

Pedro Costa Silva

Professor Locke

ENGI 101: College Writing

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As an avid writer, I used to be amazing at playing video games- makes sense, right ? I know. The two don't correlate because they are not supposed to. As a child, I can remember going through a rough phase while learning how to write. I enjoyed reading (my mom would take me to our local library at least once a week), but I would shy away from writing as it was something very new to me. Being 5 years old at the time, I would certainly rather be spending my precious time playing my Playstation 2- which seemed far more appealing than picking up a pencil and pressing it as hard as I could on a piece of paper (in the mind of this five-year-old, that is what writing meant). Nevertheless, I had to learn it- one way, or another. Writing is an essential skill in the society we currently live in. It is the beacon of communication that connects the past, present and future. I like to think of writing as the first time-machine ever invented: It is through my current action of typing these words that I am connecting you (my future audience) to my past- my story. I am able to use things like imagery, for example, to show you a scenario as if you were there with me.

From here, things get a little tricky. You see, my memory is not quite swell when it comes to specific childhood memories. My best attempt at demonstrating this memory would be to show you a drawing or some other form of illustration. Since words are all I have, words

will do. Back in Spain (where my family had recently moved in), there were these babysitting “establishments” where parents would leave their children, and the people who worked there would not only take care of them, but also teach them the “necessary skills” to enter the first grade of schooling. As you might have guessed, I was one of those kids. I remember those tall, white ceilings and welcoming, bright-colored walls as if it were yesterday. It would have been amazing, if it was not a farce. While the younger kids would spend all of their time playing, the older kids (like myself) would be *forced* to study, for lack of a better term. To this day, I can remember the first time that I was ever put inside their “study room”. Inside, there was this enormous table, which spanned all the way across the room. I am guided into the room, and what blows me right away is the amount of kids there. I find 20- maybe 30 kids crammed into their seats, all writing as if they had been kidnapped and their ransom was dependent on how many letters they had managed to successfully scribble. Appalled at this sight, I am seated. My tiny hands shiver as I rest on the cold, metal table, waiting for one of the instructors to hand me a piece of paper and let the torture begin. A couple minutes go by, when “*finally*”, -I think to myself- I am handed the much dreaded... “*binder?*” -“So we can keep track of your progress”- says one of the instructors, with a stern look on their face. I gaze my eyes at it, and I see the letter “a” drawn in dotted lines, along with the rest of the letters in the alphabet -as if to guide a poor soul to write it “perfectly”. I get through “a”, then “b” and so on. “*I might actually survive this*”-... or so I thought.

When I inevitably get to “h”, I freeze. The air in the room turns cold. I look over and I see all the other kids had stopped writing- they were done. The bright LED lamp that is sitting on

the table flares at my eyes even further, and I can feel my stomach drop. I feel both the pressure of my instructor rushing me to be done, and the pressure of my aimless pencil dragging across the page- as if it were a lost raft at sea, waiting to be swallowed by the waves of my anxiety. **“It is not that hard”**- said the instructor, with an impatient tone. Without saying anything back, I pick up my pencil and do my best attempt at scribbling the letter. I find it best not to thoroughly describe what happens next, as to not trigger the audience. But between my instructor yelling at me, me crying as a result and my mom having to furiously come pick me up, -my takeaway from this experience was that as an avid writer, I was (and still am) amazing at playing video games.

Just kidding. On a more serious note, the moment my instructor lost it with me -that- was my big breakthrough. That moment is when I realized that writing is fun because of what I *enjoy writing*, not because of writing itself. I would find it difficult to enjoy if it simply consisted of drawing letters on a piece of paper. There is no fun in that. It would be like singing a love song without *expression*. Part of the fun (for me at least) is in taking small fragments from everything that I have ever read, and then integrating such fragments into my own style of writing. But more than that: the power of telling a story (like the one you just read) and its intricacies, (to put things like emotion, pain and nostalgia on a piece of paper and make it come to life) is *by far* my favorite part about writing.