FRESHMAN EXPOSITORY PARAGRAPH SAMPLE

The Road to Experience

(Transition + TS) In Eugenia Collier's short story "Marigolds," Lizabeth gains a new awareness of compassion. (Trans. + MS 1) Early in the story, Lizabeth is a self-centered child. (C+Q) When she childishly taunts Miss Lottie during an attack on the old lady's beautiful marigolds, she confesses, "I lost my head entirely" (7). (Analysis) As a child, Lizabeth does not think of the consequences of her actions or the effect of her outburst on Miss Lottie. Instead, she acts on impulse, as one without experience is apt to do. Because Lizabeth has no experience of cruelty and believes selfishness is the only form of contentment, she has no compassion. Hence, Lizabeth's taunting of Miss Lottie reveals her lack of compassion. (Trans. + MS 2) Suddenly, however, she understands the extent of the damage she has done. (C+Q) In Lizabeth's eyes, Miss Lottie transforms from a witch to a "broken old woman" who had "dared to create beauty" in her poverty-stricken surroundings (9). (Analysis) After Lizabeth returns to completely demolish the marigolds, she sees Miss Lottie in this new light. For the first time Lizabeth feels shame and remorse for her actions. (Trans. + MS 3) Finally, Lizabeth feels for someone else for the first time. (C+Q) When she exchanges her ignorance for compassion, she can only stand and face Miss Lottie and look "beyond myself and into the depths of another human being (11). (Analysis) Due to the haggard look on Miss Lottie's face, Lizabeth realizes that another human being suffers, that all people suffer. From this new insight, she gains empathy. (Trans. + CS) In conclusion, Lizabeth illustrates one of life's greatest gains and losses as she moves from childhood innocence to adult reality.