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Foundations of Writing

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Habits of mind

A great student is not only someone who gets good grades or memorizes every lesson, it is someone who has great habits of mind. According to the Council of Writing Program Administrators et al., habits of mind, “refer to ways of approaching learning that are both intellectual and practical and that will support students’ success in a variety of fields and disciplines”(CWPA et al 1). Personally in my own experiences I consider myself to have different strengths and weaknesses when it comes to the habits of mind pertaining to my academics. I went to school in Penn-Trafford School District which is on the outskirts of Pittsburgh. My whole academic career I have never liked any of my English classes because I considered myself to be a bad writer. Now that I look back on my experiences, I have realized that the start of my dislike for English started with spelling and grammar. In elementary school we would have spelling and grammar tests which I was, and I am still not good at. Now that I understand what writing is truly about, I can try and start to change my mindset about it. Writing is not just about the grammar and spelling, it is about the creativeness and the way the writer engages and directs attention to the audience. In high school I did take a class that was geared more towards college writing and what we should expect when we get to college which has also helped. The class I liked the most was math because I always got good grades and considered myself to be good at it. I do believe that my academic experiences prepared me for college because I was taught many different qualities that make a good student. Three habits of mind

qualities that I do have are engagement, responsibility, and flexibility, but three that I could definitely work on would be curiosity, openness, and creativity.

As a student I believe that I am always engaging with the class and the task at hand. Engagement is being committed to the task while putting in effort to gain knowledge and an overall better understanding (CWPA et al 4). In middle school through high school I would consider myself to be a very outgoing and talkative person in school. Little did I know that having that kind of personality could evidently help me academically. What I mean by this, is that in class I would always be the one to answer or volunteer because I was never really nervous or timid. By having this outgoing personality it really helped with my overall engagement in my classes. It is a known fact that students that are engaged and answering questions or volunteering will end up gaining more knowledge than the students that never talk or engage with the teacher and or classmates. Engagement is a very important quality to have because it fosters growth as a student due to the correlations made between your own thoughts and ideas compared to the teachers or peers around you.

I believe that I am a very responsible person when it comes to my education as well as in my everyday life. Being a student athlete has also increased how responsible I am with certain tasks. According to the Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing, the definition of responsibility is “the ability to take ownership of one’s actions and understand the consequences of those actions for oneself and others” (CWPA et al 5). While being on a sports team here at the university it is my responsibility to represent it. There are many things that the average college student can do that I can not, due to the sport I play and the responsibilities that come with it. Being an athlete in college has also made me become really responsible with the work, as well as my classes. To be eligible to play I have to have a certain amount of credits and a certain grade.

As for my classes, my coach checks to see if I am attending and if I am not then there will be certain consequences that I would have to face. Even though being a student athlete can be hard or overwhelming at times, it has truly made me a more responsible student overall.

One of the main habits of mind qualities I have is my flexibility. Almost every student has learned to be flexible when it comes to our education due to Covid. The unexpected virus that hit the world has affected students' education in many different ways. Being flexible means that you are willing to change your habits or ways to something else that is new and different to you (CWPA et al 5). During high school before the virus hit, I was a very hands-on learner that asked a bunch of questions and needed an in person explanation. Once Covid hit, I had to learn to be flexible with my learning. Even though I may still learn the best in an in person class with hands-on learning, I have learned to change my way of learning to fit the online education we were receiving. In some classes it was very challenging for me to get a hold of because we were online, but I soon learned the ins and outs which eventually lead to my success through online learning.

When I look at the habits of mind written by The National Council of Teachers of English and others, I notice that I do not fully show certain habits. For example, I do not consider myself to be the most curious. As defined by the Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing, curiosity means “the desire to know more about the world”(CWPA et al 4). Ever since the fifth grade I knew exactly what I wanted to be when I grew up. Even though that was seven years ago, my answer has still never changed. I knew that I wanted to be a teacher my whole life and I was never curious about any other job for the future. As of now I still do believe that teaching is the right career path for me, but I do wonder if anything would be different if I was just a little bit

more curious. Even though not being curious in this situation wasn't a bad thing, it never hurts to leave your comfort zone and explore more opportunities in the world.

According to the Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing, openness means “the willingness to consider new ways of being and thinking in the world”(CWPA et al 4).

Throughout my academic career I have not found myself to be open to new ideas or different perspectives. For example, if we were to do peer reviews I would sometimes be a little anxious because I tend to stick to my own perspective rather than getting insight from other people. As I move forward as a college student it is my goal to work on being more open to my peers and teachers perspectives. Learning to use constructive criticism to my advantage can help me transform my writing and other academic tasks. In the future I hope to be more open to helpful suggestions from others and not be as one minded as I am now.

As I start to learn more about writing throughout this course, I can truly say that creativity is one of the most important habits to have while writing. As a writer it is our job to grab the attention of our intended audience. One of the ways that this can be done is through the creativity of the writing. Creativity is using your imagination to create new ideas that are interesting and different from others(CWPA et al 4). All throughout my highschool career when I was asked to write papers, I would do the bare minimum. I was never really into writing which made it hard for me to do the assignments because I truly did not enjoy it. Even though I still received good grades on these papers, it was lacking one main component, which was creativity. I would write the paper just for the grade instead of writing a creative story. So far this course is already ten times better than any of my writing classes in high school. I am hoping to get more creative throughout the semester while becoming a great writer.

To become the best writer I can be, I will keep being engaged, responsible, and flexible while also working harder to be more curious, open, and creative as well. My goal for this course is to become a more confident writer which leads to more success. I would also like to learn more about the ins and outs of a great writer's mind. To accomplish my goals I have to keep the habits of mind present while writing. I believe that this course will help me strengthen my weaknesses, while perfecting my strengths. By doing this, it will lead to my success as a writer while also accomplishing my goals as well.

Works Cited

Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing.” Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA), the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), and the National Writing Project (NWP). Writing Program Administrators. Jan 2011. Accessed 12 Sept. 2021.