

# My Final Word

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English 1010

Salt Lake Community College – Fall 2011

December 9, 2011

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## Introduction

After several years of being out of school, I decided it was time to finally finish where I left off. One of the general requirements was English 1010. For some reason, I never got around to taking a college English course. It was finally time to brush up on my English. During my previous college experience I had used the APA writing style. I had never used MLA formatting so I was pretty confused when asked to write my papers using this style. However, it had been so long since I had written any college papers I decided it would be best to take my professor's advice and try my hand at MLA formatting. After making this decision, it was time to conquer the other obstacles in front of me.

Throughout the semester, I have experienced quite a few emotions: humor, frustration, admiration, and many more. Deciding what topic to choose for the reflection paper was perhaps the most difficult task regarding this paper. Brainstorming was a must in order to overcome the vast amounts of possibilities. After filling two pages in my notebook, I went back to select the easiest possibilities to write about. Those were the ideas which did not span across a long period of time. After the choices were selected, I began jotting down a few memories which stood out most for me. Afterwards, the selection process seemed to be quite a bit easier and decided on one topic to write about. The second difficult task was deciding how to write it. Should I write a prose or a narrative? After deciding to use a narrative approach, I began typing. After about an hour of typing, I managed to have approximately one and a half pages of writing. I was very please with my first draft when submitting it.

Shortly after the reflection paper was due, it was time to tackle the next paper: a visual analysis paper. Reading the requirements for the visual analyses paper, I decided to use Google's search engine for a print advertisement which perked my interest. After searching for a little

while, I came across an ad which was both visually and emotionally stimulating. This was an ad for the Australian Post posted on Ads of the World's website. Now that I had my advertisement selected, it was time to start laying out a foundation to begin my essay. Starting out with a blank sheet of paper, I sectioned it off with a few key ingredients: the ad's purpose, the use of artistic elements, and its effectiveness. After some time of scratching my head in frustration, I decided to just start typing the notes up. Reorganizing my notes into a somewhat comprehensible way, ideas finally started to flow. Once I had about two pages of type, I went back through the essay and began revising trying to connect my ideas into a more accurate flow of my thoughts. I learned it can be quite difficult to analyze media without becoming involved in the actual presentation itself.

Finally, it was time to conquer the beast: a research paper. Since my major is Computer Science, I wanted to research something that had controversy. I decided to research a different view of video games. How are video games beneficial to society? There have been many news reports and articles talking about the downside of video games, but I wanted to present a different approach. It was a very interesting experience which took into account all the previous papers and homework in the class and overall a satisfying experience. I found a lot of information regarding this topic, and for once I had a hard time cutting out information that was not absolutely necessary to get my point across.

Overall, it has been a great experience relearning what I had forgotten and feel much better about my writing skills as a whole. While experiencing frustration some of the time, I know the information I learned this semester will benefit me as I advance to technical writing. Where I'm sure there will be even more obstacles to overcome. However, I feel confident about my success.

## Reasonable Nervousness

So, here I am, standing in front of 25 other students about to present them with a marketing campaign launched by Anheuser-Busch in 2003. I'm already nervous enough standing in front of a group, but tonight my fellow classmate who was supposed to be involved in this presentation is nowhere to be found. So much for the concept of leave no man behind.

If anyone has given a class presentation, you already know how nerve-racking it can be. After your name is called, a sudden heart pump surges while your adrenaline pumps into your body. When I stood up, I had to ask myself, do I have everything? Do I even remember what I'm supposed to talk about? Are my visual aides enough to get me through this? I could feel my limbs shaking. It wasn't even our normal classroom we were in, but a completely different surrounding. I couldn't even tell where the light switches were or where the tables started and ended. Everything was out of order including where my classmates sat. I was in absolute horror.

Walking towards the presentation table, props in hand, I could feel sweat wanting to come up to the surface of my skin. Gulping silently, I pressed forward. After all, I was already wearing slacks, a dress shirt, and tie. I came today in order to do one thing. Give a presentation to the class. After reaching the presentation table, I noticed a simple podium on the floor in the corner. I already knew it was easier to talk behind something, because it withdrew some focus on the crowd, somewhat shielding you from the glaring eyes and open ears. I managed to grab the table podium and place it on the table explaining, "This can hold my props." In reality, a table would have held my props just fine. I just used it as an excuse.

