

Self-Assessment

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for Writing in the Sciences

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I think oral traditions are the oldest known way of human communication in which information is transmitted orally from one generation to another. Multiliteracy is the ability to identify, interpret, create, and communicate meaning across a variety of visual, oral, corporal, musical and alphabetical forms of communication. Beyond a linguistic notion of literacy, multiliteracy involves an awareness of the social, economic and wider cultural factors that frame communication. Oral tradition is multiliteracy in action because family members use multiple forms of communication, apart from language, to preserve information, memories, and knowledge held in common by a group of people. Therefore, linguistic differences are conducive to rhetorical sensitivity. I practiced forms of communication beyond literacy which showed me that language is not prescriptive. It is evolving and enriched by our individual backgrounds and experiences.

Throughout this fundamental writing course, I also practiced writing different types of essays. Due to this practice I was able to enhance strategies for reading, drafting, revising, editing, and self-assessment. When comparing my first and last essays, I noticed improvement in my writing and organization of ideas. As I practiced writing, I felt more comfortable making mistakes and revising my drafts. This process helped me learn from my mistakes and become a better communicator.

Unfortunately, negotiating my own writing goals and audience expectations regarding conventions of genre, medium, and rhetorical situation was the most challenging objective for me. I had to write and rewrite the technical descriptions many times to add enough images, simplify the language, and make the format as close to the examples as possible—even by changing the page layout from regular to narrow margins. I developed and engaged in the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes during the lectures spent doing peer review.

I also improved my public speaking skills, and participated in multiple collaborative projects, especially when making the final presentation and writing the research paper on Eutrophication. I think we did some genre analysis and multimodal composing to explore effective writing across disciplinary contexts by writing different kinds of papers. For example, the summary and response papers took a completely different approach than the annotated bibliographies. It took me a long time to understand the difference between those two formats. Fortunately, I had time to fix them for this Portfolio.

I formulated and articulated a stance when writing the responses to the NYT articles, and scientific controversy paper. After taking a stance I practiced using various library resources, online databases, and the Internet to find sources that provided sufficient and current evidence to back my claims. This part was specially time consuming for my research controversy paper because I started with three sources and at the end they filled almost two pages. Finally, I enjoyed the different topics that were covered in the readings and class discussions.