

Dear Professor Campbell,

It has been a pleasure being a part of your class this semester, and I truly believe that many of the skills that I have learned will be put to good use in the future. This was a first experience for me, as I had never taken an English/writing class that addressed issues outside of writing before this one. Being able to learn about writing techniques and about life skills in the same course has allowed me to be much more interested in the course, and thus, causing me to put forth more effort. I have enjoyed your class, and believe that you should continue to teach this way.

The various assignments that we have done this semester have been beneficial in many ways. As I mentioned before, my learning in this class was not restricted to learning how to write. For example, the blog assignments have helped me think with a more broad perspective. The videos about challenging education stereotypes and questioning its worth were especially thought-provoking, and provided a new insight on this issue. Other blog posts, such as "30 is not the new 20," "Creativity," and "Happiness" allowed me to have some thought on issues that I normally do not ponder. Being able to have free thought on these issues has been wonderful. Even further, the day book writings have enabled me to let these thoughts flow through my writing. I have learned how to effectively convey my thoughts in a concise manner through this daily practice. Along with that, the practice of peer-reviewing has been beneficial as well. It has allowed for not only you, as the professor, but also for our peers to help us see where we can improve. As I do not mind that help coming from the professor, I am sure that others value peer comments more, and this allows for people to truly review their work instead of getting defensive about comments made by a professor. Each of these assignments worked hand in hand to help me develop as a writer, thinker, and ultimately as a person.

My Extended Inquiry Project's first draft was my most challenging and important work. It challenged me as a writer the most, as it required a tremendous amount of focus and discipline to do it wholeheartedly. The lessons that it taught me will extend beyond only this class and writing in general. I would not say that I am a procrastinator, because I do not put things off until the absolute last moment. However, the hardest part of doing an assignment for me is getting it started. When I start, I tend to get a lot of work done. This project has been a major test for this attribute, and I can truly say that it helped me to discipline myself. It turned out quite wonderfully, as I went from not knowing what to write about on the day that it was assigned to writing eight pages on my first draft. When I started typing, the thoughts began to flow, and I was able to give a fairly thorough opinion of the issue.

Since elementary school, a major weakness that I have had when writing is the failure to give adequate details. I distinctly remember writing a paragraph in second or third grade, and getting feedback saying to give more details. I would say that still, it is still a weakness that I am working on. However, there is a fine line between not having enough details (thus not explaining the issue thoroughly) and too much detail (causing the reader to become bored because of rambling). This is a line that I must learn to master, as details are extremely important, not only in writing, but in my future field of cyber security. Failure to give enough detail in that field could risk valuable data, money, and in some cases, lives. I will continue to pursue mastery of this quality. A strength that I have in my writing is being able to identify various stances on different issues. In order for one to have a strong argument, he or she must identify the other viewpoint of the issue, so that he or she is not seen as overly biased. This being said, I have learned to start off an argument by stating the opposite stance, explaining it to a certain degree, and giving it credit where it is due. There is also a line between identifying the opposite stance

too little and too much, as explaining it too much may take away from your argument. I don't think that I have mastered it, as there is always room for improvement, but I count it as a strength in my writing.

The Student Learning Outcomes outlined at the beginning of the semester embody some of the areas that I have improved in over the course of the semester. Most importantly, I believe that the composing processes section was the most improved aspect of my writing. Essentially saying that there is no true formula to how one should write, I learned that I should not just look up sources that may be remotely related to my topic and just hope that they stick to my paper. However, I should do some research to outline the main points that I want to highlight, and as I am writing, research more to fill in details, strengthen my argument, and provide thought-provoking quotes or statistics. Learning to do this helped me immensely when composing my EIP, as I had my Word document open right next to the web browser. I will continue to do this, as it inspired me to dig deeper into my research and not simply settle for the first few articles that I found, only scraping the surface of the issue.

When thinking about my progression as a thinker/questioner/writer this semester, I would say that I progressed most as a thinker. I am still a fairly strong-willed person with pretty set values, but I have found myself thinking more broadly about some issues due to the various blog assignments that we have done. The TED talks have addressed issues that, normally, I do not consciously consider. Issues such as education, creativity, and the grading system do not often cross my mind, and being able to hear discussions on them and to reflect on the discussion in detail has been beneficial to my ability to question ideas that I normally do not think about.

The SLO Translation was not the most entertaining assignment, as the material was basically a syllabus, yet it allowed for me to truly read the expected outcomes of this course.

Sometimes I tend to simply skim over documents like this, not truly comprehending what it is trying to convey. However, because of this assignment, I was able to translate the document into terms that I would identify with, therefore, understanding what the expected outcomes of the course were. The difficult part of this assignment was that the original SLO was fairly straightforward, and translating it any more felt as though it would devalue what was actually being said. For introductory documents given in the future, I may use this strategy to try to understand it more, therefore, getting the most out of the course.

The topic proposal for my EIP was an enjoyable assignment. Sifting through the many ideas for what I wanted to research was a process unlike any other, and helped me to find what I truly wanted to research and inform myself about. What made this assignment easy was the fact that I was able to discover what I wanted to do, therefore allowing me to invest my emotions, time, and effort into it. It was not a task or a chore to do this assignment, but a pleasure.

Doing the annotated bibliography for me EIP was a first, as I had not done such extensive research before. I was accustomed to just finding articles that, after skimming them, seemed that they would help my argument, and referring to them as I typed my draft. This has been a game changer, as it helped me truly understand where my information was coming from, who the source was, and the manner in which it was written. I cannot say that it was a blast doing it, as it was strenuous and required plenty of searching for just the right article/source, but in retrospect, I see that it benefitted my draft, setting a foundation for what I would build upon when composing my project.

My final EIP draft was not extremely difficult, as many of the mistakes that I had to make were structural. However, there were some things that I needed to elaborate on in order to properly convey what I meant to the reader. These were the most outstanding changes that I

made to my initial draft, and they enhanced my argument and analysis of the issue. The most difficult part about this section of the final draft was reviewing the first draft and figuring out what to add, subtract, and enhance. With the help of some suggestions from you, I was able to get some inspiration for some changes.

The entire ePortfolio surprised me the most. When it was first mentioned early on in the semester, I was intimidated, as I did not know what to expect. The thought of building a website about what we have written in one semester seemed daunting, and frankly, I was not looking forward to it. However, when I started it, it turned out to be much simpler than expected, thanks to the tools in Weebly. The most difficult part of this assignment was setting blocks of time to do it. As mentioned before, one of my weaknesses is getting something started. With an assignment with this magnitude, splitting it up into sections seemed to be the best bet, so I did so. It worked out as planned, and I was able to finish with a few days to spare.

Going forward, I will take several processes to my other classes, and even further, through life. Being able to think freely and allow these thoughts to flow through my fingers onto paper is something I will appreciate in the coming years of my education, and will be able to think more freely in the years after that as well. Thank you, Professor Campbell, for teaching such a wonderful course which not only enhanced my writing and composition, but helped me to become a more thorough thinker and questioner.

Sincerely,

Reginald Harper, Jr.