

FINAL PORTFOLIO:

Submitted by: Maher Sharhan

COURSE: ENG 1121 Section 402

PROFESSOR: Schmerler

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Dear Professor

Starting off the semester with a rather shy personality, walking in the classroom with people I have not met before was challenging enough. I was never good at writing or reading nor did I ever like the English subject. The class seemed fairly simple. Although I was a bit confused about some of the weird assignments in the beginning for example, writing on the train. When you started putting us in circles and each person shared their experience with writing it made me realize that I wasn't the only one who struggles with writing. I didn't speak much at first but eventually i made some friends. I successfully finished and submitted my work for units 1 and 2 on time and got good grades on them too. I was not expecting our school to get shut down and we'd be stuck quarantine at home. Transitioning to online classes was a struggle however you made it fairly easy. Unit 3 was my favourite unit, I like the fact that you didn't let us write a research paper but instead paired us up and shared our skills with one another. My partner and I got along well and we managed to hand in our work just in time. All in all, the semester has been a roller coaster for me and I think that you made the rest of this semester fair and challenging for us. I thank you for being my professor and learning new things that I have not experienced before.

Unit one

Section 1: My writing Journey

18 feb 2020

English 1121 Section 402

My writing Journey

My experience with writing in 1101 was challenging. I never had experienced writing a 2,500 word research paper in high school. Nor have I experienced using MLA format. However writing in that class was fun because we got to learn and write about New York. One of my favourite experiences was when we took a tour to the Brooklyn bridge and wrote about some history behind it. Although it was challenging I've managed to adapt to the writing skills and pass the class with a B.

One of my earliest experiences with writing was when I got my first history essay assignment in the ninth grade. Mrs. Morsi gave us one week to do it, however I pushed it to the very last day. The essay was pretty confusing and because I was not born here it would make it even harder for me. I started the assignment by watching the documents that are related to the history about the three branches, how presidents are made, what they can do, and what's the power of the president. After watching the videos, I would plan out my thought process on a piece of paper, and write the main points. I was never too concerned about the environment I wrote in. I adjusted to my surroundings accordingly and although I didn't realize it then, they have negatively impacted my thought process. Eventually, I couldn't stand loud disruptions and found that I worked better in the day than night, where sleep regularly consumed my desire to work. Now, before I begin writing, I find a quiet space (usually in the comfort of my home or the

library) in the evening after my classes are over to ensure that I am in the right mindset to be productive. Since I begin my drafts on a computer after creating a “pre-write” on paper, this makes it easier to eliminate distractions that tend to overwhelm the typing of the keyboard. As of now, I’ve observed that it’s helped me not only complete my work more efficiently but also enjoy the writing process more, considering that it doesn’t take nearly as long to get started in the first place.

Something I struggle with while writing is time management, which I try to counter with getting a head start on my assignments and thus, allow time for any writing blocks I may experience down the road. Unfortunately, this doesn’t always work out as perfectly as I’ve planned, and I’m forced to persevere by strictly focusing my attention on the assignment at hand. Besides timeliness, I often face issues when I start to write and must identify the purpose of my paper. I find that at times it’s due to there being several possibilities at hand and finding enough information to support the one I’m pursuing.

As for the things I enjoy about writing, I’ve discovered that conclusions are my favorite. Perhaps because it marks the end of an assignment and serves as a reminder of why I began writing in the first place. As for something I dislike, it would have to be introductions and that’s not particularly due to their complexity although that factors in as well. At times, it’s finding a way to begin writing that goes with my ideas and purpose which seems difficult. Once I begin writing, it’s smooth sailing from there. Ultimately, my relationship with writing has changed over the years and I am continuing to develop my skills.

Section 2: Reflection on unit one

Unit One Reflection

This unit has been super fun and weird. We experienced writing on the subway, writing outside of class, sitting in circles discussing work and more. I did not face many difficulties because the assignments that were assigned to us were not that hard. Including, writing short journeys going to class, a couple of readings that we annotated and reflected on, and sitting in a circle and discussing personal journey writings. The thing I liked in this unit is how unique my professor made writing for us, she would challenge us in writing short paragraphs without using the word “the” or “it”. Another aspect I liked in this unit is when we got to write our journey writing essays, it helped me a lot figure out how and where I like to write most. For example I have figured out that I write best alone at home and that I like to make a couple of drafts planning out my ideas. I think I learned a lot in this unit. I really liked reading “shitty first drafts” because it inspired me that no matter how good of a writer you are, it is possible to make some mistakes here and there.

