

Final Lesson Study Report: Due June 12, 2015

Use the following format to prepare your completed lesson study report for *publication* in the [Lesson Study Project Showcase](#) and the [College Lesson Study Blog](#). When you are finished, email a single Word or PDF file to wcerbin@uwlax.edu. If you have questions, contact Bill Cerbin, Lesson Study Project Director, at wcerbin@uwlax.edu or 608.785.6881.

PART I: BACKGROUND	
Title	Challenging Students in a Professional Writing Classroom to Engage Critically in Stakeholder Analysis
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Discipline(s) or Field(s)	English Department
Submission Date	June 12, 2015
Course Name	Introduction to Professional Writing
Course Description	<p>ENG 335: Introduction to Professional Writing is designed as the introductory course to the Professional Writing minor at UW-L. It is, more so than other courses in the minor, a theoretical course designed to introduce students to the field of professional writing and the conversations that circulate and need to inform practices of professional writing. Thus, the course covers discussions such as the intersections of gender, race, class, ability, risk, advocacy, and other content with professional writing practices and theories. One major thread of the course is ethics in professional writing—it is within this discussion at the beginning of this course where the lesson study took place.</p> <p>This course is a 300-level junior/senior course in professional writing, capped at 18 students, with students who have majors from all over campus—as it is a professional writing minor course. The lesson was one course period long, and took place in a discussion-based computer classroom in WING.</p>
Abstract	<p>Provide an overview of your learning goals, lesson plan, and major findings.</p> <p>Goals for the Activity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Offer students an opportunity to engage thoughtfully and critically in a stakeholder analysis activity.2. Engage in the complexity of responding in writing, post-stakeholder analysis, vis-à-vis dialogue with their group members.3. Employ varying concepts and theoretical understandings of professional writing in undertaking, analyzing, and responding to a professional writing problem. <p>Lesson Plan:</p> <p>Prior to this course, students had been discussing the history of the field of professional writing. This moment was where the field was turning both to the social and the ethical implications of the work of professional writing. Prior to this particular day, students read a piece by Steven Katz regarding the use of rhetoric in the German holocaust—the piece articulates how professional writing can be seen as a commitment of the time in which it is generated, as well as a vehicle that can drive commitments, as well.</p>

	<p>With that background, students were to engage with, negotiate about, and then find a way to respond to the form in Appendix A, and were grouped in 3 groups to do so.</p> <p>Major Findings: Students were able to engage with the form in intellectual ways, and were able to see multiple perspectives in response to the form. As the instructor, Marie was happy to see those things happening. The one major finding we came away with, though, was that it is clearly difficult for students to not identify with the institutional role they were given, and oriented themselves not to a broader context of ethical implications of this form, but very easily took on the role of the institution, even after having read the article by Katz and talking about how difficult it is to step outside the bounds and consider all aspects of a situation, and their own place and responsibility of perhaps changing the institution rather than the individuals. As an instructor, Marie will be continuing to work on making such implications clear in her writing classes.</p>
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PART II: THE LESSON

<p>Learning Goals</p>	<p>(List your student learning goals. Include broad developmental and disciplinary goals as well as lesson-specific goals. Write goals in terms of the knowledge and qualities students should exhibit as a result of the lesson. In addition, comment on how the lesson is designed to promote achievement of your goals.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learn about how the field of professional writing has shifted in their attention to the ethics of the work we do, and the ethical obligations of the professional writer. 2. Apply that knowledge to context-specific writing situations. 3. Be able to delineate between multiple stakeholders, their needs. 4. Be able to respond ethically and thoughtfully (even to challenge, if necessary) to stakeholder and cultural needs and wishes. <p>The hope was that in constructing a writing activity that was both prompted by, and necessitated response in writing, students would be able to articulate both ethical problems with the form, and with their own responses to the form. The former happened; the latter did not.</p>
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<p>Lesson Plan</p>	<p>(Describe the steps of the lesson, providing enough detail for other teachers to use it in their classes. Include any pre or post-lesson work, the specific wording of prompts, time required for each task, and explanations of any distributed materials.)</p> <p>The prompts are included as Appendix A and B. They include the steps we asked students to follow. Students were unable to complete the final task, as the 55 min. time frame was too short.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Steven Katz’s piece. 2. Form 3 groups of 6—one group representing students, one group representing the faculty, and one group representing the book store. 3. Complete the activities on the prompt.
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PART III: THE STUDY

