NAME: Megan Norris\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date\_March 9, 2011\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

About your grade:

1. Did you meet contract terms for a B? (Check out the contract again.)

Yes, except some questions do not apply (i.e. we have yet to schedule any meetings, and I have not turned in my portfolio). The one that I am barely meeting is #1. I have missed 2 classes already (snow kept me from coming one day, and a creepy old man at my babysitter’s house kept me home another day)

2. Did you have many drafts that could open the door to a higher grade?—that is,

drafts I told you I considered "excellent" or better than needed for the contract?

Well, you never really commented on any of my drafts besides the one for my class presentation. You were caught off guard, because I did not have a prologue. Even though I could articulate what the piece was about, you felt this was more important than the content. In my first twitterive—one that was about how the places in my life connect and cannot be taken out of context from one another—I had a prologue, but I felt like it directed my exploration; if I did not see an immediate connection, I did not explore that area. Yet, I knew that I had to explore the place to find the connection. So basically, the prologue held me back. However, now with my newest twitterive, I have a prologue. It is easier, I admit, to have the prologue and keep changing it as my piece takes all the twist and turns that exploration through writing drives. So, now I have a prologue, but I am not letting it control my writing.

Obviously, I have three different drafts that all have doors to explore. I am sticking with my current twitterive, the third one, because I feel like I have the most connections to this place. Also, it keeps morphing into new directions, but I love the direction it is going.

3. Please give yourself a “plus,” a “minus,” or an “okay” for each item. Let your answer reflect

yourself sense of yourself now—at the end of the semester.

* Are you able to enjoy and use writing? PLUS PLUS (I would not be in this class or major if I had not fallen in love with writing. I was a Liberal Art/Education dual major with a track in Writing Arts and English. I loved the WA program so much and writing became such an influential factor in my life that I dropped every major and declared as a sole WA major (and kept a minor in education). Writing has opened doors for personal growth. All I want to do now is embrace and share this tool. I am seriously obsessed with writing. I have never in my life found something that I can forever grow through. Writing is a life-long process. I freaking love it.)

• To enjoy the process, to throw yourself into it, to take risks? PLUS (I am not a risk-taker when it comes to academics. But every professor in the WA department encourages it, so I just redirected my thinking and looked at risk taking as requirement of academic writing. If I do not take risks, I will not earn a good mark. With this line of thinking, I have been able to willingly take risks. I admit that I still struggle, but I am continually improving in this area—hence, the plus score)

• To use writing in your life, figure things out, make decisions, deal with

feelings? PLUS PLUS (I am always using writing for personal growth and soul searching. Life easily passes by. But when I reflect on my life through writing, I see things that I was passive to before I revealed them through the writing.)

• To use writing to help you learn material in other courses? PLUS-ISH (I write notes as I am reading; I use writing to gain better understanding of new material, but I do not go out of my way to write about biology, for example, when I do not understand mitosis. Also, sneaking some of my creative writing into papers in non-writing courses seems to impress my professors.)

• To enjoy sharing writing with others—and give and get responses? PLUS (I am not into group work that is graded—never have and probably never will. But this does not mean that I do not see the benefits of group work or enjoy doing it. I just do not like getting graded collectively. As far as sharing my thoughts about other people’s writing, this is what I live for. My ideal job would be as a writing tutor or consultant. I want to work at Spell’s Writing Lab—an afterschool writing program for youths—so badly. It is my dream job.)

4. "Invention": are you able to find lots of ideas and words?

Yes, I do not have a problem coming up with ideas and different ways to articulate them through multiple writing modes. Usually, the brainstorming process works well for me. I always have an idea; the tricky part is picking one. My brain is usually running full speed. Also, I love the English language because it is rich. If I hear a word I do not know, I almost always ask what it means. Dr. Kopp is good for using words that I have no idea what they mean, but he always tells me the definitions and different ways to use them.

5. Thinking, perplexity: are you able to dig to real questions in your essays? To get to

what really matters?—to push toward figuring something out--creating a movement

of thinking?

