Elisa Huang

Professor Harrison

Writing 39B

25 August 2014

Personal Memoir of the Class

Before this course, I had a habit of shifting verb tenses and applying static sentence structure unintentionally throughout in my writing. But as I progress in this class, I was able to be more cautious about the style of my writing. Though it was, and still is, difficult to not make any mistake as I write, therefore proofread and peer review has always been helpful and useful to me. Moreover, this course not only prepare me to become a better reader and writer, but also allow me to realize different Habits of Mind such as Engagement, Openness, Curiosity, Creativity, Persistence, Responsibility, Flexibility, and Metacognition from either individual or collaborative assignments.

One of the assignments that I’ve developed some Habits of Mind is revising the two major essays I did for this course. I choose to fully revise my Literature Review essay and revise the first paragraph of my Rhetorical Analysis essay. As I revise each essay, I’ve developed Engagement as one of my Habits of Mind. Because I was able to focus on the specific issues my peers and professor discussed, therefore I had better ideas of how to modify my papers. In my revised Literature Review essay, I’ve managed to relate my claim with Sir Conan Doyle’s illustration of Sherlock Holmes’s characteristics in a way to present my argument without overpowered by the scholarly texts. On the other hand, I was able to make a less vague claim in the introduction of my Rhetorical Analysis essay, as I engage my peer and professor’s note about this critical issue. Thus, after revising my Literature Review essay and Rhetorical Analysis Essay, I realized I’ve developed Engagement from one of my Habits of Mind with a sense of my main concern for both of my essays. Furthermore, I’ve developed Persistence as my other Habit of Mind when I was revising my Literature Review Essay. Because it was a five page long essay, I had to be focused and concentrated on my main issue, which was relating Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s creation of Sherlock Holmes with my own claim about Holmes’s characteristics. Therefore, I’ve concentrated on this main concern about practicing Persistence as my Habit of Mind in which may be helpful for me in the future when I’m writing or revising even longer paper.

In addition to revising the two main essays, I’ve also developed Openness as one of my Habits of Mind in peer review assignments. I’ve also found peer review assignments very helpful to me and my peers. Both my peers and I would receive benefits as we read through how others approached the essays and as we read comments from our peers. Thus, I became more open with anyone’s advice and consider their advices because new perspectives about my writing are always helpful. For example, in our peer review assignment for Literature Review essay, I was require to give three top priorities of revision my assigned peers should consider. As I was listing their three top priorities of revision about how they could polish their essays, I was able to be open about others’ arguments, which I might not have recognize or agree before. For example, I’ve given my two peers suggestions in their Literature Review essays about going through Professors’ instructions of citing a scholarly source with MLA form properly. I’m glad that we are required to participate peer review assignments for not only just Literature Review essay, but also other essays and collaborative projects. With an open mind about other’s advice or suggestion, I would be able to have a different perspective of anything outside this class. Also, I’ve practiced Flexibility as another Habit of Mind in the peer review assignments. After I’ve received comments from my peers and Professor Harrison, I was flexible to change or modify my title for my Literature Review essay. If I wasn’t not flexible and willing to accept others advices, I wouldn’t be able to present my argument in a way for people to understand easily. Nonetheless, being able to adapt to situations with other people’s suggestions would definitely be helpful in the future.

Furthermore, from the modules on Connect, I’ve practiced my Habits of Mind of Responsibility and Metacognition. Before this class, I never had the experienced with Connect, until the first week of class, I realized that if I answered a question wrong, I would have to answer more questions in order to prove I fully learned the lesson. Therefore, I’ve develop Responsibility as my Habit of Mind when I’m working on each modules; I was aware of my actions and consequences if I answered a question incorrectly. Moreover, I’ve also practiced Metacognition as a Habit of Mind on with the Integrating Source Quiz. Before taking the quiz, everyone was required to read the three lessons from Connect ebook about citing a source in text. Then the quiz allowed me to reflect what I’ve learned from those assigned reading on Connect ebook when it asked me to provide the correct citation structure for citing a certain type of media in text. Therefore, I was able to adapt Metacognition from Integrating Source Quiz on Connect.

Though I’ve done many individual assignment in this course, the collaborative wiki projects allowed me to practice both Curiosity and Creativity as the Habits of Mind. The first collaborative wiki project was the Victorian England wiki project; I was assigned to a group with three other people who need to research on different aspects of science during the Victorian Era and how those scientific aspect relates to Sir Conan Doyle and his development of detective stories. In my group, I volunteered to cover the page about Victorian forensics because I was interested in what tools the detectives or forensics scientists used to examine a crime scene relates with Sir Conan Doyle’s description of what Sherlock Holmes used to solve crimes. Therefore, I’ve develop my Curiosity as a Habit of Mind when I was researching Victorian forensics. On the other hand, the second collaborative wiki project, I was assigned to a group with two other people who need to define the cinematic elements of “Tracking Shot,” “Voice Over,” “Whip Pan,” and “Zoom Shot,” and find examples of those cinematic elements in the *Sherlock Holmes* movies, BBC TV series, *Sherlock*, and American TV series, *Elementary*; I was assigned to work on the page “Zoom Shot” and work with my other group mates on the page “Whip Pan.” As soon as I recognize use of zoom shots in Guy Ritchie’s movie, *Sherlock Holmes (2009)*, I screenshot segments of the zoom shot scene, then put each segmented pictures in a horizontal collage to present how zoom shot is done in a film. Thus, I’ve develop Creativity as one of my Habits of Mind as I work on this cinematic elements wiki project. Because of this wiki project, I was able to present a different way of presenting pictures, utilizing a Photoshop app on my mobile device to present my creativity.

Overall, the most important lesson I’ve learned in this class is incorporating scholars’ claim with my argument in a way people can understand easily without overpowered by the scholars’ voices. If I was unable to let my readers know exactly what I want to say, then they would question the validity of my statements. No matter how beautiful my language is used, my argument had to be understandable first. Thus, I still need to practice on presenting my idea in a way that is easy to understand. Nevertheless, I would keep develop each Habit of Mind as I’m writing other academic papers or working on projects for other classes in the future.