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Enjoyment vs Pressure

Writing has always been enjoyable and simple for me. It was something to do in my free time, a form of expression, and I never really needed to put too much thought into it. The earliest written piece I can recall was from 3rd grade, I had written a heartfelt letter to Mayor Bloomberg, speaking about my concerns about the violence in the city. What I hadn't expected, was a letter back, commending me for my “persuasive” and passionate writing skills, and thanking me for writing the letter. My parents were extremely proud, they hung up copies of the letters in my house and even submitted one to the school for my ELA teacher to hang onto. This was when I truly began to discover my love for writing and storytelling. I continued to write and write throughout elementary school, even submitting my pieces for local writing contests. I didn’t win too often, but it was fun and gave me a sense of ownership and a feeling of accomplishment.

Right before entering the 6th grade, my upcoming middle school had an essay submission contest, our assignment was to write about the Hurricane that had just affected my town, and me being excited to already write, found out there was a great prize for winning. My competitiveness kicked in and I ended up being one of the winners, bringing home a brand-new iPad just in time for my departure from fifth grade. Upon entering middle school, my passion and love for writing had quickly diminished. I was faced with deadlines and deadlines, harsh grading with few explanations, and a writing burnout. To backtrack, in the 6th grade I had entered my English class excited to learn new skills and show off my pre-existing love for the subject. The course had started off smoothly, convincing me that I would excel smoothly and confidently.

It wasn't until the first big writing assignment of the year that I found myself doubting something I had once loved so much. The goal of the assignment was simple, it was basically freewriting as we could create a fiction story, which had been my favorite type of writing to do. I had spent an hour picking names for the characters in my story, and more time developing intricate backstories for each and every person. Once drafted, I was impressed with my work, to say the least. After doing some peer review with other kids in my class I had happily submitted my work to my teacher, hoping that she would feel the same way about my story. Just a week later, our stories had been handed back with the final grades for it. I was mortified when I received my paper, a 75 percent was written across the work that I had spent so much time and effort on. I was shocked to see this, and there were no markups or annotations on my paper hinting at why I had received such a low grade. I had decided to meet with my teacher who gave harsh but good feedback, and while I was ultimately proud of my work I had understood where she was coming from. So, with that, I took back my piece and was determined to impress my teacher with the next essay.

Just a month later, we were told to write an analysis/book report essay based on our readings. Though this was a different form of writing from my previous story, I had kept my teacher's critiques and comments in the back of my mind to ensure that my essay met all the necessary criteria. Once again, with confidence, I had submitted my essay with hopes of receiving a more positive look this time. Yet once again, I was not satisfied with my final grade, though it increased a small bit, this time 77 percent instead of 75 percent. I could not understand what I was doing so wrong. I had again met with my teacher desperate to find out where I went wrong.

To put it lightly, middle school had been a game-changer for me academically. I was no longer receiving praise for my writing, this time I was receiving plenty of not satisfactory grades for work that I had been so proud of. Needless to say, this completely changed my view on the subject of writing. 7th grade and 8th grade hadn't been much different, I was receiving higher grades but still was not satisfied with the writing I had once been so proud of. This had caused a constant feeling of anxiousness, I was no longer writing for fun, for my own enjoyment, now I was writing to ensure that I received a good grade and appeased my teacher. Of course, that’s a given in school. You should want to receive good grades, but what once had come so naturally to me was replaced with my constant fear that I’d fail, and with that fear washed away any enthusiasm I had for this subject.

Even today, my love for writing still hasn’t gone back to how it was before. I think the ironic thing is, while loving to write at a young age I had thought reading was horrible, that it was beyond boring and whenever we’d do book reports I dreaded having to read the books picked out, but always looked forward to being able to write about my thoughts on said books. Now, I’ve picked up the hobby of reading books and it has become one of my favorite things to do in my past time. It is interesting how reading and writing switch places, all due to the burnout of writing and an underrated, overlooked love for reading.

Reflection

In this narrative, I decided to write about how a negative experience overall affected my view and feelings on literacy. The Genre I am writing is a literacy narrative as it explains my experience. With this, I hoped to achieve the purpose of showing how much something that happened just a bit later into my childhood can impact such a huge part of my early life. The audience for this is any teachers or even students that may relate and feel the same way. My information is being conveyed to my audience through a story-telling technique for this narrative. My attitude toward this topic is very reflective. This assignment helped me achieve numerous things on the Course Learning Objectives, like learning how to engage in social aspects of the writing process and explaining my purpose. Additionally, compose texts in order to show my stance.