The similarities between our work in this unit and highschool was that we also sat in circles, each student shared their ideas with each other and received positive feedback. The teachers would also assign us assignments to read and annotate and also give our opinions on the readings. As for the things that are different, in high school we read a lot of books. Assignments were very often, in contrast in college we only have a few assignments that weigh a lot in the grading system. I also experienced time management differently. In high school we went to classes for the whole day and didn't have much time to do our homeworks. Now classes are very short and we get more time to hand in our work in time. I had success in writing my first essay.

Although I got a B+ on it I've made some minor grammatical mistakes such as using the word "it" a lot. I learned that I would need to explain my writing in more detail and expand on my sentences. From listening to other students and their writing experience I can relate that writing as an English second language student can be difficult however every writer has to struggle in order to get better at their writing skills. Another advice I learned from my professor is to read so I can develop my vocabulary. After writing all of my writing journals, annotating all the readings and reflecting on them (except 1 because I was absent) and handing in my writing journey essay. The grade I would give myself is a B+. I think I did a good job in this unit, it was successful and there were difficulties to face. I am excited for the next unit

Unit two:

Section 1: Diary Exerpts

March 23rd

7:30 AM: As another week begins, the time at which I wake up is one of the few things that's remained consistent since the beginning of the semester—when in-person classes were the norm. Like usual, I find myself checking my phone for the first few minutes before I begin preparing for my English class and awaiting this week's assignment to be posted. After all, English is the only class of mine that doesn't involve online streaming through blackboard or Zoom. For me, this means additional time to shower and as per my mom's advice, to drink hot water with lemon as a detox. Feeling refreshed, I'm now ready for the day's tasks.

10 AM: My math class began with a rather rough start, with my microphone not working for attendance and later ended off just as smoothly with our professor informing us of a quiz next Monday after our lengthy lecture on binomials. Needless to say, I was more than ecstatic at that news.

6 PM: In the time in between and until dinner, I started on my homework assignments for math and later left to purchase groceries (milk, eggs, lettuce and the such) for my family. Due to barber shops being closed, I gave myself a haircut and surprisingly, it looks decent if I say so myself. However, that doesn't mean that I'd prefer the current circumstances over the normal. I suppose very few would.

March 24th

7:30 AM: Once again, I woke up fairly early although this time with a different motive in mind. While I still checked my phone, I exchanged a portion of that time in favor of cleaning my car with my younger brother. Honestly, he was there for encouragement rather than assistance and to me that was more than enough.

12 PM: After a late breakfast with my family, I was looking forward to the lab being live streamed by one of my professors today and as expected, it didn't disappoint. Surely, it's different than performing them myself but it remains just as fascinating to observe and later analyze the results in our lab reports. There's usually never a concrete conclusion and with various possible outcomes, it only grows more interesting.

5 PM: Today my sister took the responsibility of making the family's meals and I couldn't complain when she set the dinner table for cheeseburgers. As if it couldn't get any better, she brought out a delicious strawberry cake that she'd made and unbeknownst to her, it helped me push through a lab report and my other homework assignments with.

March 25th

8 AM: Although I woke up at 7:30 AM, I decided to rest for an additional half an hour before I began the day. I slept late last night and although I initially considered it as time lost, I knew that it was essential to function well throughout the day. Contrary to most days, I exchanged my bowl of oatmeal in favor of cereal and poured myself a serving of Honey Bunches of Oats with almond milk. For some reason, I can't

get used to the milk's cardboard-like taste. I suppose the unfamiliarity is something that's in common with the concept of online classes. It's difficult for me to overcome both barriers.

