

Writing a Cohesive Argument

One of the important skills that I have picked up throughout my academic career has been the ability to write a cohesive argument supported by reputable sources and relevant statistics and information. All of my artifacts in my e-portfolio demonstrate this ability and the classes I took later on show a higher level of maturity and sophistication in my writing. One of the more important classes I took regarding this skill was CYSE 202G where I was tasked with looking at different moral issues in the world of cybersecurity and making an argument about either how they could be fixed and what steps might be able to be taken towards that goal or why I thought it was not actually an issue or not related to morality. In the artifact I included, I was making an argument about a moral panic of my choosing and what implications I thought it might have for the future. CYSE 202G was a class I took earlier on in my Old Dominion career, so my way of writing had not yet become as refined as I like to think it is today. But no matter our writing level, my professor wanted us to have the freedom to choose our own issue to discuss about, which I think brought me to a realization about myself - I am able to write much better when I can choose a topic I am interested in rather than being told what to write about. This reflection paper, for example, is something I find comes a little easier to me because it is just me talking about my experiences and looking in retrospect at my academic career. This brings me to another class I took, STEM 251G, which was another information literacy class, but not specific to the cybersecurity major. I took that class over winter semester of 2022 because I needed one more elective and I had heard from a friend that he really liked the professor and thought I'd enjoy the class if I just wanted a good class to take. In that class, the professor gave us almost total freedom when it came to the final paper and I think that it really showcases the two points I have just made: my writing has come a long way since I first began attending university and I

am able to write more freely and more effectively when I choose a topic that is near and dear to me. The final assignment was a simple research paper, but we had specifications on what kind of sources we had to pull from. This is where the class really taught me something new, because I had only really used scholarly journals for the bulk of my classes when I wrote papers. My professor wanted us to use a mix of scholarly journals, blog pages, images, and at least one social media post. I was familiar with using scholarly journals and images, those being two of the most common things to cite in my previous papers, but I had not delved into the territory of opinionated pieces like blog pages and social media posts before. In a class I took just to get an elective out of the way, I was able to add a little to my repository of writing ability by getting some experience in using sources I had not before, and overall, I think it helped me to become a better writer and be able to give myself more material to use when putting together cohesive arguments. And lastly for this skill, IDS 493 helped teach me how to market myself and how to be concise in my arguments. I am generally a long-winded person, but IDS 493 taught me that in the world of business and self-marketing, conciseness is key. I understand that there are times when being more detail oriented is necessary, but this class taught me that the world moves quickly and I have to learn how to give all the right information in a short enough time span to be eye catching and still convincing. I think this has helped me learning how to form cohesive arguments, because part of a good argument is clarity, and sometimes clarity can be lost in the paragraphs it might take to explain something.

Cognitive Empathy

Empathy is a trait I feel I have always possessed when it comes to interpersonal relationships, but cognitive empathy is a different deck of cards. Someone who has cognitive empathy is able to set aside their biases and preconceived notions to look through the lens of a

different socioeconomic class, a different race, a different marginalized group, anyone who does not share the same views as themselves. One of the first real looks I had at cognitive empathy was in CYSE 201S, which was a class that focused on the interactions between social sciences and cybersecurity. In my artifact for CYSE 201S, I examined virtual reality and how, by looking through the perspective of different social sciences, we might be able to better understand it and the impact it can have on society. I have used virtual reality plenty, but only for video games as a source of entertainment, so that was my preconceived notion of virtual reality. In doing my project for CYSE 201S, I learned about several different ways virtual reality is used in practical manners, such as being able to show a walkthrough of a house before it is built to see if the prospective owners are satisfied with the design. This first look I had at cognitive empathy opened up a new way of thinking for me that I had not experienced in my previous twenty years of life. My IDS 300W class was another class that was significant in my development of cognitive empathy. For that class, I had to choose three fields of study and select a topic that encompassed all three fields, and then write a cohesive research paper examining the issue and making predictions about its implications on the future. My three fields of study were history, geopolitics, and cybersecurity and the issue I selected was the decades-long cyber war between Israel and Iran. Relating back to my first section, this cyber conflict was an issue that I find quite interesting, so doing the research for the paper and putting all the ideas together was more fun than it was tedious. Writing that artifact certainly took me out of my comfort zone, as I had to leave my disciplinary bubble of cybersecurity and information technology to branch out into fields of study that I was not so familiar with, but that experience helped me to realize that being a well-rounded academic and having knowledge from all sorts of fields can be a valuable asset in self-marketing and furthering myself. The last class for this section is my Philosophy 355E

class, which was solely focused on developing cognitive empathy in the students who took it. Throughout the class, we were tasked with reading the ideas from seven different philosophers and examining issues through the lens of those philosophers to decide whether the actions that the characters involved in the issue took were morally correct or unjust. The assignments in Philosophy 355E were much more rigid in structure, not really allowing for much creative freedom in the writing. Looking back now, I understand that it was necessary to have this rigid structure so that we as students would be forced to use perspectives other than our own and that we would not have the comfort of being able to choose topics or issues that we are already familiar with. I really enjoyed the class, despite what I initially thought of it. The artifact I included for this class showcases one of the issues we had to discuss and the lens through which I chose to examine the issue. My writing from my assignments in that class were not as eloquent as I might usually write, but that was a necessary part of me learning more about how to be an effective writer in situations where I am going in with less knowledge than I was used to.

Cybersecurity and its Applications

Perhaps one of the simpler skills to explain, the third skill I have focused on is the abilities and knowledge I have gained in my chosen major of cybersecurity. Cybersecurity is a very broad field that includes a plethora of different jobs from a network administrator to an information security officer to government hackers. But one thing that is important for all these related professions are the hard skills of being able to understand cybersecurity. In my CYSE 270 class, I learned many of these hard skills, and the one I have highlighted in my artifact is working with the command line in Linux systems, which is essentially how troubleshooting is done on machines running Linux. This class is an important baseline class to be able to build on towards the different careers I mentioned before. The other class that was essential in this skill

was my CYSE 425W class, in which I was examining cyber law and cyber policy. While it may not seem like a hard skill, the ability to relate cybersecurity to other fields of work is a job in and of itself. Cybersecurity is a field filled with acronyms and abbreviations at every corner, so being able to translate the goings-on of the cybersecurity world to the language that a businessman will understand is a vital skill. Without middlemen, it is much more difficult for things to get done and this class showed me some of the countless ways that cybersecurity permeates every field of study in today's world.