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ENGL 21003-D
Semester Narrative

When I first walked into this class, I had no idea what I was getting myself into. I was simply taking it as a requirement, and I despise writing in general. Due to my performance in writing, I get quite shy and bashful about showing other people my writing. Given that I don't have much experience in writing as a result of my opinion of it, I was faced with a semester filled with uncertainty and challenges to overcome.

One of the main focuses of this class was to learn and develop my writing skills in terms of forward facing science. I was familiar with this term due to my habit of reading science articles in my free time, but was completely unfamiliar with the writing side of the process with my closest experience being lab reports. When it came to writing my own papers, I lacked conviction in my own abilities and doubted that I would be able to produce something of equal caliber. In regards to my writing style, I write rather blandly, sparsely giving thought towards grammatical decorum. I lacked the grace and professionalism that published articles contained, which I needed to captivate my audience. Forward facing science posed differences both in the genre and audience. The genre is that of a high-level scientific journal meant for the eyes of specialized professionals in the relevant field. In my opinion, this field drives the scientific and technological industries into research and development breakthroughs. Additionally, it allows for data exchange between professionals, as well as a platform that allows for peer review to better affirm the results of their findings. When it comes to the general public, they need to be educated and be more open-minded to help with the progression of science, which I mentioned in one of the class lecture discussions. It makes people more aware of their surroundings and realize how vital education is to prevent people from falling for misinformation, such as the anti-vaccination movement.

I noticed a few problems pervading my writing over the years when I was submitting a post on editing and "first draft pressure" for the class lecture discussions. Since middle school, my writing was rather bland and I expressed myself less and less through the genre, lacking proper guidance as to how to formulate a well-written and well thought out paper. Writing felt clunky and unfamiliar to me, oftentimes I would experience frustration out of the nuisance of having a word escape my mental grasp. Also, I never had an audience to cater my paper towards. Each piece would be sent out to my teacher or professor with only getting a good grade in mind. My teachers in high school never really helped me develop my own writing style, and rather approached it as if everyone should be capable of producing stellar works of writing. Unfortunately, it did not come as naturally to me as my teachers expected, and it solidified my belief that I was to blame since I could not meet the expectations my teachers placed on me. Instead of conversing on the methods to improve our writing, we conversed about our

“completed” papers. As a result, I began to start editing as it is an important skill to exercise. It allows for better comprehension of the material, not only in observation of proper grammar, but also in overall structure and flow of the piece. It is an essential part of my work process as I will constantly double check my writing mid-paper, despite having the other half of the topic to write about. However, this double checking habit of mine stemmed from my deep seated anxiety about my writing skills and the thought that my writing wouldn't be up to par with my teachers' standards.

Despite my initial skittishness, I decided to follow through with the coursework. When it came time for my first draft to be submitted, I grew increasingly anxious about it. My perception of a first draft, formed from previous teachers' high expectations, was rather disfigured and warped. I felt undue pressure trying to craft this perfect piece when I lacked the means to do so. As a result, I tormented myself by second-guessing placement of paragraphs as well as my selection of audience and tone to match. It was hard to improve on this on my own, so I hoped that by sharing my work with others I will be able to improve my writing. However, I didn't receive relevant feedback nor constructive criticism on what my rhetorical analysis draft was lacking or where it was strong. Working with others in terms of writing is something I'm unfamiliar with, which made the children's book more complicated. There was a lack of teamwork due to the restrictions placed, making it feel like it was composed of three people's individual assignments that were sloppily combined into one. This can be seen in the second draft of the children's book as I was the only one who had worked on the slides at that moment. Due to the switch to online classes this semester, I cannot say whether or not peer review or group work had helped me improve as it was very restricted.

The more I progressed in this class, the less discouraged I felt. Writing felt less like a nuisance and more of a challenge due to being tasked with different, unfamiliar types of papers that took me outside of my comfort zone. Spending so much more time with forward facing science and digging into academic journals gave me more complete templates on what I aimed to create. I felt more confident in my ability to understand and reapply knowledge I learned from a journal into an idea of my own making. I formed a better understanding of the drafting process, realizing that the first draft should be a list of ideas and that it shouldn't be perfect. This can be seen in the 1, Paper; 3 Audiences draft as my paragraphs were all over the place and the last two paragraphs weren't fully developed yet. This paper also taught me what's sought after in a thesis statement, since I never fully understood how to address my stance. Despite the slight increase in confidence and the improvements I had made regarding the research and academic writing aspects, I was horrified at the prospect of having to write the 1, Paper; 3 Audiences paper and the children's book due to my lack of experience. I was never taught how to cater my writing towards an audience. Instead, essays were recitals of facts and lacked creativity. I learned this through newspaper articles and children's books, as to understand the manner in which they wrote and how they catered to their audiences. Despite my struggles, I would say that this class

has improved my writing abilities. Although it's not great and is still a work in progress, my writing anxiety has lowered and I feel more confident in my writing, which happen to be my two biggest problems.