# Contextual Narratives
## to Accompany End-of-Course Student Feedback (ESF)

A contextual narrative is a reflective written document that a faculty member develops after reviewing end-of-course student feedback to provide a context, explanation, rationale and action plan.

## Why is Contextual Narrative Useful?

### For Formative Evaluation

- Allows faculty to reflect on teaching for ongoing growth and improvement
- Provides an action plan for future growth
- Provides faculty rationale and explanation for ratings and comments
- Provides faculty opportunity to reflect on changes that they have implemented over time (prior action plan)
- Provides starting point for conversation with mentor or coach

### For Summative Evaluation

- Provides clear context, explanation and rationale to chair, committee or others with decision-making powers
- Should be part of triangulation of evidence (multiple measures) to provide a comprehensive picture of teaching effectiveness

**End-of-Course Student Feedback Surveys: Instructor Report**

WRT 160: Composition 2 | WINTER 2016 | FULLY ONLINE
16 STUDENTS | REQUIRED IN CAS: WRITING FOUNDATIONS

**Course Context**
First Semester Teaching the Course Fully Online
In August 2015, I found out I would be teaching my first online class in the winter. In preparation, I took e-Learning and Instructional Support's Quality Online Certification Course in Fall 2015. The course was helpful as far as getting the basic structure of my course ready and learning guidelines for activities, but the greatest learning curve would be how I would actually interact with students.

**Student Preparedness Issues**
To add to the challenge of being a first-time online teacher, most of my students were first-time online students. As busy adults, they found the online class option to be alluring, but many had a hard time keeping up with the course content and seemed at times resentful to me that more time was required than they had anticipated. They most strongly disliked that I required two real-time meetings via WebEx since they expected to take the whole class at their own pace.

**ESF Summary Results**
Strengths
- Organization of course
- Constant communication

Issues
- Felt workload was too much
- Unhappy with grades/requirement to meet

Trends over 3 Years
- Overall positive reviews over years. Issues this year were different than others, likely due to format

**Plan of Action**
- **Spend more time communicating commitment and structure of online class.** While the QOTCC told us we would need to communicate expectations to students, I would do this more specifically to my course. My goal would be for students to determine early on whether they should stay in course or drop. I think many students realized too late that an online course was not for them.
- **Allow flexibility with web conference meeting times.** I had the whole class meet at three points throughout the semester. Next time, I would do this in small groups and give students a variety of times to choose.

**Rationale**
- **Course Load.** I will review course activities to see if anything can be better streamlined, the assignments and projects I have in this course are integral to the course objectives. Therefore, I won't eliminate most of course workload.

**Explanation**
Most students worked hard to meet the course requirements and did so with a positive attitude. About [...] students who remained in the course were unhappy with the course, and most of them probably sh[...] the course before the tuition refund deadline. I received a lot of positive feedback on course desi[...] more negative comments than usual, I suspect this is because a portion of the class had different e[...] course.

See full example on back.

## LENGTH
2-3 paragraphs or longer
*(if significant issues/concerns could be 1-3 pages)*

## FREQUENCY
- Years 1-2: every course
- Years 3-6: new courses, courses with concerns/issues and changing contexts and frequently enough to provide evidence for reviews
- Post-tenure: new courses, courses with concerns/issues

## TEACHING PORTFOLIOS
When preparing for Reviews and Tenure and Promotion Reviews, the contextual narratives can be part of a larger teaching portfolio or can be integrated into a larger teaching narrative.

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### End-of-Course Student Feedback Surveys: Instructor Report

**Brief overview of the course**

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**Specific issues encountered. Others include:**
- **tried new technique**
- **changed assignments**
- **first time teaching course**
- **personnel context (e.g. minority, English language learner)**

**Course Context**

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Student Preparedness Issues
To add to the challenge of being a first-time online teacher, most of my students were first-time online students. As busy adults, they found the online class option to be alluring, but many had a hard time keeping up with the course content and seemed at times resentful to me that more time was required than they had anticipated. They most strongly disliked that I required two real-time meetings via WebEx since they expected to take the whole class at their own pace.

**Summary of perceived strengths and issues, and SES trends over time**

**ESF Summary Results**

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**What you may change in course to address concerns**

**Plan of Action**
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- **Allow flexibility with web conference meeting times.** I had the whole class meet at three points throughout the semester. Next time, I would do this in small groups and give students a variety of times to choose.

**Why you are not changing certain aspects of the course**

**Rationale**
- **Course Load**. I will review course activities to see if anything can be better streamlined, the assignments and projects I have in this course are integral to the course objectives. Therefore, I won't eliminate most of course workload.

**Context for concerns (e.g. first time teaching course, low morale due to cheating)**

**Explanation**
Most students worked hard to meet the course requirements and did so with a positive attitude. About a third of students who remained in the course were unhappy with the course, and most of them probably should have dropped the course before the tuition refund deadline. I received a lot of positive feedback on course design, and while I had more negative comments than usual, I suspect this is because a portion of the class had different expectations for the course.

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