Critical Analysis

Overview: One of the most important writing skills for academics at all levels is the art of reading. Thoughtful, careful reading allows writers to respond knowledgably to what others have said about a topic; it also enables us to proceed insightfully when sharing our own ideas. For this assignment, you will write your analysis or “take” of an article related to our class discussions about writing technologies.

Goals: The main goals of this assignment are for you to:
- Develop a thoughtful, careful approach to reading.
- Analyze and evaluate what the article does and how it does it.
- Write your critical analysis, using an effective structure and a clear, energetic style.

Audience: Your primary audiences are yourself, the class, and me. This is a writing-to-learn project, and we want to learn with and from you about contemporary perspectives on various writing technologies.

Procedures and Requirements:
1. Choose and print one article from the links listed on the Resources section of our course web page (i.e., the articles by Johnson, Gregory, Kirn, Yoffe, or Rosen).
2. Read the article, making notes and annotations about what the author is saying, and how, and what you think about it.
3. Study examples and advice to help write effectively in this genre. Consult the examples provided at class; refer to Graff & Birkenstein for advice.
4. Write a concise rhetorical analysis of the article (700 words): help your readers to understand what the article does, how it does it, and why it matters. That is, explain the context for the piece, and provide your evaluative insights about the author’s main arguments. Concentrate on smart analysis, effective structure, and a clear, energetic style in your writing. Be sure to give credit where you use others’ words or ideas, and provide MLA in-text citations and works cited entries for any sources you cite, including the article that you analyze.
5. Bring electronic copies to class throughout your work on the project. Your final draft is due Thursday, January 26. If you found your own article, attach a copy to your paper.

Workshop drafts: Meeting due dates for the workshop drafts is important for you and for your classmates who will be learning with you. Each time that you miss one of these deadlines or come unprepared for a workshop will result in a full-grade reduction from your score on the paper.

Grading: The Critical Analysis is worth 10% of your final grade. A quality paper will:
- Present a thoughtful, careful rhetorical analysis that considers both text and context.
- Consider genre, audience, purpose, and situation to make effective rhetorical choices about content, structure and organization, and style and voice.
- Apply academic conventions for grammar, usage, and mechanics.
- Give credit to sources for words and ideas used in the piece.
- Demonstrate a developed and accurate understanding of course readings and activities.