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ENGL 150-08

Professor Green

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Final Reflective Argument

English 150 is a course designed to introduce freshmen to the world of college writing and aide them to develop important writing skills that they will use throughout their college career and beyond. I, personally, have noticed how much I have developed as a writer over this past semester. It has been a surprise to me to see how much growth occurred in my own writing throughout such a short period of time. The course has a set of five outcomes or goals that students are to achieve by the end of the semester. Over the semester in English 150, I accomplished 4 out of 5 course outcomes and will continue to work on accomplishing the other in the future.

The first goal of English 150 is that students will understand the differences that audience, purpose, and context produce for researched academic writing. In the Literacy Narrative paper, I stated, “Parents with young children need to take time to read with their children, get a library card, and encourage writing in order to learn these important skills and be more literate” (Anderson, 2015, p. 1). This sentence clearly states an audience and the purpose of the paper. This allows readers to know what the paper they are about to read will be about, and who the paper is directed to. Also, in the Investigating a Writing Rule paper, I said, “The conventional stages of the writing process should be a fluid rule that allows students to break it at any time during the writing process in order to increase efficiency and decrease the chances of anxiety and writer’s block” (Anderson, 2015, p. 2). This sentence clearly states what the purpose of the paper is: that students should be allowed to break the flow of the stages of the writing process. It also explains why so readers will understand what the context of the paper will consist of. Audience, purpose, and context help readers’ understanding of an essay and allows them to follow along better. I have accomplished this course outcome by demonstrating my use of audience, purpose, and context in my essays.

The second course outcome is that students will identify and integrate primary and/or secondary source materials for use in a specific writing task. This consists of utilizing signal phrases, in-text citations, and sentences of explanation. I believe I have not yet accomplished this course outcome however I will continue working on accomplishing it and I will master it in the near future. In the Investigating a Writing Rule paper, I integrated secondary source material, an article, into my essay. I wrote, “According to Ellis (1994), ‘anxiety is an emotional state that emerges according to the powerlessness felt while preparing for a recognized danger’ (as cited in Bayat, 2014, p. 1135). This powerlessness felt due to anxiety can lead to students feeling defeated and feel stuck in their writing” (Anderson, 2015, p. 3). As shown, I correctly integrated source material into my essay in order to make my argument stronger. On the contrary, in the Analysis of University Writing paper, I incorporated primary source material, an interview, into my paper. I stated, “As our education professor, John Doe, said, ‘[…] you have the traditional papers in which you have to do some analyzing but then you also have to do reflection papers. You have to do curriculum development papers, lesson plans, behavior management plans, all those kinds of documents’ (personal communication, November 12, 2015). When university students become upperclassmen, they are enrolled in more classes that cater towards the teaching profession” (Anderson, 2015, p. 4). In this paper, I correctly used a signal phrase and in-text citation however my sentence of explanation is lacking. I am very close to accomplishing this course outcome and in the near future I am sure that I will achieve it.

Next, students will produce writing that adheres to citation guidelines fitting specific disciplines. As an education major, the papers that I will write must be in APA format. Throughout the course of English 150, I continuously wrote papers according to APA guidelines in order to become more comfortable with it for the future when I will be writing papers for my education classes. In the Analysis of University writing, I correctly cited material in my text according to APA guidelines. I said, “In one general education chemistry class, ‘students were randomly assigned to either write reflectively in a ‘learning journal’ or to produce a scientific report every week during the last 5 weeks of the course’ (Dianovsky, 2012, p. 546)” (Anderson, 2015, p. 3). APA citations must have the last name of the author, the year it was produced, and the page number where it was found. MLA format does not require “p.” in front of the page number however APA citation guidelines do. I also utilized references pages at the end of my paper that included the bibliographies of all the sources I used. I have well accomplished this course outcome.

The fourth course outcome states that students will employ academic writing strategies such as planning, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading. In the past, I was never one to plan out papers. I would just sit down and begin writing whatever came to mind. I now plan out my papers as it is helpful to write all of my thoughts down in an organized manner first before writing. In English 150, we composed many drafts for our papers and each time, we revised and edited these drafts in order to improve our papers and make them the best they could be. In the Investigating a Writing Rule paper, we composed several drafts. In my first draft, I said, “The stages of the writing process are beneficial and it is a rule that should be kept the way it is” (Anderson, 2015, p. 2). I then went on discussing how students should have the freedom to skip around between the stages freely and that the writing process can cause students anxiety and writers block if they are forced to follow it in a set order. The paper contradicted what I first said in the beginning of the paper. After a few drafts and thorough revision, I reworded my thesis to fit my paper better and make my essay more consistent. In my final draft, I specified that students should have the freedom to skip stages, go back to previous stages, and partake in different stages at the same time (Anderson, 2015, p. 3). Revision helped my paper become more concise and consistent and readers had a better understanding of my main point. I have accomplished this fourth outcome of English 150.

The final course outcome is that students will identify language features and genre conventions present in academic writing. This outcome deals with different styles of papers and students should be able to identify different styles that are associated with different types of writing. For example, our Analysis of University Writing was a research paper in which we proposed a research question and then conducted research to find an answer. This paper followed an IMRAD structure. We had an introduction, a methods section, a results section, and analysis and discussion sections. I utilized subtitles which are common in APA format to clarify each section of the paper and display the IMRAD structure. Similarly, our Literacy Narrative paper was a persuasive essay where we had to identify an audience and write to that audience and make suggestions to try to persuade them to do something. I wrote to parents of young children and suggested that they read to their children and perhaps get a library card if they have financial problems and cannot afford to buy books for their kids. I persuaded an audience, parents with young children, to do something, read to their children and more, in this paper. This final outcome is the fourth outcome that I have accomplished out of the previous five.

In English 150, I learned a great deal about writing, such as audience, source materials, citation guidelines, the writing process, and language features. Going into future courses here at Longwood, I will continue to utilize what I have accomplished in this course. I will also continue to work on accomplishing the course outcome which I do not feel I have yet accomplished. As a lifelong learner, I will continue to better develop my writing skills and learn more and more about how to strengthen my writing.