

English I Norming Samples

Assignment

[After explanatory material describing the purpose of this essay, students are given the following specific assignment]

You will write an essay which extracts a central idea on the purpose of college from the assigned readings. As noted above, this essay will not include your own opinion: you'll be objectively reporting the information. You must decide the most effective way to categorize the information these writers offer in order to effectively communicate their ideas to your readers.

The most important part of this assignment – and all assignments involving reporting information – is narrowing down your topic. You'll encounter many different views of what an college education should be: your job is to focus on one of them. And since the focus is on reporting information from others, it may be a view you don't even share.

Much of this essay will consist of cited material – it's what readers expect when you're reporting information from other sources.

Again, remember that your purpose is not to present all of the information you've read or argue with the views expressed in the readings; instead, it's to narrow down and find connections among the readings and then to objectively present their views to your readers. (Have I mentioned objectivity enough? Good.)

NOTE: First essay of the semester.

Timeline for essay: after a week of reading sources and taking notes, students spent a week planning and drafting, another revising (which included peer and instructor review and feedback), and then a final week on proofreading before submitting final draft.

151 Essay 1

E. E.

Growing a Mind via College

Many students believe that going to college will get them the big house and the expensive car they've always wanted. But, that's not necessarily the case. According to these writers and researchers a good college will also help students to grow intellectually. They will leave college with a better mental state. But, it seems that to most students intellectual growth doesn't even cross their minds. Intellectual growth comes in third place compared to going to school to get a good job and getting the highest GPA. But, in his essay, writer Louis Menand assures us that "Education is about personal and intellectual growth, not about winning some race to the top." Colleges make intellectual growth a factor of their education by emphasizing on learning how to love life, critical thinking, and a broader knowledge

College's role, according to the writers, is to create intellectual growth in students by instructing them on how to love life. Students often say that college can be one of the most stressful times of their life, with the constant pressure to succeed in all of their classes. College for most students is the first time they're out on their own without the support of a parent figure. This can be tough on anyone. But, on the other hand college could be the best time of their life with, as Andrew Delbanco, writer for the New York Times put it, all the "semi-supervised fun"(24). But, how does a student benefit from these pressures and pleasures? A Columbia alumnus once stated; "Columbia, taught me how to enjoy life." (qtd. in Delbanco 32). What this man meant was that now that he's older he sees what college actually taught him, something that might not be apparent right out of the gates. "College had opened his senses as well as his mind to experiences that would otherwise be foreclosed for him" (Delbanco 32). He was grateful that college had showed him how to live along with giving him education, his senses were heightened and his understanding of things deepened. (Delbanco). He didn't mention that his major helped him gain his way to a life of happiness. He spoke about college as a whole as one big incredible experience that changed his life for the better. Menand said in his essay "College exposes future citizens to material that enlightens and empowers them, whatever careers they end up choosing." Majoring in something does not mean you will get a job in that field. The writers are saying that college is there as a tool to prepare students for any career or any life choices. This goes to show that whatever major you chose or whatever career you're looking forward to getting, anyone and everyone will take something valuable away from going to college.

A college's job in donating intellectual growth to students is to show emphasis on critical thinking. Many believe critical thinking is the key to understanding the world and all of its truth. "A life of the mind!" as Cornel West called it in an interview in 2008's documentary *Examined Life*. West made multiple remarks about "Questioning the truth!" Well, doing that would require much critical thinking and writers agree that college can teach that. Critical thinking in general can turn you into a whole different kind of person. Think, think, and think, don't make college a place where you just sit and listen to a teacher's lecture, half of the words flying through one ear and out the other. These writers want students to know that they also need to make the class interesting by thinking about it in a broader sense. They cannot just rely on a teacher to turn a "boring" subject into a fascinating one.

As Gutting, also a writer for the New York Times wrote "Teachers need to see themselves as, first of all, intellectuals, dedicated to understanding poetry, history, human psychology, physics, biology — or whatever is the focus of their discipline. But they also need to realize that this dedication expresses not just their idiosyncratic interest in certain questions but a conviction that those questions have general human significance, even apart from immediately practical applications." A teacher's goal should be to make a student perk up and think "Wow, that really makes a lot of sense!" instead of them sitting there half a sleep for an hour and fifteen minutes. He also states "Students, in turn, need to recognize that their college education is above all a matter of opening themselves up to new dimensions of knowledge and understanding." The writer is trying to make a point in this writing that it's both the teacher and the student's job to make college a crucial place for learning and critical thinking.

