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Self-Assessment Portfolio

English 21007

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Introduction

Before taking English 21007, the only genre of scientific writing I had experience writing in was lab reports. I did not even know about the rhetorical situation because as a student, I was more focused on getting the papers done and making sure that the content that I had written was correct. Taking this class broadened the idea that I had on what the word “genre” meant. It exposed me to the basic types of writing that as a future engineer, I must know how to write. The three genres that we covered are technical description, lab report, and the proposal. The technical description is text that describes any object through its constituent parts and its function. For my technical description, I did a keyboard vacuum that I had reverse engineered in one of my previous ME classes. The lab report is a text that involves conducting an experiment that is replicable and testable. My lab report involves testing the viscosity of a series of fluids and the effect it has on the velocity of a falling ball. The proposal project involved us working in groups of four in order to compose a document that offered a solution to a current local issue that we face. My group focused on improving the efficiency of garbage trucks in New York City.

It is in this class that I first heard the words “rhetorical situation.” The rhetorical situation is composed of: audience, purpose, exigence, genre, stance, and media. I knew what these of these aspects were individually, but I never actually had the opportunity to put them into practice. Throughout the papers that we had to write, I did not necessarily portray the rhetorical situation as well as I could have. The two aspects that I know that I lacked in were audience and stance. I wrote all of the papers for this class with the intention to inform which was not incorrect, but it lacked the substance needed for each particular paper.

This was the first class I had ever taken that was labeled as a hybrid class. Initially, I found it difficult because I was not sure how much I should write or if the ideas that I wanted to

portray got portrayed through the screen. However, as the semester went on, I became more comfortable with leaving my peers comments on their work through Blackboard.

Audience

The audience is typically the person or people who you are writing for and who you want to read your work. The audience for each assignment that we had changed depending on the subject that we were writing about. The thing that I noticed about my papers is that I was able to narrow down the audience with each paper that we had to write. This was particularly evident in the technical description I did of the keyboard vacuum. In my reflection paper for that assignment I had written that “the audience of this paper is most likely going to be high schoolers and college students who own laptops and are most likely going to use the mini vacuum. It could also be geared towards engineers who want to improve upon the current design of the mini vacuum.” Even though I wrote this in my reflection paper, I realized that when I reread the paper, I wrote without a specific audience in mind. I did not take into consideration how each audience member would react to reading the technical description. The paper could be improved by adding the fact that competitors of the brand of the keyboard vacuum that I did my technical description on would also be potential audience members.

Purpose

Purpose is defined as the reason for writing a particular piece. Much like audience, the purpose changes with each subsequent paper that we were assigned. I knew what the purpose of each paper was supposed to be, but I feel that it was not conveyed in the manner that it was supposed to be. I felt that I struggled with this particularly with my lab report. All the lab reports that I had written about previously were meant to inform more than anything. I took this same

approach to writing this lab report. As such, I felt that my purpose was weak as I had written, “My purpose for writing this lab report was to learn about a topic that I will have to take a class on by my junior year of college.” The purpose I had was the same for my other two projects and was intended to inform rather than convince an audience of a certain perspective. Thus, after taking this class, I know that I will need to consider this portion especially before writing any future papers.

Exigence

Exigence is the thing or event that makes us write. Since this goes hand in hand with purpose, this was a topic that was also not well reflected in my papers. I knew what the exigence was in the reflection papers, but I did not portray how passionate I was until the reflection paper. Still, in the reflection paper portion of the assignment my exigence felt weak. I feel that this is evident in the last assignment that we had done in the class. In the proposal project document, I wrote that “The exigence of this paper is that the current garbage trucks are inefficient. Thus, this affects everyone’s commute and causes inconveniences to the daily commute and daily schedules.” I now understand that I should spend more time discussing my exigence because in the past papers that I had written, I was mostly concerned with getting it done as efficiently as possible. Thus, exigence was not as elaborated on as much as it should have been.

