

BLUE Response Essays

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Jim Roth's Website

Working with Collier's "*Anxiety: Challenge by Another Name*"

How to Incorporate Another Author's Words and Ideas into Your Essay

Below is the beginning of my summary-and-response essay that responds to Collier's essay, *Anxiety: Challenge By Another Name*. Note how my essay's paragraphs #2 and #3 blend Collier's words and then continue with my response. (My paragraphs are incomplete but this example shows the process.)

My Essay

¶ thesis James Lincoln Collier in his essay "Anxiety: Challenge by Another Name" shares his experiences with anxiety from his college years through his present life. According to Collier, these experiences have taught him three valuable rules about anxiety and its potential either to do us harm or good. I, too, have witnessed or survived many anxious times and can easily apply Collier's three rules to my own experience.

¶two His first rule regarding anxiety is "do what makes you anxious, don't do what makes you depressed" (Collier 35). He discovered this rule as a result of his turning down a college friend's invitation to visit a ranch in Argentina during a summer vacation. I discovered this rule in much the same way. When I was a child, my aunt offered to take my brother and me on a trip to continue paragraph

¶three Teaching his son to swim led Collier to his second rule about anxiety, "You'll never eliminate anxiety by avoiding things that caused it" (36). According to Collier, his son was very anxious about the water when first learning to swim. However, instead of avoiding what made him anxious, he practiced swimming every day. In time, his son's anxiety about water was reduced and eventually extinguished through repetition and practice, through facing his fears. My colleague at work had a similar experience. She entered college wanting to become an insect biologist. Unfortunately, she was terrified of spiders. Instead of avoiding this fear, she applied for a work-study job in the arachnid lab. The first few weeks tending to the spiders in the lab were terrifying. But as time went on, she developed a greater level of comfort with them. Eventually she was able to. continue paragraph

¶four third rule from Collier's essay plus application

¶conclusion

If you're asked to write a summary in English 101 and beyond, here's an example of one:

A sample summary of Collier's essay:

In the essay "Anxiety: Challenge by Another Name," the author James Lincoln Collier shares his discoveries concerning anxiety. Collier's point is that though many of us see anxiety as a negative thing, anxiety can all be a great motivator and teacher. Collier begins by defining anxiety by using examples from his own experience. From these experiences, Collier developed three observations regarding anxiety: the first is that we

should do what makes us anxious and avoid what makes us depressed. The second is that to be successful and avoid depression, we have to be willing to endure a certain amount of worry and concern. The third is that, rather than avoid those experiences that make us anxious, we should rather experience them until the anxiety they produce is reduced or eliminated.

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"Technological Self-Limitations" - a student summary-and-response essay to the professional essay "Society Is Dead: We Have Retreated into the iWorld." by Andrew Sullivan

Student's Essay Planning Sheet

Essay #3 Thesis Sentence: Despite the greater availability of information and communication, many people are becoming isolated from the world by using technology to create the world they want to live in.

Topic (Point) of First Body Paragraph: People listen to the music they like and find ways not to hear the kinds they don't.

Topic (Point) of Second Body Paragraph: In public people spend time on their phones instead of interacting with those around them.

Topic (Point) of Third Body Paragraph: People watch media they already think appeals to their interests instead of finding out if new things will.

Topic (Point) of Fourth Body Paragraph: People access information pertaining to their existing interests rather than exposing themselves to a broader range.

Topic (Point) of Conclusion: Our focus has become about ourselves and what we like more than ever before, and technology permits us to create a barrier between us and the parts of the world we don't like.

Student Essay

Technological Self-Limitations

In his essay "Society Is Dead: We Have Retreated into the iWorld," Andrew Sullivan observes how people have allowed their iPhones and other technology to separate themselves from the world around them. He notes that "Technology has given us a universe entirely for ourselves," (378) which I cannot deny is becoming more accurate as time goes by. I see it in myself and in those around me. We are living in the greatest technological age that has ever been. Knowledge about almost any subject or culture is freely accessible to us. Yet despite the greater availability of information and communication, many people are becoming isolated from

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the world by using that technology to create the world they want to live in.

Sullivan's primary example is music, iPhones in particular. Music storage devices such as iPods or other MP3 players have permitted people to bring their entire music collection with them anywhere they go. Many of them then use these devices to listen to what they want to hear, and ignore that which they don't care to hear. These people are each "in his or her own musical world" and "almost oblivious to the world around them" (377). It becomes so easy to tune everything out, and they can so often feel justified in doing it. They know what they like and often are uninterested in hearing anything else. But this causes them to be limited to their past experiences rather than being exposed to something new. Rather than having to evaluate whether something or someone is worth listening to, they skip the question entirely and move on with that which has already been established in their minds.

In public many people spend time on their phones instead of interacting with those around them. I see this tendency in my own day to day life. Away from the computer, but out in the world, I can remove the need to pay any attention to anyone else by texting friends, or calling, or browsing the internet from my phone. Yet I irritated myself when I realized I was frequently texting other friends or using my phone to distract me even while hanging out with people I enjoy spending time with. Yet when I'm out walking in a public area I can look around me at almost any time and see a large number of people doing the same. The ones who seem happier are the ones who are talking to each other and looking at the world around them. I feel much the same; when I take a walk I feel more joy looking at the beauty around me than from

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looking at my Android. Yet that draw remains, that temptation to just stare at this tiny screen instead of the world I'm in.

Another cause of isolation today is the way people watch television or movies. Today people tend to watch media they already think appeals to their interests instead of finding out if new things do too. With the availability of Netflix and DVRs and the internet, each allowing people to watch things they want to see when they want to see them, many rarely bother watching anything they didn't already intend to. Again I see this tendency in myself. I hold a lot of nostalgia for movies and shows I have seen in the past, and I will put forth effort to see them again. If I go to watch a new movie or show, it usually has to be one that I already know covers subject matter I like. Otherwise I have to obtain reassurance from friends or from advertising that it at least covers subject matter similar to my interests. Just today a friend showed me a movie I had never heard of before. It was about a Chinese dancer who came to America out of Communist China. It turned out to be one of the best films I have ever seen. Yet I never would have watched this movie if I followed my own criteria and kept myself in this media bubble I have created.

Likewise people access information pertaining to their existing interests rather than exposing themselves to a broader range. Sales of newspapers and magazines are declining by the day due to people reading information more frequently online. People find stories and send them to their friends who they think will enjoy them, and many people rely on those friends to give them that information. If you read a newspaper or magazine you are exposed to a wide variety of articles, which you have to make an intentional choice to skip. But by being linked directly to articles online or searching for them, people eliminate the need to make that choice. Sources like

Wikipedia give us a wealth of information on almost any topic in the world, and yet many tend to restrict their reading to things they were already thinking about. This ability to search specifically and see only what they wanted to see instead of having to sift through other things in the process keeps their experiences limited.

In essence it's about selfishness. For many of us our focus has become about ourselves and what we like more than ever before, and technology permits us to create a barrier between us and the parts of the world we don't like. But if we are never exposed to new ideas, never take part in new experiences and the unknown, we place ourselves in a box and miss out on what the world has for us. I think we all could do with a little less technological entertainment. I'm going to start doing my best to broaden my experiences. If we unplug and stop our self-isolation we may find we become "just a little bit connected again and a little more aware" (Sullivan 379).

Works Cited

Sullivan, Andrew. "Society Is Dead: We Have Retreated into the iWorld." *Viewpoints*. Ed. W.

Royce Adams, 7th ed. Boston, Wadsworth, 2010. (377-79).