

ENC 1101 Assignment 2: Writing Self-Study

Objective:

Observe, study, then understand, analyze, and communicate information about your own writing habits and practices.

How-to

There are two options for this paper. One is about the writing work you do over the course of a week, and the second is about the process that happens as you write a single essay. The purpose of writing this essay (both Option A and Option B) is to understand how and why you write, and if there are any changes that you might make to your writing process to improve your writing outcomes. Both of these options are very challenging, but we will spend a lot of time in class working on small steps of the assignment.

Option A: Writing Practices Self-Study

Write

The goal with option A is to study your writing practices. In addition to your regular reading journals for the class, you'll read and compose journal responses for an additional reading in Chapter two: either the Tierney and Pearson article or the Berkentotter article.

Study your habits and practices

In this project you will consider your writing habits over time--over the length of an entire week. As you move through the week, try to take note of every time you are doing writing/reading "work," whether it is for school, for a job, for fun or family. The aim here is to see if there are times when you work best; situations where you do certain kinds of work, and how you feel about your own writing work.

Gather Data: How-To

For a one week period, keep a journal that records, on a regular period (say, hourly) the writing activities you are doing. An observation log might look something like what is shown below. As you observe, you might find that you wish to add columns. Your observation log should aim to gather a lot of information, but it does not necessarily need to be identical to the one I'm sharing here.

(Date)	Name of activity (What were you doing?)	Intensity (how hard were you working/ concentrating/thing?) 1-5 scale with 5 being the most work	Affect (how did you feel about the work?, on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the best feeling)	Productivity (how much do you feel like you did, on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the most)	Media (on what kind of media were you working? i.e. laptop, mobile phone, paper, etc)	Was this task completed without interruption? If no, what were interrupting factors?
9:00 a.m.						
10:00 a.m.	read bio textbook	4	3	3	textbook	no; phone call and texts

11:00 a.m.	Writing first draft of bio paper		1	1		Yes. (Was in library with headphones).
12:00 p.m.	read article for ENC1101	5	2	3	computer screen (PDF)	facebook; gchat; email

If you create a chart like this you might consider adding one more column for notes that can't be encapsulated by the categories above. Or, you might simply jot additional notes to the side of your observation chart. You want to have enough information to analyze and draw conclusions about your own writing habits, so create an observation chart that allows you to gather enough information to do that.

The data that you have gathered about your writing process is due at the beginning of class on 2/17/2012. Start this project early!

Study/Analyze:

When you bring your data to class on 2/17/2012, we'll talk about how to use that information to draw interesting and enlightening conclusions about your writing processes, and what you and other readers might learn from your findings.

Option B: Portrait of a Writer and the Writing Process, or the Autoethnography.

Write

First, you will read, then respond to one additional article in Chapter 2. First, you'll read the Tierney and Pearson article that begins on page 174. Then you'll write a response to questions 1 and 7 in the "Questions for discussion and journaling" section after the essay (pages 188-189).

Transcribe

However, you will write these responses using the talk-aloud protocol. As you write these responses and talk through your thoughts while writing, you will video record yourself. After recording your writing process, you will transcribe (type a transcript of) everything you said as you wrote, using the think-aloud protocol. Try to record everything, especially those actions or words that you think may be off topic or not quite perfect. The idea here is to capture everything that you do as you write. You will then go back and watch the video, and transcribe (write down) everything that was being said, including space fillers like "uhms" and "Ahhhs." **Double space this transcription, and bring it to class on 2/17/2012.**

Study/ Analyze

When you bring your transcription to class, we will develop a code by which you can mark up your transcription (you'll see examples of this in our unit readings). You'll use this code to analyze your writing process. You'll use the information drawn from your coding and analysis to present your information to the class in the manner described below.

Assignment 2 Deliverable, applies to Options A and B

(This is what you turn in on 2/22/2012):

For either option, you will need to present your findings to the class. You may do this in the form of a typed paper, as in the last assignment, or you may choose another format. You should present your findings in an engaging way, that demonstrates the analysis and critical thinking you have done as you studied yourself as a writer. When you bring this information together in the final project, you'll need to organize and compose the assignment as serious academic inquiry. Many of you will find that the CARS method described at the beginning of the book is a good organizational strategy if you decide to present this as a traditional paper.

The final project may be a written essay, a blog, a video (with written script), or an as-yet undetermined genre/format. If you choose to use a nontraditional format (anything other than a typed paper) that decision should be based on a belief and argument that another format would enhance your ability to communicate the results of your self-study. If there is a format in which you would like to present your findings but you are not sure if it will be acceptable, please just consult with me before the due date. Office hours would be a good opportunity to talk about this project.

Evaluation. You will be evaluated on the presence and quality of the following characteristics of your self-study project. Your project should:

- Ask a specific question
- Have a clear thesis (perhaps the answer to the question)
- Support the thesis with evidence (here evidence largely comes from your own observations. You cannot get away with broad generalizations about your writing habits in either option. Doing that will result in a D or F grade on your assignment).
- Demonstrate critical thinking and analysis about your writing process.
- Integrate or dialogue with some of the ideas you have been encountering in this class about writing processes (this will require internal citation, which we will discuss in class)
- Consider and discuss how your self-study and the results might be beneficial to someone that is not you (this is the so what? Including and beyond any help this may be to you, why does this matter?) A less interested classmate or peer might phrase this more bluntly: "Why should I care?"
- Correct internal and end citation. All sources must be cited using MLA style.

Due Date: 2/22/2012 (This will be a workshop day, so a post-workshop revision will also be due soon after).