
Writer's Statement about "I Dare You to Become a Teacher: How Society Has Created a Negative Image of the Teaching Profession"

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Stepping foot inside ENC 1102 as a freshman and told I would have to complete a minimum 15 page research paper was, at the time, the equivalent of telling a beginning athlete to run a marathon without even running a mile. I begin by saying this for the sole purpose that at the beginning of my journey, the only experience I had in writing was essays, book reports, and summaries for my AP courses back in high school. When Professor Richardson told my class that we would be working on this extensive research paper all semester, I had not a clue where to begin, how to plan, and how this would end up. As a student, I had always struggled when organizing my thoughts on paper and was very frightened when told that this same weakness was going to be put on a "battlefield" where I had to win if I wanted to end with a smile on my happiness when seeing my final grade.

As I have always been a future educator whose passion to teach is a pretty big chunk of my personality, I knew my paper would land somewhere in the range of the education field, but I did have a hard time focusing in on one specific topic. As I spoke with my professor, Adele Richardson, I realized that although I was interested in several issues regarding the teaching profession, my final decision had to be a topic I was truly in love with as I was making a commitment in a "temporary marriage" for about fifteen weeks—an entire spring semester. Adding this thought along the way, I was able to pick a topic that provided me with the privilege to really guide my paper and mold its organization to my preference.

However, after weeks of gathering research from several different sources, I came across another stop sign: how was I going to organize my research paper? How was I going to add to the conversation that was already out there? And most importantly, would my organizational structure be acceptable for this class? As I was struck with all of these questions, it did not help that as my class participated in many peer review activities, none of my classmates' papers looked anything like mine. At this point, I felt like I had gathered all the pieces to a puzzle, but could not put it together because I never decided what picture I wanted to see in the end. As I was feeling a little overwhelmed, I stopped by my professor's office hours to seek help. After speaking with her, I was told that my paper did not have to reflect what my peers wrote and was given the idea to do a "research review" kind of paper. After this, I felt a bit better, but this battle was still not over: I had

to sit down, pull out all my references, and try to pick topics that were similar in each to serve as the guideline of my paper.

In the end, after I was finished shuffling through different topics, I marched down to the writing center to receive extra guidance and preparation to organize my ideas on paper even further. As you can see, the start of my journey was a bit rocky and the ending was an even rougher terrain. However, being selected to present my research in this Showcase is truly an honor and I am so happy I pushed through until the end. To any freshmen out there reading this, believe me, if I can do it, you can too—definitely!