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Reflective Essay

My final project for SOC 349: Asian American and Pacific Islander Communities was a creative capstone of poems about the mental health stigmatization in Asian American communities. This course followed the history of different Asian American groups and their different journeys into the United States. The course also mentioned themes that many Asian ethnic groups can relate to, one of them being the issue of mental health stigmatization. This topic stood out to me the most in this class as I felt I could relate to it in my own experiences as an Asian American. I chose to make my final project about mental health stigmatization in Asian American communities. This was a creative project that involved the poems, "Dad", "War Cry", and "Recycling Day". Through my research, I was able to creative 3 poems that encapsulated the different experiences and feelings that come from mental health stigmatization. I used several sources such as research studies from the library reserves, the class textbook, and personal experiences to create the most representative body of work.

My goal was to create a capstone of poems that many could relate to. Although I had strong experiences in this, I did not want to make it all about me. The library reserves are a useful tool that became the backbone of most of my research. I was able to find different studies that followed issues in mental health in different countries, age groups, genders, etc. I found this the most helpful because it provided a greater outlook on this issue. I was given more perspective and provided real and relevant results on the issue and how people are affected by it. Additionally, I found access to research articles that would be hard to find otherwise. Research from China and Japan were especially interesting to read about because it included results from across the world. This felt especially important to include in my project because it would justify how experiences in mental health are similar despite living in different countries.

Combining real world research with my own experiences has allowed me to create the best version of my capstone. I feel that it is important in my creative work to consider living in other people's shoes. I find that it can be grounding to share work that does not just involve yourself, but can give a voice to others as well. The library reserves allowed me to develop that greater perspective to create my best work that represents the experiences of many. Also, the ease and accessibility of the library reserves contributed to my motivation to continue learning about the topic. The ability to refine my search for articles led me to research that I ended up finding useful for my project. I used "OneSearch" to help me input keywords and find the information I needed. I felt especially interested in the research articles that looked at the issue in a unique way and provided different insight. Because of the library reserves, I was able to easily find this information and use it as a significant part of my capstone.

Scholarly research is an important part of not just academic work, but personal and creative work as well. I believe that putting in extra thought into projects will help produce the best outcome. In my case, I found that by putting in the time and effort to research this issue, I was able to develop a better understanding of it. Additionally, I felt more satisfied with my poems knowing that they come from the experiences of many, and not just myself. After completing my capstone project, I felt inspired to continue writing and sharing works like these with others. Research is a universal tool that allows anyone to expand their horizons of understanding and create more meaningful bodies of work.

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