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ENG1101

Date 12/18/22

Final Reflection & Portfolio

Final Reflection

We all tend to make mistakes and sometimes when we realize it we ask ourselves “ how didn't I not notice my mistake in the moment. “ And honestly it's really frustrating but looking back at your precious work can be very beneficial to improve ourselves. Throughout these 4 months I have grown as a reader and as a writer. I learned my style of writing , how to get my point across , new resources to find research but especially my character development. At first it started off by not sharing at all to slightly being more open about my work. I've realized that you don't understand how the small things really impact you in the long run until it's too late.

I learned so much about myself this semester. When I read an article and I see a technique that the writer used in his or her piece that stood out to me , I try to incorporate that in my piece of writing. As a writer I learned from myself that I like to use real life scenarios in order to get my point across. For me it's a way to make it easier for the person reading my piece to understand it.

Throughout my three major writing assignments you can come across metaphors and similes in my piece. On my first major assignment I said “ I was so used to being in my own bubble that when I started school it's like my bubble popped.” The reason why I used this was because I meant to make the reader understand that the bubble was supposed to be my comfort zone and then having to leave that and start this new reality , start new things made my bubble pop , I had to go out of my comfort zone. On my major two assignments I said “ Mental illness is like a cave , you feel lost and in a really dark place and after being in there for so long you give up on searching for the light “ writing this in my piece was a way to make it easier to understand what mental illness is. The reason why I describe mental illness as a cave is because struggling with mental illness really makes you feel like you're stuck in a dark place and some people do try to find a way to get to the exit but sometimes they don't have luck and they just give up and it takes over them. On my major 3rd assignment I wrote “You can think of an open letter as sending a text message to someone but everyone can see it.” I wrote this because that's the best way to describe what an open letter is. An open letter is directed to a specific person but anyone can have access to this letter. Anyone can read this “ text message. “

As a reader it's been easier for me to understand the author's purpose of writing the article. A few months ago as a writer I wouldn't describe or put too much detail into my writing just because I wouldn't know what words or phrases to use to decide what I am trying to say but as time went by I have developed my skill of describing effectively the point I'm trying to emphasize in my piece.

This class has become very beneficial to me for multiple reasons. I learned about the city tech library database which can give me trustworthy sources. I learned about different types of genres in order to target the right audience for a piece , besides social media platforms there are TEDtalks , podcasts , and many more genres. I learned about the diverse conflicts there are in the world because of my classmates. Not only did I learn about myself but I also learned from my classmates.

At the beginning of the semester I wouldn't like being in groups and having to discuss our writing. At first I wouldn't say what I wrote down just because I was scared about what my group might think but as time went by I started to realize that this technique was a way to learn how to communicate with others and take criticism and my classmates thought to improve my writing.

I'm choosing to not revise one of my major assignments because there were very small details that I missed. This made me realize that you need to read carefully what the guidelines are in order to get full credit. Sometimes the smallest things are the ones to count the most. For example, I didn't arrange my sources in an alphabetical order. I lost five points because of that. Point is that you have to be well aware of the details that are required to get full credit.

Overall this semester was really beneficial. I learned that I like to use metaphors and similes in my piece of writing. I have developed my skill of effectively getting my point across. I have experienced new ways of finding research that can be trustworthy for any material that might require it. Till this day I still fear criticism but 've learned how to take it and transform it into something positive. It has improved my grade on assignment. Lastly I've learned to be more cautious about the little details because they are really important.

Unit 1

Adapting to my new reality.

Being born into an immigrant family brought certain obstacles for me since I was a first generation child of the family. Growing up my first language was Spanish. That's all my parents knew how to speak , with Spanish I was able to talk with my family members and feel connected with them. But then at the age of four everything changed. When I started school for the first time I realized that speaking Spanish was not the language

needed to communicate with the outside world. I was so used to being in my own bubble that when I started school it's like my bubble popped. Going into my first year of school was terrifying. All my teacher spoke to me was English. I didn't understand a single word she was saying to me which caused me to cry any time she would talk to me. I thought that she was yelling at me or that I had done something wrong. I mean that's what I as a typical 4 year old thought. I didn't want to go to school because I felt so out of place and being a shy person also played a huge role in my life. I didn't know how I was going to do it but I knew that I had to find a way to learn this new language because this was my new reality and the first step to adapt to my "new life" was to learn English.

Having to go to school without knowing English felt like I had been thrown into the ocean without knowing how to swim.

