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After Action Report – Personal Reflective Journal Entry

Over the course of this semester, I have come to see writing not just as an academic skill, but also as a strategic and useful tool that can adapt to the needs of all disciplines, especially in my field of computer science. That is why I have chosen to submit this final reflection in the form of a personal reflective journal entry. I believe this format gives me the freedom to explain how my writing has evolved, how my thinking has changed, and how the work I have done in this course will carry over into my future academic and professional life. It also reflects the nature of the writing process, and helps with explaining how I approached the major projects for the course.

This class challenged me to engage with writing in ways I was not used to. Coming from a tech-focused background, most of the writing I had done was in the form quick reports and formal emails. However, here, I was asked to consider the genre, audience, design, tone, and rhetorical purpose behind the writing assignments. It was not just about what I was saying, but why and how I was saying it. This perspective in thinking helped me grow not only as a writer but also in considerate communication with regards reach and eligibility. I began to view writing as a form of problem solving, which is something I already do in my professional career, but now it also applied to language and presentation.

One of the more stand out projects that I worked on was my Instagram-style flyer that tackled the misconception problem in computer science. I wanted to design a piece that would be engaging for students like me or to people who might come across it in through social media. That meant using a visual format they would recognize, complete with username, profile image, and a flattering images/visuals. I stepped away from traditional academic formatting and instead tried to connect with real-world communication styles that people in the tech field already engage with normally. I think this misconception about CS being inaccessible or too advanced persists because the work we do is often highly technical. Many non-specialists only encounter CS concepts when something breaks, or through media portrayals that focus on abstract or dramatized aspects such as hacking. Without accessible explanations using plain language and visual clarity, people unfamiliar with the field may not understand. This is exactly why practicing audience-centered communication is important as it helps bridge the gap between experts and outsiders.

Creating the flyer taught me how much intentionality goes into good design. I had to think carefully about text placement, color patters, alignment, font, spacing, illustrations, etc. This all helped in refining my skills for distributing information that is both accurate and digestible. After I received constructive feedback pointing out issues with chart readability, and the relevance of the myth-busting image, I rethought my entire approach. I rebuilt the chart using SmartArt so that it was clearer and more aligned with the rest of the flyer. I also refined the font styles. This helped with my understanding of how design and presentation shaped effective communication. What also stood out to me about this project was how collaborative writing became when I included testing and community input. To make the flyer more effective, I created a consent form and had the flyer peer reviewed which led to me incorporating their feedback into the final product.

Beyond the individual projects, this course gave me strategies and guidelines that I will carry moving forward. I now understand the importance of writing to specific genres and discourse communities. The way I would explain a technical concept to a classmate is different to how I would explain it to someone outside of the field. This awareness of audience is something I will definitely continue to use, especially when writing technical documents. I have also come to value feedback as a necessary part of the process. Previously, I tended to view revision as the final addition of a project, but this class taught me that real improvement comes from openness to critique.

Looking back, I feel accomplished with what I have done. I not only completed the assignments, but I pursued routes that I was unfamiliar with in order to try new formats and made thoughtful revisions based on feedback. I engaged with the material in a way that connected to my goals as a future IT professional. I also deepened my understanding of ethical considerations in writing, especially gathering inputs from others. Writing a consent form may seem like a small step, but it reminded me that every piece of communication has an impact.

One thing I hope to continue improving is my ability to transfer these skills across different situations. For example, I am interested in trying out other tech-based genres like API documentation, knowledge bases, and even video tutorials. These all require a strong understanding of the rhetorical situation, particularly how audience, purpose, and context affect the way information should be delivered. API documentation must be concise, technically accurate, and structured for efficient access. Knowledge bases need to account for secondary audiences, meaning the information must be searchable, clear, and written using plain language. Even video tutorials benefit from taking pacing, visual accessibility, and design into consideration. This course helped me develop such transferable skills, which now makes me feel more prepared to apply them across different formats.

If I had to predict my grade, I would say I have earned an A, not just based on the final products, but because of the growth and effort that I have demonstrated throughout the course. I consistently completed the work, applied feedback in meaningful ways, and connected each project to the course concepts and my professional goals. In the end, I learned how to write better, communicate better, and refined my overall skill. I’ll carry that with me into every field that I find myself in.