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ENGL 101

Professor Wahl

Essay 4.3

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A Reflection of My English 101

As a bilingual student, I thought the ELAP program would be enough to start with my major. Later, I noticed that ENGL 101 is a pre-requisite for some of the classes like ENGL 102, BIOL 150, and CHEM 131. During this course, I have learned many grammar rules class that help improve my writing. Several outcomes were involved in the class. Two outcomes I met in Professor Wahl’s class are incorporating appropriate feedback from tutors and instructors when revising essays and integrating information into essays by quoting, paraphrasing, and/or summarizing, based on assigned readings, but one outcome that was difficult to meet is grammar and sentence structure.

One of the outcomes I have met in Professor Wahl’s class is incorporating appropriate feedback from tutors and instructors when revising essays and providing effective feedback. My first essay in ENGL 101 was about three significant educational experiences I had in my life. It was my first time writing a thousand-word essay. I was scared by the number of words, and I was asking myself what ideas I would put in each paragraph to reach the number of words requested. I decided to make an organized outline as I learned in my ELAI 990 class. An organized outline is the skeleton of an essay with the thesis statement, each topic sentence with its idea, and one or two examples. That blueprint helped me reach a thousand words requested, and I was so proud of myself. Unfortunately, Professor Wahl’s feedback and grade was not what I expected. I got a C on the first draft because of many grammar mistakes and some sentences structure problems. For instance, some of the feedback I received from Professor Wahl was “topic sentence needed that will repeat the main idea of the essay and introduce the topic of the paragraph,” “don't use "the" in the transition into the thesis and topic sentences / As a reader, I don't understand "feel invest myself" / verb tense = past / no colon,” “This is copied word for word from the internet with no citation; can't do that.” I incorporated, very carefully, all his feedback and submitted it again. One of the corrections I incorporated into my essay is to put a signal phrase in the first sentence of my introduction to correct the plagiarism alert. The sentence I wrote before Professor Wahl’s feedback was “An American polymath active writer, scientist, inventor, statesman, diplomat, publisher, and political philosopher, named Benjamin Franklin states “An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.” My new sentence was “Benjamin Franklin stated, “An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.” Another change I made was the transition of my thesis statement. After revising the sentence structure, the new thesis statement became “However, leaving my parents to study in the north of Benin after I earned my high school diploma, taking my first class in the U.S., and being in Professor Satrom’s class are some significant educational experiences I had in my life.” To make sure I was sure I was on the right path with my essay, I contacted a tutor from the Writing Center to help me review my thesis and paragraphs for clarity and organization. The experience was very helpful because the tutor helped me find some other mistakes while incorporating the feedback. When I received the revised version from my professor, I received a 90%, which is equivalent to an A.

Another outcome I have met in my ENGL 101 class is integrating information into essays by quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing, based on assigned readings. The second essay assigned to us was a compare/ contrast essay about two poems. Similar to the first essay, I was worried about my essay’s structure and development. The first attempt was not perfect, but it was better than the first attempts of essay 1. For example, one of the topic sentences of my second essay was, “One of the main differences between these two poems is the tone.” It was better than one of the topic sentences of my first essay. For example, I wrote, “After having my high school diploma, I was about to leave my family to continue my education in Public Health in the north of Benin, where the climate is so cold and dust.” Even though my second essay had some plagiarism issues, Professor Wahl did not find any plagiarism in this essay. Everything that I used from the poems was introduced by signal words or signal phrases like “states,” “he says,” or “according to.” For example, I wrote “in the poem “Quarantine,” Jackson states, “Jobs shutting down, we can’t even move around, this abandoned city seems deserted like a ghost town.” The details that I did not want to transcribe were summarized without changing the meaning of the sentence. In the illustration “Philogene ask for nature to protect them from the sadness that they are feeling.” Those little details helped me improve my work's structure and development even if there were still some major and minor grammar mistakes. One of the grammar mistakes in the second draft version of my essay was the lack of subject-verb agreement in my sentences. For example, in this sentence, “all the information spread about that “so-called airborne disease” are just a way to block her emancipation,” the word-form mistake “In Quarantine, Jackson uses rhyming words throughout the poem to emphasis on her mistrust.” The third draft of my essay was better than the first since I received a C grade then an A-.

However, the most difficult outcome I had to face during this semester is grammar and mechanics. The third essay we were assigned was the “Humanities Days” report. The structure and the development were pretty good, but I had some mistakes with capitalization, semicolons, and possessive adjectives. In fact, I wrote “*Sligo Journal Poetry Reading and Student Interpretation, Globalization what is it? Why does it matter? and developing human connection and resonance,*” and I got a comment “RFW 45.” Chapter 45 is about capitalization, according to the *Rule for Writers 45e*, only the first word of a quoted sentence should be capitalized. Then I corrected my sentence into “Sligo Journal Poetry Reading and Student Interpretation,” “Globalization what is it? Why does it matter?” and “Developing human connection and resonance.” Another mistake I committed in essay 3 was the incorrect use of semicolons. For example, I wrote, “Several topics such as: suicide, death, murder, violence were shared through the poems.” In professor Wahl’s feedback, he said, “not a situation for a colon RFW 35.” After checking chapter 35, the colon, the subchapters 35c helped me correct my grammar mistake. As stated by RFW 35c, “a colon must be preceded by a full independent clause. Therefore, avoid using it in between a verb and its object or complement, between a preposition and its object, after such as, including or for example.” Thus, I changed my sentence to “Several topics such as suicide, death, murder, violence were shared through the poems.” The third outcome I also met through that essay was improving on the possessive’s grammar rule. One of my sentences where I used the possessive rule was” That activity was followed by a PowerPoint presentation made by Prof. Taylor students’.” For that sentence, I got this comment “RFW 36 - possessive not done correctly.” A brief review of RFW 36, “Apostrophe” helped me recall that rule. A closer view of the sub-chapter 36a says “to show joint possession, use <<‘s>> with the last noun only; to show individual possession, make all nouns possessive.” After revising my sentence, the new version is “That activity was followed by a PowerPoint presentation created by Prof. Taylor’s students.”

On the first day of my ENGL 101 class, I was very confident. However, after the first assignment that feeling disappeared. Thankfully Professor Wahl was there to rekindle that confidence after each version of my essay and whenever I need his help. I would have not been able to meet all the different outcomes if he did not guide me through. With all the knowledge I earned in ENGL 101, I think I am ready now to face the rest of my classes.