

Free the importance of reflective writing essay example

[People](#), [Charles Dickens](#)



Ever wonder how to become a great writer? The answer is quite obvious, reflective writing that is the process wherein a writer can learn from previous works. While I agree with T. D. Jakes in Treetop Instincts about how one should be affected only by good criticism and not by negative criticism, but I would like to add that negative criticism should be viewed in a constructive manner. This is exactly what I have done through this course wherein by paying heed to my professor, Lawanda Dickens' criticism (both good and bad) I have seen a stark improvement in my writing. I did not allow Dickens' negative criticism to bog me down; instead by keeping these negative points in mind, I ensured that the mistakes in the consequent papers were not repeated. The increasing score in the rubric sheet at the end of each assignment poses evidence to the fact that there is a marked improvement in the way I write and present essays. In this reflective paper I will be analyzing three of my own works that I have submitted through the course to show whether I have achieved the learning outcomes of the course.

I shall begin by analyzing the summary essay Are you smarter than a Zulu Warrior, where I noticed that there are multiple punctuation errors, typing errors, grammatical errors, sentence construction errors and errors in the format of the paper. There is improper usage of space quotation marks and commas, I have not put space after the commas and have used redundant italics in the paper. Typing errors are numerous, for example, in the first sentence itself I have written intellect as " Intellect", further down the first paragraph instead of finance I have written " fiancé" and in the last line of the first page the sentence should read as, " the author uses this as a metaphor illuminating that we live in with more intellectuality than we do

instinct". The language used in the essay is simple and the audience may assume that the writer (that is me) is not proficient with English as it may be the second language. According to the rubric sheet, the total score is merely a 6. 5. There is no works cited or references page at the end of the essay which makes the essay incomplete. Since this was one of my first assignments it lacked in form, structure and grammar.

In my second essay which is a responsive essay named Treetops, Aim higher the language of this essay when compared to the summary essay is more evolved. I have used references and in-text citations while presenting my thoughts on the chapter. This essay is well organized and the ideas are supported by secondary sources which makes the writing credible. Another interesting technique adopted in the essay is the reference to an anecdote which enables the reader to understand the point being raised. Though the ideas are being properly communicated, Lawanda Dickens, my professor believes that there are general statements and not specific opinions which I have stated that made the paper less assertive in nature. Another marked improvement from the summary essay is the proper usage of commas and quotation marks. To help improve the usage of comma and quotation marks I reviewed the corrections made by Dickens in the previous essay, in addition to this, I also read up online about the correct usage of punctuation marks in English, after which I consciously made an effort to follow the rules of the language. While the structure of the essay has improved, there still seem to be typing errors and errors in formatting which existed in the summary essay as well. For example, in a comparative sentence instead of using than, "then" is used which is incorrect. The proper MLA format is not followed as

the paper lacks proper indentation of paragraphs, there is redundant spacing used between paragraphs and sentences and the in-text citation format is not followed. While the content of the essay and the structure has improved, the format and grammatical errors persist. This is reflected in the total score according to the rubric which is 11.5, that is 5 points higher than the summary essay.

In the last essay which is the analysis essay, there are fewer format, typing and grammatical errors. The language has drastically improved and is more formal in tone which is suitable for the audience, i. e. the professor and fellow students. The essay is well structured having the necessary requirements such as a proper introduction, thesis statements, topic sentences, in-text citations and references to secondary sources. The thesis statement is strong and specific unlike the response essay where the statement was more of a general statement (as commented by Prof. Lawanda Dickens). Here, the topic sentences are relevant and support the thesis, there is correct in-text citation and usage of paraphrasing. The reason I was able to present a strong thesis statement and present opinionated ideas was because while reading the primary and secondary sources (articles, books, etc) about the topic I followed the annotating method suggested by Carol Porter-O'Donnell in her essay *Beyond the Yellow Highlighter: Teaching Annotation Skills to Improve Reading Comprehension*. The technique I adopted was writing notes in the margin which later enabled me to break down the reading material. As compared to the previous papers, there are no typing errors and no redundant spaces in between paragraphs which reflect that I have proofread the paper after finishing it and also that I

have paid attention to the previous errors. What is still missing from the paper is the works cited page which is an important part of any essay but, as most of the requirements are met this paper can be categorized as a college level material.

Through this course I believe that I have learnt that to write a proper essay there are multiple points to be considered. As stated by Sara Giles, “Reflection helps you to develop your intentions (purpose), figure out your relation to your audience, uncover possible problems with your individual writing processes, set goals for revision, make decisions about language and style, and the list goes on. In a nutshell, it helps you develop more insight into and control over composing and revising processes” (Giles pg 4).

I would like to write down a step by step process about what I have learnt that will show that I have incorporated the elements enlisted under the learning outcomes section. Firstly, it is important to read the instructions of the professor multiple times so that all the prompts are covered which enable a student to understand the topic and the purpose of writing the paper. Secondly, one should understand and study the format of the type of paper – whether it is a thesis, research paper, analysis essay, summary essay, responsive essay, etc. so that proper the structure of the essay is in place. Thirdly, the audience is an important question because the language, vocabulary and purpose of writing the paper is dependent on who is reading the paper and why are they reading it. For a good paper, it is important to carry out enough research related to the topic. Secondary research which includes reading scholarly articles, peer reviewed articles and journals is necessary so that the arguments/thesis contains enough evidence that

support the thesis statement. Adequate citation in a paper also lends credibility to the writer. I also learnt that to break down and analyze the purpose of the essays an annotated reading of the essay helps one to better comprehend the essay. Like mentioned earlier I wrote notes in the margins but another way suggested by O'Donnell where, " Readers can make their comments on removable pieces of paper and then stick them on the margins of the text" (O'Donnell pg 4). The last stage of the essay is to proofread and edit it so as to avoid errors in grammar, punctuation, typing and syntax. Following this process leads to writing college level essays which can further become reading material for analysis on that topic for fellow students across universities.

I would like to conclude by stating that on comparing my own works I have not only learnt that there is an improvement in the way I write, but in addition I have understood the process of reflective writing and have achieved the learning outcomes enlisted in the instructions of this assignment.

List of sources

- Giles, Sandra " Reflective Writing and the Revision Process: What Were You Thinking?", Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing, Vol. 1. Parlor Press, 2010
- O'Donnell, Carol " Beyond the Yellow Highlighter: Teaching Annotation Skills to Improve Reading Comprehension", English Journal Vol. 93, No. 5. May, 2004