



Life experience



By Adama Barro

Final Reflection

As a reader, during this class I have learned more than I taught, I wasn't confident at all in my writing and also reading.

Like many foreigners, English is a big challenge for me, but by following the directions of this class, I think that I am more up to the challenge.

Writing short stories, memoir, or journal assignments on a weekly basis built me much better for the continuity of my education.

I became a more creative and faster thinker when it came to writing a literature paper.

Although I am in a technical field, this class helps me with my speech and communication with others, it allows me to interact freely and with more confidence with others in English.

In the beginning of the semester, when I went back and read my class assignments, I was very brief on details, how to describe my ideas and also how to combine them together and make sense, I was very vague on my ideas but with the guidance of my professor now I don't know when to stop

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Throughout this semester I don't think if there is an assignment that I like the least, they were all fun to do and a great learning process.

An early assumption that I had of myself was that I was not at all a good writer, at some point I used to avoid writing even a text message with my smartphone, writing was like a punishment for me, I was not able to put all I was taught in writing and sometime it was very frustrating and embarrassing but now although I am not perfect, I am not shy of my writing, I have learned during this semester that it is okay to make mistakes and learn from that.

Revising my work is also a very good tool to correct my mistakes and always take the advice of the professor even if we think it's time consuming and most of the time, laziness gets the best out of us. It is always a good learning process to revise your work.

A piece of writing that I am extremely proud of is the poem I wrote for my mother, it was very honest, deep and personal, and I think that this poem will make any mother happy. It was very simple, truthful and inspiring.

During this semester, one thing i will mention and insist for everyone to consider is the peer feedback, it is good to have other people opinion and critiques on your writing especially people from your class, you have more or less the same mind set and that opinion will push you to do your best and not to repeat the same mistakes.

This class was a very good learning process and I will recommend it to any newcomer who wants to overcome their fears of writing.

Memoir

This happened when I was 18 years old, finishing high school, thinking I was the man, active, happy, the sky was the limite.

It was in Hamburg Germany, me a young black men from Africa who didnt believe in racisme at all, coming from a muslim family where my sister is married to a jewish man and brother to a white french lady,i use to see racism from old scool movies only.

For college my parents sent me to a culinary school in Germany. I was very happy to be in a very modern country compared to mine.

When my training started, the school gave us (students) a list of potential restaurants that were accepting students for internships and the task was to walk in , introduce yourself and ask the manager for an internship position.

As an 18 years old kid, that was one of my biggest achievements, and one of my most exciting days.

I started my day very hurly,nice hair cut, elegant dress shirt, black pants and fancy shoes. I was so happy to finally be a man. I even use an extra cologne before entering this restaurant.

I remember like it was just yesterday, my first word was “guten morgen” with all the respect, it was a total silence in the office of the restaurant,i thought it was my bad german accent or i said something wrong by mistake,unfortunately it was none of that.

A very agressif voice responded to my good morning with a question , “what do you want?”

I was shaking, not knowing what to do. I provided the professional method they teach us in class. After 3 minutes of speech,everyone from the office ignored me.

I was standing there shamed,angry, disappointed and felt invisible.

Standing there,less than a human being suddenly I heard another voice asking me “did you see any black person in the establishment? Without saying a single word, I walked out, cried all my way home and was sick for weeks.

After a long period of therapy and the support of family members, I got my confidence back and also a lot of german (white) friends. I realised that Germany was full of very nice people and that one bad apple can spoil the whole basket.

After staying in Germany for 2 years I decided to move to the USA and still have some of my best friends over there.

Short story

Awa

Awa is a young and beautiful girl from West Africa Mali, she was so beautiful that people used to refer to her as “mami-wata” (siren), an imaginary human half human and half fish with an extraordinary beauty .

At age 7 ,Awa was the star of the neighborhood ,with her beautiful smile,respect and kindness,all the other girls of her age wanted to be friends with her.

Unfortunately,when Awa was 8 years old, she got sick with poliomyelitis and lost her ability to work.She got better but remained in a wheelchair,

Awa wasn't able to work again, parallelized with both legs, everyone was sad for her.

From the very happy young girl, she became depressed, wasn't talking to people again, dropped out of school, her family had to force her to eat or even interact with her brothers and sisters. It was very sad to see this young angel fading away from life just like that.

After one long year of living her new life, adapting to the wheelchair, getting used to the look and comments of curious people, one day Awa was playing with her dolls in the back yard, a big commercial airplane fly in a very low attitude over the house, making a very big noise and it was flying so low that the plane was looks much bigger than what it is, like it was going to crash over the houses, Awa got so scared that without knowing, she stood up and ran.

She ran so fast that no one could believe what they were seeing, she went straight to her mother's bedroom with tears in her eyes, shaking, Awa taught that the plane was falling from the sky. She did not realize that she wasn't able to walk.

Miraculously, since that day, Awa was able to walk again, not 100% but her right leg got his motions back.

Awa lived her life very happy after that , she is now married and a mother of three.