<p>Approach</p>	<p>(Describe your plan for conducting observations and the types of evidence you collected.)</p>
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	<p>Of the 3 participants, 2 were observers and 1 was the instructor who facilitated the day in class. Observers took notes, including commentary from students. That ethnographic information was our only evidence, as students were not able to complete the generation portion of the lesson plan in the 55-min. activity.</p>
Findings/Discussion	<p>(Present major patterns and tendencies, key observations, or representative examples in the evidence you collected. Discuss what your study suggests about student learning, including any misconceptions, difficulties, confusion, insights, surprising ideas, etc. Recommend revisions to the lesson.)</p> <p>When asked to analyze the responses of the simulated student (“Sam”) on the simulated form, students in one small group were unsure how to proceed in performing such an analysis. Initially, their analysis centered on “Sam’s” unmet needs, as “s/he” expressed them on the form. In their discussion, the students considered how the simulated scenario was relevant to their own experiences: they sympathetically restated “Sam’s” objection to General Education course requirements, and one student remarked “We can relate to needing resources.” They also addressed how it reflected potential disconnections between the context of the form’s institutional authors and the expected respondents; as one student remarked, “Everybody’s definition of ‘need’ is different.”</p> <p>Without explicitly acknowledging it as an objective of their task, the small-group students began revising the form to better suit what they perceived to be its purpose (for example, a student commented that the form should ask “Regardless of parental income, are <u>you</u> able to afford x?”). In response to the assignment prompt: “Is [the form] clear/appropriate?” one student said “The form doesn’t ask for explanation,” and another noted that respondents would have difficulty demonstrating their “need” as the form requires, because “You can’t put in your own information.” Although unstructured, the students’ spontaneous interpretations and evaluations of the simulated form began to reveal the ethically charged points in the exercise.</p> <p>In the midst of this discussion, however, the students in the small group perceived that their analysis was off course when they were not provided with specific guidance, so they repeatedly broke off their discussion and refocused their responses to match the language of the analysis prompts, often when their discussion was yielding original insights. They perceived that “answering the questions” was the proper “task” at hand, rather than perceiving that holistic analysis would be valuable and crucial to successfully analyzing a scenario with a complex of ethical implications. Instructors of lessons such as this might encourage analysis <i>outward</i> from any artifact provided for the purposes of the lesson, rather than allowing students to resort to their default of reading <i>inward</i> from a rubric or from prompts the instructor provides.</p> <p>However, this suggestion is somewhat at odds with scenarios the students will face in their later careers as professional writers, which may require that analyses of written communication be performed through the employer’s chosen institutional filter. Further lessons that foreground the value of holistic analysis through comparison to other modes of analysis that do require rubrics or structured modes of interrogating an act of written communication may be useful prior to a lesson of the sort that we studied.</p>

Because they were unsure what constituted a proper analysis of this artifact of written communication, students had an overly pessimistic or dismissive sense of the work they had done; when the instructor asked one discussion group if they were engaged with the material, they indicated that they were *not*, but this verdict was contrary to their activity level: they had been engaged and “on task” from the start. Their reticence may have indicated that they didn’t think they were doing analysis if they had not produced an artifact of their own that held a definitive interpretation of the scenario.

The observed students possessed the general ability and willingness to attempt interpretation of “Sam’s” motivation and to recognize that the simulated form was an artifact preserving a (simulated) act of communication in which an actor, having been challenged to communicate through a medium that restricted and circumvented the agenda and would distort the intended message, had manipulated and violated the codes provided and expected by the makers of the form. The students were able to reconstruct that act of communication on its own terms, but they were less self-aware that they were doing so, and that this reconstruction was the crux of the task at hand, being a necessary ability for professional writers and administrators to master.