Many writers think college's goal is to create intellectual growth because it creates a broader knowledge in general. If a student in college opens his or her mind to things that they may have not known about originally they can expand their knowledge to great heights. Author Richard D. Kahlenberg wrote that one of the most important parts of college is "To help students find a passion—and even a purpose in life." When a student opens their minds to new knowledge they can find a new passion and that passion might stick with them for the rest of their lives. Kahlenberg hopes that teachers will speak meaningfully to their students and help them figure out who they are and where they are going. Everyone goes to college for a reason, but a broader knowledge is a reason that all students should strive for.

In conclusion, upon the words of many writers and researchers college provides intellectual growth by emphasizing learning to love life, critical thinking, and a broader knowledge. These writers prove how important intellectual growth can be in college and for the rest of a student's life. As Judith Shapiro, president of Barnard put it, "You want the inside of your head to be an interesting place to spend the rest of your life."(qtd. In Delbanco 33). A college can provide you with the ideas and way of thinking that will make your head a fascinating place to spend your time.

Works Cited

- Delbanco, Andrew. "College: What It Is, Was, And Should Be"
Menand, Louis. "Live and Learn: Why We Have College"
Gutting, Gary. "What is College for?"
Kahlenberg, Richard D. "The Purpose of Higher Education"

151 Essay 2

J. K.

Cooking Up The Perfect Success: What College is All About

Every chef starts off as an amateur just like every student starts as a beginner. 1 cup of milk, 2 sticks of butter are common examples of what a normal cake would call for. A recipe resembles college, just like a certain dish is made up of different ingredients a major calls for certain courses. For example to become a doctor a Chemistry and Physics course is required. Similar to how a cake cannot be made with out flour or eggs. While a chef learns and grows in the kitchen, college is where a student develops and flourishes. The first step is to choose, either further their education or end it at graduation. Theories and arguments for each side are strongly presented from writers who seek to find what college's main purpose is. Many agree college's role is to broaden students intellectuality and generate a new way of critical thinking. Menand explains how everybody develops in their own way, no certain amount of time can confine developing ones mind. "Personal and intellectual growth not about winning some race to the top." Discovered abilities and a new love of learning is what colleges hope to bring out in students. Keeping a flexible mind and opening it up to new ideas helps change normal thinking patterns and reactions a person may have. Agreeing with Menand, knowing more is a way to enable ones self to a brighter future.

Exercising the mind is all a part of intellectual growth, it leads to success and heightens the senses of learning. "Students, in turn, need to recognize that their college education is above all a matter of opening themselves up to new dimensions of knowledge and understanding." (Gutting). Going along with what Gutting had said, students need to be willing to learn, resistance only sets up for failure. Besides working hard to keep motivated, it also takes teachers to create the perfect setting to learn. "Good teaching does not make a course's subject more interesting; it gives the students more interests — and so makes them more interesting." (Gutting) Communication is key, it gives both the student and teacher ways to introduce new ideas and help grow.

Maintaining the idea of intellectual growth in college, multiculturalism plays a big role. It is the sharing and combining of multiple cultures in a main stream society. Given this information a student in college gets to interact and is exposed to the melting pot of cultures. Delbanco reinforces the idea that growing as a person is more beneficial than anything a book can teach. " Nothing that you will learn in the course of your studies will be of the slightest possible use to you in the after life- save only this-that if you work hard and intelligently you should be able to detect when a man is talking rot, and that in my view, is the main, if not the sole, purpose of education." (Delbanco 29). Maturity and growth are essential in preparing for all the struggles in life. Being able to catch when a person is trying to pull one over on you is an important life skill. An example is a car salesman, they pull any stunt they can to make a person think a car is the best fit for them. Somebody who is well educated about cars could easily point out what the salesman is doing and know not to fall for it. Students are the same way, they need to be confident in themselves and all they have learned to call out when something is wrong.

Many claim college to be the best years of a persons life. It is something that will help reach life goals for the future. Students grow personally from all the changes surrounding them. "Knowledge of the past helps us to think critically about the present." (Delbanco) Finding a career and making sure to reach it's requirements is all dependent on the degrees earned. An employer will take a person who knows what they are talking about over somebody who uses a front to look like they do. The commonly used phrase "never judge a book by its cover" signifies how students need to be ready not only on the outside but the inside as well. How they present themselves comes across to every employer and can determined wether they fit or not.

The student that finally graduates and accomplishes their degree leaves a totally new person. " College exposes future citizens to material, that enlighten and empowers them." (Menand) The mind is able to store and withhold a mass amount of information. It is complex and opens up a mind to critical thinking. " College is a four year intelligence test."(Menand) Constantly competing to be the best and all

the hard work that follows really makes a difference. It opens pathways and expands ideas that students never saw coming. Finding inner growth is the perfect recipe for success.

