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Diana Tran

Professor Adler

English 1A

5-4-16

The Journey of Becoming a Successful Writer

Becoming a learner is not a hard thing to do at all in this world for many students, unless

one has a disability compared to being a reader and writer, where you need to understand what

you read, in order to know what to write. During the beginning of the semester, writing and

reading was not very easy for me because when I read articles that was assigned to me, I did not

really understand what I was reading, until I learned and knew what the articles were about. It

was not my learning skills that affected my writing process; it was actually the essay prompt that

confused me, which is why I did not write very well. I know that my reading abilities are very

poor, which can affect my writing process, but after going over the articles, it made me

understand the articles much better and more clearly. By saying this, I am not saying that my

writing is very bad, but it can be fantastic, even though my reading abilities were always very

poor. I always use the strategies of highlighting and underlining words, phrases, and sentences

that I don’t understand, in order to defined the words in the dictionary and try my best to

comprehend what it all means. The ways that my attitude toward reading, writing, and learning

has changed is knowing how to annotate each paragraph of the articles, which had helped me a

lot, even though this is not always the case. Throughout the course of the semester, my reading,

writing, and learning process has developed gradually as I just mentioned, through the annotation

method, but that wasn’t it; it was also coming up with our own essay questions in class that

helped me a lot into writing the essay. There were successes and failures that I had gone through

when writing essays.

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There was this one essay that I did an excellent job on, which is the second essay. I was

proud of everything I did, which is my organization of ideas, critical thinking, and revising

process. My essay was very organized with transitions at the end of each paragraph and I also

pointed out what articles that I’d be using to help make my point in each paragraph. I did this

without having to squeeze everything in one paragraph. It is easier to separate paragraphs apart.

In addition, at the beginning of each paragraph, I also mention the different literary devices that

are used in every two paragraphs that can be connected to articles, which I am connecting the

poem, “December Nights” by Baca to Henry Thoreau, “Civil Disobedience.” By becoming very

organized, it had help me develop my ideas and interpretations for each article, without having to

be confused. Thus, this helps my critical thinking process to flow. For example, I state, “ In the

poem, “December Nights,” Baca uses simile to show that being alone so far away from where

he lived had made him become more worried of himself… In the article, “Civil Disobedience”

by Henry Thoreau, he uses simile to show his mental view of nature that affect the way he

thinks about where he is… In Baca’s poetry, “December Nights,” the narrator uses imagery to

show the hopelessness and despair that he is experiencing for messing up his own life of being in

prison that he couldn’t believe what he has done… In the article, “Civil Disobedience” by

Henry Thoreau, the problem that he sees in people reflects on why the narrator is the way he is,

not him.” Based on what I wrote, the process of being organized with my own ideas was not

that hard because I have thought of this organized structure before I wrote the essay in regard to

the essay prompt. The more organized I am; it can help make my essays stronger and better,

which I always have problems with before writing essays. This can be connected to Pipher,

“*Writing to Change the World*,” where she explains how when writers figure out how to write in

a good way, their thoughts and ideas will be clear. She states, “Many effective writers are not

stylists, but they manage to convey a clear manage” (23). In regards to this, by knowing how to

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organized, my thoughts and ideas are not confusing the audience members, but instead, it is

flowing effectively that help them understand what point I am trying to make.

In addition, I was also happy with my interpretations, opinions, and analytical

explanations because I thought it was very weak, but it was actually very strong and good.

However, there were some issues with parts of my quotes because I did not really connect my

quotes to my interpretation and analytical explanation. I did not even realize that. However, I

tried to develop my own ideas. It was not really an easy process for me to write this whole essay

because I did not know what I was going to write for my interpretations, even though I know

what I was going to write for my analytical explanations. This can be connected to Freire,

“Banking Concept of Education” because he says how the students cannot always rely on the

teacher because they can’t think for them. He states, “The teacher cannot think for her students,

nor can she impose her thoughts on them” (148). He is saying that the teacher’s role in a class

settings are to teach students, not just think for them, otherwise they are not learning anything to

benefit their education. In regards to this, this is related to my interpretations situation because

the word “interpretations” means that I have to develop my own opinions and that my professors

can’t think for me when I am forced to put my own interpretations in my essay, not just

analytical explanations. It is my own ideas, not my professor’s ideas. It was not a very long

journey when writing this essay because I already know how I was going to connect Thoreau,

“Civil Disobedience” with Baca, “December Nights” with some of the connections I had in mind

before writing this essay. I did not just pick random articles. In regards to this, I am not really a

bad writer because I know what I am reading about or even if I don’t know, I can learn from my

classmates and professor.

