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AP Lit

AP English Portfolio – Reflection

The AP English Literature and Composition course, from a graduating student's perspective, has had impacts far beyond what one may expect from the typical English course. This year, I improved my ability to collaborate through several Socratic seminars, essay peer-editing, and group presentations, among the random yet unplanned class activities. Without a doubt, the class' devotion to eagerness and spontaneity—whether productive or pseudo-productive—made me feel part of an enthusiastic cult motivated to learn and progress together as we counted our sleepless nights preceding the AP exam. It was a loose yet socially-productive course where sound effort yielded favourable outcomes in my English skills. Consequently, writing timed essays (stoplight #7) was a skill I feel I developed the greatest. At the beginning of the year, the thought of having a time limit for any piece of writing kept me up at night. I knew I could produce quality work, albeit at the expense of hours, not 40 minutes. Oh, and I was not allowed any notes. However, after experiencing the first timed write, I realized how infeasible it is to perfect anything since most people will not have unlimited time to construct a work. This forced me to write according to my ideas and analysis from the book, focusing on conveying the ideas coherently rather than perfecting my style, diction, and grammar, thus saving time and aligning with the quality of expression. When writing my second IRP for Everything I Never Told You by Celeste Ng, I felt like I was writing a summary of the events leading up to the protagonist's death rather than an analysis. Later, I realized that it was the perfect balance between the two—the summary provided the context for the analysis of why the protagonist died. Part of my misconception probably originated from the mindset that eloquent, fanciful, and thus original (and irrelevant) writing content would earn high marks. In reality, a discussion and analysis of the text directly make the essay relevant and worth awarding points for the line of reasoning. Thus, I have made it a goal to discuss concrete examples from the text in my future IRPs, using those as the basis of discussion, which not only makes my writing more relevant and credible but also saves time due to not having to focus on

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syntax and fancy “BS’ing” as I was somewhat used to. Over time, timed writes have become second nature, and I found myself not having to expel as much stress and energy during each consecutive write while keeping quality consistent. Contrarily, a skill I require more practice on is writing argumentative essays and making judgements based on textual details (stoplight #10). Despite being able to write coherent, relevant papers, I often struggled with my line of reasoning; I would state one argument in my thesis, and the essay would morph into a different lesson or theme as my feelings dictated and conclude with something different. One example is our Q2 practice essay on *The Gift of Rain*. I felt that I delivered a coherent, well-articulated argument on how the imagery impacted the narrator’s memories of the house. However, in my thesis, I mentioned how the imagery contributed to the narrator’s nostalgia before shifting to the narrator’s forgiveness in the latter half of the essay. Since the line of reasoning was unclear, I scored no higher than a 3 in row B on the rubric. Thus, I aspire to communicate my ideas with more purpose in the future, not letting my feelings dictate an off-topic direction for my written work. I will do this by periodically referring to the essay prompt and my thesis and reading through my last few paragraphs to confirm my direction follows the former, ensuring that my essay conveys one clear argument entirely. A combination of writing coherent, relevant assertions that are clear and purposeful will help me in my future career in engineering as I detail reports on the performance of designs and applications of new technologies—these must be concise, to the point, and legible, rather than complex and pompous. It will also help me become more productive in post-secondary when writing research papers that call for a concise analysis of concepts leading to clear conclusions. Despite its somewhat loose nature, I am very content having taken this class, as it helped me become a more efficient writer and collaborator in a working environment of highly-talented students.