

# Project: Interview About On-the-Job Writing

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## **Introduction**

This free pdf download describes a composition assignment that I have used successfully during my years of teaching at Ohio University.

Other teachers are welcome to download and read this pdf file and decide whether this assignment will work in their classes.

The pdf file is divided into two main sections following this brief introduction.

First is a description of the assignment. Of course, teachers can modify the assignment as they wish.

Following that is are examples of on-the-job writing interview reports written by students. Teachers may print them and use them as excellent examples for their students. One way to get good writing from students is to show them good work written by other students. Of course, the students who wrote the memos that appear in this pamphlet own the copyright to what they have written. I thank them for giving me permission to use their work in this pdf file.

## Short Memo Assignment: Interview About On-the-Job Writing

Interview a person who does the kind of writing that you will do later on the job. For example, if you plan to teach English to high school students, interview a high school English teacher. If you plan to work in a chemistry laboratory, interview a chemist who works in a laboratory. If you plan to sell farm machinery, interview a person who sells farm machinery. Ask the person these questions:

1. How much time per week do you spend writing on the job?
2. What kinds of writing do you do on the job?
3. How important is it to be able to write well in your job?
4. Are communication skills—whether written or oral—important for people who want raises and promotions?
5. What advice would you give a person who is currently taking a course that is intended to prepare him or her to write well?

Be sure to ask these questions, but feel free to think of additional questions to ask; for example, if the person you are interviewing does a lot of writing each week, you may want to ask this question: How do you handle all the writing in a week so you don't feel overwhelmed? Or you could ask: What is unique about writing for your job? Other possible questions:

- Optional: What is an example of something that you have written recently that has resulted in effective action?
- Optional: What kinds of papers should I have in my writing portfolio to show prospective employers? For example, if I have a Set of Instructions in my portfolio, what would be some good topics for that Set of Instructions?
- Optional: How can I improve my writing?
- Optional: Which mistakes in other people's writing really bother you at work?
- Optional: What are the top three skills needed to be successful in this career?
- Optional: What are some typical mistakes in communication made by people who are new to the job?

Write a short memo in which you report on the results of your interview. Use the memo format, and direct the memo to your teacher. In the introduction, tell me whom you interviewed and why. In the body of the memo, list the questions you asked and summarize the answers you received. As a result of interviewing someone who works in the career field that you would like to have a job in, you will learn about the writing that you are likely to do later on the job.

## Dashes and Hyphens

Interview question number 4 above uses dashes. Please be aware that dashes and hyphens are different. A hyphen is shorter.

Dash —                      Hyphen -

To make a dash on a Macintosh, simultaneously press these keys: shift—option—hyphen.

If you can't figure out how to make a dash on your computer, use the Help menu. If that doesn't work, use two hyphens to represent a dash.

Dash --

## How Do I Interview People?

Often the best way to gather information you need for an on-the-job communication is to talk with someone who has special knowledge of the topic or situation you are writing about. For example, if you are a reporter writing about sports, these are two good sources at Ohio University:

- Eric Wagner: a sociologist, Dr. Wagner understands much about the Sociology of Sports.
- Charles Alexander: a historian (another Charles Alexander is an engineer), Dr. Alexander has a deep knowledge of the history of baseball.

### Guidelines For Interviewing

#### *Before the Interview*

1. Choose a helpful, informative person to interview.
2. Plan the interview.
  - Contact your interviewee in advance to arrange a time and a place for your meeting. (You can also arrange a time for an interview over the telephone or interview someone by using e-mail.)
  - Before going to the interview, review the goals of your communication so that you know exactly what information you need.
3. Write your questions ahead of time.
  - Before going to the interview, plan the questions you will ask—and write them down.
  - See the Interview Report Assignment in this section for some good questions to ask at the interview. Of course, you may ask additional questions of your own choosing.

4. Avoid questions that invite a yes-or-no response.

*During the Interview*

1. Let the interviewee do most of the talking.
2. Try to keep the conversation on the topic of your interview.
3. Even if you are tape-recording the interview, take notes.
4. Throughout the interview, watch the time.

*After the Interview*

1. Thank the interviewee for his or her time.
2. If appropriate, write a short thank-you note in addition to thanking the interviewee verbally.

## **SAMPLE INTERVIEW REPORTS**

See the following pages.

**Note:** When you write the Interview Report, put the questions in **bold** to keep your communication from looking too grey.

