Text of Assignment: DEE-CR Project (Describe, Evaluate, Edit, Communicate, Reflect)

Purposes

- Evaluate and edit a text judiciously for audience, purpose, genre, forum, style, diction, tone, and mechanics.

- Communicate effectively and supportively to an author.

- Make knowledge from your experience.

Overview

- This assignment asks you to select a particular non-fiction text "out there in the world" that you believe would benefit from the attention of an informed, adept editor who can help the writer better achieve their goals.

- You will first describe the text and contextualize it, then evaluate it in terms of audience, purpose, genre, forum, style, diction, tone, and mechanics.

- Then, you will edit the text to better achieve the writer's purposes. Refer to our textbooks (the *Chicago Manual of Style* and Williams and Bizup's *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*) and other assigned resources to ground your efforts in specific concepts and strategies.

- Finally, you will reflect on the edits that you made to the text, offer rationales for why you made them and how they improve the text, and offer a "so what?" knowledge-making point from your having edited the text.

Section Requirements

Submit one consecutively paginated PDF with these seven parts, in this order:

- **D**: Part 1, the **Description**, should inform readers where you found the text, identify its author(s) and audience(s), purpose(s), genre, and forum. The purpose of this section is to contextualize the text so your edits are not just abstractions or preferences. You will have to do some research to establish these grounding conditions. Cite your sources using MLA 8th format, both in this section (in-text citations) and in a Works Cited. You'll need roughly 500 words to develop this section completely yet concisely.

- **E:** Part 2, the **Evaluation**, should evaluate the text in terms of how effective or ineffective it is, given the context you explained in the previous section. Be specific in your evaluative comments about audience, purpose, genre, forum, style, diction, tone, and mechanics. What needs editing and why? What needs to be left as it stands and why? What levels of edits are needed and why? What does the text do well, poorly, or not at all? Which concepts from assigned materials (be specific) will you use in editing the text to better achieve its purposes? You'll need roughly 500 words to develop this section completely yet concisely.

- **E:** Part 3, the **Editing** part, asks you to edit the text and to show those edits clearly. Use Microsoft Word, LibreOffice Writer, or the markup tools in Adobe Acrobat, Mac Preview, or Xodo. I will help you select a tool that works for you. The purpose of this section is to clearly show all modifications to the text. If you have to attach the edited text as an appendix and just refer to it here, that's fine, too. Talk to me about what's best to do, given the length and complexity of your text. This section is simply the edited text, showing all modifications; you'll reflect on the edits in the next section.

- **C**: Part 4, the **Communicate** part, asks you to communicate about your editorial emendations to the author in the form of an email. The email will require you to refer to spelling or style questions still to be resolved (those that could go more than one way), a list of issues, an overview of changes to the text, and a request for action. Your communication needs to be clear, supported, tactful, actionable, and useful. Use the strategies identified by Mackiewicz and Riley in their article on the "editor as diplomat."

- **R:** Part 5, the **Reflection**, asks you to reflect on how the text is improved by your edits. Recall that editing works at both the macro and micro levels and is intended to best help the text accomplish its purposes. Offer a "so what?" point about the problems, opportunities, and challenges of editing texts that your work on this particular text helps to illuminate. What surprised you? What did you learn from the process of editing this text? What did you draw on from your previous experiences (in or out of school contexts) about giving and receiving feedback? What did you learn that could carry over to other writing and editing situations?

- Part 6 is a simple Works Cited in MLA format. Here you will cite the original text and all sources used in establishing the text's context in the Description section.

- Part 7 is an Appendix consisting of the original unedited text-- retyped, embedded as a screenshot, scanned, or otherwise presented as it was when you found it. I can help you with scanning text, with optical character recognition (OCR), and other workarounds to save any drudgery here.

- After Part 7, put a page break. On the last page, identify the one item that you most want me to comment on when I evaluate your work. Use a short paragraph to do so.

Rules and Advice

- You have to choose a text "in the wild" (not from a textbook, an exercise, a collection of bad writing, etc.).

- Choose a text that you are interested in--but remember that "interest" can take many forms. Do not just settle for the first thing you see. We will have in-class activities designed to help you choose a text and to help your classmates with their own choices.

- Nonfiction prose texts only.

- No "academic paper" texts, such as a class paper.

- No student newspaper texts.

