Student Name

English 1013

Instructor Name

8 December 2023

Reflection Essay

Over the course of the past semester, I learned some tactics of different styles of writing. The different writing styles improved my writing abilities. I learned how to distinguish the different styles and writing tactics and not intermix the different styles. Each assignment helped me improve in a variety of ways. These assignments helped me polish up some of my strengths as well as improving some of my writing weaknesses.

Assignment one was a summary. I choose to write about Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s Ted Talk, “The Danger of a Single Story.” The purpose of a summary is to provide a brief explanation of the piece in which you are explaining. My rough draft was full of my personal stance. I was at first trying to prove she was correct. For example, in my first paragraph I opened with, “*The Danger of a Single Story” is a constant issue that is present in everyday life and every person at some point will fall victim or find themselves believing a single story.* Due to my over explanation, I had gone significantly over the word count. After further revisions I was able to see that I was writing a summary, not a persuasive or argumentative essay. I had taken that approach at first because that was where my main background in writing came from. At first, I took the approach of proving she was right in her thoughts. After receiving feedback, I was able to go through the essay and take out my own voice making the essay a summary. After revising my paper my opening sentences became, *Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, an author, discusses “The Danger of a Single Story” in her 2009 Ted Talk. A single story is an idea that one attributes to a group overall.* The most important thing that I took away from this assignment was learning to focus on one or a few questions to help guide my thoughts. This would help with staying within the limits of a word count as well as staying focused on the prompt and completely the assignment.

The second assignment was a rhetorical essay. I learned from my previous mistakes within the first assignment with the word count and was able to stay within the requirements. I had some errors in that that I had very minimal rhetorical devices. The purpose of the paper was to incorporate rhetorical devices such as comparing and discussing the author’s emotions and feelings towards the topic. It is also crucial to discuss who the author’s audience is. When reading the articles, I had to pick out and discuss who the author’s audience was. Learning to pick out who the audience is and what the piece is written for will help me write my paper better to a target audience. Before receiving the feedback from my first draft I had very minimal rhetorical devices. In my first draft I did not include who the author’s audience was, but in my final, I made sure to incorporate many rhetorical devices as well as address the audience that my author was writing to. An example of a rhetorical device that I incorporated was comparing into outside criticism*, One of the most common criticisms and arguments against sports is that it takes too much time away from academic work.* That was the stopping point in the first draft for my use of rhetorical devices. In my final I went on to add, *Ramsey’s challenges the argument proving that playing a sport improves one’s academic performance. Ramsey admits that sports do take hours out of one’s day and at a first glance but can prove to be beneficial.* I incorporated these two extra sentences because it helped build the argument and discuss how he addresses the controversy and was able to back it with evidence. I learned that without these devices my rhetorical essay would be more of a summary.

The third assignment was a synthesis essay. My high school background was full of lots of writing and research so this came naturally to me. I chose a topic that I knew quite a bit about but wanted to learn more about. I wanted a topic that was something no one else would choose, so it would stand out. When researching I find it very important to always explore new topics, I had written three research, choosing very different topics each time to research. The topic that I chose was which scoliosis treatment was the most beneficial. I took the stance of proving which form of the treatment is the most beneficial. With research a very critical part of the assignment is finding respectable sources and citing them properly. The notes I received after my first draft entailed a few minor grammar mistakes as well as citation mistakes. In my first draft I used more chunks of phrases such as*, Scoliosis is the curvature of the spine. It is often found in children and adolescents but can be seen in adults. Some have more significant curves than others, the curves often look S-shaped or C-shaped (Scoliosis in children and adolescents).* This assignment really helped me advance in my in-text citation skills. I was able to use a variety of ways to give credit to my sources in ways that would read more easily and smoother to my audience. I changed the previous example and made it flow and read more smoothly*, According to the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal, Scoliosis is the curvature of the spine and is often found in children and adolescents but can be seen in adults. Some have more significant curves than others, the curves often look S-shaped or C-shaped.* Another example of this is using the name as signal phrase to my quote or paraphrase, *In Paul McAfee’s article, “Types of Scoliosis Braces”, he explains that there are many different forms of braces that can be used. For example, the most used and popular brace is the Boston brace. The Boston brace is, “a type of thoracic-lumbar-sacral orthosis (TLSO).”* Along with research I was able to incorporate my personal experience. Overall, this assignment allowed me to grow in ways of better my research, citation, and grammatical skills.

