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English 21003

Professor Boisvere

Self-Assessment Essay

Throughout the Fall 2020 semester we have completed a variety of assignments in this class. We began the semester with completing the Technical Description followed by the Scientific Controversy paper and then finished with the Researched Essay. We finalize this semester with the completion of this essay which will demonstrate the growth we have personally felt throughout the course and the assignments assigned. The assignments were not restricted to those previously mentioned. In addition, we have engaged in discussion boards and engaged with our peers in order to create a thread of ideas and opinions in regards to a discussion of a certain topic. In this essay I will discuss the growth I have noticed in my analytical and writing skills through the pace of this course.

Our first assignment was to write the Technical Description. It was my first time writing anything of the sort and although it was not as easily understood on my part when compared to typical essay assignments it was the one which I enjoyed the most writing. In this paper we had to find a topic in which we could thoroughly discuss their inner machinery and a part of their history whether that be an object, a life cycle or a surgical procedure. I chose to write about cassette tapes, although this topic was not something one would first think of writing about in a science writing class I took the opportunity to write this paper as a way to satisfy my fascination with this object. I can remember my father having cassette tapes since I was very little and I kept thinking on how such a thing could produce sound. As I went researching the history of this

object and how sounds were captured and emitted I took it upon myself to draft the way in which the essay would be structured and which points would be discussed in each section. To achieve this I first read multiple sources in which the cassette tape was described and made bullet points to remind myself on what I wanted to discuss in the introduction, the first body paragraph and so on. This new way of drafting, I found has been the most effective way for me to be able to formulate and expand on each and every part of what I wanted to discuss in the paper. I followed by revising the final product and questioning where I could improve.

The next assignment was the Scientific Controversy Paper. This paper was the one in which I found myself growing the most. This assignment required us to find multiple sources in regards to an ongoing scientific debate. Although not being a totally new way of writing as most of the paper resembled an argumentative essay in the fact that contradicting points of view had to be discussed. The most interesting and simultaneously the most difficult part of this assignment was finding ways to discuss and refute points of view using science. My paper in specific was based on the ongoing dispute between pro-life and pro-choice people in regards to abortion. It is easy to formulate an opinion when not all the facts have been accounted for and the requirement of this paper being so heavily science based allowed me to find ways in which both points of view might be correct or incorrect. Due to the large weight of science in this paper, I began to find sources and read through them earlier on. I used the “drafting” method I previously stated which consisted of bullet points and a brief description of what I was expecting myself to write in certain areas. This particular essay allowed me growth in multiple areas such as drafting, reviewing, expressing other points of view that I would not necessarily support and allow me to grow on how to thoroughly and correctly support my stance throughout a paper.

In the majority of the assignments presented in this class I have found myself being increasingly more self-aware of what I would be providing and how I would be providing this information. The multiple types of sources analysed throughout the entirety of the course encouraged me to be more mindful and attentive as I read. The way of analysing and quoting multiple sources has shown to be an immense improvement from the beginning of the course to the end. Although not necessarily present in my submitted work, citing, paraphrasing and understanding certain information sources have proved to be a challenge for me. When I think back to the first paper I wrote in this class, the Technical Description, and compare it to the last one which was the Researched Essay I can confidently say that I have improved my approach to new sources as I begin to take notes on what I read to ensure that any ideas do not get past me.

Next, the final piece of writing was the Researched essay. This assignment was interesting as we were tasked to work with other people. At the beginning I was dreading the making of this essay as we would have to encounter different writing styles and different opinions on how to do certain things or how something should be structured or written. As the time came and I began to talk to my group mates and witnessed how a legitimate “research paper” might come to be with so many different authors contributing to one piece I have grown to respect publishing researchers much more. The experience was incredible. My group mates and I were able to seamlessly create the paper with no dispute and each contributed in a certain way. I have never been one to like group projects mainly because I find it hard to clearly project my ideas to others but during this project I feel like I grew in that part of myself, I was able to defend opinions, provide opinions and accommodate to what my group mates might believe was better.

This assignment was a great practice of using various information sources and databases that I might have not considered before the completion of this course. In addition the ability to engage in collaborative writing has been something that is rarely seen in English classes, at least personally, and am thankful to have been able to be exposed to this approach. As I previously mentioned, the making of the Researched Essay required the accommodation and negotiation of ideas and opinions in regards to how the final product should have been. Although not frequently present for my group it was interesting to see how a collaborative piece of writing might come to be.

In conclusion, throughout the semester I have seen myself utilize new methods in order to ensure better understanding and provide a product to the best of my ability. I have achieved the course objectives throughout the span of the semester in the making and editing of the writing pieces I have completed. Although I have completed this semester with my best efforts I can see myself improving my editing, drafting and source analysis in the future.