When engaging in lessons such as this, which require an analysis of written communication that is sensitive to the perception of implicit ethical contexts, instructors are encouraged to allow their students resources of time and attention that will allow them to analyze holistically and to emphasize that unstructured consideration of an artifact, consideration allowing for comparison between the students’ relevant experiences and those of the participants in the simulated communication, is both valuable and required for the exercise. This is especially true of a course in which students are more familiar with the task at hand than they might realize, given that their instructor has equipped and primed them to see writing in terms of ethical decision making, and has provided them with authentic examples of ethically charged communication, both of which the instructor had done in the course we studied.

For us, the most frustrating--but also enlightening--aspect of the lesson occurred when we witnessed the students engage with many of the “controversial” elements we had engineered in the form, but fail to realize the implications for ethical decision making that these elements were meant to prompt. For example, in the whole-group discussion, a student asked why the simulated form did not ask about the simulated student’s income, only the income of his/her family; the instructor encouraged the students to see that the form was expressing an assumption that parents, not the students, are the meaningful unit in the institution’s decision-making. At this point, rather than investigating this assumption and its consequences, the students continued to criticize various parts of the form by pursuing an agenda of “what’s wrong with this form?” or “what went wrong with it?” rather than examining the ethical dynamics of the written conversation that had taken place around, through, and even *on* the form itself. This is reminiscent of students in a literature course who, once implicitly prompted to criticize, will fixate on fault-finding. If such is the goal of a given lesson, this student behavior would be a successful outcome, but if a lesson seeks to have

students recreate the context of a conversation that they are interpreting, they must be subtly motivated or maneuvered into being critical not merely of a text's form, but of its function as an authentic act of communication.

When students in small groups were asked to prepare a statement explaining the administration's response to the simulated form, they experimented with a number of possible relationships between themselves and the simulated student. A student wondered if they should begin "Dear Mr. Green" or just "Mr. Green," to which a group member responded, "We are students, so 'Dear'." The group also employed euphemistic diction to downplay their criticism of "Sam's" irritated tone and manipulation of the form. The group's choices called upon etiquette conventions as well as assessment of sender-receiver relationships.

When supporting a verdict not to grant "Sam's" request, one group member asked "Would you punish him for manipulating the form?" to which a peer replied "No. It's the form's problem." In this case, a high degree of sympathy and common cause with "Sam" were reflected in their statements, but a theme of overly judgemental and dismissive attitudes also manifested, as when a different group member attempted to resolve the matter with the too-simplistic suggestion "that he take another class."

Some group members adopted a role as the institution's agents in response to their peer's question "How do we get around the fact that our form sucks?" For this group, the form and the authority behind it had become their property ("we... our form..."), and they were motivated not to expose the institution's definite shortcoming (the form "sucks"); instead, they sought to "get around it."

Another group member then suggested that the response include the phrase "we suggest the student finds alternative solutions to meet his needs." The students may have forgotten that they were meant to be addressing "Dear Mr. Green" directly, or they may have been seeking the insulation of addressing another, unstated audience while merely talking *about* "the student."

Some group members did not wish to "get around" confessing the institution's shortcomings, but were motivated to communicate to "Sam" that his/her criticism had produced its desired effect; one student suggested that the correspondence should include the statement "we are actively revising the form in the meantime." However, this student was assuming that "Sam" was motivated to reform the institution's policies, rather than merely to criticize them and, primarily, to receive the necessary recompense, a motivation that the instrument did not seem to suggest.