Genre

In this class we had three genres that we needed to cover which are: the technical description, the lab report, and the proposal. Each genre had its own specific aspect and I feel that I was able to properly match those standards to the extent that was required of me. I think

that this was particularly evident in the lab report that I had written because I have a lot of experience writing lab reports, and I know what the general body looks like.

Stance

Stance is the opinion or argument that the author is taking when they are presenting information. Stance is not something that I was able to properly portray in the three papers that we needed to write for this class. This was reflected in the proposal project because in the reflection portion of the essay, I had written that “**My stance on this topic is that while our current methods for sanitation are working, they are not efficient. As such, we need to develop a more efficient solution for tackling the garbage issue in New York City.**” This stance in itself is not particularly strong if I wanted to convince the commissioner to fund our project. In addition, this was not necessarily shown through the paper which had the intention of informing and did not have the aspect of arguing the stance that I intended it to.

Media

In developing these papers, we had to use different media to present our data. This is especially evident in the proposal project. We needed to present our information in two separate ways: print and an oral presentation with a PowerPoint. When we gave the PowerPoint presentation, we could not be as detailed as we were in the proposal document. As such, our content changed to account for the different ways we were presenting the same information and to whom we were presenting to.

Course Learning Outcome #1

“acknowledge your and others' range of linguistic differences as resources, and draw on those resources to develop rhetorical sensibility”

How we plan to do it

- Incinerator will be built comprising of:
 - Main Chamber
 - Gas Chamber
 - Clean out port
 - Igniter

Figure 1: A screenshot of a PowerPoint slide included in the oral presentation of the proposal project showing the slide of how we plan on changing the garbage truck.

This learning outcome was particularly evident in the proposal project that we needed to do as we were working in groups of 4. Due to this, we had an amalgamation of different perspectives and writing styles. As such, we needed to find a way to cohesively write the paper so that it made sense to us and to our audience. We then needed to do this same process for the PowerPoint presentation that accompanied the oral presentation we would have to give to the whole class. In the proposal document, we spent at least two pages discussing all of the individual parts of the garbage truck and how we plan on implementing an incinerator. However, when we presented, we merely have four bullet points that are three words or less, that make it as clear as possible what we plan on doing. We did not want to confuse our audience with any unnecessary words or explanations on the actual slides.

Course Learning Outcome #2

“enhance strategies for reading, drafting, revising, editing, and self-assessment”

