

## Reflective Portfolio Letter

My curated exhibit was not only the product of my own writing and ideas, it was the product of my ideas along with comments and reflections of my peers and professor. While I did the majority of the curated exhibit myself, my peers and professor also helped me develop my ideas and argument more concretely. In this way, I realized the importance of peer review. The suggestions both my peers and professor put forth gave me different ideas about how I could potentially develop my exhibit, and as a result, I was able to take numerous reflections into account to form the finished product that is now my curated exhibit. Specifically, my peer review session with Daniel was particularly effective because he gave me insight from a first-time viewer's perspective, allowing me to change certain aspects of my exhibit, especially my introduction, both of which he said assumed that the viewer had prior knowledge of the subject. In turn, I was able to correct these errors, and I did so by adding more detail, so that an uninformed viewer would have more background information before proceeding into the main portion of the exhibit. Additionally, when I went up to the board during class to discuss what my argument was and how I was going to develop it, I realized that my ideas were broad and vague, and that I should compound them to create a more specific argument. Moreover, my professor's insight helped enormously because his knowledge of the relationship between the KKK and blacks in the south was extensive. In this way, he helped me hone in on one specific argument that would be more easily supported by the evidence I already had.

There were three vital components that I used to start my exhibit: outlining, word webs, and response paragraphs. Outlining was probably the most effective of these three, as it always helps me to visualize my projects and essays before I begin them. So, through outlining, I was able to create broad headers that I then supported with the evidence and research I had gathered from the Rose Library, online, and in class to create a detailed outline that I followed throughout the project. Additionally, word webs helped me bounce ideas off of each other, as I found that one word would lead me to another, and the process would repeat itself until I had a large web that I could use to help create ideas for my exhibit. Finally, response paragraphs were helpful because they allowed me and my peers to reflect on my work.

My exhibit was heavily influenced by thoughts that I had outside the class, as I would think of effective ways to develop and create an exhibit that would keep an audience engaged and interested throughout. In this way, I found that constantly thinking about an assignment is also a valid and effective way of doing it, as my possibilities for the exhibit were influenced by my thoughts throughout the day. In the past, when I have tried to sit down and write an essay, I have been ineffective because I had not given it any thought before I tried to write. By outlining and constantly thinking about ways in which I could improve and enhance my exhibit, I think I was able to create an excellent, engaging exhibit, that both informed and captivated its viewers.

Throughout the course of this semester, I have found that my preparation leading up to an essay or project greatly influences the quality of the assignment. In the beginning of the semester, I did not give much thought to in-class and out-of-class writing assignments, and as a result, I did not see much improvement in my writing. When I

began thinking about assignments before writing them, however, I noticed great improvement in the quality of my writing. I do not think that it was my technicality that necessarily improved, although I do believe that it did during this semester, but I believe that my enhanced approach to each assignment, minor or major, heavily influenced my grade and the quality of my work.

In the future, I plan on laying out, assessing, thinking, and evaluating each step of my writing process, as I believe this is the most effective way to complete assignments, not only in English, but in any study. So, in all, I would say this course has taught me how to improve upon my writing process as a whole, and I now understand the importance of constant thought and evaluation to the quality of an assignment.