VIDEO 5: Writing Test PREVIEW

HELLO CLASS!

First of all, my apologies. I know that you all wanted to take the writing test this Friday as scheduled, however, it will not be happening until April 8tt, the Friday upon our return back from Spring Break. This is my video briefly describing what you can expect from the test, and I recommend that you watch it again any time during the break, or the week back at school before Friday.

Technically, it is possible for you to take the quiz without watching this video, however, I believe that it would be helpful to give you some idea of what to expect from the upcoming quiz.

The upcoming quiz will test your ability to apply the concepts introduced in class. You will be applying some general knowledge that you already have about your project, but you shouldn’t need to study. If anything, you might want to keep your notes on the previous videos handy, or rewatch the 2nd and 3rd video for a reminder about how certain terms are used in understanding technical communication.

Most importantly: Please remember that you must log in to CSNS March 8th at 8AM to take the quiz. You will have one half hour to read the prompt and one hour to complete the assignment, unless you are registered with the office for students with disabilities, in which case you will have two hours. The test will close at 9AM for most students. And while I can’t reveal the contents of the test, I can reveal the following:  
  
The timed writing will ask you to write about your real project. The one you are doing with your team Therefore, being knowledgeable about your project will be an asset, and to some degree, ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY. Presumably, you all have knowledge about your project, but you might also be trying to perform a very specific aspect of the project, and may be losing your grasp on what your project is all about. Try to remember the broad picture. The problem that your project is trying to solve, and the way you are trying to solve it.   
  
The timed writing will provide the opportunity to address a particular audience and use your skills of a writer. These skills include

Audience Awareness: In your life and in your career, you will have to address different people in different stations. These different writing situations require the ability to create the ideal piece of text based on your knowledge of what that person expects to see and needs to know. The timed writing will ask you to write to a specific (fictional) person.

Purpose: You should be able to develop writing that is geared towards pursuing its specific goals. A piece of writing that is meant to persuade somebody to adopt a particular policy, for example, should clearly lay out the benefits of said policy. A piece of writing that is meant to warn people not to adopt a particular policy, should warn people of the dangers of said policy. While technical documentation should be even-handed and ethical in its use of data, you can still apply it to achieve your goals. The timed writing will ask you to write to achieve a specific purpose.   
  
Clarity: When it comes to clarity, we understand that this is a timed writing assignment and therefore, you will have limited time. However, for the purposes of the assignment, you should have enough time to spend 5-10 minutes reading over your own words to make sure that you catch as many errors as you can, especially where those errors can lead to confusion.

Conciseness: We are not just asking you to write as much as possible, but also be economical with your words. Remember, there are ethics involved in how much you expect others to spend time looking for meaning in your words. Time is valuable, and you should save your reader time by avoiding redundancies.

Accessibility: To be honest, for this assignment, I think that accessibility is going to be an easy category to deal with. That is because it should be pretty clear how to format the assignment to make the information easy to retrieve, under the correct conditions. However, I am implementing this rubric because it will become pertinent on future assignments. Following the directions in the way that most people would, will likely lead to a perfect score in this category.

When taking the quiz, be mindful of the clock. Divide your time between reading the assignment, planning, drafting your response, and editing based on your understanding of how much YOU will need for each of these components.   
If you would like to see the script for this preview it is available in CSNS under the Writing Resources Module. Additionally, the rubric for this writing test is available.   
  
Please let me know if you have any questions by emailing me, or coming to my office hour. You may also view the rubric for the upcoming assignment.