However, there was this one in class essay that I did not do so well on, but I did not fail

it, which is my first essay. The reasons why I did not do so well on it is because I did not follow

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the essay prompt. It is not that I can’t write a good essay. I actually understood what “Shitty First

Drafts” by Lamott, “Brainology” by Dweck, and “Writing to Change the World” by Pipher is all

about, but I just don’t know how to apply the knowledge from these articles into an argument

that I want to create. I just didn’t get what the essay prompt is telling me to do. There were

comments about summarization for the three articles that I just mentioned and how it is too

general and not clear to create an argument. For example, I state, “In the book, “Writing to

Change the World” by Pipher, she shows how writing is very important and how people need to

know how to write by giving some examples to prove his point…In the article, “Brainology” by

Dweck, he shows how having “growth mindset” is very important in life because it will not

prevent them from doing anything, whereas “fixed mindset” will prevent them from doing

anything in life.” This shows how I have summarized the articles in an area that did not require a

summary. I thought by integrating 3 texts in my essay, I’d have to summarize it, in order to make

my point, but that is not what I had to do. I was so confused on what I had to do. The process of

writing this essay was very difficult for me because even though I have summarized the articles,

my logic and argument is not clear. It is very hard for me to develop an argument if I don’t have

much ideas in my mind, but this did not prevent me from writing the whole essay. This can be

connected to Elbow, “Desperation Writing,” where he says that thinking about writing is not a

good way for individuals to be successful. He states, “Don’t think about what you are writing or

what you have written or else you will overload the circuit again” (131). This is what I did for

my first in class essay. Even though, I had a very difficult time developing my ideas for the

essay, I did not give up on writing, but instead continued writing in hopes that my essay will turn

out fine in the end. I did not put myself down.

In addition, it also says how my thesis statement is very weak and not specific enough to

develop an argument that can help me write my whole essay. For example, I state, “The practice

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of writing can make a huge benefit in people’s life.” In regards to this, I believe that even if my

thesis statement is specific, I can’t develop an good argument because I don’t have a lot of ideas

in my mind that can make a strong connections to the 3 articles/texts, but I tried to write the

whole essay. I am lost. This can be connected to the article, “Brainology” by Dweck because he

says how there is no way that individuals can succeed if they don’t put effort in their work. He

states, “No one succeeds in a big way without enormous amounts of dedication and effort” (5).

When writing my essays, I put forth a lot of effort even when I am not prepared. I know that

there is no way I can improve my writing skills successfully, if I don’t try to write. Writing is

hard, but it just takes practice. The process of developing my own thesis statement is not that

hard; I just have to be more reasonable, but the journey of writing this whole essay was difficult

because there is no way I can write a good essay if I don’t understand what the prompt is telling

me to do. Based on this situation, the specific areas that I need to work on is my reading and

writing, not my learning abilities because if I read and understand what the essay prompt is

telling me to do, I wouldn’t have write a poor essay.

The goals that I want to set for writing is to be more prepared for in-class essays than

writing essays at home. I can’t just come to class unprepared, not knowing what I have to

write for my essay. This is the reason why I did not write very well on the first in class essay,

since my essay was not clearly structured. I did not come prepared with an outline or anything,

which makes everything worse, even though I did not follow the essay prompt. I want to do well

on every essay I write by creating outlines even take home essays. This is what I have to do, just

to be safe, so I don’t screw up on every essay I write. I don’t usually do this for take home essays

especially in-class essays obviously, but I will do it in the future, in order to write successfully. I

want to get at least a B on my in class essay, nothing under a B because that is too low. My

futures writing goals is to get at least a B or A on every essay. I want to be one of the best

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writers. I don’t want to be stuck being a bad writer. I want to improve my writing skills by

putting more pressure on myself in college than I did in high school. I will do this by seeking

advice and help from classmates, tutors, and professors if I don’t understand what the essay

prompt is telling me to do, and if I don’t have any ideas in my mind on what I will write about.

What I think is connected to the article, “Brainology” by Dweck, where he says how growth

mindsets are for students who want to build their intelligence. He states, “In short,

students with growth mindsets believe that intelligence is a potential that can be realized through

learning” (1). I am connected to this quote because I am one of the growth mindset students, who

thinks that if I don’t learn my mistakes from everyone and ask questions, there is no way that I

can be smart and succeed in my writing skills. I just have to believe in myself that I can write

good by continuing to.

In conclusion, the ups and downs of my writing has significant effects to me in a positive

and negative way. The failure of writing my first in class essay did not put my hopes down in

writing good essays, but rather it made me want to try harder and harder, in order to improve

and write well for my essays successfully in the future. I know that if I just give up, my writing

will never change and it will always be bad, but if I lay my hands down and try to write, it will

change little by little as time flies by. Giving up does not help me; it just makes things worse,

but I can change it if I have perseverance and motivation in writing. Also, the second essay that

I wrote that I did a great job on makes me impress and proud of myself for trying my best to

write, even though I am not very good in writing. It also motivates me to keep on writing with

the best work I have done due to the fact that I am not as bad as I think I am of my

writing skills. Reading and writing is something I’ve always struggled with in school, but even

though I struggled with it, I know that I can get better if I use all kinds of strategies, advices, and

tutoring to help me out. Learning has occasionally been a problem for me, but not always. If its

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English, then learning is often not a problem for me because I understand everything, after it is

reviewed, such as articles and texts and being taught how to write essays.

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