

Chat Room Revisions

Peer revision was my favorite aspect of my English 1101 class. I aspire to be a teacher when I am older because I genuinely enjoy helping others. Over the semester I peer reviewed six papers and I often received positive responses of appreciation from my classmates. My classmate, Stefanie Wheeler, told me on Facebook chat, “I got a 94 thanks to you!” and asked me to review her next paper as well. Most importantly, by peer reviewing others' papers, I learned a great deal about the writing process and I saw how I could apply my suggestions to others to my own work as well.

Below, I show my comments on Stefanie's paper. I paid careful attention to her thesis and checked to see that each of her paragraphs were clearly connected to her main argument. I also looked for areas where she could improve her sentence structure and coherence. Finally, while giving good compliments to her as well, I gave her advice on how she could conclude her writing in order to finish off with a strong paper.



Stefanie Wheeler

The Power of Stereotypes

Diversity. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the term as “the condition of having or being composed of differing elements.” These various elements such as gender, race, body type, and class are key components of a person’s individuality. Many factors of diversity are genetic and uncontrollable, whereas others are personality traits that are developed over a period of time. An individual’s distinctiveness has a major impact on their success in life, as it provides him or her with unique tools to achieve their goals. On the other hand, certain diverse traits are looked down upon by society. Stereotypes concerning particular traits can be degrading and limiting, causing a person to learn something about themselves and society as a whole. **Consequently, the only way to surpass these limitations is to defy stereotypes and prove their misconceptions wrong.**

Due to my small size and petite build, I have always been referred to as “little.” There’s no question that this trait was passed down from my mother, who received it from her mother. In short, this gene was something I had no way of getting out of. As I have noticed, society seems to take a sort of pity on short people. They tend to view them as weak, fragile, quiet, and helpless. What strikes me

the most is how they come to the conclusion that short people are less capable of the physical excellence that comes to those with a larger and stronger makeup. As a child, particularly throughout middle school, this stereotype greatly frustrated me. It limited me in the sense that I was often looked down upon by my peers. As a result, I strived for an opportunity to demonstrate that I was much stronger than I appeared.

After being a gymnast for nine years, competition flew throughout my body like the blood traveled through my veins. Hard work, dedication, and determination became of second nature. Regardless of my height, countless hours of practice and conditioning in the gym left me with a lower percentage of body fat than most of the boys in my middle school class. In fact, I was somewhat embarrassed that my arm and stomach muscles were more defined than those of a typical girl my age. I longed for my classmates to notice my strength, and a chance to put their conceptions to an end.

At the end of the year, I finally received an opportunity to prove my strength. After a full year of “strenuous” physical education classes, the state required each student to take multiple fitness tests to determine their physical improvement. To this day, I still remember running the fifty yard dash. The teacher had paired us up with one of our classmates to race down fifty meters of the outdoor track. Aware of my background as a gymnast, the teacher paired me with one of the taller boys of my class, Alex. Before he signaled for us to begin running, I overheard the kids behind me make a bet that Alex would be a sure winner. They claimed that I had no chance, as he had much longer legs and could surely out-run me. I smiled and took my place at the starting line. After the signal, I sprinted down the track as fast as possible. Sure enough, I finished multiple seconds before Alex. My classmates were shocked. Not only had I passed the test, I had proved that being small did not limit my physical ability.

Unfortunately, stereotypes often have negative psychological effects on people. Michael Inzlicht, a researcher at the University of Toronto, conducted a new study to determine whether negative labeling has a lasting harmful effect on its targets. In order to obtain accurate results, Inzlicht and his team performed a sequence of tests. His results, published in the August, 2011 edition of the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, are quite intriguing. During one part of the study, women were told to write a math test in order to determine their mathematical capability. The women that felt discriminated against ate more and were significantly more hostile than those of the control

group. Inzicht concluded, “People who felt they were discriminated against—whether based on gender, age, race, or religion—all experienced significant impacts even after they were removed from the situation” (Long-term Effects of Stereotyping). The study shows that stereotypes leave people with a sort of “baggage,” limiting them from their full potential.

As for me, stereotypes associated with my size negatively impacted my life throughout my middle school years. The idea that smaller, shorter people were weak brought down my confidence level and restricted me socially. Until I proved myself to my peers, I felt extremely negative about the popular misconception. On a broader scale, it allowed me to form opinions about society as a whole.



Ravi Srivastava

This is looking good, Stefanie. I feel that the point of your paper is to prove that: **the way to surpass limitations and overcome stereotypes is to prove their misconceptions wrong.** Your story offers good evidence for your point. Add even more evidence. After you talk about the study, **if you want**, you could then go into providing some quick examples of specific people or groups of people, and explain how **they** were limited by stereotypes. Better yet, talk about how they **proved** themselves to end the misconceptions. This is just an idea for how you can further apply your point to society.

In your thesis you say “...causing a person to learn something about themselves and society as a whole.” You haven’t really talked about this so far in your paper, and you are almost at 1000 words haha. It may be a bit too much of a direction change now, and you will have to write a lot. Im not sure of your plans, but you could take this out if you want to, and just finish up your paper with a few more examples and then teach others how they can deal with stereotypes in their own lives by proving themselves.

Good luck,

Ravi