Diagnostic Writing Assignment

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 Sherry Turkle’s “The Flight from Conversation” in From Inquiry to Academic Writing (Greene and Lidinsky 59-62) and write a 300-500 word response to one of the writing prompts below. Your essay should include an introduction, body, and conclusion. Your response should reference Turkle’s ideas, but should primarily present your own thoughts and opinions about her claims. Do not consult outside sources or quote large chunks from Turkle’s essay. The 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 MyHills “Diagnostic Writing Assignment Drop Box.”

Writing Prompts (Answer only ONE of the following prompts and be sure to read Turkle’s essay before responding so you have enough context to understand the author’s ideas!)

1. Turkle says that “[w]e are tempted to think that our little ‘sips’ of online connection add up to a big gulp of real conversation. But they don’t....no matter how valuable, they do not substitute for conversation” (60). Based on your own experiences and observations, agree or disagree with her claim.
2. Turkle believes that we often feel in our real lives that nobody is listening to us and that, for this reason, we are attracted to social media: on social media we have “automatic listeners” (61). Based on your own experiences and observations, agree or disagree with her claim.
3. Turkle argues that “[w]e think constant connection will make us feel less lonely. The opposite is true” (62). Based on your own experiences and observations, agree or disagree with her claim.

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