**To:** David Bruce  
**From:** Jake Chapman  
**Date:** October 13, 2009  
**Re:** Interview for On-the-Job Writing

I interviewed a family friend, Bob Sipkins, about on-the-job writing. He is a former lawyer, who now writes for lawyers. Bob worked as a Minnesota trial lawyer as a partner and founder of Bernick and Lifson. He graduated from Vassar College in 1974, and later graduated from William Mitchell College of Law in 1979. I interviewed Bob because I am interested in US Law, and may pursue a career as a lawyer. I asked him these questions regarding on-the-job writing:

**How much time per week do you spend writing on the job?**

Approximately 50% of time devoted to writing letters or drafting litigation documents.

**What kinds of writing do you do on the job?**

Roughly half my written stuff was 'objective'.....drafting Complaints (to initiate a lawsuit) or Answers, or responding to discovery requests which seek information on the claims/defenses. The other half was more subjective, writing memoranda for motions or briefs for appeals to a higher court, which require being persuasive and making an intelligent argument. Letters to clients and other lawyers could fall into either category.

**How important is it to be able to write well in your job?**

Critical. Being an excellent trial lawyer requires first-rate communication skills, both written and oral. When I see mediocre written work, I know I can win a case because the other lawyer is either not that smart or too lazy to work on his/her written product. The quality of one's work sends a signal to both the other side AND to the judge.

**Are communication skills—whether written or oral—important for people who want raises and promotions?**

Raises and promotions? In most law firms, a litigator who doesn't write well won't get very good performance reviews. Now, there may be other virtues that cause the firm to give a big raise or promotion.....like billing a huge number of hours or bringing in a big client or big case. The old adage is that every law firm has 'finders, minders and grinders.' Not everybody has the same personality or skill base.

**What advice would you give a person who is currently taking a course that is intended to prepare him or her to write well?**

My advice today is the same as it was when I used to teach young lawyers how to practice law and write well. TWO RULES: THINK and PROOFREAD. One needs a gameplan before doing good legal writing (memoranda and briefs). It is equally important to proof what you've written, both to check for typos, spelling, punctuation, etc. and to make sure it reads well and makes sense. I still review all my work several times to make sure it meets these standards before I forward it to the people who hired me.

David Bruce

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October 13, 2009

**Which mistakes in other people's writing really bother you at work?**

I used to get p\*ssed off when my associates didn't follow those rules and I would read something that was sloppy, either because it didn't make sense or because of typos, etc. That would extend down to simple letters to other lawyers. I would emphasize that every written document from our office creates and leaves an impression with whoever is on the receiving end.

**To:** David Bruce  
**From:** Jessie Fannin  
**Date:** October 9, 2007  
**Re:** Interview for On-the-Job Writing

I interviewed my mother, Monika Fannin, about on-the-job writing. She is a Massage Therapist who specializes in Chronic Pain. Massage therapy is somewhat similar to physical therapy, in which I plan to make my career, so this information should be beneficial to me. I asked her these questions regarding on-the-job writing:

**1. How much time per week do you spend writing on the job?**

I spend about ten minutes per patient, and the number of patients varies from week to week. In special cases where a referral is made to a chiropractor or an insurance company, I will need to write a SOAP note, so that will lengthen the time spent writing for that specific patient.

**2. What kinds of writing do you do on the job?**

I record clinical information on my patients before and after performing their massage. Before the massage, I record their complaints, current problems, special requests, or anything I pick up on during the clinical interview. After the massage, I add further notes as to what I found upon actual palpation of their musculature, as well as my treatment and any instructions I may have given to the patient.

These notes may have to be transposed into a SOAP note and submitted to insurance if requested (mostly Worker's Compensation claims), to a court of law if the patient is in litigation, or to a chiropractor or physician if the patient is referred on. A SOAP note consists of the following:

**S - Subjective**

Statements made by the patient about how he or she feels and the details of how any accident or injury may have occurred. This information should include the date of injury, place of injury, and if any popping, clicking, weakness or other sensation was felt.

**O - Objective**

Statements made by me stating how the patient looks including obvious deformity, swelling, bruising, palpable muscle tension, palpable scar tissue, palpable trigger points in the muscles, etc. If possible, the individual muscles involved should be named (i.e., palpable fibrous tissue was found overlying the rhomboid muscles). I do also give an overall statement about how the massage proceeded and what I found upon palpation or massage of muscle groups. I go on from here to explain the various treatment massage techniques that were given to each area.

