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# *Writer's Statement about "Constructing Identity in Academic Writing: A Case Study on Rhetorical Awareness in Engineering Discourse"*

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DANIEL TRUESDELL

The inspiration and motivation for my research were derived largely from my desire to make my work as relevant as possible to a real scholarly audience. As a student in Professor Lambert's ENC 1102 class, I learned that research is a never-ending process, stimulated by inquiry and validated by progress. In my opinion, good research not only contributes something to the academic world but also differentiates itself from existing work. When I began my research, I was armed with a small collection of conceptual and analytical frameworks that I had previously used to investigate the conventions of engineering writing. My intent was to implement these frameworks and analytical tools in a continuation of the work that I had been doing throughout the semester. However, after I familiarized myself with the existing academic discussions surrounding engineering discourse communities and engineering writing, I realized that in order for my work to benefit or add to these conversations, I needed to respond to a specific question or need with an appropriate methodology. What followed this realization was a long and repetitive process of secondary research, revision, and peer review that eventually led to the creation of my thesis, which I felt was technical enough to interest an audience of journal readers and relevant enough to impact the academic conversation that I was joining, yet still applicable to ENC 1102 course concepts. As a direct response to Jon Leydens' "Novice and Insider Perspectives On Academic and Workplace Writing: Toward A Continuum Of Rhetorical Awareness," I was confident that my writing would serve a valid purpose in a popular academic discussion, although I still faced the challenge of developing an adequate methodology for my research needs. My decision to perform a textual analysis of hedging was inspired by Ann Johns' characteristics of academic writing from "Discourse Communities and Communities of Practice," which was introduced to me in Professor Lambert's class. To successfully perform this analysis, I needed to be able to identify hedges in my participants' writing and thoroughly understand their relationship with the discourse. Educating myself on concepts of hedging, modality, and epistemology to the point that I could use them in my research methodology was probably the most time consuming part of my entire writing process, but this newfound knowledge would benefit me in multiple ways: Not only did it give me the

confidence and authority necessary to draw conclusions from my research, but it will also inform my own academic writing in the future and increase my rhetorical awareness as an engineering writer. I believe that my finished work represents how I learned to apply the tools, knowledge, and experience given to me in ENC 1102 to accomplish a writing task that extends beyond the classroom and relates to my academic field.