

## Back to the Drawing Board

In my mission to find purpose in serving others, I am discovering that I must be proactive in correcting my own issues. Self-reflection is not a pastime I enjoy – it can be deeply uncomfortable, and I normally find being overly busy a preferable alternative. Yet, I have determined that when I'm blinded by my own problems I can't see well enough to help my loved ones through their own difficulties. So, as I have aged, I am becoming more intentional about self-care and self-improvement. In order to be the daughter, sister, and friend I strive to be, sometimes it's necessary to go back to the drawing board and reevaluate my behaviors and situations. While change can be uncomfortable, flexibility and resilience are crucial for personal growth.

In the same way, I've found myself going back to the drawing board academically many times this semester. The revision process for this class has, frankly, been quite frustrating. As a college freshman, my writing errors have moved away from trivial spelling mistakes and sentence fragments – rather, now I deal with much larger, complicated issues like cohesive inconsistencies and data-mining. These more complex problems warrant more involved, time-consuming solutions that can be difficult to devise. In addition, critiques from my peers and professor are not always an easy pill to swallow. Innate pride and sheer stubbornness produces a natural tendency for me to balk at any type of correction, no matter how warranted it may be.

However, over the course of this semester, I have really grown as a writer due to my newfound ability to revise well. My classmates and their peer reviews have really fostered this process – their candor and feedback have been key in perfecting my papers and exposing me to new viewpoints I would not have otherwise considered. I would like to specifically thank my classmate, Neha Sivakumar, and Professor Lambert for their feedback on my Paper 1 rough

draft, which also serves as my wild card selection. I have included excerpts from the rough and final drafts, along with some of their comments, below as a tool to display the development my papers have experienced through revision.

### Key:

**Text** = the original text from my Paper 1 rough draft

**Text** = the original text from my Paper 1 rough draft that either Neha or Professor Lambert has commented on

**[Text]** = Neha's or Professor Lambert's comments on my **highlighted** original text

**Text** = the final text I used after revision

In this paragraph, I am introducing the topic of my research paper, human trafficking. Neha's feedback, the blue text, is also included in the excerpt.

"I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within [...] [the United States] shall be free" (Lincoln, 1863). When Abraham Lincoln uttered these words in 1863 as part of his famed *Emancipation Proclamation*, the world celebrated the end of slavery as they knew it. However, society continues to battle slavery under a different name in the twenty-first century – human trafficking. **[I understand what you're saying here, like I get that your comparing concept of sex trafficking to the shackles of slavery, but I feel like this comparison may come off a bit strong without a fully grounded basis as to why you're making the comparison in the first place. Hopefully that makes sense. Basically, if you want to continue with this comparison, then try to draw a much closer connection between the similarities between sex trafficking and slavery. If you don't do this then I feel like the Lincoln quote will seem misplaced in the rest of your essay.]** Slavery endures in the modern era through human trafficking, which affects the Athens-Clarke County community and UGA significantly.

Neha's comments left me stumped initially. When I wrote my rough draft, I was convinced that including Lincoln's quote was a brilliant rhetorical choice – and, when I was presented with the fact that it was not, my pride was a little hurt, and I didn't know how else to write a compelling hook for the paper. So, after close to two weeks of deliberation, I finally revised my introduction, as seen below.

High school history textbooks across the country celebrate the *Emancipation Proclamation* and the 13th amendment as the glorious resolution to the horrific slavery issue in the United States. However, America and the world continue to battle slavery in the modern era. Human trafficking, which is the subjection of individuals to “involuntary labor or commercial sex through force, fraud, or coercion” (Beeson, “UGA Takes On Human Trafficking”), is “the only industry in which the supply and demand are the same thing: human beings” (UNICEF USA, “How Trafficking Exists Today”). As modern slavery persists both abroad and at home, both awareness and incongruities in human trafficking have arisen.

Obviously, I practically wrote a brand new introduction. However, I think one of the most significant writing techniques that I have learned this semester is that it is more than alright to erase and start from scratch. For so long, I was entirely engrossed with rearranging or rephrasing my introduction, not realizing that what my introduction needed was a brand new rewrite. In writing, much like life, knowing when to completely discard something and start anew is a valuable skill – when we set aside our pride and evaluate without our own biases, we can communicate more effectively.

In addition, I have included my final paragraph from Paper 1, which details recent developments in American efforts to prevent human trafficking. Professor Lambert’s comments are also included in blue.

While awareness and research about trafficking have certainly increased in recent years, many have voiced concerns about the disparities in labor trafficking prevention. Forced labor victims represent the overwhelming majority of all modern slaves at a whopping 81% (Human Rights First, “Human Trafficking by the Numbers”). However, labor trafficking only constituted roughly 7% of all prosecutions relating to human trafficking in 2016 (Human Rights First, “Human Trafficking by the Numbers”). [very interesting] So, why is there such a disconnect in public fervor between labor and sex trafficking? PBS describes this issue as “a self-perpetuating cycle, wherein agencies may not direct resources toward labor trafficking because the issue is rarely the focus of media attention” (Miller, “Why Labor Trafficking Is So Hard To Track”). PBS goes on to elaborate, saying that lack of public sympathy and proper reporting about these incidents may be responsible for this discrepancy in the prevalence and prosecution of labor

trafficking (Miller, “Why Labor Trafficking Is So Hard To Track”). David Okech, a UGA professor who has pioneered research on the trifecta of preventing, prosecuting, and prosecuting human trafficking (Okech, David, et. al, “Human Trafficking: Improving Victim Identification and Service Provision”), spoke to the Athens Banner-Herald, saying that there is very little information on labor trafficking in Georgia, primarily as a result of “unreported, under-reported, or [...] ad hoc basis” cases (Anderson, “UGA Researcher Seeks Data on Human Trafficking in Georgia”). Regardless of the rationale behind these incongruencies, efforts are being made to investigate both labor and sex trafficking and their implications for society. **[Maybe a little more data on what these efforts are, or what some of the disagreements on HOW to fix it are?]**

Professor Lambert’s comment exposed a flaw in my essay that I had attempted to conceal with vague language – I actually wasn’t sure what efforts were being made to stop human trafficking. While I did indeed presume that somebody was trying to stop trafficking, I didn’t know who was leading these efforts or what specific prevention measures were being proposed. Because of this lack of information, I received a grade of “A-” on Paper 1, which was a step down from the “A” I received on the other two essays. So, in preparing the final portfolio, I took the time to do the research on which efforts were being made, and I then revised Paper 1, as seen below.

Regardless of the rationale behind these incongruencies, efforts are being made to investigate both labor and sex trafficking and their implications for society. **In particular, the 2000 Trafficking Victims Protection Act has been groundbreaking in deterring the crime in the United States; through the “3 P’s” of prosecution, protection, and prevention (US Department of State, “3 Ps: Prosecution, Protection, and Prevention”), the US legislative and judicial systems have assumed a new approach to stopping human exploitation.**

Because of Professor Lambert’s guidance, I was able to better flesh out my claim about trafficking prevention efforts and, thus, write a stronger essay. While revision is still my least

favorite part of the writing process, this semester has taught me that experiencing discomfort fosters growth, both as a writer and an individual.

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