The same student also stressed "we need to make clear that we are not still looking at his request." The recorder agreed, adding "If you still have needs, speak with your adviser and other students." While this response should not be paraphrased as "Tell someone who cares," it certainly did seem to represent the message "Tell someone who can actually help—not us." Given that these suggestions are not thoroughly thought-through or feasible—an advisor's role doesn't include addressing Sam's grievance, and appealing to fellow students removes the institution entirely from the student's support system--the group's motivation is to

put an end to this scenario, regardless of whether or not this end includes a satisfying resolution for Sam or for the institution. The students had unwittingly taken on the role of apologists, rather than as counselors or advocates.

When the group re-examined the questions in their prompt and considered their optional decisions, a student suggested that "Sam" should be told to resubmit the form, which another student provisionally paraphrased as a suggestion that the respondent "play the game"; the other students reluctantly affirmed this as their stance. The group members were reluctant to take on the role of bureaucratic "standardizer" even as they exercised that role, and they were especially reluctant to communicate this role to others. This reluctance may have existed for them on principle, or it might have arisen because they perceived that this decision would help to prevent "Sam's" needs from being met.

One student did respond by saying "I feel for him: I would have 'need,' but I couldn't demonstrate it with this form." This student had obviously adopted a sympathetic mode, which suited the role assigned to this particular group--student representatives on a university bookstore oversight committee--within the bounds of the assignment. That the student spontaneously took on this role reinforces the utility of having student representation on such committees, and an exercise such as this could be used to foreground and encourage such participation. However, the students were aware of the tentative and subordinate role that students play on such committees, as evidenced when the group tempered their intention to criticize the institution's failings with a desire to do so impersonally, and from a distance. After having initially agreed with the suggestion that "Sam" be instructed to resubmit the form that he had misused, the group members immediately reconsidered; one student articulated their reluctance by saying, "Do we go to the Committee suggesting that the form obviously needs revision?" She then added, "or send an email?"

The students were able to fault the form (and, by extension, the institution that had created it) and the respondent at the same time. They criticized the elements that had come together to create a "problem" that they now had to deal with. As the drafting of the explanatory statement continued, less sympathy was exhibited, and the students began to phrase their statement as if in response to an incident that needed to be resolved, rather than in terms of the plaintiff's needs. Their statement suggested "crisis response" on behalf of an institution that perceived itself to be outside of the affected community. The students in the small group were metaphorically "cleaning up a spill" in that community, and they expressed negativity toward those who created the need for "cleanup" simply by being present at the scene of an accident and participating in it, regardless of who was at fault. The group members' attitudes were reactive rather than proactive. While group members acknowledged that something was wrong with the form, they suggested fewer future changes to it, instead choosing to react to the damage done by it.

Finally, before completing their written statement, one group member captured the group's attitude toward "Sam" by pointing out that "We don't like him," as if insisting that the lesson required them to pass judgment on the respondent's motives, methods, and means of expression, not merely to criticize the form alone.

	<p>Ultimately, they insisted on finding fault with all participants in the scenario, instead of merely evaluating the efficacy of the institutional artifact itself. In finding fault, however, the students were not examining the ethical implications, power dynamics, expressions of respect for autonomy and agency, or implicit leveraging of privilege with which the scenario had been programmed.</p> <p>When the full class reconvenes, the other small groups represented similar positions, some even more willing to dismiss “Sam’s” needs, authoring statements from administration that ruled the form had been misused and that it would not be processed because of this. Some students further distanced themselves from the simulated scenario by asserting that it was not relevant to their own experience at their own institution, which employs a textbook rental system. These reactions served to disconnect the decision-makers from the scenario presented, not to engage them with it. This outcome seems less indicative of the students rejecting this lesson or this in-class activity, and more indicative of an unwitting but deliberate desire to make “Sam’s” problem go away or to assign it to someone else’s purview.</p> <p>A follow up lesson in which instructors encourage students to weigh their own decisions in hindsight, perhaps through comparison to similar authentic scenarios in which institutional representatives communicated their disconnection from a “client’s” needs, could provide a rich opportunity for further learning.</p>
References	<p>(List any sources you consulted or cited in your lesson study.)</p> <p>Katz, Stephen. “Ethic of Expediency: Classical Rhetoric, Technology, and The Holocaust.” <i>College English</i> 54:3, 1992. 255-275.</p>
APPENDIX	
Lesson Materials	<p>(Include materials used to teach the lesson including student handouts, instructor’s notes, etc. Please label and annotate each item.)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1. Lesson Study Instrument (Simulated Form): Front of Form</p>