10AM: Math class, as usual, went by quickly due to our professor's light-hearted nature despite his somewhat monotonous lectures. I've noticed his efforts in creating a welcoming environment for the students on livestream and knowing it's a new situation for him too, I appreciate his inclusiveness and attention to detail. Despite online learning creating a greater pressure on students to self-teach, he is consistently available for any clarifying questions. That is also something I've found to be beneficial through this transition to online learning.

10 PM: The remainder of the day was spent with my family, with a significant portion dedicated to entertaining my niece Reham as she rested. Although I've been working to create a better sleep schedule for myself, sleeping late has been a consistent issue for me. Usually, I try to counter this by engaging in skincare, which serves as a stress reliever, or taking melatonin before bed. Sometimes however, it seems that neither are enough. Either way, being halfway through the school week remains a reassurance to which I can eventually rest on.

March 26th

7:30 AM: With the sun beaming brightly, I had a feeling it was going to be a good day as I forced myself out of bed and downstairs to have breakfast. Today, I found oatmeal more appealing as I mixed in strawberries for contrast and planned out my day. It's been a while since I've been outside, and the weather only served as a greater reason to do so. It seems that many others felt the same as I spotted a family walking along the block (all six feet apart).

12 PM: After my math class' livestreamed lesson, I drove to grab coffee via the Dunkin drive-thru, a long-time favorite of mine, before heading to a local park. I sat down on a nearby bench and observed things I'd never noticed before despite having been there numerous times. It's surprising how much we miss when we're invested in our busy lives even when it's right in front of us. It was its tranquility that rooted me in place, long after I finished my coffee and started on my way back home.

6 PM: The week's work is now weighing down on me as Friday feels closer than ever and I want nothing more than the weekend to come. With being limited in social interactions, it's been difficult to remain in touch with many of my friends. Despite it being the era of communication, social media doesn't compare to in-person interactions and their importance in our character development. It seems that at this rate, all that's increasing is my screen time (and exponentially too). I know that this alternative interaction will eventually become second nature and seem nothing out of the ordinary to me. Until then, each day brings new challenges.

March 28th

12:30 pm: Waking up rather late, eating breakfast in the afternoon, refreshing mail inboxes every few hours, strolling in the backyard, only to return to a Netflix series— that has been my Quarantine routine. "How are you?" they ask me and although I want to say "Locked inside," I respond with a "I'm good" anyway. This pandemic has its flaws as everything does, which doesn't come as a surprise. The daily news blares aloud the number of cases that are drastically

increasing with people losing their lives along with their loved ones. During times like these, it's difficult to appreciate what we have and overlook the negativity surrounding us. More time with family is being spent, with there being several reports of less pollution in the air. As I carry on with my day, almost halfway through it already, I think it's important to acknowledge these things as well.

3:00 pm: My friend Yousef called me a little while ago to keep me up to date on how he's been doing in the time we haven't seen each other. Remaining in touch with my friends has been difficult despite the many times we share connections through social media. It seems like this time has taken a toll on everyone and we are coping in different ways. I miss hanging out with him and after all, he gifted me his Air Pod Pros not too long ago. He has never used them before and they came with a really cool case too! Now, as I use them in my time off, I remember him the most.



March 29th

11:00am : I once again woke up late, I think it's starting to become a pattern now. Today is Sunday. It's supposed to be my game day, yet I'm just now waking up and left with nothing to look forward to. Normally at this time, my team and I would be at the field up and running with our warmup drills. Today, I took this free time to help cook with my sister as she's always doing the household chores on her own.

6:00 pm: I find it hard to focus on studying for my statics exam, mainly due to the liveliness of my household that often entails loud, abrupt noises. Around this time, I usually have dinner but today nothing sounds appetizing. After a few thoughts here and there, I decided to order food from KFC and returned my attention towards my notes. This is going to be a long night. I can feel it.

March 30:

10:00 am : As usual, I woke up around the same time to check my emails for any assignments to complete for my classes. However, this week turned out to be “recabellation week”, where the college canceled classes for the week. For me, it was equivalent to a spring break. I was more than excited to hear that, mainly because learning through a bright screen had begun affecting my vision. I went downstairs, made an egg and cheese sandwich and poured myself a glass of orange juice. I had a feeling it’d be a good day.

