

Alyssa Brennan

Dr. Childs

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### A Reflection on My Time as an English Major at CCU

During my time as an English major, I have grown as a critical thinker, analyst, critical reader, and writer. I have developed so many important skills I know will be helpful to me as I begin my search for a career: communication, data analysis, close reading, research strategies, HTML, and organization. When I transferred to the major, I could not decide on a concentration. So, I chose English Studies because I wanted to take classes in each field. I am glad I did this because the variety kept my schedule fresh, and interesting. I have learned about how even though all these fields fall under the same subject, they are completely different from each other.

I learned about different forms of writing, my writing process, and how to push myself in different ways. One class that assisted with my growth as a writer was ENGL 457: Form and Style in Writing where I worked on imitation assignments that forced me into a different perspective, and writing style. This helped me realize that I do not have to limit myself to what I am comfortable with. There is a lot of value in making yourself work in a different perspective and voice than usual, and it can unlock something one would not have found otherwise. It also took some of the pressure off of the writing process because it put some distance between the writer and the work.

Fiction classes also forced me out of my comfort zone because I didn't have much experience writing short stories. I enjoyed learning about this type of writing, even though I do not think it will be something I pursue. I took Fiction I and II, where I created a 20-page short

story portfolio for each course which consisted of two 10-page stories. This was a huge challenge, because I had never written a short story of that length before. Poetry was my favorite writing workshop, and reminded me of why I used to love it so much. I hadn't realized how many different types of poetry there were, and I enjoyed trying the different styles. The class provided challenges that contributed to my growth as a writer. My professor had us write a poem in the most difficult form: a villanelle. This experience was really educational because it left no choice, but for me to think outside of the box

Another class that was particularly helpful was ENGL 459: Adv Composition and Rhetoric with Dr. Christian Smith. In this class, I completed the longest academic research paper I've ever worked on. It was a total of 17 pages about the impacts of social class on education. Smith made me confident in myself as a writer, and pushed me to be successful. Forms of Creative Writing, ENGL 301, with Jess, was one of the first classes I took when I switched from Early Childhood Education to an English major. She said the only bad writing is not writing at all. This encouragement helped me overcome the fear and anxiety that sometimes came with putting something on the page just because I thought it would not be any good.

Besides my creative writing courses, I have also really enjoyed studying literature. Literature courses have sharpened my analytical thinking, and helped me think from multiple perspectives. One particular literature course I enjoyed was ENGL 335: Persp on Wrld/ Anglo Lit/Cltre. In this class, I got to connect the texts we were looking at to current events, and problems in modern day society. This is important because it makes the texts accessible and relevant regardless of when they were published. British literature also developed important skills because so much analysis, interpretation, and research goes into studying the subject.

Background information and research is usually crucial to a full understanding of a text, so those skills are necessary, and practiced when writing essays.

Research and analysis are also important in the linguistic classes I have taken. In ENGL 355: Intro to Discourse Analysis, I was able to conduct my own research session, and data recording that I would later transcribe to analysis what was happening in the conversation, and what types of features the speakers were using when they talked. Doing an analysis, and collecting my own research allowed me to take what I learned in class, and apply it to a real-life situation. Studying linguistics has given me a deeper understanding of the English language, and how it is used in different types of communication, and different speakers.

The experiences I have had in my academic career as an English major have aided in my growth, and developed skills that will be significant in the next chapter of my life. The writing skills I have picked up from my professors have been so important to me, and I will continue to practice and improve with what I have been given. The ability to be able to conduct effective and informative research is important for any type of writing, and creating meaningful work. The connections used from research in one's own work puts it into a larger conversation within the field, which is something English majors get a lot of practice doing.