

Stephen Borst

Professor S. Tooley

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English 211C

Reflective Essay

English class this semester served to further strengthen my writing skills. Though many of the concepts I learned in high school and built upon last semester, this class encouraged me to sharpen my insights and my ability to articulate them in a mature fashion. Some of my strengths as a writer include logical sequencing, animated writing, evocative descriptions, extensive vocabulary, and knowledge of formats. I also have writing weaknesses, some of which have improved during my two semesters at ODU. These weaknesses include staying on topic, simple grammatical errors and punctuation issues. I have improved my segues between topics, but still find myself being too wordy and often repeating an idea, albeit with different descriptors. I definitely write using stream of consciousness, even using voice to text to start my first draft. This process is not without flaws. Besides the obvious misunderstanding of my words, I also find that it produces more grammatical errors and therefore more edits to make in the paper – especially punctuation. This can lead to a long, arduous editing process. However, over this semester, my editing skills have improved such that I can get through the process quicker than previously. One area that has improved this semester is my ability to catch and correct errors quicker, sometimes during the first draft. Even using voice to text, I am able to hear the errors more easily now and correct them as I go along. Additionally, my grasp of rhetorical devices has improved immensely. I am able to identify and utilize pathos, logos and ethos more readily

in my reading as well as my writing. Reconstructing my Rhetorical Analysis essay was a great way to help solidify my understanding and application of these devices in making a strong argument. Working on my final paper, finding and analyzing proper resources was important to my drafting of the paper. And identifying appropriate quotes to bolster my theories strengthened my arguments. I will still have to work on my focus within my writing, and editing will be a lifelong chore, but composing my thoughts and committing them to the written word is much more fluid than in the past. There were not a lot of assignments for this class, which enabled me to focus on the quality of the work I submitted. I realize that as my college career continues, there will be many more writing assignments and I feel very prepared after taking this class.