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English 131

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10/01/12

Literacy Narrative: The Evolution of my Writing

The use of writing has been around almost since the existence of man and has been a crucial tool for communication, preservation of thought, and creativity. It has progressed and changed over time, but is still an essential part of life today. When I first started learning this useful tool, I was taught a very structured method, where I did not have much room to explore. I struggled with this approach and after following this process for several years, I was influenced by another teacher to seek out new methods of writing. I discovered that writing constituted of so many different forms and that there was not necessarily only one right way to do it. My writing has grown and evolved over time due to experience, practice, and constantly trying to learn new ways to write. There is such a vast difference in how I first started writing to my methods today. After dabbling with different approaches, I was able to separate my writing methods, and discovered a way that my creative side could coincide with my school assignments.

My first memories of when I was taught to write date back to when I was in 6th grade. My English teacher, Mr. Z, started to instruct the class on the format and structure in writing a persuasive essay, by breaking it down into different steps for us to follow. The first step was to come up with ideas by brainstorming. He wrote down the several ideas about the topic that the class came up with, and put each one inside its own bubble. From there he drew lines to the different sub-ideas that we came up with, connecting them to the main bubbles. We were told that this was a way to lay out all the thoughts we came up with before approaching the essay. Mr. Z then explained that our essays would follow what he called an hourglass format. This meant that our introductory paragraph would come in strong and include a thesis, but would then funnel down into specific paragraphs each with their own arguments. After the body paragraphs it would open up again for the summarizing conclusion, overall following the shape of an hourglass. This was an easy format for us to follow and allowed us to write in an effective manner, as opposed to having our ideas spread out sporadically throughout our essay. By using this method my writing improved over time but my teacher told me that I started to become too descriptive and struggled with making my ideas clear and concise.

After a few years went by, I was influenced by another teacher to explore the many different ways of writing, and to not limit myself only to analytical essays. She gave me a book on creative writing and gave me an assignment which was to write a story. I started working and soon realized that I took great pleasure in coming up with stories, or even writing about my life. With this assignment I discovered how writing was a way that I could express my creative and artistic side. I did not stop with creative writing and soon moved on to poetry. I loved how a set of words put together in a certain way were able to grasp an emotion so strongly. Whenever I wrote, I would feel an array of emotions that needed to be shared. This explained why I had so much to say and why I would include so much detail in my essays. I learned how to be aware of this flaw and to take a moment to rethink my ideas, allowing me to understand how to write more clearly and get to the point. This search in writing methods improved my writing and taught me how to be able to adapt and use different styles whenever they are needed.

With all this experience I started to evolve and personalize my writing techniques. In French class we used a form of writing called commentaries. We would have to read a passage, and then comment on the stylistic prose and writing of the author, as well as the idea that he was trying to portray. Commentaries had loose guidelines and there was no “right” or “wrong” way to write one. This was where I could work to my full potential and be as descriptive as I wanted. My writing flourished and I found that with commentaries I could have the pleasure and expression that I received from creative writing, all while completing a school assignment. I started to become so comfortable with my writing assignments that I now only worked on one final draft that I correct throughout my writing, as opposed to writing and revising multiple drafts.

Learning how to write effectively was a process that included much searching and trial and error. I first learned a very basic and structured way of writing, which was difficult to make errors and not write effectively with. At the same, I liked to write in a descriptive manner and often felt limited in my writing when using this method. With the help of a teacher I expanded my horizon and tried a variety of writing styles. I saw how writing brought up emotions in me, and how it was a way for me to express, create, and communicate. Furthermore, I took a particular interest in commentaries as I was able to fulfill the writing requirements and regulations of an assignment all while experiencing the same pleasure I had from more creative ways of writing. In the end I was able to find a writing method that allowed me to work to my full potential. Effective writing is not just something you pick up and perfect instantly; it takes time and experience and will constantly evolve with you throughout life.

Antoine,

Overall, this is a very good essay. You have a strong introduction that introduces your topic, foreshadows the rest of your essay, and hints at your stakes. Your topic sentences are pretty good as well and you finish with a strong conclusion. Your essay flows well and has good transitions.

Please review the formatting guidelines in the course syllabus, specifically in relation to your font type and size, as well as the spacing between your title and the beginning of your essay. Also, I know I forgot to put this in the syllabus, but I would appreciate it if you single-spaced the header.

The highlighted sections are mostly grammar issues. If you have any questions about your paper, my comments, or the class in general, I would be happy to discuss them with you in person during office hours.

**Short Assignment 1.1 Rubric**

See the course syllabus for a discussion of each evaluation category.

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|  | **Outstanding** | **Strong** | **Good** | **Acceptable** | **Inadequate** |
| **Introduction:** Begins with a concise paragraph that clearly articulates what will be discussed in the paper and what the stakes of the paper are. | X |  |  |  |  |
| **Stakes:** It is clear from the narrative why it is being told and what the reader is expected to do with this information (e.g., change thought patterns, take action). | X |  |  |  |  |
| **Topic:** The author has selected a focused topic that is an appropriate response to the prompt and has not deviated from it throughout the course of the paper. | X |  |  |  |  |
| **Organization**: The paper shows evidence of a clear trajectory, including an introduction, good topic sentences throughout, and a conclusion. There are good transitions from one paragraph to the next. | X |  |  |  |  |
| **Tone:** The essay is written in a manner appropriate for a popular audience. The author explains ideas and references that the audience may not understand, while not elaborating points that should be common knowledge. | X |  |  |  |  |
| **Format:** The paper is of the required length and follows the prescribed formatting guidelines. |  |  |  |  | X |