

Looking Backward

I find looking back and thinking about how I was feeling when I was writing something to be pretty difficult most of the time. Unless it was a particularly poignant or transformative experience my writing usually just gets put into a vault in my brain with the rest of my writing, which at this point is pretty full. It is hard to try and remember all these things when I have written so many papers, blog posts, and responses over the last three years. Or, that's what I thought. When I reread all of the pieces and truly tried to put myself in the headspace I was in when I wrote them it wasn't that hard. I could even tell by some of the choices I made within the actual writing what I was thinking about or going through when I wrote them.

I knew going in that reflection has been a large part of my thinking surrounding writing since I got to DU, but this really made me think about how much reflecting I do in each piece of writing. I even began to think about how I reflect in research papers, even if it isn't blatantly obvious. I thought back to when these things were assigned to me and how much my writing has grown since then. I also thought about how much of it hasn't changed. Two of the pieces were specifically about writing and learning. Reading them took me back to the ways I thought about learning and writing even as far as two years ago.

Looking Inward

I felt mildly embarrassed while reading them the first time. It is incredibly important to review your writing and to think about the choices you made and why you made them. Some of the things I said, specifically in the writings about writing I may

not necessarily agree with anymore. My theory of writing has changed and my thoughts on learning have changed. In a lot of ways these are a cool time capsule for me to have. It has been very informative to go back and reflect on my writing because I have learned so much about it. One piece in particular made me feel very embarrassed. It was the persuasion article. This was one of those papers that I knew wasn't very good when I turned it in but I just didn't feel like I could fix it. I was very passionate about the topic and I still am, I just felt very discouraged about it. I just sort of accepted the sub-par grade and decided it just wasn't a piece I was going to do good on. Reading it again made me feel a wave of inspiration. I reflected on how much I have learned since I first wrote it and I am feeling a little more hope about the project.

I realized that I really like writing about writing. I haven't done that sort of metacognition writing in the last few quarters, and I remembered how much I like it. I really do like to write about writing. I always feel more confident in my writing no matter what it is when I am simultaneously learning about writing. I also realized that I don't really take a lot of risks, at least not big risks. For example, I know that I am not a big fan of creative writing. I am not confident in my creative writing and I very rarely feel inspired to write about it. I don't think that's a bad thing, I guess it is knowing my strengths and weaknesses. However, I do wonder how my mind map and my reflections would have been different had I done so more creative writing.

Looking Forward

The reflecting that I have done about writing will help me for the rest of my life there is no doubt about that. One of the reasons I decided to add the minor was because my future career will probably have a lot of writing associated with it. I wanted to feel

more confident in my writing abilities and expand my abilities. I definitely think that I have done that and now I have the tools to continue to do that in the future.

That persuasive article has been sort of haunting me. I knew that I was going to have to use it for my portfolio and I dreaded it. I am now more excited to revise it. More importantly, I am ready to look at my writing differently. I purposely avoided that piece because I didn't want to reread it and relive it. I realize now that it isn't so bad, and it will give me piece of mind to revisit it. Feeling that about my writing wasn't fun. I know now that having to come back and look through things with a new lens is important for me as a person and as a writer.

The two pieces about writing showed me the power associated with looking back at how I have thought about writing over the years. It made me rethink midterms I am writing right now, so I cannot imagine what it would do for me in the future. It helped me to see my progression as a writer but also to see what has prevailed. Some of the things in my Vignette and my Theory of Writing have stuck with me, but some things have changed. It was really helpful to go back and read those and I would like to make a habit of doing that more often.

Looking Outward

Honestly, it is sometimes hard for me to think about my writing as being for an audience when I am writing it for a class for a professor to grade. And I think some things are really just for me. It is nice to be able to share my theory of writing with others so that I can hear what is different or similar between individuals and how they write. A lot of the ideas I share in those pieces are good and interesting and can be useful for others to hear or think about. However, when I am writing those I am no

thinking about other people, I am thinking about me. That's sort of the message I want them to have to the audience anyway. My writing style and process is unique to me, and while it may inspire others to think about writing in new ways it isn't a blueprint.

Everyone is so different when it comes to writing. There is never one clear answer.

My persuasion article was particularly meant to persuade the audience to want stricter gun laws, and unfortunately I don't think I did a very good job of that. You live and you learn. Rereading it showed me the areas that I need to work on to meet the criteria for that piece. I guess being a little removed from it helped me to see it more clearly. I now know things I can do to make it better and make it do what it was meant to do, persuade the audience.

I don't think one thing makes anyone a writer. It's a pretty loose descriptor if you ask me. But, the one thing that has prevailed for me is reflection. I think to be a writer, to be a "good" writer, you have to reflect. Writing in the more bare sense is putting words on a page. I think writing well and writing meaningfully requires more than just word vomit, although sometimes word vomit is a great place to start. You have to be able to reflect on why you are writing, what you are writing, and how your writing conveys the message you want it to. You have to be deliberate in your writing, or more specifically your revision. Sometimes things aren't going to work out, and that's ok. You have to be able to roll with the punches and understand that not everything is going to be a win. I think all of this makes me a writer. I can see all these elements in everything I write in one way or another. Sometimes those things are lacking, but it doesn't mean I am not a writer. It just means it needs to be revised or rethought.