

**Self-Assessment Essay**

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ENGL 21007: Writing for Engineering

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December 15, 2020

When first entering my English 21007 writing about engineering course, I was filled with a sense of dread. Not only was my first semester of college cut down by a global pandemic, but my usually favorite topic of english warped into what I had originally thought to be a super boring class of writing instruction manuals and lab reports. One of the only things I enjoyed about school, writing creatively, would be taken from me. I would be turned into a robotic shell of my formal writing self. However, as the first couple tuesdays and thursdays began to pass by, I found love in the stead of dread. It was actually fun to write more algorithmically, and I quite enjoyed the challenge that this new form of writing posed! Although I was certainly not the best at this type of diction, I feel that I have achieved seven of the eight Course Learning Objectives through work on my lab report assignment, technical description, and group “Shark Tank” project, and have added a previously unknown writing style to my english arsenal.

Firstly, through my experience writing my lab report assignment, I fulfilled the sixth, seventh and eighth course learning objectives of articulating a stance through my comparison of two different lab reports, practicing how to use a database to find lab reports, and strengthening my source use practices by annotating both lab reports fully. The actual assignment of this writing piece was to compare two different lab reports based on their eight basic components: title, abstract, introduction, material and methods, results, discussion, conclusion, and references. I used the CCNY online library of databases to find two lab reports that interested me. At first, I was concerned about which exact databases to use and whether the lab reports I found would be usable. However, as I continued to look around in the online databases, I found that Gale's Academic OneFile was very useful as it contained almost any topic you could think of and divided every writing piece into categories such as scientific reports or books, which made it super simple to find reliable sources for my assignment. Also, as I wanted to study both a

traditional scientific lab report from a field like biology and a more psychological or social lab report, I found that searching through the list of databases themselves led me to a specialized database called the American Psychological Society Journals, which contained only very interesting psychological lab reports, allowing me to find more specific psychological topics. I then annotated the two lab reports that I picked out—one on cochlear implants and the other on a new way to heal brain cells—focusing on how each author wrote each section of their lab reports. I had never really annotated as in depth as was required in this assignment, so this new experience definitely strengthened my writing skills. By both slightly summarizing and pointing out the peculiarities of each lab report, I annotated each report fully and was then easily able to write a full report on the similarities and differences on each lab reports' specific sections. Both quoting and paraphrasing, I incorporated both lab reports in my writing assignment. In this way, I feel that I used both sources quite expertly, fulfilling the eighth course learning objective. Finally, I was able to articulate how different each lab report was using my annotations and formed what I would call a strong argument. I had not written a comparison essay in quite a while, so I had to refresh myself on the specific comparison words and diction. However, I feel that I analyzed each report sufficiently and came up with the conclusion that, although lab reports all have a very rigid structure, there is still room for large variations, especially between lab reports of different fields of study.

Continuing to satisfy the course learning objectives, specifically course learning objective number three, I evolved my writing skills further through the technical description assignment. I have never written a technical description before, sticking mostly to literature-based or creative writing, and was very apprehensive at first. Exciting was definitely not the word I would use to describe myself before diving into this assignment. However, I found that, although this type of

writing was slightly more boring than other english pieces, the differences of this genre or medium from my previous writing made it enjoyable for me. Like a new toy or place, I was intrigued with how different this type of “algorithmic” writing was and had fun exploring how I can still put my voice into this assignment. I achieved this mostly by shifting the sentence structures in my writing, such as when I started my outer body description with “...Composed of white matte plastic...”. In this sense, I negotiated my own writing goals of keeping this project fun and interesting with the audience’s expectation of a more robotic style of writing.

Being that I come from a creative writing background, I was able to use my differences to my peer’s writing style to satisfy three more course learning objectives of drawing on the linguistic differences between peers during group work, developing a more social aspect to writing, enhancing strategies for writing through peer-review, and using multimodal composition through both a writing piece and presentation in my group “Shark Tank” project about a made-up invention named the “Auto-Trimmer”. Before this class, I also gained experience planning logistics for a large scale eagle scout project in which I created a pollinator garden. Thus, when it came time to divy up the work in this project, I chose to work on planning the logistics of our invention, from the time it took to come up with the innovation to the first day of production. My other group members, Santiago and Adrain, had their own skill sets that contributed greatly to the project. Santiago, being a great writer and researcher, decided to cover writing the introduction and conclusion, in which he had to cover the entire history of hair trimmers. Then, Adrian, being both good at graphic design and writing technically, made an illustration of the auto-trimmer and completed the technical description describing the invention. With all of us working together at what we are best suited to accomplish, this project was easier than any other group project I have ever done. Also, as we gave each other our cell phone

numbers, we were able to easily come up with a schedule for completing the project that made finishing the writing and recorded presentation much easier. I believe that our write-up was further made better by the fact that we created a shared google document, allowing us to all peer-review each other's work and fix all the errors that I usually forget to remedy. Finally, as the project called for both a written section and presentation, I transformed my writing into easy-to-understand charts to facilitate understanding of the logistics associated with the "Auto-Trimmer". By then transferring these charts to google slides, I was able to effortlessly create a presentation that displays all that I have written, while also keeping the speech short and concise. I also included these charts in the write-up as chart 1 and chart 2.

Throughout the course of this class, I discovered the wonders of technical writing and fulfilled all of the eight course learning objectives through work on my lab report assignment, technical description of a mechanical keyboard, and group "Shark Tank" project. Now, at the end of my time in this class, I can say that the fears of boring robotic writing were all unfounded, as I learned how to have fun while writing in a more engineer-like manner. I can not wait for the next step in my stem-based writing journey! Thank you to Professor Jacobson for starting my passion for this type of writing and helping me understand that english can always be fun!