Being so young I felt so much pressure because I knew that if I didn't understand the material it was going to be my fault. And the thing about me is that I have always been an extremely shy person. When I was confused I was always too scared to ask questions because I felt like others were going to laugh at me for asking such a dumb question so what I would do is just stay shut but soon that became an issue. I wouldn't know how to do my

homework and if I didn't know how to do it , neither did my parents. But they did try to help in any way they could. Google translate became a helpful resource to complete my homework. We would translate English to Spanish and that's how we would do most of my homework. As I got older we realized that Google translate was not going to be enough for me to succeed with school so my parents got me a tutor. Have you ever carried a really heavy book bag that you've been waiting to put down? And when you finally do you feel some type of relief. That's how I felt when I got a tutor for the first time in elementary school. I was never able to fit in , I didn't have friends to help me out so I was so grateful when she came into my life because I finally felt like I could rely on someone to help me.

I was determined to learn how to speak and write English. I wasn't going to let anything stop me from achieving this goal. I knew that I had to find a way to improve because it was going to be useful in the future. When I got to middle school , I found out that they had a program for students that wanted to improve their English so I decided to join it. I'm so glad I did because by the end of the program I felt so much comfortable with speaking and spelling the language. I felt more open and less scared to interact with others. Being shy stopped me from finding friends. And the

only way I've gotten friends is when they come up to me and that's a bad habit I have. In 7th grade this girl named Denise came up to me and we bonded so well that I felt so comfortable around her. Our friendship had become one of the best things that could've happened to me. I no longer felt alone and till this day we're still friends, it's been 6 years of our friendship and counting. She's always been so supportive and her support has helped me through a lot. She saw my struggle and she said to me that "we learn something new everyday and learning is not something that one day stops." That really stood out to me and changed the way I view education.

Starting off at a young age with a negative interaction with English made me believe that it was some sort of curse. I felt like it was haunting me. I felt like I was never going to get to the finish line with the language but as Denise said you never actually stop learning in life and that's the beauty of it. It doesn't have a finish line, it's infinite. Thinking this way opened new doors for me. It made me become optimistic with learning new things and my education. I never actually stop speaking my native language because of my parents. Now I know how to speak and write Spanish as well. But as I said before at first I thought it was a curse but soon I came to realize that it had

become a blessing knowing both languages , English and Spanish. With this I was able to get my first job. I'm way more comfortable today with the language compared to 10 years ago. Without knowing it this experience in my life had become the biggest lesson I've learned. It doesn't just go with learning a new language, it also applies with learning new things in general in life.

At first I did think I was going to drown because I thought there wasn't anyone around to help me but that wasn't the case , the people that helped me from drowning were my parents , tutor , my best friend and my teachers. These people had a really huge impact on my education and who I have become as a person. I started doing things out of my comfort zone even if I was scared. In high school I started interacting with people and by doing this I met 3 of the best girls. It's been 4 years of our friendship. I also learned to be determined , with this I was able to learn how to drive. Overall education is very important and you shouldn't be intimidated by it. You should just go for it because without you knowing it , it could become the best thing you did for yourself and if it didn't turn out , now you know that it wasn't for you and you should try learning something new.

Unit 2

U2 Annotated Bibliography

Introduction

How does the government impact those individuals who are homeless and struggling with mental illness?

Mental illness is like a cave , you feel lost and in a really dark place and after being in there for so long you give up on searching for the light and that's when it's too late for one to realize that they have officially lost themselves. I've personally always come across homeless people. I see them sleeping by the park near my house or under the bridge I walk past to go to the train station and on the Subway as well. Seeing all these people without having a stable home makes me question why this is. Are they suffering financially? Did something traumatic occur in their life? Are they suffering from mental illness? This is a topic I've been wanting to learn about.

Citation: Chikwava, Fadzai, et al. "Patterns of Homelessness and Housing Instability and the Relationship with Mental Health Disorders among Young People Transitioning from out-of-Home Care: Retrospective Cohort Study Using Linked Administrative Data." PLOS ONE, vol. 17, no. 9, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0274196>.

Summary

Homelessness is an issue worldwide but especially in Australia. Homelessness services increased from 279,200 in 2015/2016 to almost 290,500 in 2019/2020. 57% are under the age of 35. The reason why the rate of homeless people is so high is due to poor transition planning from the government department and lack of suitable housing options. Another major reason why many young people are homeless is due to mental health disorders. 75% is based on alcohol and drug abuse. Young people with persistent periods of homelessness have a higher rate of mental health disorders than young people who have recent or single episodes of homelessness. Some mental health disorders range from alcohol , drug use , depression , anxiety and self injury.

Analysis

Mental health plays a huge role in justifying how stable you can live. And you don't know how important it is to take care of your mental health until it's too late and one is too blindsided to accept help. Now you have reached the downfall and are now living in the streets. And that goes for the majority of people that are homeless. Many people are out there struggling with drug use , alcohol and depression. Many homeless people use this as a coping mechanism to deal with their struggles but what they don't realize is that it's just making their situation worse and the government does very little to help those individuals. The journal says that those who go through a short period of time being homeless are the ones that change their life for the better. They are able to find a stable home for themselves and I think that's because they're not fully hypnotized , they are aware of what they're going through and know that they have to find a way to improve their life but people that suffer from mental illness for a long period of time are most likely to stay homeless for the rest of their life and I agree with that. Once you're at the stage where you

don't care about your physical and mental well-being you stop caring about whether or not you have a stable home. They no longer think to themselves about improving their life. They feel like they're stuck and this has now become their new lifestyle and that's sad. There isn't anyone to help them come to a realization that they need to find a way to get out of this trap.