University of Eastern State

DFA	<u>4/6/ ?</u>
Bookstore	___
Receipt	___

EMERGENCY BOOK LOAN Request Form

Student Name: **Sam Green**

Student ID: **05551121**

Circle: FR SO **JR** SR

Number of Credits: **12**

Major/College: **Bio/Yes**

Ethnicity (circle): Asian American Indian/Alaskan Native Black/African-American
 Hispanic/Latino Hawaiian Native/Pacific Islander Other Race
 White **Prefer Not to Answer**

Do you receive Financial Aid? (Circle): YES **NO** Amount/Type: ___/___
 ___/___
 ___/___

Parental Income Level (circle): 0-19,999 20,000-29,999 30,000-39,999
PREFER NOT TO ANSWER 40,000-69,999 70,000-89,999 90,000+

List Required Books for which you are requesting this EMERGENCY LOAN:

Book Title/Author:	ISBN:	COURSE #:
Supplies for "Intro to Art"—Special pens/erasers/stuff		PAINT ART 101
Software (Graphing/Calculation) for Chemistry		CHEM 115

_____ **\$267.00** _____

A small number of EMERGENCY Book Loans are available to students based on demonstrated need.
 Complete all parts of the form. Non-completed forms will not be processed.



J understand the loan is based on NEED, but J don't get financial aid (my parents make too much money) and J don't know how to show J have "NEED".

The money isn't for books (all my books are from Textbook Loans) but for Art supplies J didn't expect for Intro to Art. Also ~~we~~ we have to buy an app for chemistry that J didn't expect it to be so expensive.

J've tried to get a loan from my parents, but they said that all my books are suppose to be rented so they don't believe J need to buy the supples for Art and chem. J don't know what to do because we have to take these gen ed art classes and then they are so expensive that J need to have hundreds of dollars for this?!

2. Lesson Study Student Prompts

ENG 335: Introduction to Professional Writing

Lesson Study, 2015

Lesson Study Student Prompts (Draft)

Step I

Consider this form, and the student's responses to it.

Analyze the form: what information does it ask for, how clearly and appropriately are the questions articulated, and does the requested information seem relevant to the purpose for which it was created?

Analyze the student's responses: does s/he supply responses relevant to what each question seems to be asking? Are any responses relevant to the *purpose* for the form, if not to the questions themselves? Is the student's claim, request, or intention clear?

Writing A: In your own words, provide a brief interpretation of the purpose and intended use of the form, and the student's thesis.

Step II

You are [*insert the role the student will be enacting*].

You have been given the form submitted by the student as you see it, and you have been told to review this form and [*a memo the content of which depends on the role the student is given*].

Take time to consider your obligations as a [*insert the role the student will be enacting*]: what criteria for decision-making might you apply as you determine how to respond?

Writing B: Make a decision about [*depends on the role s/he is given*], state your decision, and explain your rationale for that decision. Your audience for this rationale might be your peers or your colleagues.

Step III

Complete the task you were given in Step II.

Writing C: Compose a formal memo in response to the task your employer has given you, with attention to the expectations of that audience as you understand it.

Writing D: Briefly reflect upon and describe what you found challenging about writing this memo. Your audience for this reflection might be your peers or your colleagues.

Study Materials

(Include observation guidelines as well as any evidence or data not in the body of your final lesson study (e.g. observer notes, examples of student work, results of data analysis, etc.).)

