

Jonathan Lopez

Writing for Engineers

Elisabeth von Uhl

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The Theory of Writing

What is the Theory of Writing and why does it matter? Does it have one solid definition or is it something fluid that always changes form? To me, the Theory of Writing is how one chooses to express themselves to the reader and always changes over time as one learns new skills and ways of writing. If one does not change their way of writing, then it will only hurt them in the long run. This is something I suffered from throughout a large part of my life as I feared criticism of my work. I always doubted my ability to write and seeing people point out my flaws just seem to amplify the lack of confidence. However, when I reached my senior year in high school, everything changed. My teacher showed me feedback is not something to fear and is something to embrace. Armed with this new mindset, I opened up more to reading feedback, and it started to change where now I was able to read flaws with a clearer mind. It changed from a feeling of shame to a feeling of embarrassment since I always thought how could I miss something so obvious.

Going into this class, I thought my writing would be good or at the very least average. This is because, at the end of my first semester, I went through another evolution of improving my writing. However that was further from the truth and it showed in our first written assignment, the Memo. I was confident in this assignment since it was a simple prompt and

would show my new strengths as a writer. The number of marks I have received on something so simple was comparable to an entire paper on a book. I received marks on my improper use of punctuation, sentence structure, and diction. Although I did not receive a failing grade, it was not something to be proud of. This gave me a reality check and served the biggest role in how I thought about my Theory of Writing. It showed me the importance of proofreading and alter my mindset. Before when getting feedback, I would get embarrassed so after this, I thought to myself, “Why not save myself the foolery and change now?”

Now having evolved again, I thought I knew what I needed to do in order to improve but forgot one important aspect, paper length. The new mindset I had of doing a quick revision worked on small assignments due to being able to catch any mistake easier. However, the longer the paper, the harder it is to spot these mistakes due to how much information is present. This is seen with the next assignment, The Rhetorical Analysis. In addition to information overload, I faced a new problem of information synthesis. This new concept was foreign to me as I did not do anything like it often. This manifests in my writing through a vague analysis of the information I made, which was only surface level. This was reflected in my grade where I received a worse grade than my first writing assignment. But I was not discouraged, I was actually a bit happy to get a bad grade since it tells me I have not reached my potential. I knew how to pace myself and with the feedback, I knew what to look for as my problems seemed to be the same.

I decided on the last project, the Technical Description, to hunker down and write this paper like my life depended on it. I carefully chose my topic and took my time to write each paragraph. I planned out mentally what each paragraph will be about and how will each

paragraph contribute to the overall topic the paper was about. I combined what I learned from my first assignment with how to plan longer papers with my second writing assignment to do this. This careful process of mine really polished my Theory of Writing and how I thought about it since I know the value of preparations and double-checking work. Not all the credit is mine though. I received a lot of help from peer edits who caught on to mistakes I didn't even know were mistakes. All this effort paid off where I finally received a grade I was happy about but not proud of. I still had some problems in my paper but they were not bad enough to make me disappointed in myself.

Even after all of this, my writing skills did not stop in the classroom. It extended out to the real world where I was helping my father do some major work. I am constantly writing emails or messages for him to either his boss, lawyer or anyone else due to him not knowing English well. Since those times are more intense, putting pressure on me to make sure I reach standards fit for these important people, I always enter a zen-like mode to make sure I do not fool around and imitate how I act if I were in that position. The real world can be unforgiving at times but I will be ready to face it with all the practice I've had and my Theory of Writing.