3:00pm: With no assignments to do, my sister and I spent the afternoon watching a movie called “The Freedom Writers”. It revolved around students who went on and became storytellers in their own right—working against gang violence and racial injustice, promoting education as a vehicle for personal and social transformation. It's a coincidence that these characters were inspired by Anne Frank, as we recently finished reading her diary entailing her experience of the Holocaust. It was an amazing movie and inspired me to not only write these daily diary assignments for English 1121 but also to be a part of this global pandemic history by recording my experiences. It’d be amazing to look back at these journals and think to ourselves how well we coped during difficult times such as this.

March 31:

8:00 am: Surprisingly, I woke up very early today despite having little motivation to do anything. I suppose I’m not the only one who feels that way, as many of my friends and family have expressed the same emotions I’ve been struggling with. At this time, all four of my siblings are still fast asleep and so are my parents. I choose to wait for them to wake up before starting on breakfast.

11:30 am: Finally, everyone is up and ready to have breakfast. At this point I don't care what we have as long as it’s edible—I’m that hungry. My sister, our favorite chef after my mother, made some pancakes for my little brother and I while she prepared her own breakfast. Seeing the avocado and chia seeds lining her plate was enough for me to shake my head. Could not relate whatsoever

10:00 pm : Another day with no classes, which surprisingly went by quickly. I turn on the Netflix series that I've been watching lately called “Money Heist” as I prepare to go to bed. As part of my skincare routine, I use a night serum from “Estee Lauder”. Although it serves more as a moisturizer than treatment, I’ve been using it for two weeks now and assure that it doesn’t disappoint.



April 1st:

10:00 am: Today is April Fools day and despite the gloominess due to this global pandemic, I had something in mind to tell my little brother. I told him that all New York City students are being required to repeat their current grade next year and to my surprise, he was actually excited. After all, being in fifth grade, he didn't want to lose his friends once they moved to middle school. In a way, I understood why he felt that way—that's how I felt during my senior year of high school.

4:00pm : I realized that my brother turns 11 on the 30th of this month and decided to order him a Playstation 4 as a birthday present. With difficult times, he's been understanding and I think he deserves at least that much (especially on his special day). It'd be beneficial for us both, as we both like to game together.

5:00pm : I went to go buy some groceries from the supermarket once again, just for simple necessities such as water, milk and bread. The lines there were hectic and with social distancing measures, it took nearly two times longer that it'd take on any other day. However, I believe the shoppers were all cautious and respectful to each other as each person was a few feet apart from each other. For that, I'm beyond thankful.

Section 2: Reflection on Anne Frank

Reflection on Anne Frank

The Diary of Anne Frank was a classic book that I first saw in my freshman year of high school. Anne Frank was a little youngster who had experienced enough distress from the holocaust, yet by one way or another she wouldn't allow the Nazis to win. I believe it's astounding she figured out how to compose so well with all the things going on around her. I think the diary of Anne Frank inspired many journalists to pursue their career due to the pain she went through and the ability to overcome them. She also inspired movie directors, an example would be a movie called "The Freedom Writers" it is based on a true story about these kids who were involved in gang violence that did not do well in school, however once the teacher showed them the diary of Anne Frank the students were inspired to write and publish their own writings.

I really do not know how she learned to write so well, she had amazing talent. Her descriptions were so in depth and her way of expressing herself was excellent. One example is when she describes a building that she sees "I will describe the building: there is a large warehouse on the ground floor which is used as a store. The front door to the house is next to the warehouse door, and inside the front door is a second doorway which leads to a staircase. There is another door at the top of the stairs with a frosted glass window in it, which has 'office' written in black across it." This shows how she successfully creates an image in a reader's head when reading her diary. All in all, I really liked her diary and I would recommend this to people who love to write journeys.

SECTION 3: REFLECTION ON UNIT II AND GRADE

UNIT II Reflection

This unit has been a bit strange, with the whole pandemic and switching to online classes it's been difficult to adapt to this new environment of studying. After all it was the right thing to do. One main struggle in this unit was that I had to write from my own home. It was really hard to focus and keep up with the attention that the government has given us and do school work at the same time. However it was not that difficult because the assignments that were assigned to us were not that difficult including writing short daily diaries, a reflection on a diary of our choice and a meeting with our professor via zoom. This unit surprised me because it was unexpected to transit from a normal day going to a classroom to learning from home via online classes.

