**Learning Journal #1**

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Learning Journal #1

The main theme of my first learning journal is practicing a growth mindset. As a person, of an age, I have a fixed frame of mind about some things. It is sometimes a challenge for me to stay­­­ open minded when I think I know something. However, Bruce Lee said, “Empty your mind, be formless, be shapeless,” (Lee, 1971). I believe that to grow and learn new things, I need to soften into some amount of formlessness, even in areas where I’ve got some experience already.

Week 4 Entry: Active Listening

In week 4, we learned that listening can be defined as “the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to a spoken message.” In this journal I reflect on my note-taking methods and active listening skills to identify areas where I could stand to grow.

Note Taking

In class, we learned that students who write notes during lectures achieve higher grades and are more likely to remember key facts when tested later. Since high grades are a goal of mine, this is a topic worth reflecting on. In the context of my career, I would live transcribe meetings between subject matter experts, then edit and publish the notes as documented knowledge. This is different from school, where the teacher’s whole lecture is designed to teach the concept. That means I don’t need to capture every word and can take more time and space between concepts to think.

Listening Traps

In week 4 of PREP 1300, we did a self-reflection on “listening traps,” and I think one of mine is “placating the speaker.” The specifics of this point are beyond the scope of this essay, but it relates to what I learned in my Conflict Resolution class that week: that one principle of effective negotiation is “separating the person from the problem.” I think that I would be a better listener if I practice that principle when I have a potential conflict with someone. I don’t have to go along with an idea out of fear that they will take my disagreement as a personal attack. What I’m learning in class is that it’s not the conflict itself, it’s dramatic behaviours that I want to avoid. With practice, I can avoid interpersonal drama while engaging in more authentic dialogue, which will help me be a better listener.

The first fixed mindset I have about note taking is that I need to transcribe every word because I might not get another chance to hear the content. In reality, I have space to think, ask questions, and try different knowledge-capture methods like Cornell. A second fixed mindset I had about listening was that if I don’t understand something the first time I hear it, then I’m on my own to figure it out. In an academic context, some teachers go over a point in more than one way, so I have time to think and ask questions in between writing down key points.

Week 5 Entry: Reading

Week 5 of PREP 1300 was about reading techniques, and GNED 1407 Sociology was about symbolic interactionism, which has a theory that we create our reality through our roles and interactions with one another. In this learning journal entry about reading habits and attitudes, I’m reflecting on the interaction between myself in the role of reader and as a writer in the business and academic contexts.

Academic Reading vs. Business

When I’m reading technical software documentation for work, for example the [Zendesk API reference](https://developer.zendesk.com/api-reference/help_center/help-center-api/articles/), I rely on clickable menus, key commands, and anchor links to navigate information hierarchies. The audience of this kind of material can expect certain keywords and parallel structures to exist in the body text. There’s no expectation that a reader will take the content sentence-by-sentence to build meaning, unlike in Academic reading where ideas unfold sentence-by-sentence in paragraphs. It is difficult sometimes to reign in my attention to focus on one sentence at a time, but to shift towards a growth mindset, I may say instead that I’m only out of practice.

Reading Self-Reflection

In PREP 1300, we were prompted to reflect on how well we think we can read. I rated myself a nine, not a ten, because there are still some things that are difficult for me to comprehend. For example, we read this article from [Statistics Canada](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-28-0001/2021001/article/00032-eng.htm) in Sociology class. It’s got a lot of percentages, numbers, and graphs mixed with academic references and statistical analysis. It takes extra effort to focus on the symbols and absorb the meaning on the article. But this data tells a story, and my growth mindset is that the story is worth the effort to uncover.

References

Lee, B. (1971, 9 12). The Pierre Berton Show (The Mandarin Superstar). (P. Berton, Interviewer) YouTube. Calpeper Minutemen, Hong Kong.