

Instructor: Paula Murphy
Department: Accounting and Managerial Studies
Course: Keyboarding

High-Stakes Writing Assignment

Please select one employment situation:

You are the office manager at the New York Yankees, Inc. Your position includes the following duties: writing press releases, hiring and training support personnel, ordering supplies, coordinating staff schedules, and evaluating major purchase decisions.

You are the senior training coordinator in a community outreach center. Your position includes the following duties: instructing classes in word processing software, coordinating interviews for prospective employees, recruiting new students, and developing fund raising initiatives.

You are the manager of a neighborhood bakery that also sells take-out lunches. Your position includes the following duties: supervising staff, preparing flyers about lunch items, designing and maintaining a bakery web site which describes all product information, recording all accounts receivable.

Directions: Imagine that your employer has asked you to choose a new word processing software package for the company, outreach center, or bakery where you work. In three weeks, he or she wants to be presented with an eight- to ten-page written report (typed and double spaced) that describes which word processing software package is best suited to the needs of the job. You have to choose between Microsoft Word 2000 and Corel WordPerfect. (Rooms C-110 and C-212 have both software packages.) In your evaluation, compare and contrast each software package with respect to the following features: cost, availability, documentation, ease of use, popularity, update frequency, and manufacturer's history. Please discuss the following software features: search and replace, merge, spell check, help screens, formats, graphics, indexing, and integration. You may use your low- and medium-stakes assignments for assistance in this evaluation. Use the software program that you have selected to type this assignment.

Some class time was spent discussing how to organize a report that involved a great deal of comparing and contrasting. Students were given samples of paragraphs that used different techniques of comparing and contrasting.

The various stages leading up to the high-stakes writing project also helped prepare students to compose a report based on comparing and contrasting.

1. The evaluation review and procedures review forms (see below) that students had to fill out during the 9th and 10th weeks of the course were particularly helpful to them. These forms helped ensure that students covered each of the required features and gave them organized material to draw on when they started composing their reports.

2. Students collaborated with others who had chosen the same employment situation in order to complete the procedures review. In their small groups, they discussed the similarities and differences between each software package. The group assignment was collected, evaluated, and commented upon by the instructor.

3. In the 10th week of the course, class time was devoted to discussing the evaluation review. Students wrote about the similarities and differences between each software package and then shared some of their findings with the class. This work was not collected, but the instructor met individually with any students who needed help.

EVALUATION REVIEW

Microsoft Word

WordPerfect

Cost

Availability

Documentation

Ease of Use

Popularity

Update Frequency

Manufacturer's History

PROCEDURES REVIEW

Microsoft Word

WordPerfect

Search & Replace

Merge

Spell Check

Getting Help

Formats

Graphics

Indexing

Integration