

Examining Myself: A Reflection

I took this class because I planned on taking AP English at my old school. At my old school AP English was a death sentence, 20 page papers and lots of reading. I assumed this class would be the same way. I started off disconnected I believe. When I first started writing the weekly blog posts they outlined what the class had accomplished that week and less of what it meant to me. More so summarizing than analytical. Coming into the class with the mindset of having to do things I don't want to just to get a better GPA shifted as I got further into the trimester. Instead of questioning why we have to read Antigone, because before I would have complained that it was an old play that didn't relate to my life at all, I was able to find connections throughout. Mr. Schoenborn set it up in a way that started with our ideas of tragedy and accepted them all. I found myself more engaged in reading others definitions of tragedy and was able to question it even. My blogs have become loose, in a sense that I feel I can open up and write my true feelings, not what I think that teacher wants to hear. Which has risen in this class and will carry me through life. Subtly throughout the trimester I have become more sure of myself, able to analyze novels or poems by what I found within them instead of what I think the teacher wants me to find. It has made writing essay's more bearable for me. I learned to look at it like a museum and me as the tour guide, and now I want to do everything in my power to make it as interesting as I can. I realized how much I like learning about this, although maybe it is just Mr.Schoenborn's style of teaching. Either way I have become a better thinker and have grown because of it.

I feel that my effort in this class has improved over time. I don't think I didn't ever have effort, it was just geared in the wrong direction. I would put in a lot of work trying to figure out what I was supposed to write and how I was supposed to write it, as opposed to feeling things and letting my personal interpretations guide me. Transitioning from that state to the latter, has made me put in more effort as I actually want to be doing this. The freedom and acceptance in this class promoted my determined attempts to analyze. The Museum analogy motivates me to have even more effort, because when I want someone to read my writing, no matter when form of writing it is whether novel, essay or poetry, I want to them to still be able to enjoy it. If the entire piece is based on analyzing, it should still tell a story and one that seems important and makes sense. Now that I realized that's what I want, it makes me work harder and take the writing in this class more seriously. The relationship between my effort and growth are the same. The more I tried, the more I learned I was able to blossom.

This is a fact, my intellectual risk taking sucks. In my table group I was able to step outside of my comfort zone and talk to the girls and they were all lovely. On the first day I asked if I could sit with them and they were so kind to say yes. Once I had established who they were and that they accepted me, I really didn't want to deviate from that. I was always the last in the group to volunteer to speak to the class on behalf of our group. I don't like speaking in front of my class, which is so weird because I was in speech forensics and got 5th in the state for poetry and performed in front of tons of people that I didn't know. I guess I had to act though so it was like I was someone else. I am always scared that what I have to say will not make any sense to anyone, that when I try to say what I'm thinking it won't come out right. I tried to stay in a little bubble for the most part, and typically I succeeded. Which really is bad for me I need to take

more risks. I made baby steps when I was able to share my ideas, questions and thoughts about our weekly poems with the people at my table, but on a larger scale I would say I was definitely lacking. I hope that as time goes on I will overcome that. It's nice to hear everyone's ideas because a lot of them are ones I would've never been able to think of because of how my mind perceives things differently than the person next to me. It's a disservice to myself and to my classmates not to share really. More often than not someone else will be thinking the same thing I am anyway. My fear of being judged in this particular situation I think is irrational, so I would like to break out of my secluded habits.

I have changed as a reader. At least I think that is what I did. After reading novels based around philosophy I have a craving for that sort of writing. The kind that makes you think and question things. The word literature used to make me crumble and now I am kind of interested in it. It's different than a John Green book. He is an amazing author and writes great and entertaining books but once I close the book it doesn't stay with me. Some of the things I've read in this class do stay with me. I have read poetry, novels, articles and many other things. Each of which can be looked at through multiple lenses when analyzing and for me as a reader I think that's what I learned to do. Look at the given situation in a novel perhaps or maybe even in life, through multiple different perspectives with open mindedness. It has revealed much to me. I am a better reader because of this.

As a writer I have been inspired. There is so much to write about and in so many ways. In the last 12 weeks I've written short response essays, a compare and contrast essay, free writing, blog posts and many others. Each form has a different tone and I've learned a lot about all of them. Before I was inspired by people that had written cute little novels that were great and enjoyable but that was it. My writing now is starting to reflect pieces that reveal meanings and birth new ideas. My writing has become more interesting to read I think, after everything I write I hear Mr. Schoenborn saying, "so what" and everything is simplified. That is an amazing thing that no other teacher has taught me, when it comes to essays. As a writer I long to produce amazing work now. In any area of writing I want it to be quality and I feel I am more capable of that after these 12 weeks than I was before.

Finally, as a critical thinker I have flourished. In all my English classes before we were taught that you could write about different things in an essay but it always seemed like we were just going through the motions. Which is no fault of any teachers if anything it may be my own, but for some reason in this class it clicked with me. I look at all aspects of things when I read them now. When studying tragedy, there are so many different ways that people described it and it would've probably been very confusing for me at the beginning of the year to understand it, but since we did it towards the end of the year, I was able to separate the variations, and apply them to different plays and novels when necessary because I understood what each person meant when they wrote about tragedy. I find that I can think about things deeper than before, this stemmed from analyzing the poems I think, because when looking at them through different lenses and discussing with the class there were things I missed and didn't understand at first but over time I became better at piecing things together to put the whole story together. I am better at analyzing pieces now, I used to summarize a lot, now I know how to distinguish the two with the "so what" rule. I even look at life differently now, trying to understand what people do and why they do it instead of jumping to conclusions. I am a much better critical thinker today

than I was in September. Overall I have experienced more growth in the class than anything else and I am excited for what's to come next.