English Composition has provided me with the skills to help me through all my college courses. The assignments allowed me to venture into topics I would have no have read or thought about. My first assignment was a summary about the Danger of a Single Story that allowed me to watch a Ted Talk and describe the main idea. My second assignment gave me the opportunity to read about how athletics and physical activity will lead to academic and life success. The third assignment taught me the power of researching a topic and portraying specific ideas. This past semester has allowed me to grow in my writing and will aid me for the rest of my academic career.

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Revision Page

Throughout the process of writing this summary I received the feedback that I was adding in my own voice, and I over explained. In my revisions I took out all sentences that had my opinion or an argumentative tone to it. I eliminated redundant explanations and sentences to meet the word count requirements. I had at first exceeded the word count but with the help of eliminating these types of sentences along with unnecessary words I was able to get my word count down within the limit.

Long Summary

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, an author, discusses “The Danger of a Single Story” in her 2009 Ted Talk. A single story is an idea that one attributes to a group overall. In the Ted Talk, Adichie discusses how her upbring brought on both believing a single story and being thought of as one.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie grew up in Nigeria. She read British and American literature. As a young girl she thought of the people of Britian as an area of children playing in the snow and eating apples. As she grew older, around the age of seven, she began to write. She wrote about what she read, she recalls, “All my characters were white and blue eyed … and they talked a lot about the weather” (Adichie). She attributed these few characteristics with the whole European and American population. She describes how everyone is so vulnerable when it comes to a story. People want to believe it to the fullest. As an impressionable young girl, she did not realize that girls of her race or having similar features could exist in a story (Adichie). She goes on to say that when she finds African Literature, she learns that she had fallen into the trap of believing a single story. She believed that girls like her could not exist in a story.

Adichie explains how hearing a single story can blind one’s perception of people. Adichie recalls how in her household they had hired help and her mother would tell her that she should never take anything for granted because they are people who have nothing. She felt pity for that family and only saw those people as poor. When she went to their village one day, she learned that the members in that family had skills to create something. She says in her talk, “It had not occurred to me that any one in his family could make something” (Adichie). She was blindsided by how poor they were that she could not see they might have any other trait to make them unique. In return she has a similar experience when she moves off to college to the United States. As an excited teenager, she recalls her roommate being shocked at how well she could speak English. The naive roommate eagerly asks to listen to her “tribal music”, to her shock Adichie was listening to Mariah Carey (Adichie). The single story of Africa had blinded this girl and she felt pity for African roommate before even knowing her.

Adichie describes that, historically, Africa has been portrayed as a place of “beautiful landscapes, beautiful animals, and incomprehensible people” (Adichie). This resulted in trouble for her when she began to write and work with publishers. They would tell her that her work was not “authentically African” (Adichie). She was told that the characters she wrote about could not possibly be African because they were similar to the white people of the U.S. for example, they drove cars and were educated (Adichie). She goes on to explain the power of a story stems from where it begins, who is telling it, and the context it is being told from is truly what creates the meaning of the story.

Ultimately stories create a foundation for ideas and beliefs that individuals have about different people, places, and things. Without stories there would be none of this. A single story is not bad but rather it is just one puzzle piece to a bigger image made up of multiple stories.

Short Summary

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s Ted Talk “The Danger of a Single Story” sends a powerful message that single stories are not the whole story. Adichie reconnects how vulnerable people are to stories. In Nigeria she read literature from American and British books, where white children play in the snow and eat apples. She thought no one like her could exist in a story. She came to the United States for college and shocked her roommate with well-spoken English. The roommate thought of Africa as an area of poor and uneducated individuals. Early in her career, she writes about her homeland. She was told her characters were too similar to the people of the United States and not authentic. These are examples she expresses in her Ted Talk, but she emphasizes the single stories do not portray false information but are not the complete version.

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For this paper I received feedback that I needed to add more rhetorical devices into my paper. I took these corrections and added things such as compare and contrasting. I talked about how the author uses emotions to reach his audience. I discussed the argument he was trying to combat as well as discussing how he uses the perspectives of a parent and an athlete. He used these different perspectives to address and reach his target audience. I also added in some paraphrases to distinguish his opinion from other opinions. The feedback that I received also discussed how it leaned more towards a summary rather than a rhetorical essay, using these devices shaped the paper into a rhetorical essay.

