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Cover Letter/Resume Reflection

      At first I thought this project would be very easy, and honestly rather useless. I knew I had a few past resumes to take information from and I've written a cover letter before. But once we actually started looking at each others, there were things I noticed in others' resumes and letters that somehow escaped my viewing on my own material. It emphasized the need for peer review and put into perspective the effects and importance of different aspects of these documents, like style and content.

      The Cover Letter was rather difficult. As you said, we're pretty well trained not to brag about ourselves. On a resume it's easy, it is nothing more than a list of skills with evidence, nothing more than objective statements. In a letter it doesn't feel right. I found it rather odd trying to balance the scale between bragging and boasting. I hate pretentious people and I think it's safe to assume that employers don't like it either, but at the same time, I knew I needed to come across as valuable. I found it easiest to measure this by imagining reading my letter from somebody else's perspective. If it sounded pretentious, I toned it down; if it didn't leave a meaningful impact, I added to it. The values emphasized was also a topic that I argued with myself about. I wasn't sure whether to focus on the technical skills and their proof, or if I should prove character traits. In the end I aimed for both, but felt that the resume would speak enough toward my technical skills. This was my only chance to speak of my character. I believe that the overall tone of the letter is ambitious, something I would value in an employee or coworker very much.

      The Resume I definitely felt was easier. As I said before, I had previous resumes to take information from along with the list of skills we made in class. It was mostly a matter of formatting the information in an easy to digest manner. The feedback I received was almost all good on structure and style which is why I didn't change it. I also copied over some aspects of the resume formatting to the cover letter because I liked it and it made the 'package' more professional. Especially once we looked at some of our classmates' resumes it became rather apparent that I'm considerably more lacking in experience than many of my peers. I'm very much hoping to work on that in the coming years, but it means that for now at least, my marketable skills, cover letter content, and demonstrable interpersonal skills are even more important than they already are. Without the history to back my skills, uncommon skills, certifications or other things I can demonstrate to stand out are going to be my main selling piece. I admit that if this was actually going to be sent out, I would consider starting over from scratch with this in mind, especially if it was for a 'real' job rather than just an undergraduate research opportunity.