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English 110C

Professor Backes

4/25/2020

Reflection Essay

As a growing writer, I have always found it difficult to start off with some type of graphic organizer because I felt as if they were useless and a waste of time. I prefer to start typing and then at the end, I will edit what needs to be fixed for clarity, however, during this semester of English 110C, I came to the realization that taking the necessary time to look over the provided graphic organizers would affect my entire paper. Ultimately, as a writer, I made the necessary adjustments to fix specific areas that overall affected my entire writing capabilities for the better and I will continue to use these methods as I grow and develop. Some of my strengths include being able to write with details and specifics to draw the reader in, I tend to write a lot so that none of my thoughts are allowed to escape and I also have some weakness, some including making grammatical errors, not being able to find the right words, and also making my sentences too long. These are just a few strengths and weaknesses that as a writer I plan to improve every time I write.

 Graphic Organizers are provided to help simplify your information or thoughts and create a framework to help organize the information. This writing tool was something I have always skipped over when writing and it has become a weakness for me. Typically, I start the paper off by just throwing down any thoughts that come to mind and hope for the best basically, then I will go back to edit. I realized how long it has taken me to just finish the paper alone and then have to go back and change things around when initially I could have used the graphic organizers provided for any writing assignments. I have learned to start with a good topic, break it down into subtopics, and from there narrow it down to the specifics in a neat organized way.

 As I write, I tend to make grammatical errors because I am always typing faster than I can think and usually I will have many grammatical errors as well as run on sentences. These errors occur naturally and that is the reason for proof reading, however, some of the time, I am paying more attention to either completing the assignment and making sure it makes sense, rather than paying attention to the grammar and how I am structuring my sentences. When I am writing, another weakness of mine is when I am unable to explain what I mean so the sentence will end up being too long and unclear. I have started to write out my thoughts first, proofread, and find out ways to make the sentence detailed, clear, and straight to the point. Doing this has not only improved my sentences, but it began to help me think of how to structure my words prior to writing.

 When it comes to my strengths, I feel as if I am detailed and creative when I write. Whether I am writing about a political issue or a creative writing portion, I like to visualize what I am thinking, and I feel like that has helped my writing a ton. Being a visual writer allows the reader to be drawn into the writer's thinking and visualize it for themselves and that’s the goal when it comes to writing. Writing a lot has helped me to get all of my thoughts out on paper, help me realize what needs to be added or withdrawn, and finally it helps to meet any possible word count that is assigned. Writing more than needed is also a benefit because then all I have to do is go back and edit.

In the IMRAD paper, there were various weaknesses as well as strengths and although this was the first writing assignment assigned, I was very proud of this particular paper. This paper required extensive research because it was based on a word that many consider to be “taboo” and I decided to choose the word “cunt”. I took the time to go to the library and look at different resources that could potentially aid me in my research and books were my primary resource. The books used were very helpful in gaining insight on this particular word and helped to drive my paper to be informative as well as an interesting read. This paper could have been boring and would not have drawn the reader's attention, but I decided to ensure that would not be the case by digging up enough information from online sources that would make the reader understand my viewpoint as well as others perspectives. This paper helped me to become a stronger writer in the creative aspect and it was difficult at first because it was based off of a specific word.

 There are some places I could have improved in would be staying on the main topic and not the origin of the word. When I write, I enjoy being able to free write and express all of my thoughts, however, this writing piece required a specific format and I had to ensure I stayed on top of that. Staying on topic is truly one of my weaknesses that I am working to improve all the time because it is the most important. Focusing on the history of the word I chose was not the main objective, and I found it very difficult to not discuss it as much as I wished, however, after receiving feedback and editing the paper, I realized that it was not that difficult in the end. Staying on the main topic and not drifting off to things that are irrelevant to the subject will be my primary focus when it comes to writing because it has a big impact.

 For the Rhetorical analysis paper, I struggled a bit with understanding the author's intent and his writing language. The goal of this paper was to develop critical language awareness and by doing so, it was important to describe and explain the subtle bias that is involved in the authors writing. I had to make sure I understood critical discourse analysis because it had to be included in the paper with a detailed explanation and I feel as if I did a good job on that. One of my weaknesses included being able to identify the rhetorical strategies that the author used in his writing because I felt as if there was not just one strategy used. I wanted to make sure I made sense when discussing the rhetorical strategy as well stay relevant to the subject. I focused on providing evidence to back up my statements and I felt as if I was extraordinarily strong in this. By providing details and evidence, I was able to make sure that there was credibility and what I was stating was valid enough to include.

The infographic paper was the final writing piece assigned and personally, this was the hardest assignment for me because it was more about creating something visual rather than just writing about it. I chose to use my Rhetorical Analysis paper to create the infographic, but it was hard to find the most important things that would help the reader understand what the article was about. I struggled with being able to structure it in a way that would make sense to others viewing it instead of just me as the writer. The infographic did not allow me to say all that I wanted to say because there was a specific guideline that I had to follow and there were some parts where I began to ramble on and not focus on the objective. However, I was very strong in being clear in the infographic visual representation so that the viewer could understand where my intentions were. I included certain pieces such as a political cartoon to help the reader know that this was about a political issue and not just any random topic which helped its relevance towards the topic. For the explanation essay, I was descriptive and detailed to help the viewer understand the infographic visual better such as going into depth about the colors used, the logos used, and any other visual elements involved.

 Finally, the In Class Expressive essays such as the Transitions writing practice, “The Room I’m In” writing practice, and even the “My feelings about Online Classes” practice and transition practice, were very useful essays that helped me grow as a writer. I struggle with making sure my writing flows well together and it is not confusing, and the transition writing practices helped to make sure it flowed well together and made sense. Personally, I enjoy “The Room I’m In” writing practice was my favorite because it forced me to get out of my comfort zone and look at what was in front of me and be as descriptive as possible in my writing. Overall, these writing practices helped increase my abilities to make sure writing was detailed and expressive and will help my future papers.

 In conclusion, my writing skills have developed during this semester, whether it was from the various writing assignments or the little practices such as transitions or learning how to cite correctly. This semester, I have learned that it is not about the content when it comes to writing, instead it is the way that you as the writer decide to tell it and how you can affect the person reading it. In the future, I believe that my writing will grow, and I will be more descriptive and expressive in my writing. Overall, I was overly impressed with the progress that I made this semester and cannot wait to see the future improvements in my writing for next semester.