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English 114B

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Final Portfolio

It has been a big challenge for me to go from my high school English classes to college leveled college courses. Professors expect more from you and there is almost no room for mistakes. It was one of the best academic choices I made to take the English 114A and English 114B classes. It has prepared me for the upcoming challenges of college writing in my future classes. Thanks to these two classes, I am a more developed writer and now know how to write a well written essay.

It all began in my first semester of college. It was my second class on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9:30am. I was terrified of this class since English had never been my best subject and always seemed to have problems with it. It turned out the class was not as bad as it seemed. The professor was young and inviting when I had that bias that every college professor would be older and strict. The class, of course, began with an introduction to the class using the syllabus. This scared me more than the actual class since this was what was expected of us. I began seeing the words “essays”, “readings, and “reflections” and right away I was terrified, but I promised myself that I would try my best and hopefully succeed.

After the nightmare of the syllabus, we were asked to bring a green book to do a practice test to prepare us for future exams. It was horrible. It truly opened my eyes to the fact that I really needed help if I wanted to pass any class. My sentences did not go with the paragraphs; I had no counterargument, and did not even finish for how nervous I was. After we read from “New Voices”, a collection from pervious student’s English 114A and B assignments which gave us an example of what was expected of us. We later referred to them in future writings. We also had texts about how to write a better essay. This class mainly focused on rhetoric’s and how we are able to use it in writing.

For English 114A we also had the opportunity to work with three different subjects and how to analysis them and eventually write an argument which would become future essays. We first analyzed a couple of propaganda posters and how it may influence others to take action in certain things. We also analyzed a film and we were able to come up with an argument. At last, we did an argument based on a book “Little Bee” which had a very interesting way of structure. English 114A was interesting but I still had a fear of writing and hoped it would not affect my next semester.

English 114B came along and was told it would be somewhat different from the previous class since the class would not be based on how to write an essay, but how creative we may get as writers using arguments and different sources. It would also be different since my classmates and I were told that we would have the same professor for both English 114A an 114B, but because of budget cuts, our professor was not able to teach us the following semester. Right away, I was scared, again. I knew my essay writing skill were still completely off and did imagine myself failing the class. I also knew it would be difficult since there would be a new professor who had to learn my strengths and weaknesses in my writing. I decided to just do the best that I could, ask questions, and get tutoring or any other help if I needed it.

The class was very warm and inviting which I was relieved since most of the class was familiar with everyone. I got to know my peers even more because of a couple of group projects we were assigned to do. My first group project had to do with making a comic strip involving a revolution and what a revolution is. The hardest part of a project is where to begin since we could base the comic on a revolution from the past or just make one up. The group met up a couple of times and we also stayed in close contact. I decided in the project I would show off my artistic skills since writing is not my strength. The project came out amazing and well organized. What is so great about group projects is the fact that you are working with different people with different strengths and each one may be able to use their strength. I may also rely on people if anything else happens. I would much rather prefer a group project over an essay since I can show my strengths while working and helping my other peers.

Well of course I would eventually write an essay, it is an English class after all. My first essay was also my worst. The lack of practice during winter break really did affect me since I did not even know where to begin with. We were assigned to read a novel, “Persepolis” and reflect our thoughts in a well-organized and creative essay using sources and experiences. I feared for my grade and my reputation as a writer. The hardest part was to come up with an argument and stick with it throughout the whole essay. My argument was about how revolutions affect people differently. To find specific sources that support my argument was a big challenge. I got through it and survived my first essay.

Essay 2 came along but this was actually my best graded essay. First of all, we no longer had to read a book, but a movie, which I have experience analyzing because of the film classes I took in the past. I also had practice so I was ready to go. I saw my mistakes from the past essay and I was not planning to repeat them again. I used historical sources and really knew what I was talking about. This essay was fairly easy just because I knew what I was writing and the practice from before really did help a lot since it refreshed my memory from my previous semester.

I have definitely evolved as a student. I used to be a scared English student because of all my failed attempts of writing in the past. With the help of experience, my peers, and most of all, my wonderful professors, I was able to be at the level of college writing. It was a long road to get here, but I made it and hopefully was successful. I no longer have too much fear like the past, but I now have more confidence and my writing. It has been a very challenging experience and English will never be my favorite subject, but I survived my first year of college leveled English.