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ENGL 21003-D
Children's Book Reflection

The idea for vaccinations to be the topic of my group's children's book arose from my 1, Paper, 3 Audience inquiry question, which is centered around how the government's actions regarding vaccines and outbreaks affect public opinion and/or anxiety. I decided on this topic because not all kids have the means of learning about vaccinations and diseases or the work the government puts into public vaccination programs. The previous assignment made me realize how vital it is for the public to be educated on vaccines since many are misinformed and therefore lack trust in vaccines. By educating the youth, we can maintain herd immunity and handle outbreaks better, which is clearly not shown by current events and the ongoing pandemic. Initially, I was unsure if I was working independently or with others, so I created a general outline for my idea, but I soon got in contact with my group members and my topic proposal received support.

My role in this assignment was to write out and illustrate for the first section, and to help edit the book once it was completed. The inspiration for my section is *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* because it takes something complex and scientifically based, such as the growth cycle of a caterpillar, but communicates the caterpillar's journey in such a way that transforms it into a fascinating tale to children rather than a boring, complicated lecture. I tried to mirror the same result in my group's book by setting the scene of a pre-vaccinated world then transitioning to an explanation of Edward Jenner and where vaccines got their start. To ensure that children can better anthropomorphize and understand diseases, we chose to personify the diseases we encounter as bullies, just like how the book personifies the caterpillar so children can relate without getting overly in-depth in the scientific aspect of the cycle.

The target ages for my audience were within the realm of 7-8 years old. The reasoning being if the children were older they would likely have some working knowledge of vaccines, which would make the book redundant. However, they would still be too young for the implementation of the government's role in vaccines and outbreaks, so I decided to stick with a younger audience and to cut out the government's influence from the book. Photos were used throughout the book as children of that age tend to be attracted to picture books to help supplement their readings. We used more simple language and tried not to get caught up on nomenclature so that the children would be able to enjoy and understand the book.

Regarding the finished children's book, I feel rather neutral with the outcome. By anthropomorphizing the viruses into bullies, it solved the problem of taking the idea of microscopic viruses and translating it into something that children would comprehend, but not get scared over. I believe that mentioning Egypt's past with "the speckled monster" helped provide a general timeline for how long dealing with viruses has been on humanity's agenda, which further establishes the importance of having vaccines. By transitioning it into Edward

Jenner's inoculation story was a fun diversion that provided more traditional picture book settings, such as a farmland cow and milkmaid. The story afterwards relates it back to children to make them feel included and aware of these diseases. I had set out to create a children's picture book that would create an educational, though simplified, representation of vaccines, and why they're vital, which was accomplished. However, I can see that the book is messily put together due to the lack of a shared vision. For example, the mentioning of different kinds of viruses was oddly placed as it wasn't elaborated on or mentioned ever again.

From my personal experience, a large obstacle was being thrust into a leadership role overnight. As someone who usually works alone, working with others was a learning experience with a curve. Perhaps one of the biggest issues was communication when it came to translating my idea onto paper, since I already had background knowledge on this topic due to the previous assignment. They found it difficult to understand my direction with my idea, whereas I had problems communicating some of the topics they had questions on. I believe that this occurred because we didn't plan out the idea together, making it more difficult to bring everyone to a consensus on the matters that needed deciding. For example, after we laid out the framework of the book, they still felt unsure about how to start working on the assignment until I finished my part of the assignment. I felt a sense of pressure to finish up the writing portion of my section by the second draft, which gave me less time to plan and thoroughly ensure that I enjoyed what I was putting down.

This assignment really put me outside of my comfort zone. Having to write to a younger audience was much more difficult because I had to stop myself from elaborating too much or using words outside of their vocabulary. I felt slightly embarrassed and awkward because it was my first time writing for this audience, since many children's books are over-the-top and expressive. To combat this, I looked back at books I read as a child to mimic their writing style, but, knowing me, it probably came off as stiff. Despite my unfamiliarity with writing children's books, it was a beneficial experience by pushing me to do something I dread as someone who's not very fond of writing.