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## Take Time to Edit Your Own Writing – You Just Might Improve It

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## Take Time to Edit Your Own Writing – You Just Might Improve It

**By Vu Tran**  
UCF Forum columnist  
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Consider all the times you received poorly written emails from colleagues or acquaintances. Did your impression of them change because of their lack of proper grammar and language? How about their misspellings or even missing words?

My impression of these people certainly changed because a poorly written email, paper, or article shows that the writers were negligent or didn't know any better. Taking time to review what was written can help ensure the reader understands the message.

Writing obviously is an important skill that we utilize every day, from texting our friends and family to emailing our colleagues, so why don't people pay more attention to the details? Writing well just seems to have become a lost art.

From my observations, I have also noticed that many people don't differentiate between writing formally and informally. Abbreviations such as LOL and OMG and emoticons should always be avoided in professional and academic settings. Misspelled words are among the worst mistakes to make – and easiest to fix, because of spell-checkers on our computers. There have been so many times when I see other students and acquaintances submit writings with rows of scribbled red lines indicating that words are misspelled.

There has been a current educational shift of resources and attention to STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields and careers, but more emphasis still should be placed on improving writing in students across all disciplines. Without the necessary writing skills, people cannot effectively share their research and ideas.

I often review papers for friends in various disciplines. Unfortunately, some of them don't articulate or thoroughly explain their research because they lack basic writing and critical-thinking skills.

Regardless of our profession, we all have to write in order to communicate. Whether you are a student, an academic scholar, a physician, or even a business associate, you must be able to write coherently and professionally. While many of us may not be profound writers and have to produce multiple drafts to improve our work, writing well will help you succeed.

Having the capability to write well means one can formulate intelligible ideas and articulate them into legible sentences. In turn, we are able to critically think about our own work and can constructively evaluate each other's ideas.

Surprisingly, many students and even professionals who have excelled in their collegiate coursework struggle with communicating their ideas because they did not learn how to write well. Aside from the basic essay format that has been engrained into the public school curriculum, many people have had limited opportunities to exercise writing abilities outside of the required English courses. Writing wasn't a big focus of some of my undergraduate courses because of class size and other reasons.

Writing allows for us to put our emotions and thoughts into words that we may have difficulty expressing through speech. It is a way for us to express ourselves as individuals. And writing does not always have to be formal, such as in academic papers, grant proposals, etc.; it can be fun and artistic.

Writing is a skill that should be practiced on a regular basis, so take personal responsibility to improve your technique. Practice by posting in your own blog, creating short stories, or sending meaningful notes to your loved ones.

And don't forget to use a dictionary and re-read what you write. By editing yourself you may learn a thing or two for your next correspondence or writing assignment.

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