Lesson Study Observation Notes: Friesen's Observation

ENG 335: Introduction to Professional Writing
Lesson Study, 2015

Friesen Lesson Study Observation Notes and Commentary

Student Responses to Instrument (Prior to Direction):

"We can relate to needing resources"

"Everybody's definition of 'need' is different"

Form should ask "Regardless of parental income, are you able to afford x?"

Recapped "Sam's" objection to Gen Ed course demands

Refocused efforts around assignment prompt: "Is it clear/appropriate?"

Response: "The form doesn't ask for explanation"

Returned to "need" on form: "You can't put in your own information"

Students are addressing ethics as relevant to student's unmet (undefined) "need."

Refocused around assignment prompt: "Analyze student's response"

Students perceive that their analysis is off course when analyzing without specific guidance, so they repeatedly return to prompts. They perceive that is the "task," not holistic analysis (but holistic analysis is crucial to analysis of ethics? Instructors of lessons such as this might encourage analysis outward from artifact, not in from rubric, although the students' future professions may demand analysis of written communication by the institution's chosen filter.

"It's not books, so this is his* only resource, the school's not providing this"

*Despite this being a group of all women, their implicit, unaddressed assumption throughout was that "Sam" was male, with a few exceptions in which "he or she" is used. Did the form communicate this, conventionally male name, or typical of "exercises" like this?

Conversation:

"Why do you need Book Loans if there is Textbook Rental?"

"Why even create this form?"

"Is UW-L like this?"

Response notes that some UW-L majors require book purchases.

Are students attempting to set aside their context (having Textbook Rental) here, or judging the scenario at hand using their context? Seems more judgmental than attempting to construct the context of the instrument's scenario.

Restated "Sam's" attempt to get parent's help, but being disbelieved., then asked "What does that say?"

Recapped "Sam's" obfuscation of family income on form.

Refocused around prompt for "Interpretation" Writing: There was confusion whether the prompt asked them for one interpretation (of the form itself) or two (of the form and "Sam's" responses on it).

Instructor arrived, asked if students were engaged with material; they indicated they were not, but this was contrary to their activity level: they had been engaged and "on task" from start. Did their reticence indicate that they didn't think they were doing analysis? That they had no product, or no definite interpretation of the exercise? When engaging in lessons requiring analysis of ethical scenarios, instructors may be encouraged to allow students room/time to analyze holistically and to emphasize that this is valuable and "on task."

Instructor asks "You are reading this as...?" All respond "Students"

Regarding the form: "Why would credit number matter?"

Student immediately responds by connecting the context of students' need for money being variable based on number of credits taken and number taking in a given semester.

Instructor prompts the group regarding "Sam's" answer of "Yes" to "College:" blank. Group laughs but a student readily responds that the maker of the form may not be aware of what students know (how familiar students are with conventions of the university).

A student notes that the form isn't well designed graphically. What did she mean? What criteria? It would be valuable to have students address not only WHAT SHOULD A REVISED FORM ASK/NOT ASK? but also WHAT SHOULD A REVISED FORM LOOK LIKE?

Instructor prompts group to assess why "Sam" "went rogue"; a student responds that "Sam" didn't have the space to respond to what was being asked, and another said "the student thinks the wrong questions are being asked."

This is indicative of an overall ability and willingness to attempt interpretation of "Sam's" motivation and to recognize that the completed form is an act of communication beyond the codes provided and expected by the makers of the form. They can construct that act of communication on its own terms, but they seem less aware that they are doing so, and that this is the task at hand (and a valuable task for professional writers/administrators).

When summarizing the group's discussion, a student introduces the observation that without a title, "would it even be clear what the form is for? It could be a survey for all we know." The group states that the form is "not meeting the needs" presumably intended by its makers.

The full group convenes to hear each group's responses. The first group states that they don't think the form should ask about ethnicity.

A second group responds that the form should ask about ethnicity because a student respondent might be an "exchange student" but students respond that "ethnicity" doesn't address that. They state that it would be more of a "language" issue for such students.

A student notes that responses to the form's ethnicity question might be read as "Not American student," and another notes that the response might be read with "pity." This requires development. Instructors might consider a list of such terms that would halt discussion until defined and contextualized.