Quote: “ These young people who end up being homeless often have histories of mental health issues, which may reinforce and lengthen their episodes of homelessness “

Citation: “Sister of Woman Living on the Streets with Mental Illness Says Law Prevents Her from Taking Action.” Yahoo! News, Yahoo!,
<https://news.yahoo.com/sister-woman-living-streets-mental-062600753.html>.

Summary

Alisha Lessenger was extremely brilliant. In 2012 she was an inspirational speaker for college students. But that changed and she now talks to herself in her car and in public settings. She was arrested multiple times for the past seven years and has been in and out of jail and mental health facilities since her mother's death. California state law requires someone to be in “ immediate danger to themselves and others “ in order to be committed without their consent. Michael Reno, the president and CEO of the midnight mission says that the law is designed to protect us from someone that is dangerous by putting them away but not designed to really get the help and assistance needed for those with mental health disorders. Alisha's sister drives the Streets looking for her sister and when she finds her , she calls someone to go get her and take her for treatment but no one has taken her sister in. Alisha will go to court and the judge will decide whether she is mentally stable to stand the trial.

Analyze

When someone's mental health is really poor people expect them to seek help but the thing is that they don't realize how deeply they're suffering with mental illness themselves. California state law doesn't actually help those with mental health disorders in order to detach themselves from it and that's an issue. The law states that they have to be “ an immediate danger to themselves or the people around them “ but that's the thing at that point they've already drowned in their mental illness. Instead of actually helping those people , the police arrest them for the crimes they are committing and that's good at first but after arresting them multiple times they should come to a realization that what they need is help. They should be taking them to a mental health facility instead of trial. The government doesn't take a step to solve this issue. That is the reason why the rate of homelessness hasn't decreed but instead it has actually increased throughout the years.

Quote: " Our laws are built for people who have cognitive capacity , they're really decided to protect you and me from someone , you know putting us away , they're not decided for people who really need help and assistance in making cognitive decision about what's best for them. "

Citation: Josh.barker. "NYC's Homeless Population Grows amid Mental Health Crisis That Predominately Affects People of Color." New York Amsterdam News, 24 Mar. 2022, <https://amsterdamnews.com/news/2022/03/24/nycs-homeless-population-grows-amid-mental-health-crisis-that-predominately-affects-people-of-color/>.

Summary - today in 2022 we have the highest rate of homeless people living in New York City since the 1930s. Many have chosen the subway as a home. Many homeless people suffer with mental illness and other severe health complications. Due to the pandemic occurring in 2020 everything took a turn for the worse which caused the rate of homeless people in New York City to increase dramatically. The organizations that the government had provided for homeless people in order to solve this issue had shut down.

Analysis

I agree with this newspaper because in 2020 a crisis happened, a pandemic occurred and everything shut down. Everyone had to be on lockdown because covid-19. Covid was killing people left and right. This dilemma didn't decrease the rate of homelessness in New York City but instead it increased the rate of homeless people. The help that the government had provided for those suffering with mental illness soon shut down during this time and that affected many people that didn't have a stable home. Those who did have a home soon didn't. The pandemic caused many people to no longer have a job. The city shut down and many didn't qualify to receive money from the government which caused many people to lose their homes. People didn't have the money to pay for their bills.

Quote: " Homeless single adults experience higher rates of addiction disorders, mental illness, and other severe health complications than homeless families. Furthermore, the pandemic seems to have worsened these underlying structural issues and what organizations, the government, and citizens can do to alleviate the problem,"

Conclusion

With some research I learned that the majority of people that are homeless are struggling from mental illness. And no one is trying to help them, not even the government. How are things supposed to get better if there isn't anyone trying to decrease the rate of homelessness. The government just thinks about getting money instead of investing money into creating more mental health facilities for homeless people. Opening up more facilities can help those that are lost and don't have anyone to guide them into a new path and secondly help them live a stable life. Your mental health is really important and if you let it take over you it will eat you alive. You will no longer have control over making your own decisions. If you feel yourself slowly

getting trapped don't let stigma stop you from seeking help if you can identify your mental struggles at an early stage it will be easier for you to improve your mental health.

Unit 3

<https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/pennereng1101fa2022d438/files/2022/12/U3-part-1.pdf>

<https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/pennereng1101fa2022d438/files/2022/12/U3-reflection.pdf>