

Supporting Students in Writing-Intensive Courses

Insight on Reducing Writing Apprehension Through Planned Interventions

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INTRODUCTION

- The ability to write well is a skill valued by employers
- Agricultural degree programs use writing intensive courses to build students' written communication skills
- Students often possess anxiety related writing and writing assignments
- One way to support students and help them overcome anxiety is through planned interventions
- What is not known is which types of interventions students view as more efficacious and which ones they prefer

METHODS

- A researcher-developed questionnaire exploring course interventions and course structure was created for the study by drawing on literacy literature
- Data were collected via Qualtrics during the last two weeks of the spring 2017 semester
- Population was undergraduate students enrolled in a writing intensive agricultural leadership course (n = 76); 48.68% (n=37) responded
- Of the respondents, 56.8% (n=21) were male and 43.2% (n=16) were female; the average student was 20.57 years old and in his or her second year of college
- Tests of inter-item reliability were conducted on the four constructs. A 95% confidence interval was used. Scores indicate good reliability: (a) boot camp, .864; (b) modeling, .878, (c) peer review, .938; and (d) Overall Course Structure, .748

FINDINGS

- Though modeling was the most preferred writing intervention, participants did not have a strong preference for any of the three interventions
- Composite scores for each construct were: (a) writing boot camp had a mean score of 2.37 with a standard deviation of .739; (b) modeling had a mean score of 2.18 with a standard deviation of .733; and (c) peer review had a mean score of 2.59 with a standard deviation of .952
- The course structure was the most effective factor in improving writing, according to participants. A composite score for the overall course structure construct had a mean score of 2.11 with a standard deviation of .676
- Among factors in course structure, feedback from the TA was rated the most effective factor in improving writing with a mean score of 1.73 and a standard deviation of .804

REFERENCES

Byrket, J. S. (2016). The Impact Of Writing Intensive Courses On Writing Apprehension And Academic Motivation.

Daly, J. A., & Miller, M. D. (1975). The empirical development of an instrument to measure writing apprehension. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 9(3), 242-249.

Fischer, Laura M., and Courtney Meyers. "Determining Change in Students' Writing Apprehension Scores in a Writing Intensive Course: A Pre-Test, Post-Test Design." *Journal of Agricultural*

LEGEND

Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neutral Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree

WRITING BOOTCAMP

Direct instruction on expectations and characteristics of technical writing, including grammar, format, and APA Style.

MODELING

Instructors model how to read a writing prompt, identify key components, and craft a thorough response.

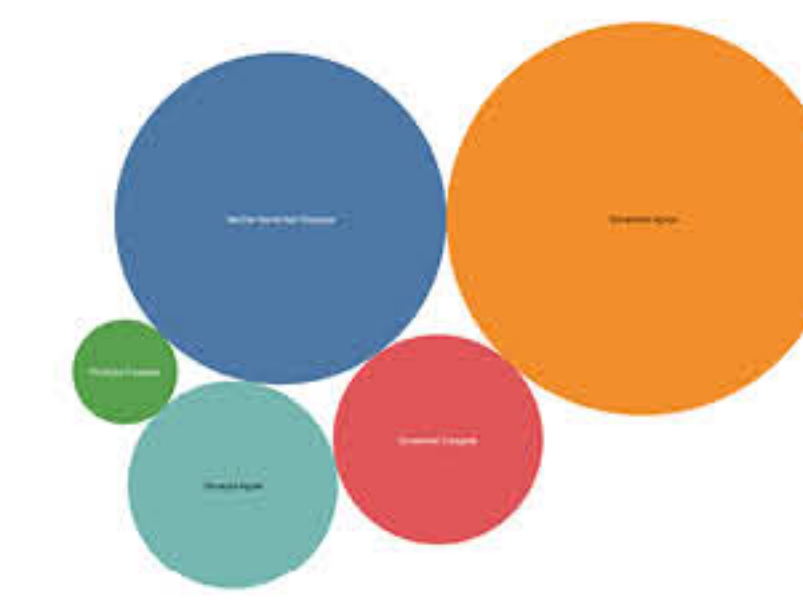
PEER REVIEW

Instructor provides brief lecture on how to give critical feedback to peers; afterward, students provided feedback to three peers.