The instructor asks, "Ethnicity is different than nationality, right?" All immediately respond that this is correct.

A student notes that there is no good reason to have the ethnicity question on the form because no matter how it is used, the response would inappropriately influence the administrator's decision-making.

A second student states that s/he doesn't understand why the form asks income questions.

A student responds that that s/he understood the question to be asked because the institution wants to know why the student perceives having a need for the loan, but the student also notes that there is no place on the form to explain the scenario, if this is the institution's reason for asking about income-based need.

A student questions whether the loan has to be paid back, and the group responds that they interpreted this to be true.

Another student asks why the form doesn't ask about the student's income, only the family's, and the instructor states that the form seems to express the assumption that the parents are the meaningful unit in the institution's decision-making, not you, the student.

At this point, student seem to be picking points to criticize in the form (and noting the intended “controversial” elements, but their only guiding prompt seems to be “what’s wrong with this form” or “what went wrong with it?”

This is reminiscent of students in a literature course who, once implicitly prompted to criticize, will fixate on fault-finding. If this is the goal of the lesson, this is a success, but if the lesson seeks to have students recreate the context of a conversation that they are interpreting, this might be a potential obstacle to avoid.

The instructor walks students through Part II of the writing and provides the groups with their assigned roles, then hands out the decisions they must make.

Observations of the group tasked to be the Oversight Committee’s student members:

A group member reads the assignment aloud. They state that they intend to break down the role by connecting it to themselves.

A student describes “Sam” as “snarky.” Further, she says that “I wouldn’t want him getting this [loan] when I don’t.”

A second students wonders whether “Sam” is telling the truth about the cost of required materials, and she notes that it would be easy to check this.

This is telling. The students may be carrying through the previous full group’s fault-finding mode, or they may, now what they have been told to occupy the role of students, feel motivated to “police” a member of their community and make decisions about “him,” a task that requires them to be critical rather than sympathetic.

A third student suggests that not every student will “go rogue” or “make an appeal,” but she also says, “Not that his explanation helps.”

I’m not clear on what she means by this: because some students won’t speak up for themselves, their task should be to advocate for the form to be changed? Or that this student is an extreme example of possible responses to the form, so it should not be changed? Or something else?

A fourth student asks “Would you punish him for manipulating the form?” and a group member responds “No. It’s the form’s problem.” A different group member says “I’d suggest he take another class.”

This is interesting because the students are faulting the form (by extension, the institution) and the respondent at the same time. They are criticizing the elements that came together to create a “problem” that they now have to deal with. There is less sympathy, more a sense that an incident needs to be resolved. This is very suggestive of “crisis response” or institutions that perceive themselves to be outside of a community, “cleaning up a spill” in that community, possibly with negativity to those who created the spill by being present at the scene of the accident, participating in it, regardless of who was at fault. The attitude seems reactive, not proactive. They know something is wrong with the form, but they aren’t talking about future changes to it, only reacting to the damage done by it.

The group re-examines the questions in their prompt and considers their optional decisions:

A student suggests the student should be told to resubmit the form.

Another student provisionally paraphrases this as suggesting that the respondent “play the game,” and the other students reluctantly reply “yes.”

They seem reluctant to take on the role of bureaucratic “standardizer” that I saw them exercising [see green above], and especially to communicate this role to others [They don’t

want to be “that guy”]. This reluctance to be the standardizer may exist for them on principle, or it might have arisen because they perceive that this decision will cause “Sam’s” needs to remain unmet.

One student responds “I feel for him: I would have need, but I couldn’t demonstrate it with this form.”

This student has obviously stepped back into a sympathetic mode, which the role assigned to this group in particular allows for within the bounds of the assignment. That the student spontaneously took on this role reinforces the utility of having student representation on such committees, and an exercise such as this could be used to foreground/encourage such participation.

A student asks whether “Sam” has considered “creative” options.

