

My Writing Portfolio Essay

Introduction

This semester, I learned many things from all the assignments we did in class. At the beginning of the semester, I was not very confident in my writing skills because English is not my first language. Sometimes it was hard for me to organize my ideas, use grammar correctly, and explain my thoughts clearly. But after completing different essays, reflections, and projects, I feel like I improved a lot. Every assignment taught me something different, not only about writing, but also about myself, my goals, and the way I think. Some assignments were easier than others, but all of them helped me grow as a student. In this portfolio essay, I will explain the major assignments I completed and what I learned from each one.

Letter of Introduction

The first major assignment was my Letter of Introduction. In this assignment, I introduced myself, my background, and my future goals. I wrote about how I was born and raised in Senegal, West Africa, before moving to the United States. Moving to another country was a very big change in my life. I had to adapt to a new language, culture, and school system. At first it was difficult because I felt confused, but over time I became stronger and more confident. Writing this letter helped me think deeply about my life experiences and how they shaped me into the person I am today. In the letter, I also explained why I chose chemical engineering as my major. I wrote that I enjoy math, chemistry, and physics, and I want to use science to help people in the future. Growing up in Senegal, I saw problems like pollution, lack of clean water, and limited healthcare in some places. Seeing these issues made me interested in

engineering and science because I believe engineers can help improve people's lives. This assignment made me realize that my background and experiences are important because they motivate me to work hard and achieve my goals.

Technical Description Essay

Another important assignment was the Technical Description essay about smartphones. At first, I thought this assignment would be easy because everyone uses smartphones everyday. But once I started writing, I realized that explaining how a smartphone works is more difficult than it sounds. I had to go deeper than just saying people use smartphones for texting and calling. I had to explain the hardware, software, and communication systems that make smartphones function.

In my essay, I explained parts like the processor, touchscreen, and memory. I described the processor as the "brain" of the phone because it controls everything and helps apps run smoothly. I also explained how software like Android and iOS allows people to use apps and connect to the internet.

Writing this essay taught me how to explain technical ideas in simple words. Sometimes I struggled because I repeated ideas or forgot to explain details clearly, but overall this assignment helped me improve my organization skills.

Lab Report Analysis

The Lab Report Analysis assignment was one of the hardest projects for me. In this assignment, I analyzed two science texts and compared different parts of a lab report like the title, abstract, introduction, methods, results, and discussion. Before this assignment, I did not fully understand how scientific writing is organized. I knew some

basic sections like introduction and conclusion, but I did not know how important abstracts and methods sections are in lab reports.

While analyzing the two texts, I noticed that both had clear and descriptive titles. One text talked about photosynthesis and light intensity, while the other discussed water density and temperature. However, I also realized that both texts were missing a strong abstract section. This taught me that scientific writing follows a very specific structure. Scientists must explain their ideas step by step so readers can understand and repeat the experiment if needed.

This assignment was challenging because analyzing someone else's writing is harder than writing your own ideas. I had to carefully read the texts and think critically about what was missing and what was done well. I also learned how important details are in science writing. Even though this assignment was difficult, it helped me become more patient and more careful when reading and writing.

Group Project About NYC Subway CBTC

The group project about the NYC subway system and Communication-Based Train Control (CBTC) was another important assignment during the semester. In this project, my group focused on the problems with the NYC subway system, especially train delays caused by outdated signaling systems. We explained how CBTC can improve subway efficiency by using wireless communication and real-time train tracking. Working on this project taught me a lot about teamwork. At first, it was difficult for everyone in the group to organize our ideas because each person had a different opinion. Sometimes our writing sounded repetitive, and sometimes we did not agree on what information to include. But over time, we learned how to cooperate and combine

our ideas into one project. This experience showed me that teamwork is not always easy, but it can lead to better results when everyone contributes.

I also learned more about public transportation and technology. Before this project, I did not know much about subway signaling systems. Researching CBTC helped me understand how technology can solve real life problems and improve transportation for millions of people. This project also showed me that engineering is not only about machines, but also about helping society and improving people's daily lives.

Reflections on Major Assignments

Another important part of the semester was writing reflections for the major assignments. At first, I thought reflections were simple because they only asked about my opinions and experiences. But later I realized reflections are useful because they help students think deeply about what they learned and where they still need improvement. For example, after writing my smartphone essay, I reflected on how difficult it was to explain technology clearly. After the lab report analysis, I reflected on how scientific writing requires organization and attention to detail.

Writing reflections helped me understand my strengths and weaknesses as a writer. I realized that one of my strengths is determination because I continue trying even when writing is difficult. But I also noticed weaknesses like grammar mistakes, repetition, and sometimes unclear organization. These reflections motivated me to continue practicing and improving.

Essay on AI in the Future

We also completed an in-class essay about the future of AI. In this essay, I explained how artificial intelligence can help chemical engineers work more efficiently. I

wrote that AI can monitor data like temperature and pressure, prevent mistakes, and improve safety in factories. I also explained that AI should not replace humans completely because human knowledge and decisions are still important. This assignment helped me connect technology with my future career goals.

Where I See Myself in 10 Years

Another in-class essay focused on where I see myself in ten years. This assignment was personal because it made me think seriously about my future. I wrote that I hope to graduate with a chemical engineering degree and work in a company that focuses on medicine, energy, or environmental protection. I also wrote that I want to help both communities in the United States and people in Senegal. Writing this essay made my goals feel more realistic and motivated me to stay focused in school.

Peer Reviews

Finally, peer reviews also played an important role in my learning this semester. Reading other students' papers showed me different writing styles and ideas. It also helped me notice grammar mistakes and organization problems more easily. Sometimes it was difficult to give feedback because I did not always know what advice to give, but over time I became more comfortable. Peer reviews helped me understand that writing is a process and that everyone can improve with practice and feedback.

Conclusion

Overall, this semester helped me grow as a writer, student, and person. I learned how to organize essays, explain technical information, analyze scientific texts, and work with others in a group. I also learned more about myself, my future goals, and the importance of perseverance. Even though I still make grammar mistakes and

sometimes struggle with vocabulary, I know I improved a lot compared to the beginning of the semester. These assignments showed me that writing is not only about schoolwork, but also about communication, learning, and personal growth. I feel more confident now, and I believe I will continue improving in the future as I continue my education and work toward becoming a chemical engineer.