

Reflection

When I initially started this class I was unsure of what would come from it. I've never taken a literary analysis course before. Naturally I was nervous of the unknown. Fear of looking dumb and not being sure of my present skills, I didn't contribute to the first discussion. I didn't think I knew enough to adequately contribute anything of value to the discussion. Though, I did keep track of what I thought of the stories.

After it came and past I went and read through the discussion. I realized my thoughts on the reading were similar to my peers. Next discussion I decided to contribute. It wasn't much just enough I was comfortable with. I even got a few comments back. I started regularly contributing to discussions. My ideas and way I thought about a certain element in a story always was changing with each different perspective my peers wrote about.

The first big assignment came and I had no idea what I was doing, so I winged it. Turns out I didn't know what I was doing. Completely missed what my professor was looking for. She told what I should have done differently but commented on how well what I wrote was done.

When our critical literary analysis came around again my mind couldn't wrap around the thought of writing five pages on a short story. I read and re-read the requirements at least six different time. I had no idea what story to analyze. I didn't know how I was supposed to compose a thesis.

On sheer desperation I went to my reading journal of all the literature I've read for the class. One of the very first entries I asked a question about Edgar Allan Poe's story The Cask of Amontillado. I then just went and searched for an answer to that question.

In the middle of researching the question I realized I might be able to use this for my literary analysis. I went back and read the story and found my thesis might fit. I decided on using psychological criticism as my backing. I was much more interested in Poe and what may have influenced his story than forcing myself to write about another story.

I wasn't 100% sure it would fit the requirements but I found the risk worth the gamble. It was the first interesting idea I could think of. Not to mention the first idea I thought I would be able to write about to meet the length requirements. I did all my research at one time, documenting where I got the information so I could compose a works cited page. I then began reading the story again and annotating parts I found that contributed to my thesis. I wrote those notes out to get a clearer look at what my thought process while reading was. I started writing it after I had a clearer picture of what I was trying to say with my thesis and what examples I would include in my analysis. When I had everything I wanted down on paper I read through and made several changes, some small wording, others entire paragraphs I didn't like. When that was finished I edited it at least one more time before I was satisfied enough to turn it in.

I was right about the requirements. They didn't quite fit what was asked of me. Again, my professor told me it was good work but not quite what she was hoping for. I missed the mark. My strength was the writing and how I wrote. My weakness was not asking questions about the assignment where I was lost.

I have revised the paper, not to what the original description was but just refined what I did. Pounding out the kinks I missed previously. I don't regret losing some points for not hitting the target. I learned that my writing is ok, I just need to ask more questions and read assignment descriptions more carefully. I had fun with the research and the writing.