

# Reflection Letter

How does this assignment differ from the ones done in the past? Was this beneficial? If no, then why not?

The assignment “Composing Messages in Multiple Genres” is very special. I was surprised by the idea of this assignment, composing and expressing the same message with different kinds of texts and visuals. The genre is not restricted to anything. It can be any kind of text or visuals or something else. Besides that, there is also no restriction on the choice of the topic. Usually, previous writing class assignments I have done all target one subject, or even a specific topic, for example, using the materials of English education I have read in the class to identify a conversation between scholars and compare these ideas. I never had a writing assignment that not only accepts visuals, but also emphasizes expressions of visuals or media other than texts. In my experience, this assignment is more like a design assignment, which is to convey the message by various media.

However, I don't think it is not in the scope of writing. I hold the belief that the concept of writing is to communicate. Every kind of media and genre has its own use under the circumstance. I am glad to see that I can have a good practice other than traditional writing which is more common nowadays.

## Why did I choose my specific genres?

Because of no restriction on the choice of the topic, I started to brainstorm the topics I am interested in and familiar with. My intended major is more on science. I also had a one-year training in chemistry. From my daily observation, lab safety is very important, but students usually feel bored with the traditional approach of textbooks. Also, many do not pay attention to the pre-lab with careless reading on the lab manual and instruction. This is why I decided to take an experimental approach to make pre-lab and chemical safety more interesting. This experimental approach is gamification. By realizing the idea of gamification of chemical safety, I made the main product,

a board game named “|Safe⟩ + |Dead⟩”. This board game is meant to be played in the section of pre-lab to promote the awareness of chemical safety.

Here, to illustrate the concept of this board game, I use several different genres. The first genre is simply the direct visualization of this board game. It is a picture to illustrate this whole board game. I chose this as the first, because I want to give the audience a first impression before going deep into the specific rules of this game. The second genre is the core of this board game, the game instruction. It describes the process and the spirit of this game using the style of an “evil” character. This genre is essential to construct a game. The third genre is a Twitter post. This Twitter post serves as an advertisement with a short message. It is to advertise this board game and also its idea on a public platform. The fourth genre is two posters. It is meant to be printed out to present the ideas in an exhibition. It includes an abridged version of the game instruction to let the audience learn more about the concept of this game.

Do the genres I chose differ in nature? If so, how?

Most of the genres I mentioned are different in nature. For example, the first one, the simple visualization of this game, cannot describe much about the rules of this game, which is the main job of the second genre, the game instruction. On the other hand, this long game instruction may not be interesting or suitable for fast screen-scroll reading, the conceptual picture can give a direct impression to the audience.

Do I feel that some of the genres I chose were closely related?  
How would I have changed this?

However, There are two genres very similar to each other and closely related here. It is the first conceptual visual and the last one poster. It is also pointed out by a peer reviewer. I admit that they may be similar because they share many elements and they both are images. However, they are for different purposes. I would choose the first conceptual visual if only one picture is allowed to introduce the idea of this board game, because of its simplicity. The poster seems to be a superset of the first one. However, because it is a

relatively more complex genre, I can put more elements and text descriptions into it. It is designed with the consideration that the audience may spend more time reading through if they are interested by the first visual.

How did the impact of my message change from genre to genre? What was the most vs least impactful message? Why?

Comparing the impact between different messages, I would say the impact of the visuals is larger than the impact of the texts, because visuals are always easier to catch eyes compared to plain texts. Because it is right now a digital time with most people using phone apps to get the information, there is not much time for a user to pay on each item when he/she scrolls down the screen. Taking the time of the attention from the audience into consideration, visuals are the only way to survive. The long paragraph of game instructions prevents the concept from spreading, even though it is the most accurate description among all the genres. The poster I made is trying to balance between the visual impact and the accuracy. I am not sure if it would work well in real life. It is usually hard to create something to have these two benefits at the same time.

What was the biggest challenge in this assignment?

The biggest challenge in this assignment is the plan and the work on visuals. Although I had a vague outline on how to begin, it is after I write out the specific rules of this game in the game instruction that I have a clear understanding of how this game would work and what visuals of items I need to create. As a result, besides the board itself, I create the stickers and the question cards. It took a much longer time than I expected. It is not easy to gain some iconic image and visuals on chemical safety. I create the whole visuals based on the warning signs (GHS) and the diamond (NFPA 704) as two iconic symbols. They are in the public domain and I got them from Wikipedia. (Special thanks to Wikipedia here.)

If I had more time on this assignment, what would I do differently?

Due to my availability of time, although several artworks were made, the theme and the elements might be boring. I do not have time to extend it or use a custom color scheme. The icon of the game is also made in a hurry. The name might be small to notice. If there is more time, all these artworks can be polished with a better plan.

What was the most significant lesson I learnt during this assignment?

When I was writing this assignment and trying to use different genres, I felt that writing multiple genres is more like playing different roles in one action. It is prominent when I write the game instructions. When I ponder the character and effect I want to achieve. I gained some ideas from a background storyline of a coding assignment. To give myself some thoughts on writing the game instructions, I checked some famous board games, for example, Taboo. To achieve the effects, I need to mimic the style of an odd “evil” but kind in heart character. There are some conventions I think are essential to build the character and the genre, for example, I never use “I” or “me” throughout the game instruction, but use the name instead.

In this process, I actually enjoy writing the game instructions. It is a lot of fun. I need to come up with many jokes. Maybe some of them are out of my poor sense of humor. It is also a distinguishing experience for me to write this game instruction. In this writing, I indeed feel that the fun of it motivates me to continue on writing.

How will this assignment carry into other classes?

From these lessons I have learned, I feel that the joy of writing is the most important thing to support me to write. I hope I can carry it into other writing classes. The process of composing a brand new genre, the game instructions, gives me some experience of how to write a new genre that I have not seen before. This will definitely benefit me for my future class.

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