

Learning Essay

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ENSS 120

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Design Ethics, Equity and Justice

When I first took this class, I believed this class to be about the natural processes of the world. I learned very early on that this was nowhere near the full scope of what Environmental Science entailed. Throughout this course I learned about the intricacies of natural processes and how they relate to the human experience, especially how it relates to class struggle and suffering. This is evident in my notes for week four, where I talk about learning about weatherization and how different energy systems, such as hybrid or electrified systems, harm or benefit certain communities. (week four, tuesday) This change in scope caused me to become more invested in recognising such relationships and how nature and human society work with or against each other. Not only did I learn about viewing the world in a different light, I also learned about how to help out my local community. In week three on Thursday, I learned about and discussed with the class how to inform the community about the available resources that may help out the people in philly living under the poverty line. Such examples would be learning and spreading the knowledge about Philadelphia's water program and the cost and risk of alternate energy sources. This topic helped me understand my privilege and position, as I never had to worry about finding outside support for energy bills. This new angle helped me foster a new interest and motivation for the subject. In my observations, I try to take this perspective and apply it to mundane activities as noted in my observations, like lawncare and traffic tolls. (observation week 4, week3)

Skills and Strategies

I tend to struggle in a traditional class environment. My mind tends to race and struggle for concentration and attention. This class helped me not only give them the tools to slow down but also change the way I learn so that I learn in a way that suits me. With each meditation, I have been able to slowly improve my headspace as class starts. Over the course of my notes, it is evident that they have been more and more effective as time went along. Working on this midterm through a website has helped me retain what I learned better as I can relate to the material more. This is in part due to what I learned in week one with Engaged pedagogy. I applied engaged pedagogy for this class by personalizing what we were learning in order to transform blank works on a paper to a real personal memory. This is evident in my observations and group discussions, where I talk about concepts we learned like weatherization and how it applies to me. This class also forces me to address my time management issues head on, by giving me full responsibility in terms of deadlines. While normal classes have assignments due weekly, Environmental Science focuses work on portfolios. While this class does have weekly assignments, it is evident that the weight of this class is not with them. This removes weekly pressure, which means it is up to me to delegate time to work on this class in a timely manner. This skill is not specific to Environmental Science, as it can be applied in all work. While I still have a long way to go, I have been given the tools to address my time related issues.

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Confidence

I have hallways been a shy speaker, with very little confidence in my work. As stated in my learning goal, I do not have a lot of confidence in my work. Oftentimes when I have made a mistake, I lose all confidence and become demoralized, which harms my future assignments. This class has been helping me tackle this by how the group discussions are structured. By constantly rotating out group members, I can see students from all levels of confidence and competence. This has helped me realize that my work, even when subpar, is not to be sulked over. I experienced this when working on the group story. Usually group work makes me envious of others and their knowledge, but a lot of the group discussions or work are not about that. They are co-operative in a way that makes me confident in my abilities. This can also be seen when we discuss as a class regarding research memos. One example of this is week two's gift economy group discussion. By having a group leader repeat my ideas, I could both see how my words impacted the discussion but also retain a certain level of anonymity that let me share such ideas to begin with. This group dynamic also helps me learn from my peers and become more interdependent and less of a hermit. It is due to the group discussions that I was able to better understand the class material, especially when it came to understanding Philadelphia and its intersectionality with environmental science. This is seen with me learning about all the programs that the city uses and the struggle of its people.