**A - Assessment**

Statements made by me after the massage of my findings about the condition of the patient (i.e., patient has rigid musculature of his neck after automobile accident).

**P - Plan**

Statements made here would include when the next massage was to be scheduled, any suggestions given to the patient such as icing, elevation, etc., as well as any comments the patient may have as they leave. This helps tell me for the next visit what strengthening, stretching or other things the patient may have been working on and how this has helped their problem.

**3. How important is it to be able to write well in your job?**

It is extremely important. My patients return for continued treatment of a specific problem or perhaps multiple symptoms such as in the case of fibromyalgia. My writing should be extremely accurate so that correct payment for a specific problem may be paid or a physician or chiropractor may get a clear picture of what I saw when caring for the patient. Many times an insurance company simply wants to know if the patient had an increase in pain and palpable findings after an auto accident, or if when you saw him or her prior to the accident no symptoms were present in the area of question.

**4. Are communication skills—whether written or oral—important for people who want raises and promotions?**

Absolutely. You may be a good practitioner of massage, but if you communicate poorly to your patient (i.e., talk too much, inappropriately, or not at all), then he or she may not return for additional massage therapy or report to the referring physician that you seemed uninformed or unprofessional. My raises and promotions are on the basis of customer and referring physician satisfaction and continued referral of new patients. If my written and oral communications are presented in a clear, concise, and professional manner, that is a direct reflection on my education, experience, and overall skill as a massage therapist. Many times, a patient will return not because they have continued pain, but because you listened to them. Listening is also a very important communication skill. Focusing entirely on the patient is extremely important. I see a patient for over an hour, so I see them longer than any other medical practitioner in their life. I must be very careful also to obey all Ethical Codes and Practices.

**5. What advice would you give a person who is currently taking a course that is intended to prepare him or her to write well?**

Focus on detailing your communication in a way that cannot be easily misunderstood. Don't generalize; be specific. Name the muscle or muscles you are referring to, not just "upper arm." Use good sentence structure and perfect spelling. Be professional and to the point.

**6. Which mistakes in other people's writing really bother you at work?**

I do not deal much with the writings of other people in my current line of work. However, in my past while working at a hospital, my biggest gripe was with run-on sentences, the misuse of commas, and spelling mistakes.

To: David Bruce  
 From: Jaclyn Goddard  
 Date: October 8, 2008  
 Re: On-The-Job Writing Interview

I interviewed my aunt, Mary Rowe, about on-the-job writing. Mary's job title is Chief of Staff, ACS Inc., Human Resource Outsourcing. While she used to be involved in finance and has held many financial jobs in her career, she is currently working in administration. As Chief of Staff, she reports to the Executive Managing Director, HRO, and serves as his support for both internal administration and operations strategy. I hope one day I can be just as established in my career, so her answers to my questions should be very beneficial. I asked Mary the following questions regarding on-the-job writing:

**1. How much time per week do you spend writing on the job?**

I spend at least 50% of my time writing on the job.

**2. What kinds of writing do you do on the job?**

I do a lot of writing with the preparation of:

- slide decks and presentation materials,
- organizational announcements,
- bi-weekly newsletters for employee population,
- weekly business summaries for escalation to corporate management,
- instructions for various internal processes,
- summaries of analytical and statistical material,
- back up documentation to support award requests, and
- numerous emails to colleagues, managers, vendors, etc. to advance day-to-day projects.

**2. How important is it to be able to write well in your job?**

Writing skills are critical to the performance of my job.

**4. Are communication skills—whether written or oral—important for people who want raises and promotions?**

Yes! Communication skills are important for anyone who wants to be successful in their work. Good communication skills allow an employee to not only deliver a work product, but convince others of its value and relevance. Good communication skills allow an employee to effectively and efficiently work with colleagues to produce quality results within strict timeframes. Good communication skills are an advantage to those who want to express their career aspirations and expectations to upper management. An employee is more likely to be rewarded with additional compensation and more responsibilities if he/she can communicate the value of their deliverables to both subordinates and higher levels of management.

**5. What advice would you give a person who is currently taking a course that is intended to prepare him or her to write well?**

I would suggest the following advice:

- Think of your audience and consider what information they really need.
- Reflect on the communication style of someone you enjoy or respect. Try to incorporate the aspects of their style that appeal to you.
- Remember that different situations require different communication styles. The approach you use to make a business proposal will differ from the approach you use to email a colleague to facilitate a meeting.

