Portfolio Introduction
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In looking over my writing from this past semester, I have noticed many improvements even in such a short amount of time. I feel that essays one and three really brought out this change in my writing style and abilities. Though all three of these works are very different in their substance, I feel that they are the best representations of how I write. When writing, I felt like I was forced to look deeply into my personal values and utilize these values to draw a conclusion about each issue or text. I felt that so far, CORE has really helped me to better understand myself and strengthen my stance on many issues.

When it came to choosing the two essays that I had an option to include, I chose the personal narrative and the Henry IV essays for various reasons. Papers two and three were both similar in that they each examined a text and had us reflect on it. So in order to show the variety of writings we did this semester, I chose essay three which was the better of the two, as well as the first and fourth essays. By doing this, I had a personal narrative, a textual analysis, and a research paper to show my abilities in writing in different styles.

Though I used three different types of papers, I did not exactly like writing each of them the same nor did I find each of them "easy" to write. First off, the personal narrative gave me the most trouble of all. I hadn't really written a story about myself since elementary school, so I hadn't really developed a technique for writing such papers. However, I did find that it helped me let out some thoughts that had been hanging around in my head for a while. The analysis of Henry IV on the other hand came much more naturally because this was the type of paper I wrote throughout middle and high schools. This was also my favorite paper of the three because not
only did I really enjoy reading the book or because it seemed easier to write, but I really felt like I had accomplished something after writing it. As an engineering major, it may be obvious that I am not in love with English classes, but this class was more than just another English class and I felt this paper brought that out by showing my deeper thoughts. Lastly, I always struggle a little with research papers. I find that I tend to be repetitive in making my arguments while also trying to fit in a diverse selection of support for them. Yet with this paper I felt like I was able to kind of carry over this addition of my values to my writing, though it was much more difficult being a research paper.

In going from first draft to final draft, all of my papers saw some pretty major changes. In my personal narrative, I initially had talked about how I felt and the changes in my character, but I didn’t actually show these changes. So when I went back over this paper, I tried to give examples of how I changed and gave deeper details of my feelings to help the reader feel the change in who I am. In the second paper, I initially felt really good about what I had, but in going back and looking at it I saw, along with what others had said, that there were definitely some places that I could make stronger. For the last paper, I had written a very rough rough draft, so it wasn’t difficult to know that I would need to do some work on the paper.

In the revision of each of these papers, I depended a lot on my peer reviews for assistance in going back and improving my papers. I felt very comfortable working with the people in my peer review groups and sharing ideas with them. I also felt your feedback on my drafts was very helpful in pointing out some of the deeper issues with my papers. This is what I would hope my readers will notice in my final papers; that they more deeply look into my arguments and do a better job of showing my thoughts rather than simply stating them.
Unfortunately, I still do not believe my essays are as good as they could be. I still feel my personal narrative is not quite deep enough; I felt like I was just storytelling. My research paper never did fit together quite as well as I had pictured because the organization just never seemed to be perfect. As for my *Henry IV* paper, I feel that it is the best of the three, but still just doesn't read quite as smoothly as I would like it to. Yet, I am pleased with these drafts of my paper. I feel that if I were to try to make them better, it would take a lot of work with a much better writer to individually take quite a bit of time to look over it with me.

With all of my papers, as well as this introduction, I am aware that I often write very long sentences. However, after trying to change that a little it seemed to be an impossible task because it just the way I have always written. After writing a paper and then going back and reading over it, I have also noticed that I often lack good transitions. I also have not completely mastered my organization to the point that I would like, but I'm still improving. I feel that I am pretty good at getting my point across and writing a little more eloquently than other students like myself (male, engineering students). I kind of like that I don't make my papers sound very personal, and I think that my way of writing does a pretty good job of communicating with the reader.

For freshmen coming into this class, I would first advise them to erase any thoughts of this being just another typical English class. I would tell them that though it does require a pretty good time commitment, the class really is worth it no matter what your major. The texts we read in this course contain more than just literary merit; they also make one think about what is important in life and allow them to better grasp their view of the issues that surround our lives. I must admit that I did not look forward to CORE this semester, but after sitting through each of the classes and reading the material, I feel that it has better defined my character.