

Questing for Change: Using Quest Gamification to Encourage the Writing Process

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Introduction

- **The Problem:** Students don't engage in the writing process, because of
 - Time Constraints
 - Workload
 - Just don't know how
- **My Solution:** CompQuest: a quest based gamification of the writing process that has:
 - * Encouraged more process work
 - * Demystified the process
 - * Clarified expectations of quality writing
 - * Curbed grade-grubbing and complaints
 - * Made writing fun
 - * Given students a sense of autonomy

Inspiration

- **C'S THE DAY:** participants at the Conference on College Composition & Communication (the C's) get a booklet with a list of activities to complete. You check in at the C's the Day booth to update your point total and collect prizes (sparkle ponies and trading cards).



CompQuest

- There are two types of quests that students can complete during each paper unit:
 - **General Quests:** brainstorming, peer review, revising, writing center visit, paper conference
 - **Side Quests:** unit specific quests that add context to the assignment—either specific writing based quests or quests that move them out of their comfort zone
- Students complete either General Quests or Side Quests during a paper unit and at the end of the unit get rewards based on how many quests they completed.
- There are NO GRADES or POINTS involved.
- Quality is important, but this is a zero penalty thing—if a student doesn't submit any quests it has ZERO EFFECT on their course grade

CompQuest

Sample Quests

Brainstorming: Complete one (or more) of the following and submit your brainstorming on the Google Form:
Clustering/web: make a cluster or web diagram with your potential paper topic in the middle and related ideas branching off it it.
5 min freewrite: Set a timer for 5 minutes and write nonstop about your topic
20 questions with a partner: pair up with someone and have them ask you questions about your topic (who, what, when, where, why, how, etc) to help develop ideas. Then ask them similar questions about their topic.
Sketch it out: get creative and doodle and draw some ideas for your paper—you can use a mix of words and images/doodles
Progressive outlining/web: Start with a cluster/web, then pick one of the branching topics and start a new cluster/web focusing on that; repeat once more with a branch from the new cluster/web
Brain dump: perfect for when you're ready to start drafting but stuck. Set a timer for 10 min and write everything and anything you know or think about your topic without paying attention to organization or structure—just write!

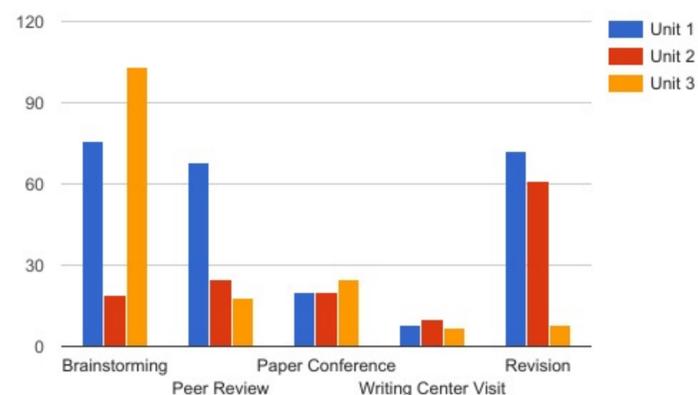
Exploring the Context: find an article or photo essay (Lens section) that relates to your Op-Doc and write a paragraph summary of the article/photo essay and discuss what, if any, insights it gives you to your Op-Doc

Rewards

- There are three reward levels that students can reach during each unit:
 - Level 1: erase an absence (complete 2 quests)
 - Level 2: turn in a paper up to 2 days late w/o penalty (complete 4 quests)
 - Level 3: chance to revise a paper (complete 6 quests)
- Rewards are redeemable all semester

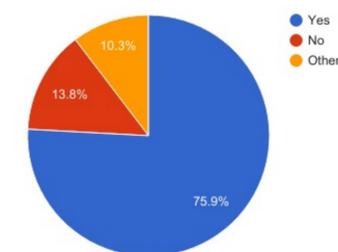
Results

Completed General Writing Quests

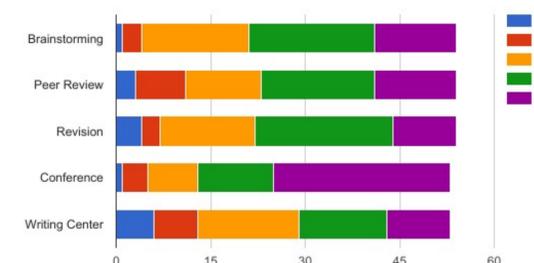


Results

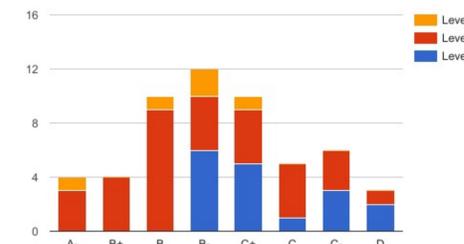
More Confident?



Helpfulness of Quests, Scale 1-5



Reward Level vs. Grades



What Students Said

"Made me want to do more of the writing process"

"I like how doing it can positively affect my grade....It helps me get a solid ground on my paper because I can use baby steps, brainstorming, peer review, etc"

"I like that it encourages me to go back and look at my paper more and revise it. I also like that I have the chance to rewrite my paper if I earn enough points"

"Pushed me to do writing exercises that I would not have done before and they ended up helping immensely."

"The CompQuest game made me put more effort into my paper. By doing the quest, I was actually doing things that improved my paper."

"It made me step outside my comfort zone and it helped me work and edit through my piece in ways I didn't know you could."