**6. What is an example of something that you have written recently that has resulted in effective action?**

1. I recently delivered a PowerPoint presentation that explains our upcoming reorganization, the reasons for the change, the next steps, and my manager's expectations. It was considered a great "kick off" for a very significant change in our group.

2. My executive managing director needed to communicate his expectations about the goals and objectives his managers incorporated into their bonus plans. I drafted his communication and included specifics and back up explanations. We completed our bonus planning and documentation with quality based on these instructions and this communications.

3. Our managers needed to complete their merit increase planning for their employees last month. I wrote a communication about the process steps, timing, and explanation of our compensation philosophy. We were able to effectively and timely deliver the planning because the team had the information they needed to quickly get it done.

**7. What are some typical mistakes in communication made by people who are new to the job?**

Young professionals often find it difficult to remove emotion from their communications (oral and written). Business communications are better delivered and respected when they are focused on facts, analytics, process steps and specific deliverables....not on feelings, frustrations, or ambiguous requests.

Someone new to a particular job or role may also fail to adjust their communication style for their audience. The way we talk to or solicit information from our managers may differ from how we work with peers. Our communication style may also differ from person to person based on their individual preferences.

If you are new to your role, it can be overwhelming when asked to communicate about particular deliverables. When you are still gaining competence, you may find it difficult to communicate about the work you don't fully understand. You will learn a lot about your job by forcing yourself to explain an aspect of it to another.

David Bruce

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8 October 2008

**8. What are the top three skills needed to be successful in this career?**

- Communication Skills- and the ability to vary communications by audience and situation
- Business Analysis-and the ability to use numbers, metrics, and anecdotal information to make recommendations and decisions
- Extensive Knowledge- of how our particular industry, line of business and team operates.

To: David Bruce  
From: Mike McGann  
Date: October 11, 2009  
Re: Interview for On-the-Job Writing

I interviewed Dave Smith, a Senior Financial Advisor at the United Bank of Switzerland, or UBS. UBS is a financial services company which focuses on managing private wealth assets. I hope to eventually become a Senior Financial Advisor, so I feel that interviewing Mr. Smith will give me a good idea as to how much and what kind of writing one does when they are a Financial Advisor. These are the questions I asked him about on-the-job writing:

**1. How much time per week do you spend writing on the job?**

It all varies from week to week. Sometimes I won't have much to write at all. Other times, I can spend most of the day writing reports on possible investments for a particular company or individual. These reports are then turned into presentations, which also can involve a great deal of writing.

**2. What kinds of writing do you do on the job?**

Again, it varies quite often, but it includes:

- Investment or security reports
- Investment or security presentations
- Company announcements
- Daily company communications via email
- Spreadsheet and statistical software packages used to analyze data
- Writing forms for the Securities and Exchange Commission regulations

**3. How important is it to be able to write well in your job?**

As a Financial Advisor, it is extremely important to know how to write well. My job is to convince clients that we have found the best way to invest their money. In order to convince them, our reports and presentations must be put together very well so they are convincing. It is also very important when talking to potential clients because you are trying to convince them that they should trust our company with their money. If the report or presentation is not as good as it can be, don't count on getting that client. My particular job title is paid commission only, so it's even more important.

**4. Are communication skills—whether written or oral—important for people who want raises and promotions?**

Financial Advisors deal with people on a day-to-day basis. Your ability to communicate with other people is crucial. The only way someone will get a raise or promotion is by bringing in new clients. As I said before, this is no easy task. Your reports and the way that you present them to potential clients hinges on your interpersonal skills.

**5. What advice would you give a person who is currently taking a course that is intended to prepare him or her to write well?**

Take as many writing classes as you can throughout college. You may not think it is very important, but that is what separates the good advisors from the great. Writing is a skill where many people struggle and knowing how to write in the workplace can do great things to your career.

**6. What are the top three skills needed to be successful in this career?**

The three most important things needed to be successful in this career is first and foremost a college degree. You can't do much in this business without a degree. It helps to have a degree in finance, economics, or some type of business degree. However, it is not necessary. We have Financial Analysts and Advisors who have degrees in English and History. The next important thing to have is a solid set of interpersonal skills. As I mentioned before, I don't get paid unless I convince clients that they should let me manage their money. I will be successful only if my interpersonal skills are good enough to where the client trusts me and my plan for their assets. The third skill is having a good understanding on the things that affect the economy such as money markets, interest rates and investing.

