Look closely for typical errors. The most common error is giving the wrong date or matching the date with the wrong day of the week. Another common one is you for your. Another is missing words, and missing punctuation at the end of the sentence. If you frequently type it's for its, look for that error. (It's must mean "it is." It's has no other correct meaning.)

5. Save any important email in your drafts folder, and then come back to it a few minutes later. Just a few minutes away from the message will help you spot errors.

6. Before clicking Send, check the "To" line and your greeting. Be sure you have written to the correct Christie, and be sure you have not spelled her name Christi or Cristie or Kristie, especially if that is your sister's name.

Lynn Gaertner-Johnston, Syntax Training, Seattle, Washington, Business Writing Blog, May 19, 2009, [http://www.businesswritingblog.com/business_writing/2009/05/how-to-avoid-silly-errors-in-email.html], July 27, 2009.

CALENDAR

TOOLS OF THE TRADE: RUBRICS

(COURSE ID: 201010EUT1)

Tuesday, October 6, 2009

12:40 - 1:40 p.m. Dawson Room

Assessment Conversation

Dava M. O'Connor

Chair, Department of Teacher Education

Rubrics make assessing student work quick and efficient, and they help teachers justify to students and others the grades that they assign. At their very best, rubrics are also teaching tools that support student learning and the development of sophisticated thinking skills. They can serve the purposes of learning as well as of evaluation and accountability, thus blurring the distinction between instruction and assessment.

Participants will examine several rubric examples and explore how deploying rubrics can be useful in teaching as well as in assessment.

FALL BREAK

Oct 15-16, 2009

FACULTY MEETING

Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2009

12:40-1:40pm, LC200

WHITE BOARD

2009-10 Publication Dates

First Monday of the Month

September 7 March 1

October 5 April 5

November 2 May 3

December 7 June 7

January 4 July 5

February 1 August 2

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SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

APATHETIC STUDENTS, ILLITERATE graduates, incompetent teaching, impersonal campuses -- so rolls the drumfire of criticism of higher education. There are neither enough carrots nor enough sticks to improve undergraduate education without the commitment and action of students and faculty members. They are the precious resources on whom the improvement of undergraduate education depends. But how can students and faculty members improve undergraduate education? To provide a focus for their work, we offer seven principles based on research on good teaching and learning in colleges and universities.

ENCOURAGES CONTACT BETWEEN STUDENTS AND FACULTY

Frequent student-faculty contact in and out of classes is the most important factor in student motivation and involvement. Faculty concern helps students get through rough times and keep on working. Knowing a few faculty members well enhances students' intellectual commitment and encourages them to think about their own values and future plans.

DEVELOPS RECIPROCITY AND COOPERATION AMONG STUDENTS

Learning is enhanced when it is more like a team effort than a solo race. Good learning, like good work, is collaborative and social, not competitive and isolated. Working with others often increases involvement in learning. Sharing one's own ideas and responding to others' reactions sharpens thinking and deepens understanding.

ENCOURAGES ACTIVE LEARNING

Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just by sitting in classes listening to teachers, memorizing pre-packaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves.

GIVES PROMPT FEEDBACK

Knowing what you know and don't know focuses learning. Students need appropriate feedback on performance to benefit from courses. When getting started, students need help in assessing existing knowledge and competence. In classes, students need frequent opportunities to perform and

receive suggestions for improvement. At various points during college, and at the end, students need chances to reflect on what they have learned, what they still need to know, and how to assess themselves.

EMPHASIZES TIME ON TASK

Time plus energy equals learning. There is no substitute for time on task. Learning to use one's time well is critical for students and professionals alike. Students need help in learning effective time management. Allocating realistic amounts of time means effective learning for students and effective teaching for faculty. How an institution defines time expectations for students, faculty, administrators, and other professional staff can establish the basis of high performance for all.

COMMUNICATES HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Expect more and you will get more. High expectations are important for everyone -- for the poorly prepared, for those unwilling to exert themselves, and for the bright and well motivated. Expecting students to perform well becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy when teachers and institutions hold high expectations for themselves and make extra efforts.

RESPECTS DIVERSE TALENTS AND WAYS OF LEARNING

There are many roads to learning. People bring different talents and styles of learning to college. Brilliant students in the seminar room may be all thumbs in the lab or art studio. Students rich in hands-on experience may not do so well with theory. Students need the opportunity to show their talents and learn in ways that work for them. Then they can be pushed to learn in new ways that do not come so easily.

Teachers and students hold the main responsibility for improving undergraduate education. But they need a lot of help. College and university leaders, state and federal officials, and accrediting associations have the power to shape an environment that is favorable to good practice in higher education.

University of Honolulu Community College, Teaching Tips, Arthur W. Chickering and Zelda F. Gamson From The American Association for Higher Education Bulletin, March 1987 [http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/7princip.htm], September 30, 2009.

Encouraging Student Retention

CIRCULATE around the class as you talk or ask questions. This movement creates a physical closeness to the students. Avoid standing behind the lectern or sitting behind the desk for the entire period. Do not allow the classroom to set up artificial barriers between you and the students.

AT MID-TERM and at final exam, your last test question should ask if a student is going to continue at the college or drop out at the end of the semester. If a potential drop-out is identified, you can advise the student to work with the division counselor.

University of Honolulu Community College, Teaching Tips, Jefferson Community College, Kentucky [http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/studretn.htm], September 30, 2009.

Why Put People Down in Writing?

Lynn Gaertner-Johnston

THE OTHER DAY I SENT out my monthly ezine, Better Writing at Work, to about 8,000 subscribers. I received a few "unsubscribe" notices, as I normally do. People unsubscribe when they are changing jobs or buried in email. I know their reasons because my ezine mailing program allows people to comment.

I was annoyed by this unusual unsubscribe comment, left by someone named Amanda:

"I teach a professional writing class at work, and I thought this newsletter would give me additional tips or writing skills we were not already teaching. It didn't."

Am I wrong in thinking this is a putdown?

When I am out shopping, I do not say to the shop owner as I leave the store without making a purchase, "I thought I would find good things in your shop, but I did not." When I review a menu in the foyer of a restaurant, I do not say, "Sorry. Your menu has nothing to offer me" before I walk away.

Amanda might have written "Not what I expected," or she might have not commented at all. Why put me down? Why burn a bridge with a possible colleague or professional contact? Why spread ill will?

Being mean-spirited just doesn't make sense to me. What do you think?

Lynn Gaertner-Johnston, Syntax Training, Seattle, Washington, Business Writing Blog, June 29, 2009, [http://www.businesswritingblog.com/business_writing/2009/06/why-put-down-people-in-writing-.html], July 27, 2009