Assignment 2

America is often criticized for their efforts and the value that they set upon athletics. In Christopher Ramsey’s article, “USA Water Polo CEO: ‘Blending sports with education is the secret to America’s economic success,’” tackles the argument providing evidence that sports help students turn into successful adults. Ramsey’s provides evidence from his personal experience and the experience of his sons to respond to this criticism. Playing sports allows students to learn skills beyond the sport and within the classroom preparing them for their future careers, teaching them important skills such as teamwork and leadership, and providing a strong schedule forcing athletes to have time management.

Christopher Ramsey's article proves that playing a sport and physical activity will set people up for a successful life in their career field. Ramsey describes that the competitive edge and mentality that is put into sports can be compared to the world of business. Ramsey goes on to argue, “Athletes develop discipline perseverance and effective communication skills that see them thrive in a highly competitive environments qualities that are transferable to contribute to success in business as well as other aspects of life” (Ramsey). Life is full of unexpected events and sports offer athletes the ability to learn combative skills to persevere through the tough times. Sports teach kids to lean on one another and use teamwork to build bonds and solve a problem as a group. Sports are more than just merely an extracurricular activity; sports are a key component to America’s thriving “game of global business” (Ramsey). Learning to work with others for a common goal in a competitive environment is evidence that sports led to a successful career. Balancing multiple events during the day and week creates a big view picture. Ultimately Ramsey’s describes that learning to view tasks and responsibilities through a wider lens teaches management of time, priority of tasks and planning for upcoming events.

Playing a sport teaches children tough and realistic life lessons. Through these life lessons children will learn the value of teamwork and will rise to the occasion through leadership opportunities. In the words of Chirstopher Ramsey, “Sports is a reality check. It is difficult to escape the athletic experience without learning a few basic truisms. Life isn't fair. Teamwork is essential to success. Practice and preparation matter… you are only as good as your last game” (Ramsey). Ramsey’s plays into the emotions of his reader. He relates to both the athlete’s and the parents through this quotation. Although some of these lessons may be a tough pill to swallow, they are essential to life. Life is not fair and there will be bad days, but it is how one overcomes these bad days and moves forward that will ultimately define them as a person. Working as a team for a greater cause can be one of the most rewarding and frustrating things a person can do. It is hard to share power sometimes but realizing that greater things can and will be accomplished is one of the most important values a sport can teach someone. Ramsey continues, “Athletes must understand discipline and teamwork, and show leadership to succeed” (Ramsey). Practice is key to perfection, everyone wants to always be right and always be the best, but that is not the case. There will be times when a person is not as naturally gifted as someone else. Hard work and dedication will carry a person a lot farther than natural talent in life. Effort invested in a task will not only advance the skill of that particular task, but it will also reinforce the values necessary to achieve success on and off the sport fields. Sports and athletics force individuals to understand that life is not fair and that there is always going to be someone better, faster, and stronger. Subsequently sports give you the skills to combat these tough moments with teamwork, practice, and determination.

One of the most common criticisms and arguments against sports is that it takes too much time away from academic work. Ramsey’s challenges the argument proving that playing a sport improves one’s academic performance. Ramsey admits that sports do take hours out of one’s day and at a first glance but can prove to be beneficial. Ramsey’s addresses this topic in his article talking about his personal experience with his sons. He recalls that amid water polo season when his boys would have hours upon hours of practice they would perform better in school. This is a direct result of the fact that the boys were forced to manage their time. Being able to manage one’s time also plays into the success of American business (Ramsey). Having a more rigid and structured schedule will give athletes smaller windows of time to work on and complete their work, this forces them to focus and work more efficiently. When compared to a time when athletes are not on a strict schedule they do not perform as well academically, and they work less efficiently. The illusion of having more time to accomplish the tasks can lead to procrastination and less productive times. As Ramsey recounts his water polo days, he describes this as, “This blend of work ethic, competitive fire, and academic preparation has created a secret sauce in American business which, in my view, is the part of the reason American companies have historically outperformed most of their international competitors” (Ramsey). This so called, “secret sauce” would not be possible if it were not for the involvement sports play in a young person’s life developing lifelong skills to lead to a successful adult. Furthermore, sports not only play a huge role in an individual’s life but also in the global economic success of American businesses.

Sports play a vital but controversial role in society today. Many argue that sports take time away from what could be academic achievements, but there is no doubt that this argument is false. In Christopher Ramsey’s article, “USA Water Polo CEO: ‘Blending sports with education is the secret to America’s economic success,’” he conquers and proves that sport and be athletically involved has a direct correlation to both academic and career success. Ramsey writes this article for parents and their children. He connects to both audiences because he once was an athlete spending many hours a day on sports, but now is a parent who is watching his sons grow athletically, academically, and learning real life skills because of water polo. The success of an individual is not measured only by success in the classroom, but by how they move forward in the world facing obstacles, balancing multiple tasks and solving problems facing them in a constantly changing world.

