

The Development of my Writing Process Through English 109H

As a second semester college student, I have learned many things the hard way while navigating the transition from high school to college. After receiving my grade from our first project, The Controversy Postmortem, my confidence in my old ways was essentially destroyed and I knew I had to try something new. Throughout this semester I have changed a lot about my writing process; by improving my planning, editing, and organizational processes, I aimed to improve my grades. The writing habits I have today were sculpted by the many projects and blog posts I have written this semester. My writing philosophy has changed from writing a paper the night before it was due and only editing it for grammar, into spacing out my project and allowing time for change and different ideas. Now, I have learned that it is not just okay to change your idea, but it should happen so you can expand your horizons and further develop your ideas into a project that perfectly fits the prompt. During my four years of high school, I had to write many essays, and for the most part, my teachers were very pleased. However, my worst fears came true when I came to college only to find that my old ways needed revamping.

Throughout high school, I got by writing my essays shortly before they were due, and my idea of a 'rough draft' was an essay that only needed to be revised by grammar and punctuation. I never thought of myself as a person who needed to plan out my ideas far in advance and revise my drafts for more than grammar. I always thought that drafts were unnecessary; once I decided on an idea and started to write about it, I did not think that I would need to change anything, nor did I have the desire to put in more work to change it. My family always thought I was good writer, so that gave me the confidence I needed to reassure myself that writing drafts were useless, and that I could get away with writing only my final piece. For me, writing an essay was never something that I worried about because I would just sit down,

decide what I was going to write about, and then write it. I never had to think about time management and planning and revising because I did not see them as necessary or useful. Throughout high school, writing my one draft worked for me, but that quickly changed as I came to college. As the projects became more and more detailed and time consuming, I learned that I was not able to write everything in one night and that the first idea that came to me wasn't always the best idea. I found that it was extremely beneficial to not commit to my first idea, and to develop my project as I worked through it.

When I transitioned into my first college english class, I had ideas on how I would improve my writing and how I mainly wanted to focus on research. I never thought that I would have to change my writing process and I would have to plan and edit my papers more before they would be acceptable to turn in. For my first project, I had to pick a controversy and I picked to do a QRG because I had never done one before and I wanted to get it out of the way. I kept trying to think of a controversy that I wanted to write about and I finally decided on the legalization of marijuana in Colorado because I am from Colorado and I have seen first hand how it has affected the state. I kept encountering problems, like getting unbiased news sources, and opinion pieces from the mayor and Coloradans, but I thought I had put in too much work to change my mind so I kept powering through. At the end of the project, I thought that I worked my usual magic and I expected to pull off an A. Shockingly, I ended with a C and I just didn't understand how I earned such a low grade. I decided that I had to take a new approach for my future projects if I wanted to hold onto my dreams of ending the class with an A, and developing a writing process that will serve me for the rest of my life. I really showed improvement during my third project because I learned how to develop my ideas and not get attached to the first idea that popped into my head. I started to make a video about the issue of paying college athletes. After putting hours into the blogging process with that topic, I shared my seemingly

good idea with my professor and I found that he thought it wasn't something I should write about. At first, I was very hesitant to change my topic because I had put so much time and effort into it already, however, I decided to develop it more because I thought it would be risky to use a topic that my professor didn't like. As the weeks went on my topic changed from the paying of college athletes, to the college admissions process. I'm not sure exactly how I reached that topic, but I just kept changing my mind until I settled on a one that I could speak freely about and that I related to. I'm not sure what I earned on that project yet, but I feel much more confident about it. I spent weeks developing my idea and topic into something that I could relate to and I could show others that they could relate to it as well. After changing my mind so many times for that project, I have realized that it is okay to change your mind, even if you think it's too late. I found that it is far easier to write on something that you are passionate about and it is okay if it takes you awhile to find that topic. This realization has really excelled me as a writer and and a person. It made me more comfortable with changing my mind and not being so stubborn. I really understood that if I'm not fully confident with my idea in the beginning, there is no point in sticking with it and it could really only hurt you in the end if you are closed to change. Also, through my projects, I have learned a lot about time management and how it is absolutely impossible to procrastinate the way I did in high school.

Procrastination is sadly one of my favorite things because it ensures that I finally sit down and focus on a project I should have started far in advance, and it also makes me not have to worry about the project until right before it's due. In high school, I usually wrote my essays or completed small projects only a couple days before they were due. It worked well for me and I usually got A's so I never thought I would have to change my ways. My first english project was really hard to get through and I learned in the first week that if I wanted to ever leave the library, I would have to evenly space my work and I could never leave it to the night

before it was due. I found that each blog post was different and some only took 15 minutes to complete and some could take over an hour. I knew that I had to keep on a schedule so I would keep my sanity in check. At the beginning of each week, I looked to the schedule to see how many blog posts were required for the week, I tried to do one to two a day and work at least an hour on my actual project so as the due date approached, I wouldn't have to do all of the work at once. In the beginning of the semester, I was off and on with this schedule, some weeks I would follow it perfectly, and some weeks I would have too much going on to get to my english homework until the weekend and I heavily regretted that. During project two, there was one week where I held off from doing all of my blog posts until Sunday because I was lazy and thought I could just do it in a few hours on Sunday morning and all would be good. Unfortunately, I woke up on Sunday morning at 9 AM and only left my room 3 times during the whole day because I was glued to my computer. I never again left all my work till one day because it was a terrible experience and my FitBit tracked me at only 1500 steps for the whole day which really brought down my daily average of 14,000. Really, it's healthier for me to spread my work out. Now I religiously stick to spacing out my work. This really has helped me ensure that I don't get stuck with hours of work to do in one day, and it helps me edit and revise everything I do. When I am in a time crunch, I rush through my blog posts and my project, it doesn't give me time to revise or look over my project. When I spaced everything out I had more time to think about what I wanted to write and how I wanted to present it. I also had a much easier time when it came to revision because if I took my time, I didn't make as many mistakes and it was easy to revise.

Learning that it was okay to change my mind even if I thought it was too late, really had a positive effect on not only my writing process, but my life. I didn't think that changing how I write would change my personal habits in general, but it actually did and I am grateful that I learned

this now. This past semester, I learned that an important skill needed to excel in college is good time management, and although I was pretty good with it in the past, I am much better with it now. The projects here involve much more work and thought, and that amount of effort can't be devoted in one night. I also found that my first idea isn't always going to be the best one, and no matter how much work I put into my essay or project, it is never too late to change my mind. I have accepted the fact that I was stubborn in my ways and in my views, but, sometimes, if I think just a little bit harder and a little bit longer, I can develop my idea into something extraordinary that can take my writing to the next level. This realization of my flaws, coupled with my determination to overcome my weaknesses, has helped me develop vital life skills used everyday. These unique qualities I developed over the semester, have taught me to accept defeat when I'm wrong, help me to understand others' opinions and views, as well as showing me the importance of being analytical and taking time to separate facts from fiction in order to form a well-informed opinion. This semester of english couldn't have come at a better time in my life. Not only did I learn how to change my writing process, but I learned how to change the way I think and that is a valuable lesson to learn.