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Professor Reardon

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Assignment #11

“The Importance of Writing in the Workplace” Article Reflection

I felt that the article, and its included resources, provided a useful outline of why writing is so important in the workplace. I especially liked the main article’s point that strong writing is linked to critical thinking skills, which is not something I had previously considered. It makes sense that good writers must possess an ability to think from multiple perspectives, which is a concept strongly associated with critical thinking. I am glad that Pitt’s STEM programs still have an emphasis on writing; otherwise, our curriculums would be very dull. I have personally found that engaging in an activity that requires more critical thinking than my normal courses, such as writing a paper for a philosophy class, helps me think more clearly when completing engineering assignments. Overall, I think that most of the sources provided by the article do a great job of emphasizing the importance of good writing in professional settings. However, it is more interesting to write (and read) a reflection that takes a more critical stance, so I will expand upon my issues with one of the article’s sources.

I have issues to raise with the first source linked from the main article, titled “I Won’t Hire People Who Use Poor Grammar. Here’s Why”. In this article, Kyle Wiens, founder of online repair manual iFixit, explains why he requires all applicants to his company to take a mandatory grammar test. I understand and can even sympathize with his reasoning for doing so – that grammar is credibility, regardless of profession. I still believe that this sentiment is misguided; to me, Wiens just comes off as pretentious.

Personally, I take great pride in using correct grammar whenever possible, and it does bother me when others do not use correct grammar in their writing. But if I were the founder of a company that requires good writers, I would be willing to take some responsibility for building grammar skills in my employees. This grammar test reflects the workplace of environment at iFixit to me, as one that is not oriented towards growth in the slightest. I would likely be expected to be a fully realized employee from my first day there, being frowned upon for asking any questions with the purpose of learning. A quick Google search, of which Wiens is so fond, showed me that iFixit has only 135 employees and 1.2 million users, which are anemic numbers for a software company founded in 2005. This does not surprise me, as I struggle to understand why someone would choose to work in such an environment if other options are available.

Wiens argues that all the answers to one’s grammar questions are just a Google search away, but I think this is misleading. Good grammar usage does not depend only on looking up the rules when necessary; I would argue that the most important way to develop grammar skills is by reading profusely. Reading allows an individual to recognize patterns in writing, to provide a background for how language is generated. There is a reason why we do not learn grammar immediately in elementary schools, because we have not yet built a sturdy foundation of English comprehension. If I were to give a complete set of automobile parts to someone that has never seen a car, it would be unreasonable to expect them to build me an entire car. They first would need to understand the concept of a car and develop a framework for what each part of a car does before they would be able to build it from scratch. It is in this way that Wiens’ logic is flawed.

**Works Cited**

“IFixit.” *Craft*, 2020, <https://www.craft.co/ifixit>.