As for the things I enjoyed in this unit, I loved writing diaries not only did it kill time during this boredom but I think it will be fun to look back at how and what I did in my house during the pandemic. I also liked reading other classmate diars and seeing what they have been up to and how each of them is coping. Before online classes i would mostly finish my english assignments in a quiet place on campus like the library, now i learned to adapt writing in my house. Reading other classmates' work taught me to be more creative with my own work. Before, I would worry that my writing wouldn't be as good as other students, now that I read their work it showed

me that everyone has their own unique style of writing. I would give myself an A- on this unit. I uploaded my week 1 and week 2 diaries, a reflection on Anne Frank and I did my mid semester Unit II review. I feel like it's a fair grade because I've turned in every assignment on open lab on time, however due to technical issues I faced during my zoom meeting I deserve the minus.

Unit three:

SECTION 1: Your skill/interest during confinement/ with sources

MY SKILLS/ACTIVITIES ARE...

1. Playing Soccer

2. Being athletic

3. Baby sitting

1. Here You will tell us a little bit about WHAT YOU ALREADY KNEW BEFORE the confinement/what your experience has been with this skill/activity.

I started playing this sport when i was 15. I taught myself how to play, my group of friends and I would get together after school and play till sunset. As I was playing, my teachers in gym class suggested that I join the school team. I joined in my junior year and within that season I became the top scorer and won an MVP award. I noticed that I am more passionate about this sport more than anything. I'd play twice a day for 5 to 6 days a week. After our season ended I kept myself busy and joined a team in the New York league. The coaches really liked me and I was admitted. All in all, i really enjoy playing soccer, the feeling that i get knowing that i'm going to another day to play is as happy as i could get and i could not be anymore thankful. Not only because i'm good at it but it serves as a relief for any stress.

2. Here You will tell us SOMETHING NEW you learned about it during this confinement period. If you haven't learned anything new, then go out now and find out something(s) that you didn't know about it before!

-This sport was found 3,000 years ago the chinese developed a sport called cuju which would involve kicking a ball over the net with the feet and no hands allowed.

-Soccer was banned during a period of time in england because of how violent and competitive it would be.

-It was played by prisoners at London's Newgate Prison in the early 1800s. having their hands cut off for their crimes, prisoners came up with the game using only their feet.

3. Here You Will Give credit to THE SOURCE(s) of this new information and tell us a bit more about this/these sources and why you like them. Show us where we can go to find them.

www.youtube.com is the source I used. I think youtube is an excellent source for learning. There are many creators there that would explain specifically what you asked for. For me i watched a video called "the complete history of football" this is a perfect video for people that didn't know much about football or as Americans call it "soccer". It goes into deeper meaning into the sport. I recommended this channel on youtube because they are best known for making videos about history behind different sports.

4: Context/Brief explanation to explain your skill/interest*

Soccer is a team sport that is played in outdoor fields.

11 players vs 11 players per game

It is the most popular and most played sport around the world

It lasts 90 minutes 45 minutes each half

The sport is played with the feet, no hands allowed

This sport requires a lot of communication and to know your teammates well enough and the style of their play.

Section 2: Pairs Assignment

1. What you have in common -- where you meet on common ground on a deeper level, as well

I know that you are a big fan of soccer, and you enjoy practicing it. I like volleyball too, and I think it's important to practice. Practicing in singing has made me better at it. I'm sure that soccer requires more practice and is very strategic as well. I see some players kick the ball and steal it from their opponent, and I immediately become intimidated.

Daniel, I found what you wrote very intriguing. You said that drawing was “the will to find yourself to draw”, sounds very poetic. I love drawing, in fact when I am bored in a class, my creative side comes out and doodles all over my paper. Drawing feels like a way of expression, something that singing does too. Could you tell me how drawing makes you feel?