To: David Bruce  
 From: Peggy Metzger  
 Date: October 6, 2009  
 Re: Interview for On-the-Job Writing

For the on-the-job interview, I contacted my sister, Susan (she prefers Susie) Daughenbaugh. Susie works as a Quality Assurance Manager (QA) at Reiter Dairy, LLC in Springfield, Ohio. I know this isn't close to Veterinary medicine, but if for some reason I fail to get my veterinary degree, I will at least have a degree in Biological Sciences, and this is something I could do with that degree. So, this information can still be quite useful to me. I asked her these questions regarding on-the-job writing:

**1) How much time per week do you spend writing on the job?**

I really don't want to do the math, but in the course of an 8-hour work day, I am writing anywhere from 4 to 6 hours.

**2) What kinds of writing do you do on the job?**

Most of the time, when I am writing things at work, they are directional and inquisitory emails. These are either getting sent to my superiors to find out the information I need for other things I am doing, or they are to my workers to find out results of tests or other information. I, also, write many of the procedures and policies along with doing charts and flow diagrams for my meetings.

**3) How important is it to be able to write well in your job?**

Very! I send e-mails because I don't want to waste my time running out into the plant to find the person, and if I don't word the question right, then that confuses the reader. So they then, either have to waste time in finding me, or send me an e-mail back asking for clarification. Then I have to send them one back, and so on and so forth. So, a well-written e-mail can save time, and keep the frustrations of both parties to a minimum.

**4) Are communications skills—whether written or oral—important for people who want raises and promotions?**

Yes, especially if you are going to have people under you. If you are unable to communicate effectively and concisely, then your people will find it hard to follow your directions.

**5) What advice would you give a person who is currently taking a course that is intended to prepare her to write well?**

The best advice I can give is to write clearly and concisely. Also, good grammar is very helpful in landing the job, let alone keeping it.

**6) What is unique about writing for your job?**

In my job, I would have to say the most unique writing I have to do, and love to do, is being able to describe physical things, and physical applications in a written manner. Being able to write up tests that are to be run on the product and not be questioned over it.

**7) How can I improve my writing?**

When writing directions, e-mail, or any correspondence really, just be as clear and concise as possible. You want a total idiot to be able to look at the directions, read them, and be able to perform whatever task you need them to.

David Bruce

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October 6, 2009

**8) Which mistakes in other people's writing really bother you at work?**

I absolutely hate people who give unclear statements, or requests in their e-mails/ correspondences. My old boss used to send me e-mails that would ask me to get her a file. I would have to send one back, asking what file she needed. She would respond with a topic, and I would still need it narrowed down more, to a test, or a run for example. We would have to keep sending e-mails back and forth, or I would get fed up enough to just leave my office, to go talk to her to figure out what she needed exactly. It drove me crazy and was a total waste of her and my time!

**9) What skills are needed in you job to be successful?**

In my job you need to be able to give clear directions. You need people to understand them the first time, not the sixth time reading them through. Along with giving directions, you also need to be able to read and execute directions from others. You also need to be able to communicate your thoughts, and the processes effectively, not confusing the people, even though it makes perfect sense to you.

**To:** David Bruce  
**From:** Kristin Nieto  
**Date:** November 5, 2008  
**Re:** Interview for On-the-Job Writing

I interviewed one of my former professors, Dr. Sally Marinellie, about on-the-job writing. Dr. Marinellie is a Speech and Language Pathologist and teaches Language Development to Hearing, Speech, and Language majors. I am a Hearing, Speech, and Language major and I plan to pursue my future career as a Speech and Language Pathologist. I asked Dr. Marinellie the following questions about on-the-job writing:

**1. How much time per week do you spend writing on the job?**

It really varies with respect to what I have going on with my research. For example, over the summer all I did was write research manuscripts--about 6 hours per day. During the regular academic quarter, that goes down because of all the other responsibilities such as teaching and committee work. I would say that, on average, I write about 5-10 hours per week during the regular academic quarters.

**2. What kinds of writing do you do on the job?**

Mostly, I write papers that describe experimental studies that I have done (i.e. manuscripts) in the hope that a journal will accept that paper for publication. I also write research grants in order to get money to do more research.

**3. How important is it to be able to write well in your job?**

Extremely important because research is conducted in order to disseminate the results. In doing so, you must be able to write clearly and efficiently.

