Forests through Time and Space Writing a combined evaluation

Overview

We are going to be using combined evaluations for this program—one evaluation will take the place of your self-evaluation and the evaluation of you by the faculty.

Please read through this entire document before beginning.

Here's how it will work.

- You will write the first draft in third person (see attached examples) and bring **four (4, IV)** printed copies of your first draft to class this Wed, Dec 1st. **Do not use any of the evaluation forms, just a Word document.**
- In class, you will exchange your evaluation with three other students, who will read and edit your writing. Take the suggestions on your evaluation and revise your draft.
- Bring both a paper copy and a disk copy to workshop (9 AM) on Thursday, Dec 2nd in the CAL.
- During workshop, you will exchange your evaluation with three other students, who will read and edit your writing.

Specific Instructions for Thursday workshop (PLEASE READ)

1. Login on the CAL computers using your personal login.
2. If you haven't already done so, create a folder for yourself Use a version of your name that we will recognize, which will make it easier if we have to look for another copy of your eval.
3. Copy your evaluation from your disk to your folder.
4. **Rename your file with your last name as the file name, e.g. flintstone.doc.** Files with names like "Eval.doc" or "MyEval.doc" won't mean much to Heather or Paul in a folder with everyone else's evaluations.
5. **Meet with your study group (or three other students) to make groups of four.**
6. Exchange evaluations and read each evaluation in your group.
7. As you read others' evaluations, note any particularly strong clear writing that gives you a clear sense of what they learned and how well they know this material.. Identify areas that aren't totally clear to you. Make sure the writing flows and is easy to follow. Write your comments on the draft and put your name on the top of the first page as a reviewer.
8. Make suggestions that result in a clear and concise document. Be particularly aware of sentences that talk about what the class did (program description) and not what the student learned.
9. If you are reading an eval that has been reviewed by someone else, you can respond to the comments they have written. If you agree with a previous reviewer's suggestion, indicate with a "me too." If you don't agree, write another suggestion.
10. Save all your printed drafts with comments from your reviewers. You must turn these in to the faculty at the end of the day with your portfolio.
11. Edit your evaluation and save the changes to the copy in your folder in the Students folder in ForestTimeSpace directory. **Save often, like every time you pause to think** (ctrl-S). You will then make the needed changes to your evaluation. Save your evaluation onto your disk. Email yourself a copy.
12. When you are satisfied with your evaluation, submit it to the appropriate faculty.
    a) Put a copy (not the original) in the appropriate folder (Evals-Heather, Evals-Paul) in the ForestTimeSpace directory.
    b) Just to be safe, email a copy as an attachment to your faculty (eval group). Heather: heyingh@evergreen.edu, Paul: przybylo@evergreen.edu

13. We (the faculty) will meet and discuss each student's progress. We will then read the evaluation you wrote and edit as we deem necessary. If we feel that we can't work with your eval, we will write an entirely new evaluation of your work and you will need to write a standard student self-eval.
14. Meanwhile, you need to write an evaluation for each of us, using the official forms (faculty evaluation) and have it ready for your evaluation conference. At your conference, we will exchange evaluations, read and discuss them, making changes as agreed to by both parties.
15. You will also fill out the program evaluation form and bring it to your conference.
16. If we elect to write an entirely new evaluation of you, you must then write and submit a self-eval of the usual style.

Writing a third-person eval

Writing an evaluation of yourself is a difficult task. We often don't step back to take an objective look at our progress—it is easy to lose your perspective and gloss over many details. One of the benefits of writing a third-person evaluation is that the language can help you be objective. It forces you to step outside of yourself and talk about yourself as though you were another person. Although you may initially have trouble with this process, it will pass. You're not only writing an evaluation, but also developing some new skills so expect it to be a little difficult. We have provided some questions below to help start the process and have examples of evaluations written by other students for you to look at.

Write your evaluation in the third person (see examples). Try to keep it to one page (single spaced). Focus on what you learned, not what you did. The course description will be attached to the eval, so a reader can refer to that for what you did.

Sample Structure

- Introductory paragraph includes attendance, an overall statement about general effort and achievement.
- Paragraph on forest ecology, what you've learned and how well you know this material.
- Paragraph on evolutionary biology, what you've learned and how well you know this material.
- Paragraph on the most important learning you did this quarter, your best work.
- Short summary.

Suggested topics to cover

General Intro

- Attendance & completion of all assigned work
- Did you participate fully in all aspects of the program?
- How well did you achieve your goals for the quarter?
- Consider your level of understanding at the beginning of the program and your current understanding of the topics covered in the program.

Lecture/ workshop portion

- How well do you understand the topics and concepts covered in evolutionary biology and forest ecology? You can deal with each discipline separately or mix them together.
- Do you fully grasp all of the details or only the main concepts?
- What degree of improvement happened during the quarter?

- Has this increased understanding affected how you think about things and view the world? Any examples?
- Do you feel confident in your ability to think creatively with these new ideas/information?
- How are your quantitative skills? How does this compare with where you were at the beginning of the program?
- Did you complete all the study questions before class? Did you contribute to increasing the understanding of the material in your study group?
- Library research skills: How are they? Can you confidently find the relevant scientific information you need for projects?
- What did you learn doing your short research paper? Is your learning demonstrated in the final paper?

Field work

- What did you learn during the field trips?
- Do you fully grasp all of the details or only the main concepts?
- What degree of improvement happened during the quarter?
- Has this increased understanding affected how you think about things and view the world? Any examples?
- Do you feel confident in your ability to apply the techniques you learned in the field in a new situation?
- Were there any particular field moments that had increased impact on your understanding/learning?

Summary

What was your best work this quarter? Why?

What did you do where you learned the most? What area needs the most improvement?

