Prof. Munsell

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Month XX, 2022

Composition Students

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Dear Composition Students,

Greetings!

Recently, I’ve been thinking about writing and what that looks like to students like you. I’ve been in the classroom for quite some time, and I’ve learned that to many students, writing can be a daunting task. The thing is, that to write better, you have to write more often.

Though we are not in the same room, I can already hear the groans of frustration. You’re probably wondering how you’re supposed to write more when writing is already so tedious. While it may be a struggle to write now, I promise it won’t always be that way. In the words of the great Kelly Clarkson, “what doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.”

I’ve been in multiple careers and have a few degrees under my belt. While writing fiction has always come easily to me, that does not mean that I found writing twenty-page term papers to be a walk in the park. My first semester in graduate school, I struggled to hit the length requirements. Then, it got better. Why? I was writing more, and with more practice, it became easier. By the time I graduated, I was able to crank out twenty-page term papers like they were nothing. This is not to say that I expect you to be writing that much for me, only to highlight that even your humble Composition professor has struggled with writing.

Now, I’m not saying that if you start writing, you will love it. You still may find writing to be tedious. That’s okay. Everyone has their own skills and strengths. The point of this letter is to help you see the benefit in the practice of writing. The skills you learn while writing extend far beyond putting the proverbial pen to the page. Your professor is not just asking you to write five pages on the life cycle of snails because they want to torture you. You may run out of things to say on the first page and wonder how you will continue for four more pages. The benefit of lengthy writing assignments is that you learn to take an idea and develop it, analyzing the evidence you glean from other sources and then, hopefully, begin to insert your own ideas.

So what am I recommending? I recommend that you write more and write often. I recommend that maybe you see your assignments as a chance for growth instead of a device to make you miserable. Let’s focus on your strengths in writing and build on them. The skills you learn in analysis and making connections to different ideas will be vitally important to you in college and beyond.

I wish you the very best in your semester. If you’d like to discuss anything that I’ve said here, please feel free to send me an email. As always, my door is proverbially open.

Sincerely,

Prof. Munsell