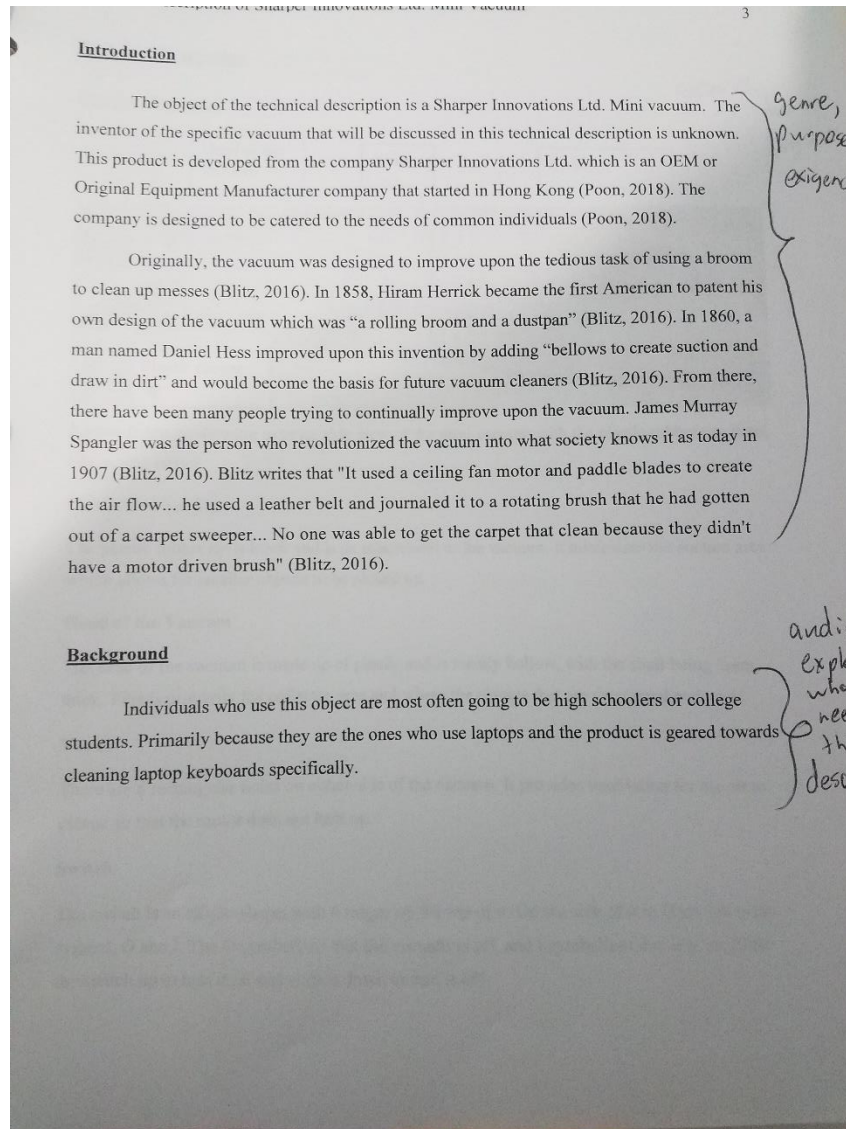


Figure 2: Picture showing a peer’s comment on the technical description assignment.

For the technical description assignment, I had encouraged that my peers annotate the work the paper. When I received feedback on my technical description, what I first did was annotate my work. This way, I could fully mark up my paper and point out mistakes that I

needed to edit for the final draft. Figure 2 shows comments that a peer, Erica, has made on my paper. With her comments I was able to identify what aspects of the rhetorical situation were present in certain parts of the paper and then re-read those portions to see if they fulfilled the aspects of the rhetorical situation.

Course Learning Outcome #3

“negotiate your own writing goals and audience expectations regarding conventions of genre, medium, and rhetorical situation”

Personally, I know that as a writer I struggle with being too wordy. I tend to overwrite and be repetitive when I am explaining a particular idea or even an essay. For the papers that we had to write, there was a page limit on both the actual content of the paper itself, and then the reflection paper. Due to this, I felt that I was restricted on how much I could write, and what I even could write. As such, a lot of the papers I had written were not developed as they could have. This was evident in my lab report because I had written that “**However, writing this lab report in this format has made me warier of essential information that I should include, and cutting out anything that is irrelevant.**” In my lab report I knew that I needed to be more conscientious on how much information I put in. Since I was focusing too much on not overwriting, I forgot about the rhetorical situation.

Course Learning Outcome #4

“develop and engage in the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes”

Assessment Data Report Format

Title of Lab: Exploring the relationship between the viscosity of a liquid and the terminal velocity of a spherical object flowing through
it.

Student: Chanel Sophia Macapagal

Peer Reviewer: Nicky Jiang

Read and refer to the rubric above in order to understand the criteria used in reviewing student lab reports.

Make selections based on the rubric criteria and your assessment of your peer's lab work.

On a separate sheet of paper, type a substantive report (at least 4-5 paragraphs) on your reasoning for each category selection on the chart below.

Attach both the completed rubric and report to Blackboard in your designated group.

