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Self-Assessment

Throughout the semester, I have written several papers about several topics, and as a given, I have learned multiple things. From the first assignment, a PSA that my group and I chose to do on how CCNY, and more specifically on how the NAC dealt with food waste, to the final assignment, an Op-Ed I wrote on the United States' plastic pollution and why recycling is the best solution, I have gained many skills, from a writer, researcher, and a team member perspective. I have seen how people might approach a project differently, widening my views on how I worked on one. I also learned different ways to structure a paper, as it was the first time I used APA format and several other techniques. I was taught how to structure a project with the idea of my audience in mind, never having thought of that until now. All in all, during this semester I have gained a lot of knowledge that I shall present in this self-assessment.

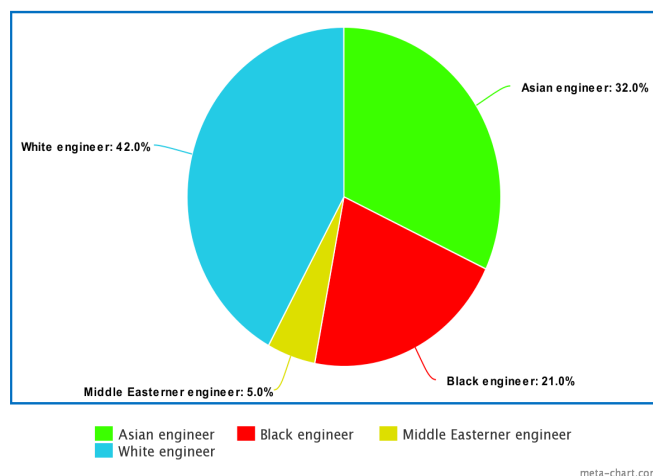
The first thing I noticed was during the first assignment, the SPSA. In this assignment, groups choose an available topic and make a short PSA video about it. My group chose to do the PSA on how the NAC building dealt with food waste. At first, I thought nothing much of it, thinking it would be an easy assignment if the work was divided and we all did our part. After the first in-person meeting, where we distributed the roles and the project truly began, everything went smoothly, and the future looked bright. That was until I realized that group work wasn't as

easy as assigning parts to people and just doing yours. There has to be more communication along the way, either to motivate the members to work or to talk about different problems met along the way. I realized this the day the assignment was due, after having to do a lot of the PSA myself and trying my best to shape some of my teammates' work to fit my vision, a vision that differed from theirs mainly because of our lack of communication. But at the end of the day, I do not hold any of my group members in a lower regard than I previously did, understanding that no one was at fault and that we, as a group, did not communicate our ideas and concerns enough, ending up with different visions of how the PSA should have looked like.

Another thing that I learned during this class was to write according to the audience. It was something I never thought of before, always writing with the thought of a professor reading it. After years of thinking that way, my audience defaulted to being professors and following the rules I was first introduced to, never deviating from them. This changed when doing the SPSA and the A.I. research paper. Instead of thinking, "I should write this for the university." I thought, "Who is going to read this and how should I make it fit their preferences?". After learning that my audience for the SPSA was mostly students like myself, I decided to use simple language and concise words, not needing to "impress" them as I would when writing for someone of higher education. This was also true for the A.I. lab report, as my audience would include people seeking to reproduce my research. Because of this, I strived to make the steps as clear as possible, making them easy to copy, not bothering with fancy words or lengthy explanations.

Relating to the audience, this class also brought up the possibility of how different people could be viewing my work. The most striking one was the possibility of people with color

blindness coming across it. Being close friends with someone color blind, and the fact that the thought never crossed my mind surprised me. It was not until the moment he was in my group, pointing out the fact that he could not differentiate the different colors used in the pie charts that I realized the importance of being aware of how other people see my work. Although impossible to create something that could be enjoyed by everyone equally, simply knowing the fact that there are cases where your work might fail to fit a certain demographic is already a good step in the struggle of trying to appeal to everyone.



An example of is this chart. It contains colors that my friend cannot tell apart. They are the green, labeled as Asian engineer, and the slightly green yellow, labeled as Middle Easterner engineer. In order to not be confused by these two

colors, it was necessary to put them across from each other, as putting them next to one another would make it extremely difficult for him to tell apart, and as such, hard to read the graph.

The last major thing that I learned throughout this class is the use of sources, and more specifically finding the right ones. Back then when doing essays, I would sometimes use sources that remotely looked related to my topic, judging their validity with a single glance. While this was mainly due to my essays being history-related, having to write more papers on scientific topics made me realize of the dangers that using a random article might have with my research. A single information coming from an unreliable source could make the entire paper

untrustworthy. And although I knew this in the past, the point was hammered in my head when I was looking for the amount of plastic waste being generated by the United States.

Here, two different sources talk about how much plastic was being generated by the United States, one for [2016](#) and the other for [2017](#).

The U.S. generated a staggering 42 million metric tons of plastic waste in 2016 — more than any other country in the world, according to the analysis.



The one talking about the amount of plastic waste generated by the U.S. in 2016 is from a news article, while the one talking about the plastic waste generated in 2017 is from the official United States Environmental Protection Agency. While the news article claims that the United States produced 42 million metric tons of plastic waste in 2016, the official United States EPA claims it produced about 35.4 million metric tons. Where does this extra 6.6 million metric tons come from that the news article talks about? And even though they are not talking about the same year, the amount of plastic generated should be lower as the year decreases, so why the difference? That difference probably comes from the fact that every news article does its best to have more shocking news to get more users, even if it means lying or using untrustworthy sources.

I have also learned a lot of other minor things during this class. Things like APA format or hyperlinking were strangers to me before this semester. I definitely do not regret taking this class and would recommend it to anyone seeking an English class or trying to learn how to write research papers or do group work. The professor was incredible, accepting my late paper several days after their due dates (I am sorry), and was available anytime I had a question or technical difficulties. It was honestly one of the best classes I've taken, ranking number 1 in all of my

previous English classes. The work was purposeful and interesting, the classes entertaining and informative, and the overall vibe pleasant, I would take it again if I could.