

## **Diversity and the Writing Process: My Introductory Reflective Essay**

Regardless of our location, we are surrounded by diversity. Different points of view, different backgrounds, different personalities, and so on. Each of these concepts forms who we are and is shown through our different styles of writing. Because of my diverse background and my religion (Islam), I've been confronted many times by curious people who either want to know more about the Middle East and Islam, or feel as if they are obligated to tell me that I am wrong or am a "terrorist." After going to a Christian school for almost ten years and being exposed to many different religions, I have been prepared to face challenges. When compared to writing an essay, this can be seen as my "evidence" that I've researched. Everyone knows that in writing, you must always consider other points of view and be able to back up your thoughts with evidence. However, my writing, like me, can be complex and at times confusing, but I've been striving for quite some time to simplify both my life and my writing. After confronting many people with opposing views, I realized that giving them extensive, drawn out information usually distracts them from the main point. Instead, it's best to give them concise, simple evidence, especially at first, to catch their attention and make them think about the topic at hand. This perfectly correlates to what I realized about writing in my English 1102 class. I initially lacked the ability to simplify my thoughts, but after peer reviews, lectures, and revisions on how to do so, I was able to improve my way of writing, which can be seen throughout my portfolio.

I consider my strengths to be analyzing a piece and interpreting the writer's style in order to propose a certain idea. I tend to write about how those who are "superior could have something in common with those who are labeled inferior." I also strive to give a voice to those who are not usually given the opportunity to speak, both in my writing and in real life situations. This can be seen through my analysis of Maya Angelou's "Still I Rise" poem, in which I point out certain literary devices and how they intertwine to strengthen Angelou's purpose of the poem. This can also be seen in my first essay, which involved more research than the second. Though researching is not exactly my forte, my first essay shows how I learned to gather evidence from outside sources to fit into the meaning of my essay. For example, I used three critics' opinions on Kate Chopin's "Désirée's Baby" to formulate a conclusion how "Chopin's juxtaposition of light and dark emphasizes the intended theme of anti-racism." Another strength and weakness of mine is grammar and diction editing; I can usually find the most proper way of saying things that only have a simplistic idea behind them. While this is exceptional for peer reviewing, it is at times harsh on me when I sit for fifteen minutes simply trying to find the perfect way to write down my ideas on paper. I can be considered a perfectionist when it comes to this aspect, but one major thing I have recently learned is to simply get the idea down and focus on how strong it is, instead of worrying about how elegantly it can be presented.

Usually, it is difficult for me to put everything together and mold my thoughts into a seemingly excellent essay. But through my teacher's and classmates' comments, I was able to revise my essays to accurately present my thoughts. One can see this in my

revision exhibit and in my first essay's conclusion, in which I simplified a weak, confusing conclusion — "Chopin addresses the color issues that were occurring during the antebellum time and inadvertently explicates the effects of hastily concluding one's status in society. Her story confirms that racism is not only based on skin color but also depends upon one's mindset and aura" — into a more understandable and concise thought: "Chopin addresses the color issues that were occurring during the antebellum period and shows the effects of hastily determining one's status in society. Her story confirms that racism is not only based on skin color and appearance but also inherently in the eye of the racist." In this example, like many others throughout my portfolio, I combined my complex way of writing with the intended simplicity of thoughts.

I especially realized the importance of simplicity in my English 1102 class. In my IB high school classes, I was taught to present ideas elegantly and sternly. However, after seeing classmates' essays and how well they did when writing informally, I realized how casual and simplistic our writing could be. By peer reviewing, one can see the different points of view and ways of writing. It gives us the opportunity to show our strengths and help others' weaknesses. Peer reviewing countless essays and talking with classmates helped me and my peers shape a more effective way to write.

My Wild Card seems completely different than everything in my portfolio. However, it shows my ability to compromise and have some fun with creative, "out of the box" ideas. By doing a group project (my Wild Card), I learned how difficult circumstances involving varied personalities can create a great product. This, along with peer reviewing, can be related to everyday life; two opposing parties could be arguing and overruling the other's opinion, which in a way is like peer reviewing, except more harsh, of course. Like learning to come to a consensus in a paper, one could compromise in life when faced with a problem. The diversity of the two parties can then be seen as a positive aspect instead of negative, which would allow, with proper attitude, an effective conclusion.

Compromise. Simplicity. Diversity. Each of these different ideas can be linked to one another to form a chain of progress. While these concepts are at times difficult to correlate, sharing thoughts and ideas while being respectful can lead to the greatest of outcomes. One can correlate writing and literature to appreciating others' points of view and diversities. Instead of making a situation more complex than it already seems, like how I initially did in my writing, figuring out an easier and more effective way of sharing ideas is key. Overall, writing is like overcoming diversity. Once a person presents his ideas, he has to consider the way in which he presents them, the effect on the audience, as well as the response he will provoke.