Wayne State University
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To   Dr. Jared Grogan
From   Jai Govind
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Subject   Overall Course Performance

I walked into this course knowing very little about technical writing, but I walked out with much more than technical writing. Through this course, I have gained various professional skills that will definitely prove useful throughout college, and my future career. This course has helped me realize that our world is full of technical writing, and the impact it has on our daily lives. From cooking instructions to highway signs are all forms of technical writing that influence us in various ways. I have always learned writing as a form of expression, but this course has slightly changed my view. Technical writing is not about the author, but more about the reader's interpretation. The projects in this course were well integrated with many learning outcomes such as writing, designing, reading, analyzing, researching, documenting, using technology, and media. I have encountered many of these learning outcomes in the past, but the projects in this course have helped me significantly refine my writing skills. I have met the different learning outcomes of this course through each project, and improved upon all of them to some extent in my own interpretation.

Individual Performance
I have never attempted to create a resume for myself before this course, because I have been a full-time student for most of my life. I was aware of what a resume was, but not the genre elements that went into effectively writing one. My work on creating a resume, and cover letter for International Paper is a learning experience that I will never forget. Throughout this project, I improved upon many course learning outcomes such as writing, designing, analyzing, and researching. My first resume draft only included a brief outline of my education and experiences. It was after learning from our course text, that I began to write with a reader-centered approach. I had to research the company and the position that I was applying for. This allowed me to revise my resume by analyzing the requirements of my primary audience, and establish criteria for an accompanying cover letter. At first, I had just complied all the information on my resume neglecting design and format. It was later that I properly formatted the document to be one page, and listed everything in descending relevancy. My experience with the cover letter was somewhat similar, because it also required professional formatting. Aside from the formatting, I was able to write a strong letter because of my prior writing knowledge. I considered my tone, and context while writing a persuasive cover letter that was addressed to the hiring committee at International Paper. This project has helped me acquire the necessary skills that will craft even more effective resumes and cover letters in the near future.

The second project that I completed for this course was a WikiHow webpage that listed technical instructions on how to play Karrom. The learning outcomes that I cleared on this particular project were writing, designing, analyzing, documenting, and using technology. The writing portion was the most challenging, because it required concise writing that could be easily understood, and immediately applied by the reader. First, I had to analyze my audience to figure out how much information I needed to include on the instructions. I eventually decide to target board gamers, and wrote a somewhat beginner's guide to Karrom. A wall that I had to overcome on this project was designing the page, and integrating useful visuals. I tried to use online media to create visual diagrams, but I was not very good at it. Therefore, I utilized Paint on Windows 8.1 to simply include arrows and text. I plan on improving significantly with visuals in the near future as this is a concept that is important in presentations. Another new experience that I encountered on this project was usability testing, and documenting the information in the appendix of the instructions webpage. Usability testing was primary research that provided useful feedback, and allowed me interact with my direct audience. The test results aided my revision process, and complete a quality instruction webpage.

Additionally, I also worked on creating a professional online portfolio with the resume, and cover letter from the first project. I understood the need of creating one as employers today prefer to look for the professional portfolio of potential employees. When it relates to software, I am technologically challenged and it becomes harder for me to meet expectations. As an Engineering major, I have learned extensively from a hardware perspective, and still require basic software skills. I have realized the need to improve on this as I complete the professional portfolio. It has become a learning outcome that I will carry over from this course, and continue to improve the portfolio further.

Collaborative Performance
I have completed a few collaborative works before this course, and they have also involved report writing. My past work has involved writing up six material science lab reports on laboratory work conducted with group members. I was elected team leader of my group for the collaborative research project in this course, because of my past experience in collaboratively writing technical lab reports. The challenge that we decided to select for our collaborative technical report was researching new experimental sustainable gardens for Seed Wayne. I gathered team members for this research topic, because of my interest in agriculture, and my view on environmentalism. This was the final project were all the learning outcomes were touched upon to some extent. The research plan was extremely helpful in getting team members on the same page about how the technical report will be compiled. I felt that it also aided coordination efforts, and helped team leaders get some feedback on the experience of all members. The plan introduced us to a broad use of technology, and we used many current technologies to productively work together. The research plan also served as a design tool that aided the writing process of our technical report, and I believe that my group successfully cleared this learning outcome.

A big challenge that I believe we ran into on writing the technical report was the difference in writing experience among our team members. I had to give a lot of improvement suggestions to some members, and or handoff the work to other members for further revision. The problem was that some members were not grasping the concept properly, and were submitting poor quality work. This is where I had to set an example by completing my work first, so that they could follow it closely. Personally, I would have preferred to find a better solution to this issue. It would have distinguished our style, and set proper flow in our report. There was room for improvement in writing our technical report, but I believe we marginally cleared this learning outcome. As a team, we conducted two forms of primary research, and multiple accounts of secondary research. Our primary research involved a student survey through Surveymonkey, and an interview of current Seed Wayne members. The secondary research involved experimental designs, and topics closely related to sustainable food systems. I feel that my group conducted excellent research for our report, but many members were not checking the credibility of their sources. My group successfully completed research, but ran into many problems with analyzing their results. Once again, members poorly interpreted their excellent results, and this lead to poor documenting. We spent most of our time fixing the results analysis, and properly documenting them into our report. Researching was one of the strengths of my group, but analyzing that research properly needed more work than expected. In the end, I feel that we touched upon all of the learning outcomes, though many of them could have been improved with more time.

Conclusion
From my work on all of the course projects, I can conclude that I have individually and collaboratively met all the learning outcomes for this technical writing course. I have significantly improved upon the writing, reading, analyzing, and researching outcomes through each project. I believe that I can further improve upon designing, documenting, and using technology outcomes through my future writing classes. One strategy that I learned in this course, and will continue to use in future projects is the reader-centered approach to writing. It does not just apply to technical writing, but any form of writing with a goal. Another important lesson that I will use is the Writer's Guide from our course text, which helps the writer determine the goals of their communication. It can help organize collaborative projects for big groups as well as extensive individual work. Finally, I will also use the different collaborative methods that we utilized throughout the course.