

The High School to College Transition - From a Student's Perspective

In an interview for this project, sophomore Kendra Jones spoke about the challenges she faced as a writer when she first entered college.

Transcript

"... in high school my writing assignments were pretty basic. I mean the teachers pretty much spelled it out for us. We would read a book, a novel, a play, or a poem and then they'd say, 'Write about these aspects or compare these two novels.' It was, it was almost the same thing every single time.

"In my honors [English] classes we didn't do very hard assignments. They pretty much walked us through it. 'We want your introduction to be this.' 'We want you to include this in the body.' 'We want you to do this for your conclusion.' It didn't take a whole lot of brain power. I mean anybody could do it. And it wasn't very hard to get into the honors classes to begin with.

"When I graduated high school, I was very worried about coming into college and writing. I had heard horror stories from people, like they were straight A students and now they are getting Ds on all their papers. So I was very nervous.

"I took English 101 and English 102, very basic, nothing too hard. They were very different because unlike college, where people walked you through... I mean unlike high school where the teachers walked you through it, in college they say 'Okay, I want you to read this novel and compare it to the novel we read a week ago.' ... They wouldn't really...they didn't tell you: 'We want you to write about this.' We had a little more creative control about it.

"My freshman year we did a lot of assignments about current events in English 101. We took issues that were going on around the world and we got to write about them and compare them to things we were reading in class. We read a lot of essays in class by different authors. Not so much novels, so that was pretty interesting. In English 102 it was a little more structured, so we read what was on the curriculum list to read. I wouldn't say that the assignments were all that interesting. We compared some poems, we talked about protagonists...

"In college my professors expected us to already have our style of writing determined. Just...They wanted the facts. They wanted us to go into more detail, which was different because in high school they pretty much tell you just what they want, they don't want a whole lot of detail, they don't want you to go off on tangents. In college, your professors are looking for more than just the text.

"If I could have changed one thing, [I] would have had my teachers help me with my style of writing and give me a little more freedom with my writing. Instead of saying write about how/what Oedipus's problems were, I mean, something more along the lines of creativity. Something that I could have really worked on and been interested in and not just the same old same old. Because every single writing assignment was pretty much the same as the last. Because in college they don't want that, they don't want everything to be the same. They want things to be different, and just have a unique style all your own."