
Writer's Statement about "Controlling the 'Others'"

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When entering college, it had always been a regret that I decided not to take an Advanced Placement English course in high school. It was something that most of my peers had done, because getting core classes out of the way was the first thing on their minds. When talking to them in the beginning of Fall, they seemed to think it was the right choice for them, and they had me thoroughly convinced that it would have been the right choice for me. I felt as if they were ahead and that I was wasting my time. However, the journey through composition classes at UCF is one that all students should consider taking.

In grade school most of my teachers did not know how to go about teaching writing. I was told by each educator that paragraphs need at least seven sentences, and all the commas must be placed properly. I do not believe that many of them even took the time to read what I had written. They simply wanted to make sure that students wrote sentences, and had written them correctly. In my first composition course in college, when I was told that my professor would be grading my work based on content, I was speechless. I was thrilled to see that the professor cares what I have to say, and will read my work. I immediately decided that I wanted to write something that would be thoughtful and impressive.

The first assignment that was given to my class was called "Portrait of a Writer." During the lecture, the professor was talking about the assignment, but after the first couple of sentences, I immediately zoned out. All I heard from her was that we needed to write about events in our past that have made us the writers that we are today. Furthermore, she told the class that it must be five or so pages and include references from the scholarly articles that we read while in class. I sat back in my chair and was contemplating ways of writing, brainstorming ideas, and thinking of how to write them. While pondering ideas, I was thinking that I did not want to simply write about my past in a very serious way. I also thought that it would be interesting if I told a story where I was interviewing myself. I wanted my paper to have humor, but in a mature way. Finally, I wanted people to feel like they are able to step into my shoes for the eight or so minutes that it takes to read my paper. It may seem poor that I was not paying attention in class; however, I could not help it. My creativity was overwhelming my ability to be attentive.

After class, I talked to my professor about my ideas and she said that it sounded like a very interesting perspective, but it would be difficult when trying to keep an audience. She told me to form my ideas clearly, keep thinking about them, and focus on an audience. Since I am a biomedical sciences student, I decided later that I wanted to also include medicine in some way. I made the interviewer a psychologist, and I would be his patient.

The beginning of the paper was the hardest part for me. I had very good thoughts on paper and sentences that induced deep thinking by the reader. However, it was not a very good start for my story. I had no clue how to transition from my introduction into the narrative. In the beginning drafts of the paper, it simply cut from an introduction into narration. My professor could not discern whether I was writing a narrative or an expository piece. Unfortunately, I did not know what I wanted either. After much consideration, I found that I needed to restructure the

introduction. To ensure the story's clarity, I created a paragraph where the psychologist was lecturing the audience, much like an aside in a play. I then made a transition to the story so that people would understand that it is all one narrative. This was necessary to capture the audience's attention so they did not become confused while reading. One of my peer reviewers commented saying that it seems as if the psychologist is sitting in a chair while lecturing the reader and smoking a cigar.

When writing "Controlling the Others," I strived to put a mental picture in the reader's head as much as possible. The main question that this paper addresses is, simply, how does a reader decide which teacher has taught them to write the correct way? The conclusion that the psychologist found for his patient is that, ultimately, he had to consider all of them, but decide which teacher's lessons work best at different times in the writing process.

All of the stories that were told are severely exaggerated, of course, but still very true about my life, and my experiences. My mother taught me how to read before school at a very young age, and my father sat with me and read stories to me each night and sparked my creativity. My ego as a student is very hard to work against and has been a struggle because of how stubborn I can be when doing schoolwork.

The audience that was considered in this paper was mainly other students who have trouble considering who to listen to while writing. It was also written to help professors see that new students struggle with deciding which person in their life has taught them correctly. I decided on the genre of a narrative because, just like it is very easy for my fictitious character "Barry" to write subjectively, it was very easy for me to write a narrative and keep the audience's attention, too.