
Writer's Statement about "The Effects of Internalized Oppression on the Black Community"

CORRIN PINKNEY

The first day of my ENC 1102 class was boring. I was daydreaming and not paying much attention to my instructor until he said "research paper." I was immediately irritated and anxious. I hadn't written a research paper since I was in the eighth grade, and that was a group effort. I knew research papers were long. The thought of writing a ten- to fifteen-page paper intimidated me and I contemplated dropping the class. I dismissed that notion when I realized I was not going to escape writing a research paper whether I was in this particular class or another. I was under the impression that we'd be given a topic to research and we wouldn't get any further guidance on how to write an effective paper. That was far from the truth. Our instructor helped us step by step through the writing process.

Throughout middle and high school, I was always a strong writer, or at least that's what my teachers said. Writing papers and organizing them comes naturally to me. It's not extremely difficult for me to get my thoughts across on paper or a computer. It's a gift. The way I was instructed to write this paper and my writing background made the writing process effortless. By the time our assignments were over, half of my paper was written.

The most difficult part about this paper was choosing a topic. We were informed that the topic was our choice. I'm a bit indecisive. I had no idea what I wanted to research for a full semester. I finally came to decision at the last minute with the help of my sister. She and I were both taking ENC 1102 classes with different professors. She, too, had to write a research paper but on a discourse community she was a part of. She chose the black natural hair community. Her topic inspired my topic of choice: the black community. I'd always been interested in the black community and our struggles and triumphs. I realized that when overcoming oppression or being oppressed we would point our fingers at someone else. I wanted to take a look at what we were doing to ourselves. I knew from firsthand experience about the light skin vs. dark skin silent war in the black community. I wanted to explore the roots of the issue and analyze the effects it has had on people. So, I started off broad and then narrowed the topic to attitudes about skin color. And so my paper took root.

I chose to write this paper for all audiences. Not just black people, but for other races and cultures, too. I addressed colorism in the black community: what it is, where it came from, and how it affects people today. I believe that writing is a powerful tool to effect change. It might be something that some people find boring, but for those who like to read writing is educational and possibly life-changing. Writing this paper has altered my life in a good way and I hope it does the same to someone else.