

SEPTEMBER 1, 2021

# FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Collaboration is the key to innovation.

**Dr. Rachel Carr**

## MULTIPLE DRAFTS

Thank you, Dr. Carr, for your willingness  
to share and collaborate!



## Multiple-Draft Assignments

Requiring students to submit multiple drafts ensures that they are writing over a period of time. This type of assignment design emphasizes a process approach to writing in which students cycle through the revision process to improve the quality of their work. Multiple-draft assignments require that students engage in the revision process in order to move on to the next step. Early thinking often consists of summarizing or reacting to a topic whereas higher-level analysis and evaluation are often a result of feedback and reflection. In this model, feedback is a part of the writing process rather than an outcome of it, and improvement is expected to occur within a given assignment rather than expecting improvement to occur on the next assignment. This instructional strategy commonly includes students in the feedback cycle by assigning peer reviews. When students are asked to assess the work of their peers, they benefit from reading examples of other work and reflecting on performance criteria while assessing and providing feedback. This experience also helps them self-evaluate their own writing.

## How do you design projects that include multiple drafts and require a revision process?

I begin major papers or projects with a proposal, a short draft, and a peer-reviewed full draft. These are all graded for completion/participation only.

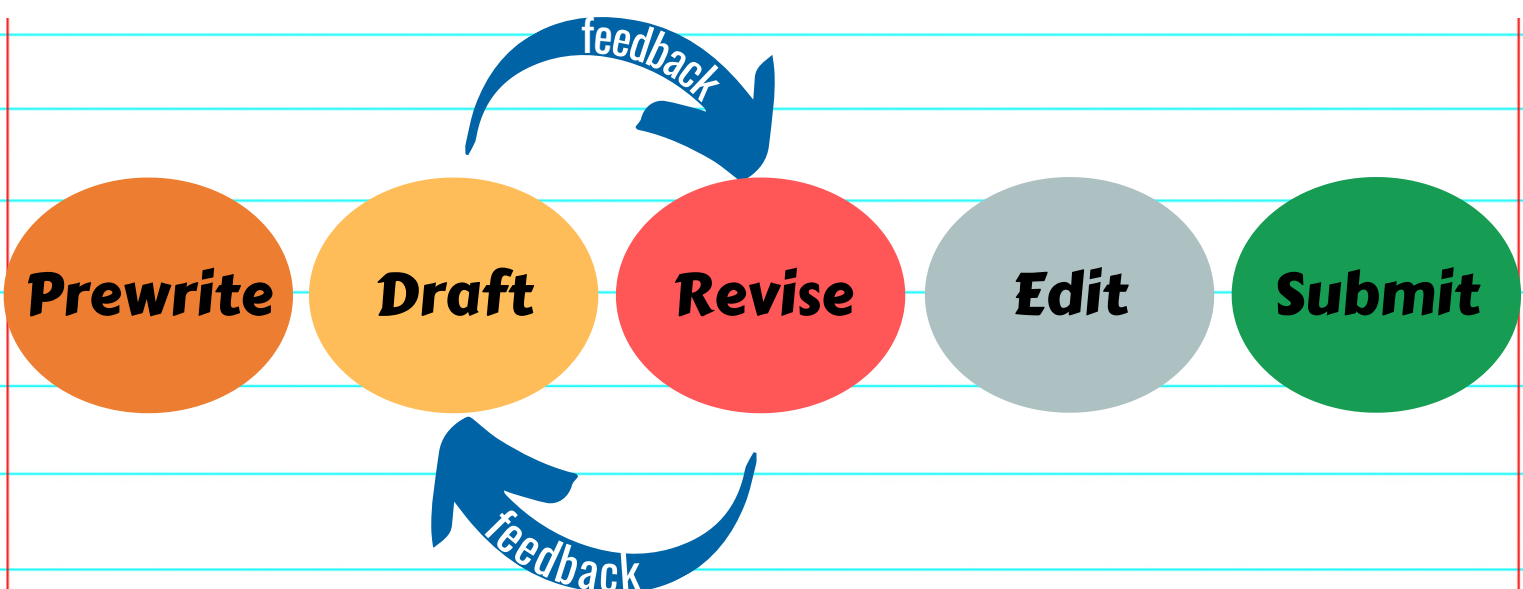
15% of the final assignment grade comes from revision.

- The proposals are 1-2 paragraphs.
- The short drafts are 1-2 pages.
- The peer-review draft is the full-length assignment.

I give short feedback on the proposals and short drafts. Usually, after the first or second paper, I stop doing the short drafts as students are more confident and familiar with the requirements of academic writing.

## How have revision opportunities and multiple drafts impacted student performance in your course?

The students who participate in each draft and revision process improve significantly more than those who do not. Also, this type of assignment scaffolding helps students avoid procrastinating or feeling paralyzed the day before the due date. A lot of students have absorbed that writing is an innate talent, that they have it or they don't, when all good writing is just the work of re-writing.



## How does the multiple draft/revision process impact your grading?

While this process does require more commenting upfront, it saves me time grading. Research shows that students can only absorb around two critical comments at a time, so multiple drafts allow them more time to process and improve their work. Ultimately, this means that I'm familiar with the final papers I'm grading and know what to look for when commenting, which makes grading papers much faster. It also makes it much harder for students to plagiarize an assignment.

## How have your students responded to this pedagogical strategy?

While they do tend to resent the proposals and multiple drafts early in the semester, they come to appreciate it by the end. Students feel more confident as writers, and they understand the value of a revision-centered writing process because their final grades are higher.

**CLICK TO VIEW A**



**SAMPLE ASSIGNMENT WITH**  
**PEER REVIEW INSTRUCTIONS**

