Overview: Every Composition I student is asked to write a diagnostic essay in order to help professors determine their students’ current writing level and readiness for this course. This essay will not be graded critically, but will simply be used to assess your writing skills. Because we need to see where you are as a writer, this essay should present your best work and not that of peers, friends, or parents. Though this essay is important, it is not meant to intimidate you or stress you out. Usually students spend about 1 to 1.5 hours writing their essay after having read the assigned article. You might think of this essay as more of an “in-class” writing response and limit yourself to a specific time frame. Your instructor will read your essays with this time restriction in mind.

Instructions: Read Deborah Tannen’s “How Male and Female Students Use Language Differently” in From Inquiry to Academic Writing (Greene and Lidinsky, pp. 368-373) and write a 300-500 word response to one of the writing prompts below. Your essay should include an introduction, body, and conclusion and should reference the ideas in the essay. Do not consult outside sources or quote large chunks from Tannen’s essay. Your response should reference Tannen’s ideas, but should primarily present your own thoughts and opinions about her claims. Your essay should use 11 or 12 point, Times New Roman font and should be double-spaced. When you are finished, save your essay and upload it to the “Diagnostic Writing Assignment” submission in MyHills and the “Diagnostic Essay” in Turnitin.com.

Writing Prompts (Answer only ONE of the following prompts, and be sure to read the essay before writing your response!)

1. Tannen claims that classrooms are “more hospitable to most men than most women” because our educational system focuses more on debate than open-ended discussion (370). Based on your own experiences and observations, agree or disagree with her claim.

2. Tannen claims that male students and teachers tend to prefer debate and direct challenges to ideas while female students and teachers learn better through personal anecdotes and group discussions (369-373). Based on your own experiences and observations, agree or disagree with her claim.

3. In her essay, Tannen discusses student and teacher interactions in the classroom and the challenges inhibiting student learning. Although she doesn’t directly state her opinions about classroom roles, Tannem indirectly suggests what students’ and teachers’ roles should be in the classroom (369-373). Discuss how she believes students and teachers should ideally interact in the classroom, and based on your own experiences and observations, agree or disagree with her opinion.