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Writing for the Sciences

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Reflection on Researched Op-Ed

For this assignment, I was educated on what an Op-Ed was for the first time. I was interested in how it was formatted toward general audiences and scientifically proven that it changes the minds of individuals. The content of the Op-Ed assignments, although not inherently difficult, were confusing for me. The methods of “loosely–analyzing the structure” and making it my own response regarding the same topic was challenging. I felt as though since all the claim’s information, correct formatting, diction, and evidence in the original op-ed were plastered in front of me and were already incredibly coherent and perfect, it was hard not to emulate it or make it similar. In English classes, I was typically used to creating my own claim, finding my own sources of evidence and conducting my own research. Although those factors are far way more work, it was incredibly easy to make my work feel like my own.

The assignment of it being a response made me simply create my own Op-Ed as an agreement to the original Op-Ed I had used. This means my Op-Ed agrees with the claim “Expressive Faces Make You More Likeable”. I know nearly every source of professional writing requires a claim, including this one, but I was unsure if my claim was limited to agree or disagree, or if I was meant to propose a whole new claim with sources supporting this new and related claim. So for me atleast, I feel as though it would have been easier to know right away what kind of argument I am proposing, rather than it just being labeled as a response, which I thought was a bit vague.

However, one of the most interesting aspects that I took from this composition assignment, would be recognizing unclear writing and knowing how to construct cohesive writing. I also learned what impersonal writing was, which is often used in scientific papers, which definitely validated me as I related to feeling lost upon these kinds of papers. I never noticed how much extra words I add into my writing which makes my writing unnecessarily wordy and less clear. From the visual demonstration of how to place the subject in the beginning of the sentence, and ensuring that the predicate and object remain as close as possible to it, I realized that I have been writing for so long without even considering that aspect of grammar. It was so basic, and I remember being taught it in middle school, and I am surprised how much I overlooked the components of sentences that I write daily.

For my overall outcome or goal, as I mentioned previously, I want to be able to write both cohesively and professionally. One of my flaws I feel is that I tend to type as if I am having a conversation and cannot find the appropriate balance between casual and formal. In addition, I also believe I can be very wordy upon typing my assignments. I enjoyed this assignment, although slight confusion, I enjoyed that I had the freedom to select my topic, engage in collaboration, and become more informed on how scientists write, and how these scientific discoveries get distributed through general audiences.