Transmittal Letter and Final Evaluation

Dr. Boyd Petersen

English and Literature Department #153

Utah Valley University

800 West University Pkwy

Orem, UT 84058

December 17th, 2014

Dear Dr. Petersen,

I am submitting my research paper along with all of the other required documents in the service portfolio for English 2020 to meet the final class requirements.

Based on my self-evaluation, I believe that I deserve a grade of an A- for my efforts in English 2020. I feel as though my attitude towards the service learning and research aspects of this course has improved over the course of the semester. During the early stages of the semester I harbored feelings of resentment towards the required service project and the subject matter of my research paper. Even though I believe community service is important, and giving not only benefits the recipient, but the giver as well; I felt like spending twenty hours of my limited free time this semester to perform an activity that I believed would not improve my writing abilities was a waste of time. I’m glad I was wrong. I felt my service project choice greatly stifled my ability to find a conflict to write an argumentative research paper about, but in the end challenged me to think outside of the box.

Given the factors outlined in the syllabus and grade contract, I believe that I met all requirements and excelled in a few areas. Throughout the semester I never missed a class. I rarely arrived late to class, and when I did arrive late, it was not by more than a few minutes. Consistently, I came to class having read all of the required readings beforehand. I actively participated in class discussions and treated my peers with respect. During group activities I did my best to listen to my classmates contributions while offering my own suggestions. Upon submission of this service portfolio, I will have turned in every assignment this semester. The only assignment that I have not turned in thus far is the Service Interview paper, but I did turn in the memo on the assigned day indicating that I had not been able to conduct the interview due to communication difficulties with my service agency.

I feel as though my work ethic towards this course has accurately reflected my character. Even when I had a negative attitude towards the research paper and service learning aspects of this course, I gave an honest effort in completing my assignments and understanding the required readings. As my attitude towards the course content improved, I was able to put more passion behind the work involved, specifically with the research for the research paper and the revising step of my writings. The main take-away I got from this course in regards to my writing methodology involves how I approach composing and revising differently now. I have always struggled with being able to fill content for my previous English papers. The “How to Say Nothing in 500 Words” reading changed my mindset over the course of the semester on how to tackle this challenge. Approaching revision by editing sentences to be direct and concisely worded greatly improved my ability to write effectively. The in-class exercise we did towards the end of the semester that involved removing prepositional phrases and improving readability significantly enhanced my method of revision. I would highly suggest presenting that exercise in the beginning of the semester in future classes you teach. I feel it made a huge difference in my writing abilities and I wish I had been able to practice that technique throughout the whole semester. Fortunately, I am confident that I will have plenty of opportunities to practice this revision technique throughout the rest of my life.

My experience in English 2020 has refined my writing and research techniques. I invested a noteworthy portion of my time this semester developing my research abilities. I believe that my note taking strategies and organization abilities have improved from this semester compared to the prior semester. I think I spent more time revising papers in this class than in most of my previous English classes throughout my academic career.

Thank you for both a challenging and rewarding class.

Sincerely,  
Russell Andlauer