COURSE STRUCTURE

Writing support built into course that does not constitute a lesson, such as: TA feedback, online resources, rubrics, etc.

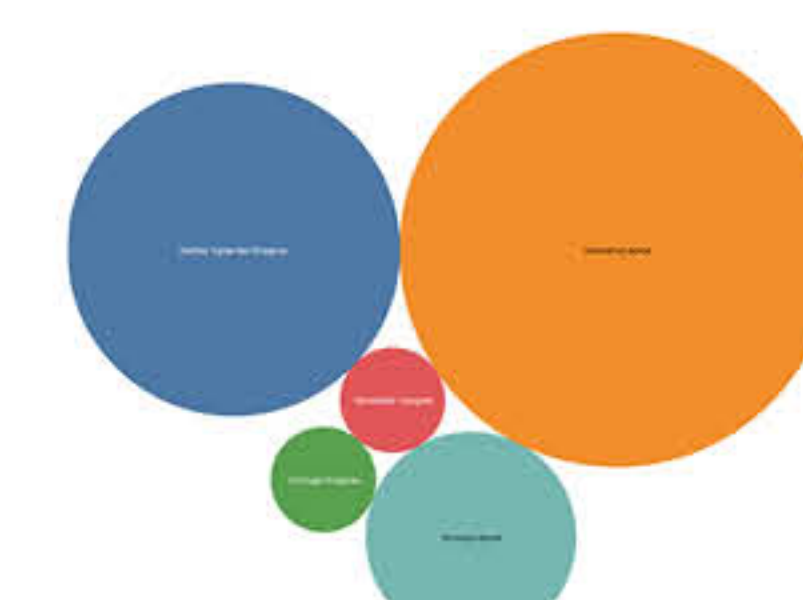
Increased my confidence in my writing ability



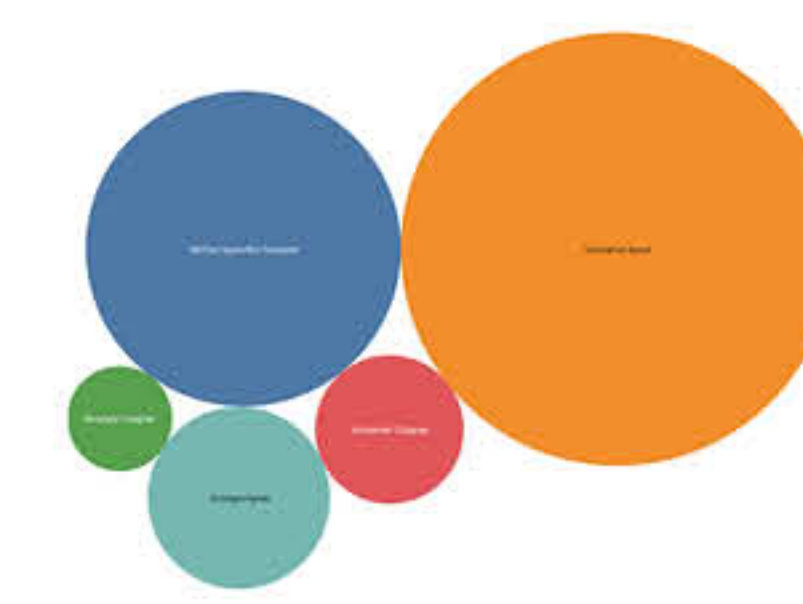
Helped me to better organize my thoughts on paper