- Choose a text with "enough" to work with. While that standard is loose, if you choose a text that just needs a couple of commas added or removed (or is very short), you won't have much to work with or reflect upon. This assignment assumes that you will see a genuine need for substantive macro/micro editing of the text. By the same token, if you choose a very long text, you might not have enough time. We will negotiate your selection of a text to work with.

- Make sure that your edits are judicious and that they achieve the text's purposes better than the text did before you edited it. Don't chop out essential information (maybe it can be condensed) or just appropriate the text. Don't introduce new errors.

- If your chosen text is subject to a particular style guide, work with that style guide, submit it (e.g., with a link), and be sure to describe how you used that guide to make choices.

- If your chosen text is not subject to a particular style guide **or** that guide does not provide a clear answer to a particular question, use CMOS as your style guide. In particular, use CMOS for
  - Section 5.250, the Glossary of Problematic Words and Phrases
  - Sections 5.251-.260 on biased language
  - Section 6 on Punctuation
  - Section 7 on Spelling, Distinctive Treatment of Words, and Compounds
  - Section 8 on Names, Terms, and Titles of Works
  - Section 9 on Numbers

- ○ Section 10 on Abbreviations

- ○ Section 11 on Languages Other than English

- Be prepared to articulate a rationale for all modifications to the text.

- Ask questions early and often. Participate in low-stakes drafting and invention activities.

Evaluation Criteria

Description section

Expectations

- ❏ Informs readers where you found the text, identifies its author(s), audience(s), purpose(s), genre, and forum.
- ❏ Contextualizes the text so your edits are not just abstractions.
- ❏ If sources are needed to establish this context, they are incorporated effectively and cited in the text and a Works Cited.

Comments, Questions, and Advice:

Evaluation Section

Expectations

- ❏ Evaluates the text in terms of how effective or ineffective it is, given the context laid out in the previous section. Explains what the text does well, poorly, or not at all.
- ❏ Clear on what needs editing and why.
- ❏ Refers accurately to specific concepts from CMOS, SLCG, or other relevant materials particular to this text and its context.

Comments, Questions, and Advice:

Editing Section

Expectations

- ❏ Shows the chosen text and your edits clearly by using change-tracked word processing or clear PDF markup.
- ❏ Edits improve the text for its purposes and context, are judicious, and do not introduce new errors.

Comments, Questions, and Advice:

Communication section

Expectations

- ❏ Uses style sheet, issues section, and overview of changes to the text to separate levels of comments and to balance depth and breadth.
- ❏ Clear, supported, tactful, actionable, useful to the author.

Comments, Questions, and Advice

Reflection section

Expectations

- ❏ Reflects on the edits you made, where you suggested modifications to the text (and where you did not), and how the text is improved by your edits, micro and macro.
- ❏ Offers "so what?" points about the problems, opportunities, and challenges of editing texts that your work on this text helps to illuminate. (Possible questions to develop: What surprised you? How were you judicious in your edits? What did you draw on from your previous experiences [in or out of school]? What did you learn that could carry over to other situations?)

Comments, Questions, and Advice

Form and Mechanics

All sections present, in order (Description, Evaluation, Editing, Communication, Reflection, Works Cited, Appendix), in consecutively paginated PDF?

- ❏ Yes
- ❏ No

Unhampered by disruptive errors (e.g. ineffective sentence fragment, comma splices, fused sentences) or accumulations of minor errors (e.g., dropped quotes, typos, it's/its, missing/ repeated words)?

❏ Yes
❏ No

Comments, Questions, and Advice

Content (90% of grade)
❏ Meets All Expectations-100%
❏ Meets Most Expectations-85%
❏ Shows Effort, but Doesn't Yet Meet Most Expectations-70%
❏ Not Assessable-0%

Form and Mechanics (10% of grade)
❏ Meets All Expectations-100%
❏ Meets Most Expectations-85%
❏ Shows Effort, but Doesn't Yet Meet Most Expectations-70%
❏ Not Assessable-0%

Overall Grade for Submission (Content + Form and Mechanics)

❏ Meets All Expectations-100%
❏ Meets Most Expectations-85%
❏ Shows Effort, but Doesn't Yet Meet Most Expectations-70%
❏ Not Assessable-0%

Overall Comments and Priorities for Revision: