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*English Comp 105*

**Course Reflection**

I never knew I was going to die at such a young age. The sentence you just read caught your attention, it brought you a sense of curiosity and left you wanting to read more and fill the missing pieces in your head. Exactly what was I dying from? What caused this? What will happen next? This is what good writing is, the ability to grab hold of the reader’s attention and keep that attention alive and interested. It isn’t that difficult to tell whether a piece of writing is considered good or bad. You have to read it to figure that out. If you wave a bone in front of a dog, its attention will be focused on the bone causing it to come running, This is the key for all writers; we must find an incentive to wave in the vision of our readers to keep them wanting more.

Speed, strength, agility, willpower, and heart are essentials for a boxer to be considered good. Just like a boxer a writer also needs certain characteristics to be considered a good writer such as, good word choice, sentence fluency, organization, and ideas that are interesting, but above all else be creative. Creativity, in my opinion, is one of the most needed traits to be a good writer. The ability to play with words and come up with fun, strong, and moving sentences comes from creativity. Without it there would be no mysteries, no arguments just a paper that gets straight to the point and is one dimensional which sounds more like math to me.

I never really enjoyed writing an essay, it was always a hassle to me and I view it as a huge nuisance, whenever I came across a writing assignment I wouldn’t really care as much as I should have, I did it just to get it done and that was the end of that, but over the course of this semester I learned something about myself, I actually enjoy writing. I love the feeling of writing a very well written paper. Although, I am very lazy, stubborn, and a huge procrastinator when I sit down and take my time, I display the traits of a good writer. Thinking over all my work during this class I have seen that by taking the time and writing about the topics that I am passionate about brings out the absolutely best in me.

Throughout this course I’ve come across styles of writing that I wasn’t so unacquainted with such as, writing an ethnography or writing an issue paper. My writing gradually elevated with each assignment. My first few writing assignments weren’t something to brag about but as the class was progressed forward I started to see that I had a lot more control and freedom with my papers. I was able to write however I choose and about whatever I wanted. There were no instructions or format to follow; there were no rules to abide by. I was given complete creative freedom. Writing my first paper was the hardest because it was my first time writing with so much freedom. I felt lost and structure-less. Being told what to write about and how to write it was all I knew how to do. The freedom to explore writing was something different but it was a good type of different.

*“You can’t do it; you’re living in a fantasy!” I was fifteen when I confronted my parents about my dreams of becoming a professional boxer. But they quickly shot it down because it didn’t live up to what they called a “traditional job” as a Bengali family. Both of my parents didn’t have much growing up in Bangladesh, education was scarce, and jobs weren’t available. Even now in the U.S my parents work day and night to keep food on the table and clothes on our backs. Everything in their eyes had to be realistic and of course had to be about education. My mom always said, “Work hard in school and you will make tons of money.” Obviously the only thing I heard was “tons of money”. My brain decided to censor out the less important part of the sentence, “School”. But above all else the only thing on my mind was becoming a professional boxer, to become welterweight champion of the world. Yes, it is a unrealistic goal, so what, I guess I’m an unrealistic person.*

This is the introduction paragraph taken from my first paper. As you read through this intro paragraph you can see that it is not such a well written introduction. There are several mistakes, the sentences are not very well thought out and also are very compressed. Furthermore, there isn’t a very good flow and the interest level of this paragraph is quite low. While in the process of writing this essay I remember not knowing how to get everything onto paper I had very cloudy thoughts and didn’t exactly know what to write down and what to leave out.

*Walking in Keyworth Stadium (a soccer/football field found in the south corner of Hamtramck, MI) in such a long time felt really good, I felt a feeling of freedom and relief, like all my responsibilities just disappeared, I felt like a kid again. At the entrance of Keyworth stood a tall 10-12 foot fence that was used to close off the premises to unwanted guest during the late hours of the day. As I was walking, there was a parking lot directly in front of me and a building to my left side that wasn’t too far from the entrance. The building was made up of red bricks and had an automatic sliding door with a sign that read “Now Open”, it wasn’t a very huge structure, and it kind of looked like a house. At the very top of the building in big, black, bold letters Hamtramck School District. The site of this building brought back the time my friends and I caused a small disturbance. We were playing soccer in the parking lot and sued the side wall as a goal; we kicked the ball repeatedly into the building until we kicked out by security. The fact that we couldn’t use our heads and play in the field that was 10 feet away from us shows how intelligent we were.*

This paragraph was taken from my second paper, the ethnography. This excerpt was a decent paragraph, it contained a good amount of detail and also allowed the reader visualize what was actually there. Although, this introduction was not my absolutely best, it assisted me on moving forward and developing as a good writer. I became much more detailed and creative with my words and started to expand my vocabulary. I can recall having a bit more confidence with this piece. Although, I still had some difficulties wording everything I did manage to get everything out, but I still had much to practice such as, developing my thoughts and expanding my sentences.

*I grew up in Hamtramck, a small town in Michigan that stretches roughly about 5 miles long. I arrived here at the age of 4 with my mom to begin our new lives. Taking my first step on American soil was a pretty big deal, the one thing that I can vividly remember was that there was a gigantic stretch limo that didn’t seem to end and a man wearing a black suit standing in front of it. The only thing I could remember about him at the time was that he was tall, really tall and he had a funny haircut, most of his hair was on one side of his head, on the other side looked like its been completely shaved off. His hair was odd looking but his mustache was just ridiculous, there was a long strip of hair placed on his upper lip that look like it belonged on the empty side of his head. He was holding a blue circular metal container that had all these various pictures of cookies on it, so I guessed it was a container full of cookies that he was trying to hand me, out of fear I ran behind my mom. I thought why would some random man just hand me a box of goodies? Well because it was my dad, and this was the first time we met.*

Above is an excerpt from my third paper. This is introduction paragraph is proof of my evolution from a high school English student to a decent college English student. By comparing this introduction to the intro of my first and second papers you can see the amount of improvement that was made. My sentences flow better and also allow the reader to visualize what they are reading more accurately. This paragraph has complete ideas yet there is still room from improvement. I can easily recognize and recall my thoughts during this introduction. I felt like I have learned a ton and now I can regurgitate it back onto paper and show off my writing. I was able to intertwine techniques from both my narrative and also ethnography to benefit my third paper.

Comparing these intros you can see a fairly good amount of progression between them. I applied various different changes to help better my writing. As seen in the first introduction paragraph there is a deficiency of detail and clarity which weakens the paper and also bores and leaves the reader less interested. In addition, this paragraph lacks the capability to hook the reader and keep the reader interested. Even though I wrote about a topic that I was passionate about it still didn’t have any flare to it but I soon discovered the reason for this while writing my third paper. I had the passion for the topic but the passion to write about the topic was my decline. I had to dig deep and put myself on the paper, which was my solution. The second introduction showed the progression and new acquired knowledge I attained from the mistakes made in my previous piece, nonetheless, I still had mistakes and much to learn. Reading the introduction of my third paper (What’s Your Story) it can clearly be inferred that I applied the changes that were required to make my writing good writing. This intro is more descriptive, a lot more interesting, and also is well organized.

To put your thoughts onto paper is not so difficult put to analyze your thoughts and to expand them into something knowledgeable and presentable is quite difficult. But writing an issue paper is far worse than that. Here is an example, a paragraph taken from my issue paper.

*There are those who come here legally by following our step-by-step procedure and then those who come here illegally. The U.S. is home to approximately 11 million illegal immigrants today and of those 11 million illegal immigrants, 8 million are in the work force (Preston, 2011). Now what does this say about these individuals? Yes they came here illegally but they are working hard and doing their part to better the U.S economy. This proves that illegal immigrants are just as important as permanent residents and American citizens and that they should be allowed the same privileges we have, such as obtaining a driver’s license. Each year undocumented immigrants with false Social Security numbers contribute roughly $7 billion to Social Security and almost $2 million to Medicare. Since most illegal immigrants come when they are young and working, they tend not to collect Social Security or Medicare for some years even though they are paying into the system due to payroll taxes. Most of these illegals were educated in their countries and now the American economy acquires the benefits of their hard work (Anderson, 2011).*

Writing an issue paper is far different than that of a narrative or ethnography. This was the first time that I have been exposed to a paper that is solely an argument that requires citations and a lot more thought. In my opinion it was the most difficult and time consuming paper to develop. However, I did learn something new; I obtained the skill to acquire data and to use this data to back up my claim to help get my point across. Even though this was my very first research paper I did fairly well because I feel as if my writing ability in general matured throughout the semester.

As of right now I believe I am a fairly good writer. Every paper that I wrote, I managed to incorporate different techniques and attributes from my previous assignments. For example, from my ethnography, I learned to write what I saw but I didn’t just write what was in front of my eyes but what was in my side vision or if something caught my eye towards the left, every detail was exploited and thrown onto paper to allow the reader to stand where I was standing and see the things I saw. I integrated this technique into my third paper giving a different element to help strengthen it as a whole. In addition to this, I also was educated about the power of an interview and how this can reinforce your paper and give it a different light. Here is an interview that I took and was placed in my third paper:

*I approached my parents about this. Hard headed as always and motivated of course this time I came with logic. “What do you want most from me?”, I asked.*

*Without hesitation, my mom said with a strong and solid tone, “to be successful.”*

*“Well hypothetically speaking would you rather want me to be successful and hate my life or happy and a failure?”, they looked at me and gave me a blank stare and shook their head in upsetting way.*

*“What’s a parents number one goal?”, I asked.*

*“YOUR parent’s number one goal is to make sure you become somebody in this world”, they said I relaxed myself and started to think logically.*

*“To become somebody it takes motivation, dedication, hard work, and initiative. Do you see any of those traits in anything but boxing?”, I said calmly.*

*The question went unanswered and there was a few seconds of silence. “What do you think about school?”, I said.*

*“School is such an amazing opportunity that not everyone can have”, my mom answered.*

*“Well what do you think about those who didn’t finish school but become incredibly successful?”.*

*She was quiet for a few seconds and said, “They got lucky, some people get lucky.” Out of frustration they quickly left the room and went about their days. My parents are hard headed, must be wear I get it from.  They were all about school and wasn’t.*

Although, I still have much to learn and much more practice needed, I feel as if I was given enhancement drugs to improve my writing. Looking back at the beginning of the semester till now I am finally feeling like a college student. My work is much more thought out and I take the time to expand my thoughts and ideas. I started off a little shaky in the beginning of the semester but now I have surely improved into a more skilled-full writer. I think what helped me most would possibly be viewing the pieces of my fellow classmates which gave me a understand of what I was doing wrong and what I could do help better myself. I believe I didn’t really assist anyone in becoming any more of a better writer then they already were but I know for sure that they impacted my writing ability. I look to move forward into the next level of writing next semester. I am well prepared and also I have an arsenal of different writing techniques that can now help aid my papers in the future.

Good writing doesn’t just occur with the first draft, it takes several tries to get it right, numerous revisions, countless editing, some more than others. It’s about expressing ideas into words that flow perfectly together and giving the audience something that they can relate to. As I reflect on my work and the grades I have received, I feel a huge amount of regret because I refused to devote my time on working hard and working to my full extent on all assignments. I didn’t receive any bad scores but I received scores where if I were to try a little bit harder it would have made a huge difference in my overall grade. In my honest opinion I believe that I have earned a solid B in the class even though I spent most my time on the surfing the web or updating my relationship status on Facebook I still managed to pull off decent papers such as, the “What’s Your Story” essay which I received an above average score on. Below is an excerpt taken from the “What’s Your Story” paper to provide evidence on my above average work.

*The box of cookies was a unique looking container. It was circular shaped metal container that just fascinated me because it was a metal container that held food, which I wasn’t use to. Most of the cookies in Bangladesh (our homeland) were usually sold in paper or cardboard boxes. On the top half of the lid there was a picture of a enormous white house with what seemed to have grass as a roof, which I quickly assumed was the house were going to be living in, boy was I wrong. Just below the picture of the house in gold letters read Royal Dansk Butter Cookies and underneath that was a picture of numerous different kinds of cookies that I couldn’t wait to devour. Around the side of the container there was just a copy of what was on the lid. Till this day I still possess this container because it wasn’t just a container anymore it’s now a memento, a part of history that symbolizes the first time my dad and I met.*