**4. Are communication skills--whether written or oral--important for people who want raises and promotions?**

Yes, very important.

**5. What advice would you give a person who is currently taking a course that is intended to prepare him or her to write well?**

1. When you are stuck, just get something down on paper. You can always revise.
2. Always, always proofread carefully. In doing so, read your work out loud (not silently). You'll notice more mistakes that way.
3. Know exactly who your audience will be and write to their level/background knowledge.
4. Do not write like you talk. Writing is more formal.
5. Make every word count.
6. Go back and re-learn 8<sup>th</sup> grade grammar (e.g. run-on sentences).
7. Plan and outline before writing.
8. Keep sentences simple and easy for your reader to process.

David Bruce

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November 5, 2008

**6. What are the top three skills needed to be successful in this career?**

1. Ability to handle multiple tasks and prioritize.
2. Effective communication skills.
3. Being good with details.

To: David Bruce  
From: Kady Shoemaker  
Date: October 7, 2009  
Re: Interview for On-the-Job Writing

I interviewed my cousin, Kim Shoemaker, about on-the-job writing. She is a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher at Paint Valley Elementary School, located in Bainbridge, Ohio. It is my career goal to become an elementary teacher, so this interview is extremely useful in helping me prepare for my career. I asked her these questions about on-the-job writing:

**1. How much time per week do you spend writing on the job?**

I spend an awful lot of time per week writing on the job. Now it may not always be formal writing, but being an elementary teacher requires you to be writing something about 80% of the school day.

**2. What kinds of writing do you do on the job?**

So much writing is done in this profession. I guess the first thing I'll mention is lesson plans. Writing the lesson plans for the day can be done months or weeks ahead of time, but the time spent writing them is still significant. I am constantly observing my students and writing down my observations. These observations may just be small sentences or words but I am still writing. Also, you're teaching so writing on the board happens all the time. I could really go on and on about the kinds of writing that I do, IEPs, memos to staff, letters home to parents, grading, etc.

**3. How important is it to be able to write well in your job?**

It is extremely important. I teach children. I write letters and send them home to families weekly. If I do not write these letters well, the parents will think I am not an adequate educator. When I write a recommendation to my administrators, I want them to take me seriously; therefore, writing well is particularly important.

**4. Are communication skills—whether written or oral—important for people who want raises and promotions?**

Communication skills, both written and oral, are important in my career. As far as raises go, that comes with time and your education. A promotion could be considered being moved to a more preferable age-level or becoming a principal or guidance counselor. The age-level promotion would depend on the teacher and would require communication skills. Becoming a guidance counselor or principal requires other training.

**5. What advice would you give a person who is currently taking a course that is intended to prepare him or her to write well?**

Take it seriously, because it will help you in the long run. Do what is asked of you, and do it to the best of your ability.

To: David Bruce  
 From: Rebecca Waddell  
 Date: October 8, 2009  
 Re: Interview for On-The-Job Writing

For this assignment, I have decided to interview Mrs. Brenda Ford. Mrs. Ford is a kindergarten teacher at Waverly Primary School. Since I plan on becoming an early childhood educator, I thought that it would be very helpful and fitting to interview her. Last spring I had the opportunity to observe and work first-hand with the students in her classroom. During this time, I noticed the types of writing she was doing on the job on a daily basis. I asked Mrs. Ford the following questions about on-the-job writing.

**1. How much time per week do you spend writing on the job?**

As far as time spent writing with students, I spend approximately 25 hours a week. We write all of the time!

**2. What kinds of writing do you do on the job?**

Being a kindergarten teacher, most of my writing is centered on the practicing and teaching of writing skills with my students. We work on printing of letters and numbers, journal writing, morning message for modeling, name, etc. I also write a weekly newsletter that is sent to the parents of my students to keep them informed on upcoming events in the classroom. Some of my writing for my job takes place at home. For example, I write lesson plans to plan out all of the events of the day. Although I am not writing this while on the job, it is still a crucial type of writing that must be completed for this job.

**3. How important is it to be able to write well in your job?**

As a teacher, I think it is extremely important to write well for communication with the parents and to model correctly for the students.

**4. Are communication skills--whether written or oral--important for people who want raises and promotions?**

From my experiences as a parent and a teacher, I believe that communication skills are extremely important. They are not only important for people wanting raises or promotions, but are useful in many other aspects of life like making friends, succeeding in school, and communicating thoughts or feelings.