Poem

Who is she?

The root of the baobab

She is the one

The one who wakes up first and sleep last

She is the one

The one who cries when i am hurt

She is the one

The one who punish me when i do wrong

She is the one

The one who values my life more than her own

She is the one

The glue who keep us united

She is the one

The one who gave me life

She is my mother

Dialogue

This happened 2 months ago when I went on a school project trip to a mosque in brooklyn.

It wasn't too crowded, due to the covid 19 everyone was socially distancing, the ambiance was very calm because many people lost friends, family or neighbors during this difficult time.

Very curious, looking and listening to everything , I overheard a conversation between 2 worshipers.

The 2 men were discussing the covid 19, it was a very interesting conversation and I couldn't help, I listened for at least a good minute.

Men A:

Do you believe in the corona propaganda?

Men B

What do you mean by "corona propaganda"?

A

Come on, stop acting like you don't know, this is a plot from the government

B

The government? People are doing and you want to talk about the government?

A

We all know the truth but everyone is scared to speak up

B

From what i know it a virus who accidentally came out of a lab in China

A

This is what they want you to believe, it's an American made visus, it is part of the depopulation program just like cancer or malaria they don't want to cure.

B

I don't think so because this pandemic can destroy the US economy.

Only 1 infected person under a ventilator treatment cost more than \$30000, why that?

A

That is my point, big manufacturer and assurance companies will make billions and the average taxpayer will pay for it. It is all part of their plan,just like september 11 attacks.

B

I think it is time to pray and we have to hurry.

At that moment , I composed myself like I wasn't listening to their conversation and moved away,it was very interesting and surprising to hear this.

Journal 1

My name is Adama Barro, for the fall semester 2020, I registered for English creative writing class and it was an amazing experience.

English being my second language for me, it is always challenging to be in the same class as a native English speaking student.

The first day of class, I didn't know what to expect, how the teachers will be and how her teaching technique will fit me in the class.

My teacher's introduction was a game changer, she came with very friendly and respectful ways, ensuring us that we are all learning, there are no right or wrong answers, just to do our best and with her guidance we will get to perfection together.

In the first week of class, she gave us an assignment "Meet my" which was basically anything we like and want to share with others and from that I started to realize that it is not as difficult as I thought.

From that, every week was a new and interesting subject, she helped me express myself more and be open to share my personal experiences with my classmates.

After four weeks, I missed some classes and assignments due to health reasons but when I came back, she took her time and walked me through all my missing works and was available for all my questions.

This school year was very different from others due to the Covid 19, all classes were on line which I thought will be easier but on the contrary the challenge was much more for me, I had 6 classes and it was overwhelming.

What I will recommend for online classes is to work on a daily basis, do not postpone any assignment and be in constant contact with your professor.

Creative writing goes beyond a literature class, it is your everyday life, it makes you think outside the box and you can apply that knowledge in all aspects of your professional and personal life and when you put your mind into it, before you know you will be writing your own short stories, poems or books.

This class was a good opportunity for me to discover some hidden talents I didn't know I had and some amazing classmates.

Thank you professor Jessica Penner.

Journal 2

It was in a very nice summer of 2007 in Brooklyn, New York, I was still a newcomer to the United States, with my four years of experience with the American society which is very liberal compared to where I am coming from.

New York is a city where race, color, religion or sexual orientation does not exist for most. I was and still very happy moving to this beautiful, busy and noisy city.

I was much younger and wanted to experience anything and everything, night club bars and restaurants used to be on my every weekend schedule, I met some great people and one of my favorite new friends is Shone.

Shone is a bartender, very professional, he likes and enjoys his job, always friendly with all the customers, the fact that Shone knew that I was new to the city, he introduced me to plenty of great people and even helped me to register to an English learning center to make my English better.

After three good years of friendship, one Saturday night as usual at Shone's bar, he was off that day and we decided to have a drink together with other friends to celebrate Shone's birthday, he took the opportunity to inform me of his sexual orientation, Shone is gay.

Coming from a conservative country compared to the US, and from my religious beliefs, this was one of the biggest shocks of my life.

Shone was my best friend, someone who taught me a lot, kind, nice, and always put his friends' needs first. That day I became sick on the spot, and I decided to go home.

Usually we hug each other but that day, I could not hug him. I was ashamed, disgust and humiliated for socialising with a gay man for that long.

At home that night I couldn't sleep, I was thinking of all the good times I spent with Shone. He is a very nice person and I ask myself if he didn't tell me about his sexual orientation, we would still be together partying and having a good time.

At that moment, I realised that I was being a homophobe and the same religion that I strongly believe taught us that we are all God children and we should love each other.

My ignorance was going to cost me my best friend, my brother, the next day I went to Shone and apologized for my behavior, and surprisingly he totally understood me and I was able to hug him again comfortably.

That day was one of the most memorable days of my adult life, I realise that even if you don't agree with someone else's choice, you have to respect it.

It was a very good life lesson for me.