

Literacy History Project

1. How do you define “good” writing?

I consider good writing to be a skill that is gained through constant practice. According to the readings assigned at the beginning of this course, “good writing” requires working on drafts. Drafts inspire the writer to get the best pieces out of their work. From personal experience, the best writing pieces I have written come from extensive writing drafts. In terms of academics, I believe professors grade papers heavily on grammar. I tend to get points off my paper due to grammatical errors. This is why I do not consider my writing to be “good” writing because even though I proofread my paper several times; as a bilingual person, I do not have the ability to fully correct my grammatical mistakes. Also, one of the skills that make good writing is the ability to convey a specific purpose based on the context of the prompt. Once the purpose is identified, the reader will have a better understanding of the paper and will add flow to the writing as well.

2. What are your strengths as a writer (non-academic)?

As a non-academic writer, I consider my writing to be at a proficient level. Not taking in consideration my tendency to make grammatical mistakes, I do have the skills to convey a specific purpose in my writing. Over the last few years, I have written very few non-academic papers and therefore it is difficult for me to analyze my own non-academic skills as a writer.

3. What are your strengths as an academic writer?

In my academic writing, I am skilled at using the proper vocabulary depending on the audience. In emails sent to professors, I use a different vocabulary compared to the emails I sent to friends. One of my priorities as a writer is to answer the prompt with enough supporting evidence. Even though grammatical errors take away points from my paper, the overall content of the paper is very clear to the reader.

4. If you are multilingual, how does your proficiency in another language(s) affect your reading and writing in English?

I believe one of the reasons I continue having difficulties reading and writing in English is the fact that I am a non-native speaker. I was raised reading and writing in Spanish and even though I learned English at a very young age I have learned that certain restrictions apply depending on the language being used. English writing requires grammatical accuracy and direct ideas. However, in Spanish, I express my thoughts with more flexibility which helps me develop the purpose and content of my paper in a more effective way.

5. Describe some positive and negative reading experiences + outcomes (academic and/or non-academic).

There was a point in my academic life where I was really comfortable reading and writing in English. However, that changed when in one of my classes in elementary school I was bullied

for having an accent. I became conscious on the way I spoke and started doubting my writing. At one point, I tried my best to never participate in class even though I knew the answers to many of the questions asked. This experience had a great impact in my academic and social life. Even in college, I still struggle to be a bit more outgoing than usual. Over the years, I have used writing as a way to communicate my thoughts but even then, I do not feel comfortable having other people read my work unless it is the professor or the person grading my paper. I feel that others might judge me for my poor grammar.

6. Describe some positive and negative writing experiences + outcomes (academic and/or non-academic).

At the end of my first year here at UC Davis, I discovered the library bookstore near the Memorial Union. I decided to get a fictional book, sat down, and started reading. Once I started reading, I read for approximately an hour and 30 minutes. It was one of the most enjoyable moments I have experienced after a long and stressful academic year. After that day, I push myself to go to the bookstore once a day and read for at least 30 minutes. I have noticed that after starting this new habit, my academic writing has improved immensely. I believe I have gained a better idea of correct sentence structure and creativeness. Even though I do not do this very often, I try to do the same with my writing. Usually, I try to write in my journal once every week or two weeks but it always depends on the situation that I am in. I still struggle to write in non-academic scenarios.

7. List your reading and writing habits outside of school.

Every quarter I take English and Spanish courses where I have to to read in English and Spanish. When I read, I makes sure I do it at the library or in my room where I know I will not get distracted. Most of the time I tend to go over my assigned readings once and then I go back to analyze the text in more depth. If the readings are heavy in content or if the font size is small, I tend to take breaks.

8. List the steps you usually take in your complete writing process.

I first start by understanding what is expected from me as a writer. Depending on the purpose of my paper, I decide the form most that is most appropriate for my audience. After working on extensive research and gathering enough evidence I start working on my thesis. I spend most of my writing process in my thesis since it important in order reach my purpose. Having a strong argument that conveys the purpose in an effective way, is necessary in order to develop a strong conclusion. Also, as a writer the beginning and ending do a great job in capturing the reader's attention.

9. What do you wish you were more proficient at in reading? Why is this important to you?

I wish I was fluent in reading because this skill is necessary in order to communicate with others. Reading to others and for it to be effective, I should read with confidence and clarity. Even though I feel more comfortable writing my thoughts, being able to express my thoughts out loud is a more effective way to get my viewpoints across.

10. What do you wish you were more proficient at in composing? Why is this important to you?

As mentioned in my previous comment, I want to improve my grammar flaws. Knowing how to write properly is very convenient in any chosen career. The overall ability to communicate with another person is essential to have successful outcomes.

11. List reading and writing experiences you wish you'd had before college.

I wish I had taken courses that had a brief overview of the basics in grammar and a communication course that would allow me to practice my reading out loud in class. Since I believe that practice makes perfect, I think that taking courses that covered topics where I lack practice in would have made it easier for me to improve my English. Also, I wish I would have read more growing up because I would then have had an extensive vocabulary that I would apply in my writing.

12. What types of writing do you expect to do in college?

In college, I expect to do a lot of academic writing compared to non-academic writing. As a Human Development undergraduate, I expect to do extensive research that will result in the production of academic research papers. By next year, I will be taking mostly upper division classes and will be expected to write in an advanced level. For this reason, I decided to take UWP 1 because I wanted to develop a strong set of skills for future writing projects.

13. Based on your answers to these questions, what goals do you need to set for yourself in order to improve as a reader and composer in the next year?

In order to improve as a reader and composer I should start to read and write more often. Reading will expand my vocabulary knowledge which I will then apply to my writing. Also, since English is my second language, academic reading more will help me familiarize with advanced sentence structures and creativeness that is sometimes required in academic writing. Also, it is most likely that reading more often will introduce me to different styles of writing that I could then apply to my own writing style. Noticing the differences between fictional writing and non-fictional writing will help me see their similarities and differences which I will then combine into my own writing.