Goal 3.1 Reflection

In order to succeed as a scientist, you have to be able to write effectively in multiple contexts within the discipline. This pertains to all scientific topics including the ones that you find least interesting. To successfully write this way you have to be able to write for many audiences. These audiences incorporate scientists, colleagues, scholars, and even the general public including readers with little to no knowledge of the scientific community. One of my first lab reports was written in my genetics class. Though the report was completed it lacked important detail and information. Once I started taking higher level courses, I began to successfully write reports for my classes.

One of my last reports that I had written at Longwood was for my Senior Capstone class. This class not only taught me that not all reports are the same but also that my report can consist of materials from all over. My report consisted of a problem definition and a pros and cons list for using plastic. This report was nothing like I’ve ever written before, but it strengthened my skills as a scientist. It allowed me to learn how to adapt to unusual situations as well as write in a different scientific format. This is useful because if I have a career in a scientific field, I could be asked to write reports in new formats and forced to adapt to transitions.

Writing within the multiple contexts has helped me completely change and improve my writing skills. My animal behavior class required my group and I to write a final report on color change in *Anolis carolinensis* due to different environmental stimuli. I was able to write it effortlessly and quickly. This report specifically taught me to remember to include data from other articles as well as to concisely relay the information needed. If there is too little information, then you could leave blind spots and confusion as well as your data lacking support. If there is too much information, the reader could find it hard to read the paper and lose interest in the experiment.

Lastly writing within the disciplines allows you to learn different ways of communicating science. During my animal behavior class, my group and I were asked to write a report on *Armadillidium vulgare* and whether they prefer wet or dry substrate. This report was different because we were asked to include visually appealing statistical analysis as well as other accredited scientific data. While writing this report I learned the importance of writing a primary literature paper and the differences that are associated with general audience papers. It also taught me how to approach each paper and efficiently write them.

These concepts will be used for the rest of my life. Whether I use these skills for a job or personal application, I feel confident enough to say that the reports will turn out professional and correctly formatted.