**5. What advice would you give a person who is currently taking a course that is intended to prepare him or her to write well?**

I would advise that person to use prewriting to organize thoughts, write rough drafts, and edit. Also, use peers whenever possible to read it over and give thoughts or critique. Pay close attention during this class; the skills you learn will be used throughout your life.

David Bruce

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October 8, 2009

**6. What are the top three skills needed to be successful in this career?**

Not necessarily in any particular order, I would have to say communication, organization, and ability to inspire.

**7. Do you have any job-hunting tips for me?**

Go to school districts and give them a face to attach to a resume, keep options open about grade levels or positions, and use any contacts that you can to get your foot in the door.

**To:** David Bruce  
**From:** Matthew Watson  
**Date:** October 6, 2008  
**Re:** Interview About On-the-Job Writing

I decided to interview my supervisor at the Circulation department at Alden Library at Ohio University because I am considering getting an MLS. Michelle Dixon is the student supervisor and covers the night and weekend times.

**1. How much time per week do you spend writing on the job?**

I spend probably about eight hours writing on-the-job. Most of my time is spent working with the library patrons and student workers.

**2. What kinds of writing do you do on the job?**

The bulk of my writing comes from e-mail correspondence with students, patrons, other circulation supervisors, and other departments within the library. I also write up supervisor action reports, incident reports, and recommendations.

**3. How important is it to be able to write well in your job?**

It is extremely important. I have to be able to communicate ideas to my coworkers easily. Since I am the nights and weekends supervisor, I do not see my fellow supervisors that often so I cannot simply tell them what I mean. I have to be able to put it in writing.

**4. Are communication skills – whether written or oral – important for people who want raises or promotions?**

Yes, writing abilities and oral abilities are very valuable in this department. Writing well is just a general job skill. But at the Circulation desk, we are constantly helping patrons – checking out books, handling fines, and helping with general questions. If an employee does not have oral presentation skills, it will be obvious and their job performance and therefore evaluations will suffer.

**5. What advice would you give a person who is currently taking a course that is intended to prepare him or her to write well?**

Go to class and actually pay attention. Notice the mistakes you make consistently in order to make sure you do not make them again. “Writing” is deceptively simple – take this class seriously.

To: David Bruce  
 From: Raina Wolfe-Stein  
 Date: October 12, 2009  
 Re: Interview about On-The-Job Writing

For this assignment, I interviewed Kerri Shaw, a social worker in Athens County. Kerri Shaw works at Trimble Elementary School as a school social worker. I am currently pursuing a degree in social work, and plan to work with children in the future. I have considered working in a school setting; therefore, the information I received from Kerri may give me an idea of what types of writing I may do on the job in the future.

**1. How much time per week do you spend writing on the job?**

I spend about 30 % of my week writing, between 12 - 15 hours.

**2. What kinds of writing do you do on the job?**

I write letters to parents and staff, newsletter articles, case notes and email correspondence. I also write monthly reports about my program, as well as grant proposals.

**3. How important is it to be able to write well in your job?**

Extremely important. Often, it's the only form of communication I have with individuals, so it's imperative that I be able to communicate professionally and effectively. Also, I represent an education institution as a school social worker and we want that "face" to present well. I have contact with university staff, government officials, and agency leaders, as well as parents who are illiterate. Being able to write well enables me to communicate with a range of people.

**4. Are communication skills--whether written or oral--important for people who want raises and promotions?**

Last year, our agency was suffering from the budget cuts, and the prevention programs were being evaluated for efficacy. We had to collect data (and more data and more data), compile it, interpret it and present it orally and in report form to, essentially, support our positions. Fortunately, the data showed progress and change, so we remained on staff, but it is certainly an example of how important it is to be able to communicate well, especially in this economy. In social services, we must be our own advocates.

**5. What advice would you give a person who is currently taking a course that is intended to prepare him or her to write well?**

Use your peers for proofreading shamelessly. Learn what parallel sentences are and ask all the questions you can in that safe environment of the classroom. Practice! Write about something you love so that it flows out of you.

**6. Which mistakes in other people's writing really bother you at work?**

Run-on sentences and inappropriately informal greetings. Also, not using proper capitalization and grammar when writing professionally.

David Bruce

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October 12, 2009

**7. What are the top three skills needed to be successful in this career?**

Flexibility, empathy/positive regard for others regardless of circumstances, and the ability to multi-task.

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