This suggestion doesn’t gain traction, perhaps because the group is aware that their assigned role wouldn’t allow them to find out if “Sam” has done so, and no likely means of suggesting them.

A student puts forward the decision that the student be instructed to resubmit this form, and the group generally agrees with this initially, but then immediately reconsiders.

One student asks, “Do we go to the Committee suggesting that the form obviously needs revision?” She then added, “or send an email?” The student seems to recognize the tentative/subordinate role students would play on such a Committee.

Another student points out that “We don’t like him” as if to reinforce that the lesson they insist on taking from this exercise must include that the respondent’s motives, methods, and means of expression should be evaluated, not that the form alone should be criticized. They seem to insist on seeing the scenario, not merely the institutional artifact, especially if that artifact [and, by extension, the institution] is to be criticized.

At the instructor’s prompting, the group begins mocking up their response to “Sam.”

A student wonders if they should begin “Dear Mr. Green” or just “Mr. Green” and a student responds, “We are students, so ‘Dear’.” This calls upon etiquette conventions as well as assessment of sender-receiver relationship.

Typing quickly, the recorder composes the draft while the group mates offer suggestions. All laugh at attempts to downplay criticism of Sam’s use of language and manipulation of the form with euphemistic language, including the description of it as “somewhat sporadic.” [What do they think “sporadic” means?]

A student interrupts the draft to ask, “How do we get around the fact that our form sucks?” The student has taken on the role of the institution’s agent here (“we... our form...”) and is motivated not to expose the institution’s definite shortcoming (the form “sucks”), but to “get around it.”

Another student suggests that the response include the phrase “we suggest the student finds alternative solutions to meet his needs.” The students may have forgotten that they are meant to speaking directly to “Dear Mr. Green,” seeking the insulation of addressing another, unstated audience while merely talking about “the student.”

A group member suggests that the correspondence should include the statement “we are actively revising the form in the meantime.” This suggests that at least some of the students do not wish to “get around” confessing the institution’s shortcomings, but is motivated to communicate to “Sam” that his/her criticism has had its desired effect. However, the student is assuming that “Sam” is motivated to reform the institution’s policies, rather than

	<p>merely to criticize them and, primarily, to receive the necessary recompense, a motivation that the instrument doesn't seem to suggest.</p> <p>The same student also stresses "we need to make clear that we are not still looking at his request. "The recorder agrees, adding "If you still have needs, speak with your adviser and other students."</p> <p>This response cannot truly be paraphrased as "Tell someone who cares," but it certainly does seem to represent the message "Tell someone who can actually help—not us." Given that the suggestions to seek help from an advisor (whose role doesn't seem to include addressing Sam's grievance) or to contact students (essentially removing the institution entirely from the student's support system) are not thoroughly considered or feasible, the group seems motivated to put an end to this scenario, regardless of whether or not this end includes a satisfying resolution for Sam or for the institution. Again, the students seem to have unwittingly taken on the role of spill-cleaners, rather than as counselors or advocates.</p> <p>When the full class reconvenes, the other groups represent similar positions, some even more willing to dismiss Sam's needs, stating that the form had been misused, that it would not be processed because of this, and that the problem is not relevant to their own experience at UW-L because of the presence of Textbook Rental.</p> <p>These reactions serve to disconnect the decision-makers from the scenario presented, not to engage with it. This seems less indicative of the students rejecting this lesson or this in-class activity, and more indicative of an unwitting but deliberate desire to make Sam's problem go away or to assign it to someone else's purview.</p> <p>A follow up lesson in which instructors encourage students to weigh their own decisions in hindsight, perhaps through comparison to similar authentic scenarios in which institutional representatives communicated their disconnection from a "client's" needs could be a rich opportunity for further learning.</p> <p>On the way out of the classroom, one student notes to another, "This was fun."</p>
<p>Dissemination Materials</p>	<p>Include a copy of, links to, or citations of any papers, posters, or presentations, publications that resulted from your lesson study.</p>