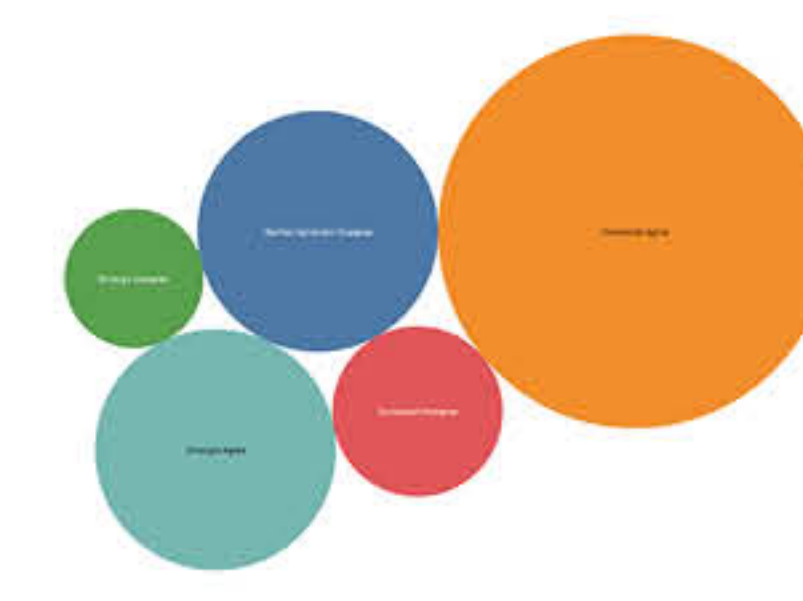
Helped me produce a high-quality written product



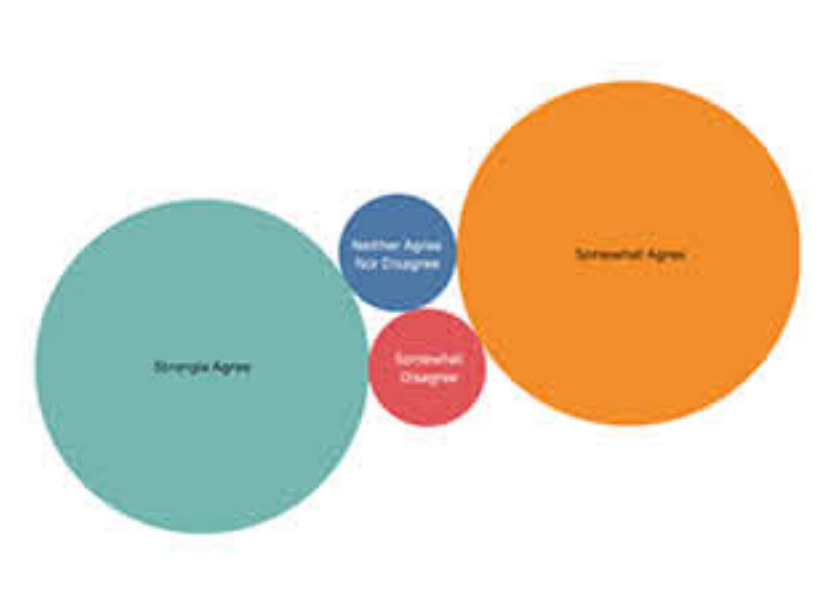
Helped me improve my grammar or punctuation