This relates to the twist and turns I was speaking to in question #2. I think that the process I have been going through shows that I am exploring my place through deeper thinking. This also speaks to when I wrote about writing as growth. Writing allows me to really dig into my thinking—it directs it, shapes it, morphs it, reinforces it, etc.

6. Voice: can you make your writing sound comfortably like you--and get life and

energy into your sentences?

I am very true to my writing voice. I think this is my biggest strength. I often receive comments like “You’re voice is strong,” “As I was reading, I could hear you,” etc. Luckily, I am not dull, so I do not have to search for life and energy. Also, when my writing feels scripted or boring—this happened plenty of times in my general education classes—I can usually note this and redirect my writing to make it better.

7. Can you "show, not tell": find words that make people see what you see, feel what

you feel?

Yes, although my creative writing has more showing than my academic writing.

8. Can you do genuine revising: rethink or "re-see" what you've written and try out

new ideas, new structures, new voices?—develop or explore further what you've

already written?

Being able to do this is my favorite part of writing. The current direction of my twitterive—this is the third ‘place’ I explored—is a remaking of an essay I wrote. Also, I had to do a research paper once where I was forced to suppress my opinions and bias; I reshaped this paper into a personal essay and a dialogue. Also, I wrote an essay in an English Literature class that I am re-exploring in my Evaluating Writing course. In this class, we are repurposing and recreating meaning, too. I even do this type of remaking in every piece I write. The revision process is the most important element of writing.

9. Can you copy edit successfully and get rid of virtually all mistakes in grammar and

mechanics?

Yes, but I always wait until the very last draft before I do it. I play around with my writing during the revision process, and it would be pointless and a waste of time to worry about grammar and what-not too early in the process.

10. Feedback: can you give good feedback to others--and perhaps more important--can

you get them to give you the feedback you need?

I think I give great feedback. However, I do not get my peers to give me the feedback I need. I often leave peer reviews frustrated or pissed off. For example, on Monday, I completed a peer review in Evaluating Writing. We were to read the papers prior to class, write constructive comments (using the rubric), and then come to class and discuss our comments in the groups. One of the group members handed me my paper. I began flipping through the pages to read her comments, and it was blank. Really?! I have a printer; but thanks for the effort—I guess. Other comments are like pats on the shoulder—“I like you intro,” “This was a great paragraph,” etc. Even when I make comments like “I think my conclusion should be strengthened; any suggestions,” or “I am required to use this source, but I cannot see how it relates to my piece; any suggestions would help,” I get no constructive comments. Sometimes, I cannot even get teachers to give me constructive criticism or suggestions. When I have expended my resources and ask for direction, they usually say “You can do it,” or “Take more risks.” In this class, I received great feedback from the interview, but not from the twitterive presentation. One comment did, however, drive me in the direction of my current twitterive.

11. How well did you come to understand your writing process and learning process?

I am a highly metacognitive thinker. I am aware of my process and constantly observing other people’s processes. To me, writing is all about the process; process might as well be a synonym for writing. Earlier, I said that writing allows growth. I think this growth is achieved by going through the process.

12. How was your level of effort over the semester?

My effort is always on point. You set the expectations, and I work my hardest to meet them. There was one point—a week actually—that I think I was slacking. But in my defense, my mind was in a bad place and it took longer than normal to break myself out of it. I do not deal with death well—leave it at that.

13. How much do you feel you improved over the semester?

I have improved in many areas over the semester, but the most notable was my ability to write for a public discourse. I am not into blogging. The reasons go beyond the scope of this reflection—well, not really, but this topic is a self reflection in itself, and I do not plan on writing a whole essay about my struggles with public forums; I will save that for my final reflection letter. But, in a nut shell, I am now more comfortable writing online. I still have room to grow. But I am starting to see how I can use this type of writing in my personal life, so I am open to the challenges to come.

14. What grade do you think you earned this semester?

I think that at this point in the semester I have earned an A. As far as the requirements for a B go, when comparing my performance, I feel like I have excelled beyond the minimal criteria.