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Revision Page

The feedback that I received was to correct a few minor grammar and spelling mistakes within the text. I corrected all those mistakes. I also had to fix some citations mistakes that I had made within my intext citations. I changed the name of the article to the name of the website or place of publication to cite. I also added in signal phrases to correct this as well as to better differentiate my personal experience from my articles.

Synthesis Paper

The medical world is constantly changing and improving with new technologies, inventions, and treatments. Over the course of many years the treatment methods of scoliosis have been argued over, adapted, and changed into what is the most beneficial treatment. The forms of treatment have been improved as advances in medical technology and knowledge have been discovered. According to the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal, Scoliosis is the curvature of the spine and is often found in children and adolescents but can be seen in adults. Some have more significant curves than others, the curves often look S-shaped or C-shaped. The confirmation of a diagnosis the patient will, depending on the severity of the curvature, have three ways of treatment, bracing, surgery, and physical therapy (*AANS*). Throughout the course of medical history these methods have been adapted and improved to result in the most improved and safest results.

Surgery is the only fully effective method of treating scoliosis, but it is also the most life risking method, that is why bracing is the best method of treatment. The brace method is not a cure but rather prevents it from increasing and hopefully enough to where the curve is less severe, and surgery will not be necessary. The brace method is not easy, it requires more attention and time of both the person wearing the brace and the doctors. This necessary attention and dedication are often why the brace is shown to be less effective. Studies have found that depending on the type of curve a person has depends on the effectiveness of the brace. This is due to how severe the curvature is as well as how mature the skeletal growth is (Hawary, Ron El, et al). The results of the brace are not consistent due to these contending factors. When looking at the statistics of the study done by Ron Hawary one sees that the brace was not effective for over half of the patients. Looking at these statistics alone can discourage patients and patient’s family from attempting the brace, but bracing has many benefits and is versatile for different people’s body types. In Paul McAfee’s article, “Types of Scoliosis Braces”, he explains that there are many different forms of braces that can be used. For example, the most used and popular brace is the Boston brace. The Boston brace is, “a type of thoracic-lumbar-sacral orthosis (TLSO)” (McAfee). This brace applies pressure ensuring proper posture. I personally had a very successful experience with the Boston brace. At the age of five I was diagnosed with scoliosis. I was treated for many years and the doctors tracked by growth and maturity. When I was eleven, they decided that I was about to hit a growth spurt so this is when they decided the best form of treatment for me would be with the brace. The brace was custom made and fit to my body and I wore it for a year and a half. It was a very hard transition because the brace is not comfortable and having to wear a huge piece of plastic not only made me self-conscious, but it was very uncomfortable to wear for twenty-two hours a day. I knew that I wanted to do everything in my power to avoid surgery, but I would not know if the brace did its job for a year and half. At the age of thirteen I was told that my treatment was successful, and they had put me in the brace at the proper time. Although it was uncomfortable, I am very thankful to my doctors who worked and tracked my growth to give me the best treatment possible. McAfee describes the other braces that are common are known as the Wilmington Brace and the Milwaukee Brace. The Wilmington brace is a custom mold made to fit a specific person’s body. This is unlike the Boston brace which is made from mold and the patient is put in the one that fits them the best (McAfee). Both the Boston Brace and the Wilmington Brace would not be possible if it had not been for the Milwaukee Brace. The Milwaukee Brace was the original brace, which was invented in the 1940s. Today, the Milwaukee Brace is not used as often as the other two braces (McAfee). The Wilmington brace and the Boston brace are both full-time braces and both work effectively to improve scoliosis, and this would not have been possible if it had not been for the adaptations to the very first Milwaukee Brace.

