**What is a Learning Commentary?**

A learning commentary (LC from now on) is a short formal essay written as you review for a test. Hopefully, your ideas have changed and grown about a variety of topics during each unit. Chances are, however, there will be a single idea that stands out- something that you didn’t get before and now makes much more sense.

The LC tells the story of your learning about that single idea- how your understanding of that idea evolved over the course of the unit. It’s like an extended journal entry, except that the focus is on a single physics idea (not a single event).

**Writing the LC**

Here’s a step-by-step guide to writing the LC:

1. Identify the physics topic you want to write about. Ideally, it’s an important topic that you’ve learned lots about. Have you had any significant “aha” moments during the unit? Is there a topic where you used to be confused and now you’re not? Or something you thought you knew about, but have discovered more about or changed your perspective on? If can’t remember, look at your journal entries.
2. Identify events that helped you get to your new understanding- things like class activities, in-class problems, homework problems, readings, important discussions and the like. Select two or three of the most important of these and write about how each changed/improved your understanding of the topic you chose. What did each event help you “get”?
3. Think about what you now understand about the physics topic you’ve chosen and how this understanding is different from the understanding you had when you started the unit.
4. Write your essay, incorporating your ideas from steps 1-3.

**Turning it in**

You will upload a word-processed electronic file to BlackBoard. *Please do not type your essay directly into the text box on BB*. Use whatever word-processor you want, but please upload MicroSoft Word files (most word processors, including Pages, can export Word files). We have MS Word in both the Mac lab (SCI366) and the PC lab (SCI368), in case you do not have a way to export/upload Word files.

***If*** you want to include drawings in your LC (most people don’t), please use your own drawings. Scan (or take a picture of) your handwritten drawings and paste them into your LC file. (If you need access to a scanner, let me know). Please do not use artwork from the Web. Please do not spend hours creating fancy electronic artwork.

**Grading**

Your LC will be graded and commented up electronically on BB according to a rubric (also posted on BB). Once the comments and grade are returned, you will have an opportunity to rewrite/revise your LC at no risk- I will award the better of the two grades. The rewrite/revision (if you choose to do it), is due one week after the first draft is graded.