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ENG102

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Pre-Course Reflection

As far back as I remember, English subject was something I avoided in school because it was very difficult for me.  I’ve always had a difficult time staying engaged, especially writing.  But after reading WPA Outcome and Habits of Mind, it has opened my eyes a bit wider and has given me hopes of becoming a little better writer.

I hope that by identifying my strengths and weaknesses, I can take a baby step towards improving my skills.

**Rhetorical Knowledge:**

The easiest concept to grasp from the list of WPA Outcomes is the “Develop facility in responding to a variety of situations and contexts calling for purposeful shifts in voice, tone, level of formality, design, medium and/or structure.” from Rhetorical Knowledge.  **Creative**(Habit of Mind) approach to delivering my message is to adjust my tone and the formality depending on my intended audience.  An email to my manager would be significantly different than responding to a friend’s text message.  One is carefully thought out and formatted and checked multiple times while other is very casual with few words with ignored typos.  By understanding my target audience, I can tailor my message accordingly.  I’m often given the opportunity to write a technical documentation for the engineers at work.  I also deliver this same information to the executives.  The information is the same but the intended audience is the polar opposite, so the level of details and the explanation is drastically different.

**Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing:**

“Use composing and reading for inquiry, learning, critical thinking, and communicating in various rhetorical contexts” is something that I feel pretty comfortable about.  Being a software engineer, I spend a lot of time reading the documentation, how-to books, and the articles about the latest technology.  This allows me to stay **engaged**(Habit of Mind) and always be **curious** (Habit of Mind). Although most materials are the matter of fact, some are very subjective which forces me to use my critical thinking skills.  I often seek out additional information to sort out the facts versus assertion.  “Read a diverse range of texts, attending especially to relationships between assertions and evidence…” is something I practice on a daily basis at work and feel very comfortable.  However, outside of my technical bubble, I have a really difficult time in critical thinking.  I often struggle with hyper-analyzing the author’s intent and always end up questioning it.

**Processes:**

It was surprising to find “Experience the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes” as one of the techniques in WAP Outcomes.  I didn’t realize how important it was to engage others for their feedback and use the feedback to become a better writer. Often times, we think of writing as something you do alone in the room but this has definitely opened my eyes.

If I’m being honest, perhaps I avoided seeking other’s feedback because of fear of failure.  “Learn to give and to act on productive feedback to works in progress” is something I’ll need to work on and with help from my classmates, I can start to turn the feedback into a positive experience and be **responsible** (Habit of Mind).

**Knowledge of Convention:**

“Learn common formats and/or design features for different kinds of texts.”  As mentioned in the Rhetorical Thinking section, learning to format my message to the intended audience is something I feel very comfortable with. In a recent documentation I presented at work, I was able to simplify the latest features of C++ programming language to the newest interns by presenting it in different terms and format.  All throughout this process, properly citing other’s work is critical. “Practice applying citation conventions systematically in their own work.”

“Develop knowledge of linguistic structures, including grammar, punctuation, and spelling, through practice and revising.”  I have to admit, I’m extremely nervous and concerned about my writing skills. Outside of writing emails, messages, and some documentation, I don’t write much of anything and I haven’t done them since my high school days.  Often times, I struggle writing a simple email because I’m too critical of how I write and not what I write.  I hope to get better at this in this class.