Consider where you were at the beginning of the quarter, what sort of progress have you made? Do you feel your progress reflects your abilities?

Were there any concepts or information that really struck you? How has this changed the way you view the world? Why?

How will the knowledge you gained during this quarter be used in the future? How does it relate to your previous experiences?

Eval Examples

Here are some examples of joint evals. We will add the following paragraph to the beginning of each evaluation (or something similar)

This is a combined evaluation with input from both the student and the faculty. The student, Bart Simpson, contributed most of the information in this evaluation. It reflects the student's style, and to some degree emphasis, on the topics covered. Each evaluation went through a peer-review process. The faculty read, edited, verified, and added information as necessary. The final draft was discussed and agreed upon by both the faculty and the student.

Bart Simpson was enrolled in the full-time, upper-division science program *Exploring Biogeochemistry* during winter quarter 2004. He came into the program with a good understanding of Pacific Northwest geology and statistics and a fair understanding of chemistry, ecology and biology. Bart's main goals in this program were to improve his abilities with applied mathematics, analytical chemistry, and laboratory techniques. He attended all program meetings, completed all assignments on time, and his work was generally excellent. Bart was a very affable, self-motivated person—he was willing to go above and beyond what was expected to fully understand the material.

Bart's thorough answers on the weekly study questions were very complete and detailed. He often led the discussion in his study group and his questions during class indicated a strong critical thinking ability. His answers were much better when he worked on the questions on his own outside of class. His performance on the in-class, open-book midterm was fair, but after working on it at home, he demonstrated an excellent understanding of the concepts and details covered. Overall, his exams and study questions indicated that he has a very good grasp of biogeochemistry.

Bart made good progress in lab. His technical skills with the various analytical methods improved during the quarter, as did his record keeping in his lab notebook. He was dedicated to the lab work and routinely stayed late during lab to ensure his data collection and analysis was complete. His lab notebook was well organized and he explored a number of possible explanations for errors or trends in his data. Bart did outstanding work in the statistics workshops and demonstrated strong data analysis skills.

Bart was particularly enthusiastic and dedicated to the group field research project he undertook with four other students. Their study, *Spatial Transformations of Total Nitrogen and Component Species in a Two-Lake Ecosystem*, went well beyond what was expected. Their hypothesis was that there was a difference in anthropogenic nutrient loading of the two lakes. Bart was evidently the leader of the group and demonstrated a high level of organization. Their project was very ambitious and they completed or attempted many complex biogeochemical analyses within the scheduled timeframe. They analyzed samples for all measurable forms of aqueous nitrogen, dissolved oxygen and biochemical oxygen demand. Their project also included calculations of water and solute fluxes and mean residence times of masses and volumes within system stocks. The resulting poster was excellent—well designed and clearly presented. In addition, they also wrote a paper summarizing their work, which was not required. Their paper was outstanding, concise, detailed and well organized. This project was a large undertaking for a one-quarter venture and went beyond what was expected of the group. Overall, they did an outstanding job on their research project.

Bart exceeded his learning expectations this quarter and found this demanding program and its intense workload a stimulating and exciting environment within which he could excel. He finished the program with the analytical skills needed to further his understanding of the interconnectedness of geochemistry, ecology and global nutrient cycling—a very solid foundation for future work.

Betty's goals for this program were to learn more about mushrooms and lichens, their roles in the environment, and to gain skill in field identification. She had no previous experience with lichens or mushrooms, but some background in the biology, taxonomy, and ecology of plants. Betty worked steadily and enthusiastically throughout the program and completed all of the assignments on time. She attended all field trips and missed only two class days. She worked very hard to understand the material and improve her skills in collection, identification, and microscopy.

In the lab, it took Betty some time to feel confident. Her previous experience using dichotomous keys was helpful, but it took time to become familiar with the new vocabulary of mushrooms and lichens. She struggled using microscopy on her mushrooms—her apparent slow progress was partially due to poor vision and difficulties adjusting the microscope. However by the end of the quarter, she felt comfortable and enjoyed preparing slides. Betty turned in 18 mushrooms, labeled and organized with accompanying drawings and descriptions. Her mushroom collection included nice drawings, but it would have benefited from more detailed field notes, descriptions and microscopic features.

Betty thoroughly enjoyed lichen identification and became very confident in keying out specimens. She enjoyed drawing the different forms of thalli and performing chemical and UV tests on specimens in order to identify them. She maintained good lab notes for every day spent in lab, including key couplets and characteristics of the species she was trying to key out. Betty turned in 20 lichens, correctly identified; all with fairly complete descriptions and detailed drawings, which she is proud of. Betty did an excellent job on her lichen collection —it demonstrated her significant improvement during the quarter. Several of her drawings, e.g. *Cladonia transcendens* and *Hypogymina enteromorpha*, were excellent.

Betty's understanding of the ecology, biology, and taxonomy improved throughout the quarter. Her performance on the exams demonstrated a good to fair grasp of the main concepts covered, although she did not fully understand many of the supporting details. Her on-sight identification skills were similar.

Betty was extremely enthusiastic about her research summaries and presentations for both her mushroom and lichen articles. She felt that she had made real progress and was excited at how well she understood them. She did additional research online and in the library on aspects of the papers that she initially did not understand. She did well with her lichen presentation and article summary. For her mushroom paper and presentation, she would have benefited from extra time organizing and identifying important parts.

Betty's best work was her lichen identification and descriptions, as she gained the most confidence in working with them, and had the most interest in them. She has gained much confidence in the field and lab when it comes to both mushrooms and lichens, and would be eager to continue similar studies. She feels both content and excited that she knows so much more about both mushrooms and lichens, which adds to her knowledge of plants, and has resulted in a greater understanding of ecology in general. She now has a desire to further understand the chemistry of these organisms, and feels it would help her better integrate her new knowledge.