ENGL 2311 Discussion Responses (DR) & Collaborative Comments (CC)

For Project 1

DR1: 1st Day

- Why are you taking a Technical and Business Writing class?
- What most excites you about this class?
- What makes you most nervous about this class?

THEN "Reply" to a classmate's DR1 = **Collaborative Comment 1**

DR2: Audience and Tone in Writing

Two increasingly important aspects technical and business writing is knowing your audience and matching your tone when writing to that audience. Based on your experience:

- How should you write differently in tone for a friend and for a supervisor about the same information?
- And WHY should you write differently in tone for a friend and for a supervisor even though the information is the same?

THEN "Reply" to a classmate's DR2 = **Collaborative Comment 2**

DR3: Staying Positive

"Business Letters: Accentuating the Positives" explains the importance of staying positive in your wording. This response has three parts:

- Why is it important to use positive wording in your business letters (like a cover letter)?
- Why is it important to soften negative information with a positive point of view?
- Write one personal "weakness" that can be stated in a positive way in a cover letter.

THEN "Reply" to a classmate's DR3 = **Collaborative Comment 3**

DR4: Strong Action Verbs

"Power Verbs for Your Resume" shows even stronger action verbs.
This response has three parts:

- Why is it important to use the active voice in your résumé?
- Why is it important to use powerful verbs (instead of weaker verbs like "helped") in your résumé?
- Write one bullet point for your résumé using a strong action verb.

THEN "Reply" to a classmate's DR4 = **Collaborative Comment 4**

For Project 2

DR5: Steps in Instructions

The Farkas reading proposes five components for procedures:

1. Title
2. Conceptual element
3. Infinitive subheading
4. Steps
5. Notes

Steps are the most important of these components. The **Steps** section contains many **subsections**:

- Basic action steps
- Steps with a facilitating modifier
- User option steps
- Conditional steps
- Purpose explanations in steps
- Feedback statements in steps

Choose one of these **subsections** -- other than Basic Action Steps -- and write, in your own words, a summary of when you would use this kind of step and why it helps the reader.

THEN "Reply" to a classmate's DR5 = **Collaborative Comment 5**

DR6: Style and Grammar

Reynold's "Understanding Prescriptive vs. Descriptive Grammar" and OSU Writing Center's "Prescriptive and Descriptive Grammar" explain well these two differences of "correct" grammar.

Prescriptivism states rules about style and grammar that writers must follow if they want to write correctly. Professional and technical writing typically takes a ***prescriptivist*** approach to style and grammar, such as the **GNOME** "Developer Documentation Style Guidelines."

In contrast, the spoken and/or informal grammar takes a ***descriptivist*** approach, by recognizing that grammar is always changing and that you might use different grammar and style in different settings.

- What place do you think informal grammar has in professional and technical writing? Can you think of an example, from professional and technical writing, when you would take a descriptivist approach to grammar instead of a prescriptivist approach?

THEN "Reply" to a classmate's DR6 = **Collaborative Comment 6**

For Project 3

DR7: Different Types of Technical Reports
Jake Wobbrok's paper "Catchy Titles Are Good: But Avoid Being Cute" gives great advice for writing an academic research paper, particularly for the Human Computer Interaction field where he does most of his research.

What advice from Wobbrock's paper would you change for writing technical reports in a business and professional setting? Choose **ONE** of the sections in Wobbrock's paper (Abstract, Introduction, Related Work, etc.) and describe how the advice for this section (and maybe its title or even existence) would be different for a technical report written in a business and professional setting. (Keep your answers short. You do not need to address every piece of advice in the section that you choose.)

THEN "Reply" to a classmate's DR7 = **Collaborative Comment 7**

DR8: Graphics in Your Technical Report
After reading the first three pages from *Technical Communication* Chapter 12: Creating Graphics, you might be thinking about including a graphic in your technical report.

- What information might a graphic convey in your technical report?
- What type of graphic might you include and why would you use that type?

(Note: Your technical report does not need to include a graphic, but at least explore the possibility here.)

THEN "Reply" to a classmate's DR8 = **Collaborative Comment 8**

DR9: Technical Reports Only for STEM?
As implied by NISO's "Scientific and Technical Reports" instructional report, are technical reports ONLY for STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, mathematics), or can they be used in other fields, like business, education, or the social sciences (psychology, government)? Explain.

THEN "Reply" to a classmate's DR9 = **Collaborative Comment 9**

DR10: About This Course
What has been the most valuable part of this course for you personally? How did you grow as a writer? What would you change if you were planning the course for next semester's students?

THEN "Reply" to a classmate's DR10 = **Collaborative Comment 10**