

Reflective Essay

Upon entering English 1020 I had high hopes that this class would allow me to grow as a writer and overall improve my english skills. This was my first class ever at a university and I was nervous to see how it would go. English in high school had always been one of my weaker subjects and I was ready to change this. Over the course of the semester we were given different projects, assignments, and activities that were meant to help us develop our writing and challenge us. Such things included making an infographic, learning how to research in the library, and learning how to write essays varying in genre. While doing all of these things we were to keep in mind the four learning outcomes of the course and how we were interacting with them. The learning outcomes were reading, writing, researching, and reflecting. It was our goal to recognize how each one could be applied to our projects and assignments. Once we recognized them, we were able to use them to advance our projects and assignments. This class has been surprisingly pleasant for me and made me realize the english is not so bad after all. In the end, I feel as though I met each of the four learning outcomes which in turn has allowed my writing and appreciation for writing to grow in this class.

The first essay we wrote was an analysis essay about an article of our choice. Reading, being the first learning outcome, was used in great detail to write a decent essay. I applied reading when I read the article my group chose, peer reviewing other students' essays and reading my own essay over to look for mistakes and areas of improvement. When I read the article my group chose for the first time I was slightly confused on the author's overall argument. Being confused led me to reread the article 3 or 4 times to be sure I fully grasped every important detail I needed to produce an analysis essay. The second learning outcome is writing, which could be considered the most important because it is the part that's being graded. Writing

this analysis essay involved learning how to write different genres and how to present knowledge on different types of arguments. I also used writing when I wrote my rough draft, which was then peer reviewed. I used the comments written by other students to edit my rough draft into a final copy that was almost error free. With this being the first essay I wrote in college I made sure to edit everything and constantly look it over. The next learning outcome was researching, and was not used as much in this essay as other ones. I only researched words that I did not understand and points the author made in her article that I wanted more background on. The last learning outcome I met was reflecting. I first used reflection when I read the comments my peers wrote about my essay. I used their feedback to reflect on what I needed to fix within my own essay and possibly what to look for in other students' essays when peer reviewing. Reflection was also used when I got my grade back and our teacher left us comments on things we did well and things we could have fixed. In turn I used these comments to improve essay following the analysis essay. Overall I met each learning outcome in the analysis essay, but knew I could go more in depth with them on the next essays.

Upon writing the research methodology paper I was able to explore and apply all four of the learning outcomes once again. The first learning outcome was reading, which I believe was important to engage with and is necessary to write a good research methodology paper. I used reading when I read the articles I chose to pull important information from. I made sure to read each article multiple times to ensure that I understood what the author was saying and could decide what the most important pieces were to use in my research methodology paper. Also, when I was reading these articles I circled key words and wrote notes in the margins that way I could easily find what I wanted to incorporate into my paper. The second learning outcome is writing, which includes writing the paper itself and other notes. I first wrote a rough draft, which

was originally choppy and included all my ideas thrown together. As we peer reviewed and I had my teacher read it over, my paper developed into a well written final draft. When writing this paper I used a new genre of writing; this genre makes use of first person. Using the words "I" or "me" was difficult to adjust to, but as I practiced it began to get easier. Another use of writing within this paper was knowing how to cite things correctly. Personally, I had minimal skills in citing correctly, but this paper helped me to better understand how it works. The third learning outcome I met was researching. With the name of this paper being "research methodology" it was assumed there would be researching involved. The first step of research for this paper was learning skills researching with the help of our librarian. I researched using the Wayne State libraries website, which made researching much easier and more efficient. It allowed me to type in keywords in different websites, this helped to narrow down articles based on exactly the words or phrases I typed in. I also had to do some research on how to correctly cite things as I did not completely understand how it worked. The last learning outcome I demonstrated knowledge on is reflecting. I reflected on not only my own paper but also my fellow students' papers through peer review. This allowed me to reflect on their paper, which in turn then gave me more ideas on things to do and not to do in my own paper. Reflecting is an important learning outcome because it gives you a chance to note your errors and correct them. In the end I believe I met each learning outcome when writing the research methodology paper.

My second to last essay written in this class was a research paper about vaccinations. I used the first learning outcome reading a lot in this essay. I read between 12-15 articles looking for useful information to cite in my essay. Skimming was a skill I learned how to master in this essay. I would first skim each article looking for something relevant and then if I felt it was useful I would go back and reread it in detail, highlighting and writing side notes in the margins.

Reading in this case went hand in hand with the learning outcome researching. These articles that I read I had to find first or research. It was important to carry over the skill of using good research terms to find good articles which I learned when writing the research methodology paper. Each article I used I dissected by researching words I used and then researching information about that article to be sure it was accurate. I really mastered my researching skills by this essay. Another learning outcome I really improved upon was my writing. This essay was the longest, it had to be eight to ten pages in length and at first I thought this may be difficult. As I learned how to use more details and expand upon ideas throughout the semester it turned out that it was actually quite simple to get to eight pages. I used writing in this essay to write side notes on articles, a rough draft, comments on other students essay, and my final draft. It is evident that my writing improved as I use better grammar and more detailed examples. The last learning outcome I mastered by this essay was reflecting. Once again I reflected upon my own essay when reading other students' essays and also with feedback from my teacher. By this essay I really used my reflection to improve my essay.

By the end of english 1020 I feel more confident in being able to write essays. Engaging with all the learning outcomes is the key to a successful paper and can be carried on to other classes. I plan on continuing to improve my skills within each learning outcome to allow myself to grow even more in my writing. There is always room for improvement and keeping in mind reading, writing, researching, and reflecting can allow for these improvements in writing essays. Prior to this class I did not consciously think about the these learning outcomes. It is helpful because it allows you to go more in depth with reading, writing, researching, and reflecting. In general I have learned a great amount about writing and will continue to apply this knowledge in future classes.