Portfolio

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**Reflective Journal**

Four month ago, a new chapter of my life began. My journey at AUB has started with the first semester being composed of 5 courses conveying new important ideas and concepts. Among these courses has been the English 203 course. In light of finishing this course, this is a reflective journal that assesses my progress and objective fulfillment in this course.

Personally, I believe that the main skill I have gained through this course was how to integrate other authors’ ideas into my essay and accredit their contribution, avoiding any kind of plagiarism. For example, in the first draft of my first essay my referring to other authors seemed too blunt like saying: As Charles Taylor (1991) calls it , “the disenchantment of the world”. Whereas referring to authors in the 2nd draft of the 2nd essay seemed more integrated and imposed throughout the essay like saying: Cross-cultural conflicts are resurging in our world calling desperately for healthy communication between sects; communication that must be taught first at home, Tannen (1990). Such a skill was an important attribute I’ve learnt in this course. This attribute gains its importance from our need as university students to use databases for trustworthy outside information without committing plagiarism. For example, three outside texts from AUB’s database were integrated in the 2nd essay.

In terms of accreditation of other author’s contribution, I have improved in referencing according to APA style. The following is an example of a reference from the first draft of my first essay: Goldsmith, O. (1762) . The Citizen of the World : National Prejudices. Whereas the following is a reference from my 2nd draft of my 2nd essay: Bordo, S. (2006). The Globalization of Eating Disorders. In Z. Sinno, R. Rantisi, G. Zeineddine, N. Honein & J. Najjar (Eds.) *Shades of Gray* (2nd ed.) (pp.320-323) Edinburgh: Pearson Companies Limited. My referencing became more explicit and includes all what APA style demands, like: author’s name, year of publication, editors and other criteria.

In this course, also I have been introduced to essay responses, and the development in this particular area was outstanding. This is obvious through comparing my first response, which wasn’t submitted to the teacher, to my final response(3rd response). My first response was totally off target, analyzing the author’s way of writing instead of responding to the ideas presented by the author. Here is an example of a topic sentence in my first response “I believe the essay was a coherent , well-written essay”; noting that I didn’t even have a thesis statement in my first response. On the other hand my final response analyzed the author’s thoughts instead of techniques, which is demonstrated through this thesis statement “The reason behind the strength of the media’s influence is its ability to reach everyone, and its effect on the unconscious”.

Finally and most importantly, analyzing and writing argumentative essay is a skill I’ve gained in this course. I have become able to assess the credibility of the author through his logic linking his major and minor premise, in addition to the support he presents. Also I have become able to write an argumentative essay that is built on a claim that broke down to arguments supported by examples. The second essay is an argumentative essay that displays the skills I’ve gained in argumentative writing.

Some peripheral skills were also enhanced like my ability to participate in debates like the one in class that revolved around empowering women. Also my ability to communicate with people from different sects practiced in this course, especially in the unit project, whereby my 3 partners were from different sects in Lebanon, still it was a great group.

In conclusion, I am at the start of an important preparatory stage of my life and this first semester added to me essential attributes to guide me through this stage and the ones after in my life. English 203 was one of the courses in this semester that armed me with a lot of skills: referencing, writing response essays and argumentative writing. Acquiring knowledge turned out to be exhausting and expensive, but with it only could a true civilization rise.