Works Cited

- Delbanco, Andrew. "College: What it is, was, and Should be" Princeton University Press (2012): 24-35. Print.
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- Menand, Louis. "Why we have college." The New Yorker (2011) Print.

151 Essay 3

Y. V.

Mind Over Matter: The Purpose of College

The importance of college has always been ingrained in the mind of students. Students must attend college to benefit financially in order to support themselves. As Louis Menand points out, “higher education is widely regarded as the route to a better life.” However, he also mentions that “education is personal and educational growth, not about winning some race to the top.” He makes it clear that students forget sometimes that there’s more to the purpose of college than just a better income. Many writers, such as Menand, Gary Gutting, Loren Popem Alina Tugend, Andrew Delbanco, Richard M. Freeland, and Richard Kahlenberg, insist that the real purpose of college is to assist in the personal and intellectual growth of its students. They focus on the need to enrich students, to aid in “self-discovery” and to promote diversity.

First and foremost, many writers agree that in order for the colleges to fulfill their purpose of personal and intellectual growth, they must nourish the minds of its students. Gutting, a professor at Notre Dame, mentions that a “college education is above all a matter of opening themselves up to new dimensions of knowledge and understanding.” According to Gutting, students need to use college as stepping stone to elevate their knowledge. College introduces students to information that they should or would like to know. Writers like Gutting feel, that this is how students become more knowledgeable about not only themselves, but about the world they live in. Furthermore, Gutting argues that college not only educates its students, but helps them develop a better understanding of themselves and their surroundings. If students do not value the knowledge or understanding they receive from a college education as Gutting recalls then “college and universities have no point.”

In addition, once college helps students improve their understanding and acquire more knowledge, they can become contributing citizens to society. Menand, a writer for the *New Yorker* points out that “college exposes future citizens to material that enlightens and empowers them.” He implies that what college graduates learn in college can help with future issues that society will face. They will be able to make the best decisions possible because Menand believes that college has taught them “to think critically, reason analytically, solve problems and communicate clearly.” Connecting this to the larger society, Pope, author of “Colleges that Save Lives,” argues that qualities like these build better leaders and stronger communities (13). Because of this, Tugend, a writer for *The New York Times*, adds that the population does not want people who are “not able to think critically about the issues that face us as a society.”

Furthermore, all commentators can agree that self -discovery is the core of personal and intellectual growth in college. Delbanco quotes the former president of Amherst College about how after college he experienced a “stirring and shaping, perhaps for the first time in his life, [of] actual convictions- not just gut feelings.” College forces students to step out of their comfort zones, according to Delbanco. For this purpose, Delbanco, a professor at Columbia, uses a student from China being educated at an American college as an example. He states that in a debate amongst his peers, the Chinese student was the only student to go against not only his peers but the “prescribed answer” (qtd. in Delbanco). The reason behind his act was that “Bowdin [college] forced me to reconsider ‘the answer’ and reach beyond my comfort zone” (qtd. in Delbanco). Delbanco is implying that college not only pushed students out of their comfort zones, but rather the academic and social norms they readily accept.

As a result of “self- discovering,” college students may also find a passion or even a meaning in life. As Freeland, writing in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, comments, “intellectual pursuits can be, and are for many people, a rich source of meaning in their lives.” Kahlenberg believes that college is a setting in which students can develop personal interests in different topics. He mentions that college can also lead them to begin thinking about the areas in which they are skilled. According to Pope, author of “Colleges that Change Lives,” colleges “have helped them [students] find themselves so happily, given

them new powers and confidence, and made them better persons” (4). Pope indicates that not only does college result in self-discovery for its students, but self-improvement.

Above all, according to writers, promoting diversity is essential for personal and intellectual growth in college. College as Kahlenberg, writing in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, puts it “provides a unique environment in which students of different backgrounds can learn from one another.” In a sense, college stimulates socializing. Not only is it a way for students to interact amongst themselves but amongst their professors. Delbanco describes that “it can provide the pleasurable chastisement of discovering that others see the world differently, and that their expense is not replicable by, or even reconcilable with, one’s own.” This, according to Delbanco is how students benefit intellectually from diversity. He illustrates that colleges encourage their students to reexamine their ideas or beliefs because it builds awareness to other ideas that can lead to an improvements or to new ideas.

In conclusion, the intellectual portion of college can be rewarding. According to many writers, the purpose of college is to lead to personal and intellectual growth. It is made clear with their emphasis on the need for diversity, that it can help students discover themselves and to promote diversity It is Delbanco who best describes the college experience when he states “college should strive to be; an aid to reflection, a place and process where young people take stock of their talents and passions and begin to sort out their lives in a way that is true to themselves and responsible to others.”

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