

Please type or print.

What was the writing assignment? (Use your teacher's words or attach the assignment.)

Final Reflective Writing Assignment

For your Final Portfolio Reading, you'll need to include a piece of writing that discusses your writing and the choices you've made as a thinker and a writer. This piece can be in the form of a letter or an essay. In either case, there must be a clearly stated main idea supported by explanations and specific examples.

For the development and support of this piece, draw from your two research papers, lessons learned through class discussion and the writing process itself, as well as insights gained from reading the texts, "How to write with style, by Kurt Vonnegut, "Listening to Students: New Insights on Their College-writing Expectations" by Lorna Collier and "What Do Professors Say about College Writing," by Elizabeth Brockman, et al. Use direct and indirect quotations from any of these texts to illustrate the supporting points you make.

Length: 2 or more pages, but no longer than 4. Format: MLA (Remember to cite your sources.)

Dear Portfolio Reader:

Thank you for reading my Final Portfolio. My writing is not at its best and definitely has room for improvement. However, I feel fairly comfortable now that my skills have progressed and the quality of my papers has improved in this class through learning about and practicing writing. It also helped to read the articles that gave insights into college writing and how to write with style. There have been a few problems that I have had to fix to make my papers acceptable. For instance, some of the things I have had to work on were; staying focused on one topic and not wandering off the subject, writing clear and shorter sentences because mine were too long and confusing, using an outline to break the subject into related topics for individual paragraphs, and using others information from sources to support ideas. Nevertheless, the one idea that I have benefited from the most was choosing a subject that I am familiar with and can relate to.

I search for a main topic that I can relate to or something that I actually do in my life. I recognize that if I write about something from my own life experiences, the writing is much more relaxed because I am more comfortable with and have a better understanding of the information. Actually experiencing and knowing exactly what it is like to live out the subject that I am writing about makes it much easier to put it down on paper. For the first assignment in this class, I chose to write about sports and went into detail about snow skiing, which I am passionate about. Knowing what it is like, how it feels, and how everything happens from a first person view instead of from how someone else sees it is much more reliable. It also just simply makes the writing more fun and enjoyable when you have an opportunity to share something about yourself with others. Kurt Vonnegut says in his article *How to Write with Style* “that no one would care how well or how badly Mr. White expressed himself, if he did not have perfectly enchanting things to say.” (Vonnegut). In other words, sometimes it does not matter how fancy your writing is if you do not have anything interesting to talk about. Writing on something you are passionate about catches the attention of the reader allowing them to

enjoy your work.

After settling on an intriguing subject, I struggle with staying focused and developing the main topics that are presented in my thesis. I start writing by putting all the information I have into my paper. It normally starts out strong but then about halfway through I begin drifting away from my main point and ramble on about something that is related to but does not develop what I am discussing. This makes my papers too broad and less interesting because they do not support my main subject. Kurt Vonnegut makes a great point, "If a sentence, no matter how excellent, does not illuminate your subject in some new and useful way, scratch it out." (Vonnegut). I like this quote because it communicates a good idea of how to make sure that my writing stays within its main topic. In my second paper *Habits of Mind to Create Better Work*, I wrote too broad by describing all 16 Habits of Mind. I rewrote it so that it focused only on the two habits of mind that were in my thesis. However, something that probably influences straying from the subject is that I like to write very long sentences. I like to jam information into my sentences instead of transitioning to a new sentence. A peer reviewer drew attention to this bad habit. Long sentences in my writing are part of why my papers are too broad.

Another reason why my papers lack focus is because usually I try to skip to process of making an outline. Sometimes I just want to start writing about an idea and I do not want to worry about making an outline and overthinking my paper. However, I quickly learned that making an outline to direct my paper is essential. Taking the time to prepare an outline before I start writing provides direction for my ideas and organization for my paper. One of the most important things about an outline for me is that it helps me stay focused on the subject of the paper. Writing an outline keeps me on track, gives each of my paragraphs a specific topic and keeps my paper flowing nicely.

Another thing I struggle with is using information from other sources. It is difficult for me to add other people's information into my writing. I do not like to interrupt my work by using a quote from another source because I prefer my own writing. Incorporating other source information shows that what I am talking about is not just what I think but that there is researched or supporting data that

proves my statements and makes my paper more solid. The article *What Do Professors Really Say about College Writing* states the importance of students knowing “how to incorporate source materials into their writing, either to provide supporting evidence or to generate a thesis.” (Brockman et al. 78). For example, in my paper called *Do What You Love Most* I used information from professionals that do the sports mentioned to support my ideas. Using quotes also helps me stay focused on the purpose of my paper and makes my writing more narrowed down.

Over all, I think that even though I had some problems with my writing in the beginning of this class, the practice of writing and knowledge that I attained helped me to focus on resolving those issues. This has encouraged me be more confident in my writing and has allowed me to enjoy it more. I hope I can use the new skills that I have developed to do more writing in the future that is creative and effective.

Sincerely,

Works Cited

Vonnegut, Kurt. "How to write with style." *International Paper Co.* 1982.

Brockman, Elizabeth, et al. "What Do Professors Really Say about College Writing?" *English Journal*, 100.3, 2011, pp. 75-81.

Taylor, Dane. "Do What You Love Most." 2017.

Taylor, Dane. "Habits of Mind to Create Better Work." 2017.