Finally beginning to speak, "I'm Jerron, my partner whose name will not be mentioned, cunningly decided to leave me stranded. Please bear with me while I try to cover both of our

thoughts.” Random bats of the eyelids and quirky smiles generated among the crowd. I felt some understanding. I assumed they saw a deer in the headlights look from my facial expression. Some confidence came back, however my throat seemed to choke again. While my hands started sweating again, I asked a question while holding up a visual. “Who knows what company uses this logo?” Pausing wittingly, I waited for people to raise their hands in response. After all, I had a wrist watch keeping track of the time used. Standing alone in front of the crowd of twenty people, I knew ten minutes would feel like forever. Unfortunately, the simple eagle and prominent “A” didn't generate a response. Silence simply filled the crowd.

Suddenly asking a different form of question, I received a different answer, “Who here has ever consumed a beer?” Suddenly hands were raised cautiously, as if I were I were pursuing a less fortunate event of alcohol consumption. I stated, “Of those that raised their hand, you have most likely consumed a product of Anheuser-Busch. And, probably consumed more of it than you should if you woke up the next morning regretting what you did the night before.” Giggles filled the air giving me even more confidence. I smiled with relief.

Secretly, the presentation aides I provided not only held visual ideas, but notes on the back for my presentation. Perhaps you could refer to them as backup ideas as well as a structured flow of thoughts I wished to pursue. It is never comfortable to confront a crowd without a backup plan. While my presentation continued uncomfortably, I finished around the amount of time I should have. No docked points for going over or under. I felt pretty satisfied as I ended the presentation by passing out candy to the crowd. Sugar seems to always help.

Finally, at the end of my experience, my teacher gave me feedback. I assumed it she tell me, “Get more practice in public speaking.” Instead, she asked me if I had thought of going into public speaking. My answer was simply, “no, I'd rather not have a heart-attack.”

## Visual Analysis of Australian Post

This advertisement caught my attention while browsing for marketing ads. I first noticed the ad after seeing the contrast and interesting visual aspects. In the middle, a female is hugging a text-based male wrapping his arms around her. Upon further investigation, a slogan reads, “If you really want to touch someone, send them a letter.”

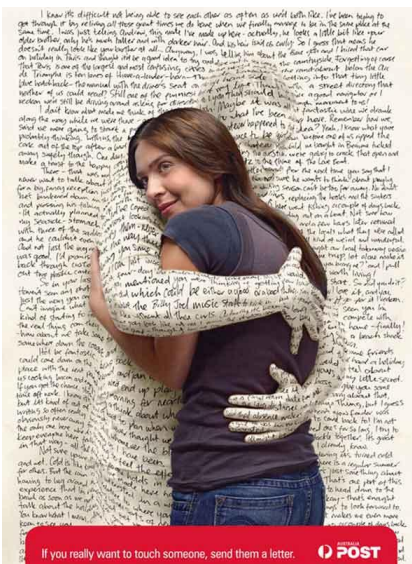


Fig. 1. Australia Post: Hug. Ads of the World.

The main purpose of the print is to ask for action. Mailing more personal letters will provide happiness for the people you care about. Who better to handle this personal interaction than the Australian Post? The advertisement also asks for further trust from the viewer. Trust in the company to handle personal memorandums.

The use of pathos is very evident to make the writer's point. The female, having a tender look on her face while she hugs the model of a male, infers love and compassion. The slogan also offers a reference of compassion. In order to continue this inference, a written letter is provided in the background apparently written by the female in the foreground.

Overall this is an effective print advertisement which contains very little ambiguity as well as a creative approach to keep the viewer interested and involved. Not only does the visual aspect summon initial consideration, the handwritten letter in the background keeps your interest starting with, “I know it’s difficult not being able to see each other as often as we’d both like. I’ve been trying to get through it by reliving all those great times we do have when we finally manage to be in the same place at the same time.” After a brief introduction, the letter continues to talk about their holiday in Paris where they became lost.

After a little research into the background of the Australian Post, I found some interesting information about the postal company. Half of the company’s income is received by delivering letters. Also, it is reported that 96.1% of domestic letters are delivered on time (within 2-5 business days depending on location) (Australia Post). So, the company is well established to accept personal mailings.

Regardless of how impressive the aspects of this ad are, I would like to see a few changes. During the introductory part of the letter, the writer rambles a bit, “[Andrew] looks a little bit like your older brother, only he’s much taller and with darker hair, and his hair isn’t as curly. So I guess that means he doesn’t really look like your brother at all.” This rambling turned me off a bit. Also, I was reading a few comments from the ad, and agree with someone who commented, “I think better with eyes closed” (Sandy). The female would appear to be more genuine if her eyes were closed. Otherwise, the ad develops an effective transference from beginning to end.

