Dagmawi Dessalegn

                         Essay number two

Language in itself, is a very complex process. It has affected me in several ways throughout my career at ODU. I am an engineering student so I am required to take numerous notes. English is my second language, and although I can hear and understand many phrases, I sometimes struggle to produce them. Using Note taking strategies, I can gather thoughts that may be scattered due to this barrier, the structure in my writing will also increase due to practice, and the notes will hopefully give more clarity towards my courses.

From the very first day I struggled with cultural phrases. These phrases are just simple everyday words, but always delayed the task at hand. During my freshman year, I actually found writing an outline of these questions helped gather my thoughts. Once I would be around my American friends I would ask, “what does this mean?”, or, “How do you say this?” By organizing these questions I was able to properly use note-taking strategies and increase my language skills.

I found that my writing ability was also enhanced due to note-taking. Last year during my entry courses, I was asked to write papers and struggled creating main ideas.  I would use a charting method to help gather my main ideas. I am a visual learner so this technique was very helpful. One of my classes asked me to write a paper based on previous experiences. I jotted down my main experiences and linked like moments between all of the experiences together. This was due to following this particular model of note taking. Any sub details of my experiences were listed under my subheadings. This practice helped my language development, as it became easier for me to write.

While sitting and listening during my engineering courses this year, I still experienced trouble. Learning academic terminology associated to my major, was another challenge I needed to overcome. Learning an entirely new topic while struggling with language were the two tasks at hand. I used the Cornell method of note taking for this situation. All of my main points, details and summary notes were located in the same area. This strategy helped prepare me for exams, and group projects. I also wanted to be well informed when helping my classmates. By highlighting the major concepts I can memorize my information with less difficulty.

Note taking strategies have helped me immensely as my career as a student and as a young adult in America. Creating an outline helped me adjust to the cultural language used at my college. By listing different phrases, I was able to remember and understand them over time. By following a charting model so that I could increase my writing skills. It also gave me a visual aid so I could link all of my listed information. This strategy helped to develop my language development because of main ideas being written. By writing all of my main ideas and supporting notes, I was able to learn more terms in my major. All of these strategies have helped build a structure I will continue to use for my career and life.