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Looking Back in the Semester

This semester has been transformative for me as both a reader and a writer. Through the vast amount of assignments and class discussions, I have gained deeper insights into the way I read, write, and how to interact with different forms of communication depending on the discourse community I am in. This reflection will explore what I have learned about myself, how I have developed, and how I plan to use this knowledge in future writing tasks as this will be my final English course in my college life.

At the beginning of the semester, I viewed myself primarily as a decent reader and writer, focused on completing tasks on time rather than taking the time to see how I can improve on the way I write. However, while taking this course, I have come to realize that being a thoughtful reader and writer involves more than just completing an assessment on time, it requires engagement and reflection. One significant change is my ability to analyze texts more critically. This was particularly evident in one of my essays, "The Importance of 'Besar La Mano'" where I explored cultural communication within my Hispanic family. I wrote, "The saying 'besar la mano' is more than just a greeting between relatives; it is a way of showing respect, love, and passion for Hispanic heritage and family." This quote shows how I have learned to delve deeper into the cultural significance of language, enhancing my ability to connect with and understand diverse perspectives within different communities.

Throughout the semester, my writing has become more nuanced and reflective. In my project on the dangers of AI, I initially approached the topic with a general concern. As I progressed, I learned to present a balanced argument by including multiple viewpoints to gather more of an understatement on a particular topic. In my article about AI, I wrote, "AI in education can enhance learning but also risks job losses and reduced critical thinking." This balanced view shows my development in addressing complex issues more thoroughly, considering both the benefits and drawbacks of technological advancements.

The skills I have acquired in this class will be useful in various contexts, both in college and in my community. For example, the ability to critically analyze and articulate my thoughts will aid me in other academic writing assignments. In my discussions on AI, I reflected, "The introduction of ChatGPT in 2022 has made these concerns even worse, as educators worry about students cheating and not thinking critically." This insight does not just apply to academic essays but also to discussions and presentations where I need to present well-rounded arguments.

Also, understanding different discourse communities, as we discussed in class, helps me navigate different social settings more effectively. For example, recognizing the significance of "besar la mano" within my Hispanic community has deepened my connection and appreciation for my cultural traditions. This cultural sensitivity will aid me in engaging more meaningfully with different community members.

In conclusion, this semester has been a journey of growth and self-discovery. I have learned to engage more deeply with texts, analyze issues from multiple different perspectives, and appreciate the cultural contexts of language. These skills will not only enhance my academic abilities but also enable me to communicate more effectively in various social settings. The examples from my assignments show this progress, highlighting my development as a thoughtful

and reflective reader and writer. As I move forward, I am confident that the skills and insights gained in this class will continue to enrich my writing and interactions with others. This was an amazing journey with many benefits in and out of college.