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English Composition 11000

#### Phase 4: self-assessment essay ( portfolio cover letter )

The hardest part of writing is the beginning. Well... at least for me, it is. This is the third iteration of an introduction for this specific writing piece about self-assessment. I've considered starting this piece with a reference to the past and how the purpose of writing has changed for me over the years, then I tried to start with a more academic approach centered on the art of drafting but eventually, both ideas were scrapped. This importance placed on the introduction makes sense. It sets the stage, the theme, and most importantly it sets the flow for the rest of the piece. For what is the point of spending effort into writing a piece with disinterested readers?

The importance I placed on the introduction took place in all other parts of my writing. Having a draft completely scrapped because of a disorganized flow has rarely happened but cutting whole sections of text happened quite frequently to preserve the cohesion and flow of a piece of writing. Reviewing and editing became more than half of the process in writing. I even developed a strategy for a more efficient process for editing. Hearing your piece of writing out loud shows how much cohesion is in the piece of writing. I would play my whole piece through text-to-speech to hear how it would sound when someone else reads it. Of course, this isn't a foolproof method as the computer has no way to give criticism directly. That of course is done through peer review, which I did warm up to this semester. I usually prefer a calm musical session alone when editing pieces.

This would also apply to researching where hours of my life have been used to find answers and sources to questions that needed more concrete proof other than me pulling it out from prior memory. Although this process of researching would end with me having a list of 20 to 30 links that were vaguely connected to the topic I was doing. I believe this became a problem in phase 3 where quality over quantity became very apparent during the process of researching the argument between streaming and music artists. This also happened during phase 2 where definitions of genres and styles all seemed pretty loose where musical elements were shared with multiple genres but just didn't link to form a strong similarity or connection. But in those cases I was researching for answers to a vague question, I would then adjust my approach to more specific research narrowing down on a specific keyword or even stance.

Taking a stance in the researched essay seemed an easy task at first, but would become like trying to walk straight on a blurred line that zigzags on the floor. It does become harder to defend your stance when it seems like every source was slamming your stance to the ground with no push-back. The lack of

supporting sources gave me no other choice but to analyze the factual sources and synthesize an opinion that didn't originate from another article's perspective. I also learned how to implement different sources of media ranging from interviews to songs to promote a stance.

To shift away from the topic of research, I noticed a similar constant shown in all my pieces of writing. Although the topics and goals of each phase were vastly different, the theme of introspection always managed to sneak in even if the overall impact of its presence in the piece wasn't hugely important. The connection to the author always makes the writing feel more genuine and interesting. It gives more purpose and reveals why the author even chose to write on the topic. Finding purpose in an assignment where the requirements and topic are given can be a lengthy task of waiting for inspiration but what I found that worked best was inserting a personal opinion or even relating it to an experience. The purpose of the piece also brings up the question of the audience that was targeted. Usually, for superficial writing pieces like academic assignments, the audience is only the teacher and peers who choose to review the piece. But going past the superficial audience to realize what audience the piece was meant to attract proved difficult for me to wrap my head around. Sometimes I just write for myself as an outlet for my thoughts. But the audience can be split into demographics of age, gender, and even knowledge. Associating a style of writing with an audience was difficult as I thought an audience to be really anybody that stumbled upon the writing or was reading it solely for the relation to their topic. The understanding that rhetorical devices and the inclusion of specific language and bias can influence the audience came from the realization that different genres appeal to different people. The audience heavily influences the direction of the writing piece as purpose and audience come conjointly, so identifying an audience greatly assists in choosing the style of the piece.

Overall, I've learned how to increase my efficiency in researching and analyzing different types of media and sources to synthesize a strong thesis and opinions. I also have evolved my writing centered on the relationship between author and reader and the purpose of both parties whether it be why the piece was written or why the audience chose to read the piece. This experience from writing will be used in future pieces whether they be for academic or personal purposes.