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“Australia Post – Fast Facts.” *Australia Post*. N.p., n.d., Web. 23 September 2011.



Many video games challenge the player's abilities to perform mental tasks through puzzles and environment manipulation. These puzzles also require intense visual attention in order to complete certain tasks for advancement throughout the game. As stated in one research volume "Simulation & Gaming", "The ability to mentally rotate or arrange objects is related to many general learning tests and paradigms, and research has shown that video game play is related to this ability" (Barlett et al., 389). Puzzles and manipulative tasks provided by video games increase creative and logical intuition. This requires the use of both sides of the human brain.

While video games challenge our mental performance, the player also feels more satisfied individually with intrinsic rewards generated by the sense of satisfaction for completing difficult tasks. Inside *Reality Is Broken*, Jane McGonigal covers this idea writing, "Games make us happy because they are hard work that we choose for ourselves, and it turns out that almost nothing makes us happier than good, hard work" (57). Also, McGonigal suggests the average gamer is the typical working class whose "smarts and talents" are underutilized throughout the day. The chance to "plan and coordinate complex raids and quests" relieves stress and completes a more satisfying life for the individual working forty hours per week (57-61). In other words, while systematically relieving stress of everyday life, video games increase happiness inside one to make a better way of living.

Not only do video games promote individual stability through the satisfaction of intrinsic rewards, they may actually lessen aggression. For years, critics have constantly battled for the removal of violence in video games claiming the actions introduced increase aggression in a societal community by desensitizing individuals. However, for millions of years aggression has been found among every animal in respect for survival including humans. In *Civilization and Its*

*Discontents*, Sigmund Freud discusses the natural tendency towards aggression amongst humans. In this work, he looks at the almost impossible removal of aggression throughout society by redirecting or sublimating an individual's natural aggression into a socially acceptable environment (19-23 ). While aggression towards others may always be among an individual it may be possible to limit aggression using video games.

Included in social acceptance of individuals, social collaboration amongst others is also invited. Cooperation amongst players is by no means new to video games, innovations in technology over the past several years make it possible for players to perform in large groups. In order to successfully complete various tasks cooperation is required between players. The largest amongst these games include Blizzard's *World of Warcraft* where groups are compiled to finish various tasks which would not be possible to accomplish with an individual alone. In his paper, Ducheneaut writes "Indeed, there is no evidence from WoW that players feel their social experience is impoverished—it is in fact quite the opposite" (100). Video games are now inviting teamwork as a necessity, which creates social bonds among the community.

With possibilities of large-scaled group interaction due to technological advances, it is now possible to collaborate across the globe. When carrying group interactions into a scientific community, amazing accomplishments can be achieved. For instance, a research scientist from the University of Washington started an online game which he called FoldIt. This game allows players to manipulate damaged protein diagrams in order to fix them. Players have the ability to work together by various means in order to accomplish this task. The social environment is described as a way players can collaborate with their group members by helping each other with strategies and tips through the game's chat function or across the wiki (Cooper et al. 759). This simple protein puzzle game has created some significant strides in understanding protein

structures. Players working collectively managed to help identify a protein structure necessary for the reproduction of the HIV virus within three weeks. This is an astonishing feat for scientists trying to understand the HIV virus.

Video games have only been part of society for a minute timeline compared to the entire human civilization. Unfortunately, there is very little research displaying the effects of video games on society. Also, since technology is advancing at such a rapid rate, it is almost impossible to predict where video game advancements and understanding will be in the next few years. This has brought a large

amount of critics foreseeing video games as interfering with the average daily devotion of and individual among a societal community because they simply don't understand the possibilities brought about by the gaming industry. Recent studies suggest the future of gaming can provide a positive impact among society as a whole.

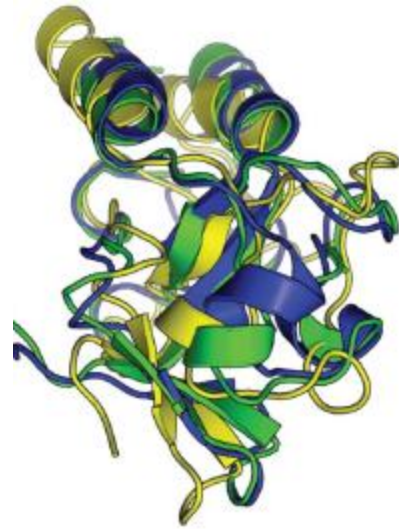


Fig. 2 The top-scoring computer model was unable to sample as close to the native protein as the Foldit players (Cooper 758).

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