Item from rubric	Score Selections			
	1	2	3	4
Abstract/Summary				X
Introduction			X	
Experimental procedure				X
Results: data, figures, graphs, tables, etc.				X
Discussion		X		
Conclusions				X
Spelling, grammar, sentence structure			X	
Appearance and formatting				X
APA method				X

Figure 3: Screenshot of a rubric used by a peer to grade my lab report

We actively engaged in peer review throughout this entire process. This is where the hybrid portion of the class was used in. We would post our drafts on blackboard, and then our peers would then comment on them. I found this process to have both pros and cons. One of the pros that online peer review had was that it allowed for an easier way to gain access to our peers. We knew where they would post, and they had a deadline that they needed to meet. However, one of the cons was that it made the peer review process less personal. We did not get to see our peers as they read through our writing. Moreover, in the process we filled out rubrics as a way to grade one another and then leave paragraphs explaining our rubric choices. This is evident through our peer review process in the lab report assignment as shown in figure 1. My peer, Nicky left me a series of short paragraphs in which he explains why he graded me the way that

he did. However, as this was an online peer review, some of his comments were not as specific as I would have liked them to be because he did not point to a particular paragraph or sentence that needed revision.

Course Learning Outcome #5

“engage in genre analysis and multimodal composing to explore effective writing across disciplinary contexts and beyond”

This was done for every assignment that we had done. The multimodal media was particularly evident in the proposal project aspect of it. We had the same content on both the proposal document that we submitted and on the PowerPoint slides that accompanied the oral presentation that we gave out to the class. However, what differed was how we presented that information. We tended to be brief in the amount of words present on our PowerPoint slides because we wanted our audience to be more engaged in learning information that we gave them.

Course Learning Outcome #6

“formulate and articulate a stance through and in your writing”

Stance is an idea that I understood on a standard level. However, it is something that I struggled to apply to the papers that I had written. This is because for all the papers that I had written, I wrote them with the intention that they were informing the audience of a certain point and not necessarily giving my opinion on it. I think that this is immediately evident in the technical description that I had written. The stance that I had for that paper is that “**the vacuum is actually an essential everyday object that has made our lives significantly easier. However, despite the fact that it makes our lives easier, we actually have not improved upon early designs of it by much.**” In this initial paper, I did not develop a stance on the keyboard vacuum because I

was not sure what I was attempting to convince the audience. I had written it with the intention that it was going to inform the audience of how to use the keyboard vacuum rather than attempting to convince them of the benefits of using it.

Course Learning Outcome #7

“practice using various library resources, online databases, and the Internet to locate sources appropriate to your writing projects”

PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVING SANITATION

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Figure 4: screenshot showing the sources present in the “References” page of the proposal document

Our class had a library class in which we went to the library to learn how to use the CCNY database to search for scholarly articles for our research papers. We found different databases and also how to be able to use Boolean search phrases. This research was particularly evident in the proposal project, as we had multiple sources that were scholarly articles.

Course Learning Outcome #8

”Strengthen your source use practices (including evaluating, integrating, quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing, synthesizing, analyzing, and citing sources)”

This was something that I actively had to look out for in all the papers that I was writing. It was deciding between quoting or paraphrasing. It all depended on if I wanted the author’s voice to be heard more or my opinion and voice more. This was especially evident in the proposal project that we worked on. This was the project that required the most extensive research in comparison to all the other assignments that we had worked on as a group. As such, my group and I looked at multiple research articles. As we tried to integrate those sources into the paper, we had to decide how we were going to do so. In the end we ended up summarizing most of the research that we had because they were primarily statistics. This is shown in the proposal document when my group had written “Sanitation workers are exposed to 11 different *Penicillium* species, and on average the genus constituted 84% of each worker’s fungal exposure (Madsen, Alwan, Ørberg, Uhrbrand, & Jørgensen, 2016).”

Conclusion

The genres and skills that were taught in this class are particularly important to my understanding of the type of work that will be expected in my future. The rhetorical situation is an important aspect to any type of writing that I will have to do as engineer. As such, I know that as a writer, I will have to place more emphasis on these aspects as I write more papers. Overall, I feel that I have grown as a writer because I am more aware of habits I have as a writer, and the weaknesses that I have when it comes to writing papers in the engineering field.