Maher-One thing Ariel and I have in common is that our skills have much deeper meaning than just an “interest”. She likes to sing when she's stressed or overwhelmed and that's her go to place. For me, Soccer is a big part of my life. It is a place where I find peace and tranquility. Both of our skills require a lot of practice, which I was quite surprised that singers have to practice.

2. What new thing(s) you learned from each other

I learned that you, Maher, live in my area. Also, we took that A train together and saw each other that one time. We would have been good train buddies if it weren't for the virus. I have also seen your good moves in soccer. They seem very hard to do, I know I wouldn't be able

to master them. I'm proud of how much of a great player you are. Also, congratulations on your MVP award, you deserve it all the way because I have seen how hard you work.

Maher-I learned that singing takes lots of practice. I sometimes thought that singers have natural talent in them, Ariel mentions that "Singing includes speaking by the manner in which the breath is expended to vibrate the vocal cords". Meaning you need your lungs, diaphragm, tongue, and mouth. All these things need to work together and be firmly controlled in order to produce a melody or note. I also learned that when singing in a group creates an emotional bond between the singers. When playing, communication is just as important. To play well you have to know your teammates well enough.

3. What new thing the other person pushed you to learn about your own skill

Maher actually pushed me to sing a song called "selfish" by Madison Beer. He actually pushed me to try high notes, which I don't do as much due to its difficulty. It was nice to try something out of my comfort zone. It also showed me what I can improve in as a singer and how much more creative I can get with my voice.

Maher-After my soccer season got cancelled because of quarantine I was really frustrated with myself and I found myself lost. Ariel privately messaged me to not lose hope, she encouraged me to work out at home(a specific app called workout home) and to keep my diet healthy.

4. What new perspective you gained from doing this exercise

Maher-Doing this exercise I realized that even though two different skills can be completely different they can have their similarities. Looking at other people's skills from different perspectives gives creativity towards how they can perfect it. For example I told Ariel to try a song called "selfish" little did i know that song had a high note in it which ariel claims to not do them as often.

During this exercise, I got to know people through their skill and what they enjoyed doing. Many had a skill that needed certain qualities. For example Maher showed me how self-disciplined he is, and his determination in his sport. Soccer is a challenging sport, and him challenging himself to do better, shows me his focused personality.

Section 3: Reflection on Unit three

My partner was Ariel, We met the day schools closed down and to keep in touch with her I found her email on openlab and she asked for my snapchat. We worked pretty easily because we practically talked to each other everyday. I knew about her skill (singing) even before we paired up, she would send me videos of her singing and she would even sing the songs I suggest. And like always she never fails to amaze me. I really like her voice and her passion towards singing. One thing I asked her was which artist inspired her to try this skill. Ariel was inspired by a Broadway show "Phantom of the Opera" that she saw as a child, the characters' performance is what interested her in singing. She had a rather rough start but eventually found her rhythm through practicing and that is something I learned. Singers have to practice just as much as an athlete or an actor or any other skill.

I am glad this Unit was a fun one, we made it happen through zoom calls and openlab posts.

Discussing and sharing my interest with Ariel made me realize how much I enjoy playing soccer

by just talking about it. This motivated me to actually do this assignment and turn it in on time. She was impressed with it and even pushed me to do better with my skill. This process went by easily, we got to know about each other better. One of the struggles I had was finding the motivation to write during this harsh period of time. This process could have improved if we were in class discussing our skills in person. However through social media we got the job done. A grade I would give myself is an A. I attended all of the zoom discussions and although I didn't participate much I still learned and wrote in our do now in the first 5 mins for class session. This unit went by easily and there were struggles as well. I worked well with my partner and completed the given assignments.

Unit 4: Over all reflection

This has got to be one of my favourite classes ever. I started off the semester like entering any other english class from before, not interested and only in it for the grade. This class made me like english so much more. We usually write about a story or some boring articles we read in almost every other english class. This class has made it all about us, each individual with their own unique writing about themselves. I did my best in all three units. They were a bit challenging but fun and handed everything on time. I believe I deserve a B+ overall because I did get pretty lazy towards the last unit and feel like I could have put more into it. All in all, this semester was fun and interesting. It is something I have never experienced before and I did learn alot from my professor. I wish her and the rest of our class the best of luck.