
Writer's Statement for "Literacy in Aviation: Aeronautical Inscriptions Take Flight"

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When I started college, I had a basic idea of what college English would be after dual enrolling Composition I in my senior year of High School. Being an Engineering major, English isn't necessarily my favorite subject, but it is quite a fun one as you can put all your thoughts down on paper and creatively write; something engineers don't normally do. However, Composition II at UCF was much different. My professor strayed away from the generic English class marked with readings and essays and focused on a lesser known device in literacy; a device called an inscription. An inscription adds more depth to writing in the form of pictures, charts, and hand-written items to name a few. The question that drove the research paper was, "What if literacy is much more than just alphabetic text on paper?"

This is where I envisioned the idea of writing about inscriptions in aviation, one of my favorite hobbies. My research paper encompasses that question and seeks to find out if our definition of literacy is too narrow and if you can find literacy anywhere, even inside the cockpit of an aircraft. In my essay, I used the term inscription frequently to prove this theory showing that inscriptions found in flight, such as checklists, flight plans, and weather logs, are forms of literacy as well. My findings shocked me almost as much as this unconventional Composition II class. I found dozens of inscriptional literacies in aviation forcing me to focus on just the inscriptions revolving around the preparation of a flight, before the plane even leaves the ground! This essay is the result of a semester of research into a topic that, at the start of the semester, I didn't know existed. There is an abundance of literacy in aviation that would allow me to write a whole book. Limiting the number of connections between inscription and aviation turned out to be one of my biggest challenges in writing. From at first not understanding the intricacies of the topic, to then being overwhelmed with inscriptions to write about, I had to find ways to limit myself to just a handful to talk about in depth.

I enjoyed my time in the class learning about what English could be if we focused more on the everyday literacy in our lives instead of the generic alphabetic text on paper. In my essay, I propose the different benefits of having a specialized English class focusing more on the inscriptions relevant to our majors and career paths so that we continue to learn about our future careers as well as redefining the definitions of literacy.

The semester class was focused solely on this essay with each big submission being a different chunk of the final essay. With each submission, our professor would give feedback on our work and we would read other classmates' pieces as well and give our feedback. This was a tremendous help in fitting the final essay together and comfort in knowing that it was reviewed by numerous people. In the end, I became an expert on the topic of inscriptions and started to notice them in numerous places in my everyday life.