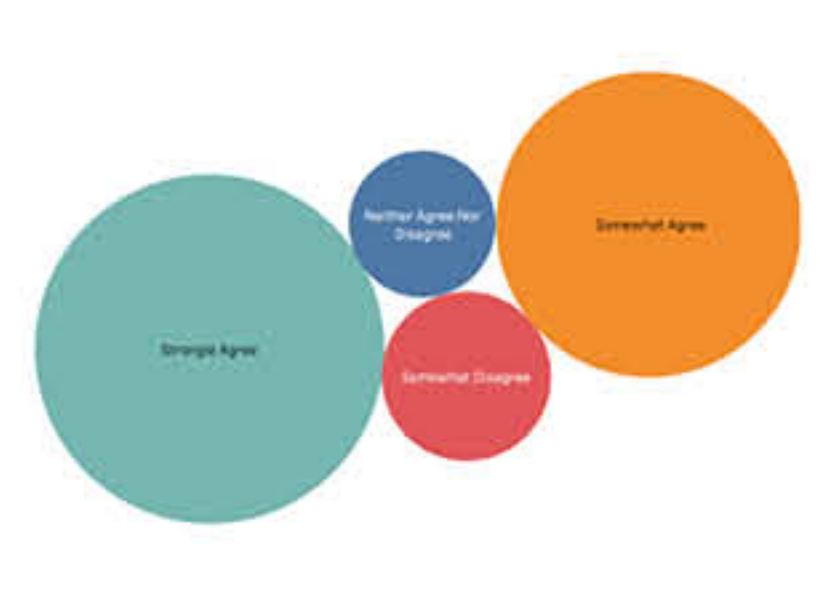
Was a worthwhile use of lab time



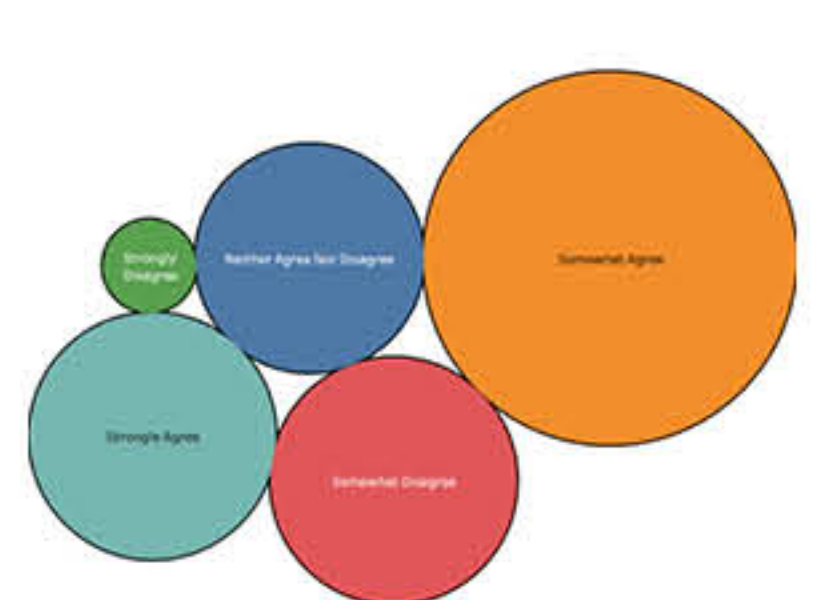
Written or verbal feedback from TAs



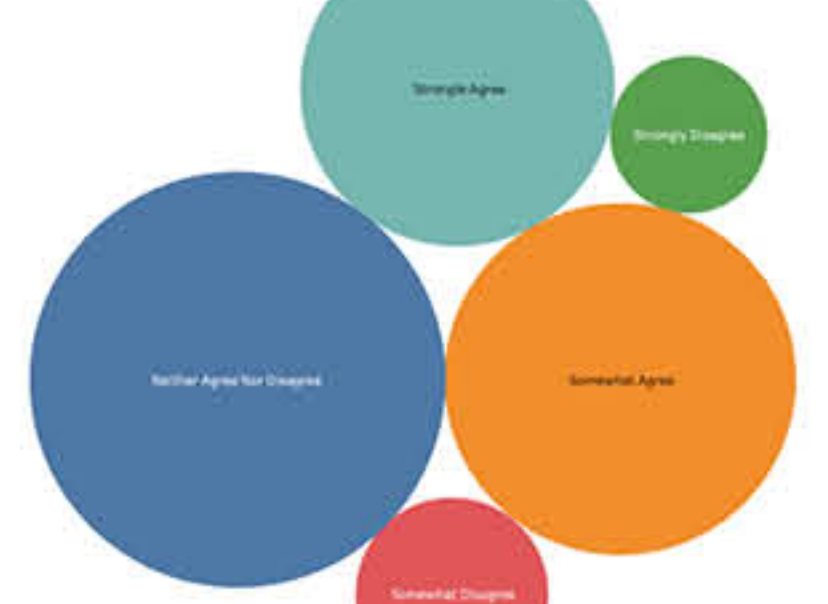
Multiple opportunities to review and resubmit assignments



Number of assignments



Access to resources offered by the MU writing lab



Access to resources offered by the instructor on the course site