Surgery for scoliosis can be very risky due to its crucial location in the body. This is why often people view this surgery as the last resort to fix the curvature. Advances in medical technology have made this surgery less risky. The Mayo Clinic explains that there are three forms of surgery, Spinal Fusion, Expanding rod, and vertebral body tethering. The expanding rod is used only in young children with rapidly increasing curvature. According to the Mayo Clinic, “Surgeons can attach one or two expandable rods along the spine that can adjust in length as the child grows.” The rods are then lengthened every few months as the child grows. The other surgical option is Vertebral body tethering. Surgeons perform this through small incisions in the body, they place screws on the outside the edge of the spinal curve and a cord is threaded through the screws (*Mayo Clinic).* The third type of surgery is Spinal Fusion which is the most used. During the surgery the surgeon fuses two or more vertebrae together. This prevents them from moving or being apart. A metal rod is put in to hold the spine in place and straight as they fuse the vertebrae together (*Mayo Clinic)*. The benefit to the surgery methods is that this completely fixes the curvature, but this does not come without potential risks that may arise during and after surgery that could affect the patient for the rest of their life. Risks that could arise are, Pseudoarthrosis- “non-union of the vertebrae of the spine,” nerve damage, profuse bleeding and broken pieces of the vertebrae or hardware in or around the vertebrae (Splane). Nerve damage can be minor or significant. To help prevent this from occurring nerve function will be monitored throughout the surgery (Splane). Scoliosis surgery is a scary surgery that can negatively impact the patient, but if it is successful the scoliosis will be fixed. Following surgery is a long period of healing that incorporates rest and physical therapy.

Physical therapy alone is not an effective method of treating scoliosis but rather when it is used simultaneously with bracing and surgery can be seen to improve and ease the pain that scoliosis can cause. Physical therapy is used to help with posture as well as pain management. Those who have been diagnosed with mild or moderate curves will often be referred to a physical therapist (Sears). The physical therapist will do a physical and medical evaluation of the patient on the first appointment. They will request that if one is being treated with brace that they bring the brace as well. They will often give their patients homework and exercises to do at home to improve their strength. They want to build up the strength in the patient, but if they are in great pain the PT can assist in such ways as using heat, ice, electrical stimulation, ultrasound, kinesiology taping, and massages (Sears). These are a few of the methods that physical therapists have found to help improve strength and manage the pain of scoliosis. In an article published by John Hopkins Medicine website, they discuss a specific type of physical therapy known as the Schroth Method. This method was created by a woman who had an unsuccessful brace treatment. According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, “The Schroth Method is a non-surgical option for scoliosis treatment…exercises customized for each patient to return the curved spin to a more natural position.” This method aims to strengthen muscular symmetry, helping improve posture and learning to breathe in the side of the bod. Johns Hopkins Medicine continues explaining, the Schroth Method strives to achieve muscular symmetry. The exercises can both build up muscles and restore overworked muscles. Breathing tactics within in method follow a technique known as, “rotational angular breathing. The idea is to rotate the spine with breathing to help reshape the rib cage and surrounding soft tissue” (*Johns Hopkins Medicine)*. John Hopkins Medicine explains, the Schroth Method also stresses the importance of posture in day-to-day life. Striving to have good posture will strengthen and elongate the muscles surrounding the spine. Similar to the brace it is not a total cure but the goal of the Schroth Method and physical therapy is to prevent scoliosis from advancing.

The treatment methods of Scoliosis have all evolved over time. Bracing has come a long way since the first brace was invented in the 1940s. With each new advance in technology the surgery becomes safer, and the brace becomes more effective. There are multiple forms of bracing therefore there are many ways to achieve an effective outcome and can be a personal form of treatment. Surgery is the only true form of a cure for scoliosis, but it is also the riskiest form of treatment. Depending on the age of the patient and how mature the bone growth is will determine the type of surgery performed. Physical therapy is a form that is used to assist and improve bracing and surgery. Physical therapy can follow a personal path to fit what will benefit the patient or they can follow a set plan such as the Schroth Method. The Schroth Method was adapted from personal experience with scoliosis and a failed brace experience. The treatment of scoliosis is constantly adapting and changing in hopes to provide a safe and beneficial treatment for each patient.

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Notes

Progress:

I have made progress in my research skills. I learned new ways of finding sources such as, the university’s online library resources, google scholar, as well as googling articles. I have learned how to incorporate these sources within my text and making my paper flow and read easier.

I have progressed in the sense that I now have learned a variety of writing styles. Each writing style will help me in my future academic success.

Challenges:

One of the main challenges I had was keeping on track with the purpose of my paper. Especially in the first two I would read the articles and think that all the information was important so I would try and put all the information into my essay. This ran me into multiple problems such as overgoing the word count and a very confusing essay. One of the strategies that I found very helpful was using the key questions to help guide me.

Strategies:

The main strategy that I took away from these assignments was focusing on a one or two key questions to help guide my paper. Using these questions gave my writing a purpose and allowed me to make a stance and stick with it.