

SUNY College Cortland

Digital Commons @ Cortland

Critical Evaluation

Rhet Dragons Student Writing Samples

2021

My Writing Technique (2021-2022)

Samantha Spencer
SUNY Cortland

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.cortland.edu/rhetdragonscriticaleval>

Recommended Citation

Spencer, Samantha, "My Writing Technique (2021-2022)" (2021). *Critical Evaluation*. 5.
<https://digitalcommons.cortland.edu/rhetdragonscriticaleval/5>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Rhet Dragons Student Writing Samples at Digital Commons @ Cortland. It has been accepted for inclusion in Critical Evaluation by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Cortland. For more information, please contact DigitalCommonsSubmissions@cortland.edu.

“My Writing Technique” Samantha Spencer (Critical Evaluation example)

Questions to Consider For Discussion and Reflection

This critical evaluation details how the author understands her own writing throughout CPN 100. She discusses several different aspects, such as her writing process, style, how she uses instructor comments on her writing, and what she might need to think about for the future. As you read Spencer’s essay, consider the following questions:

- One of the areas that Spencer writes about relate to her writing process and pre-writing in particular. What did you think about Spencer’s process? What kinds of strategies have you used in pre-writing?
- Spencer also spends time discussing comments that she received from her instructor on her writing and in individual conferences. What kinds of feedback and comments have you received on your writing? What is your process for thinking about these comments? How do you use the comments you receive on your writing to revise your papers?
- Finally, at the end of CPN 100, Spencer has some insight into her own strengths and progress as a writer (such as organization.) What do you see as some of your own strengths? How has your writing process or the way you think about your own writing changed so far?

My Writing Technique by Samantha Spencer

Throughout the semester, I have found many strategies and resources helpful in my effort to better my writing. In my Composition 100 class, I have written two essays: “Matthew Desmond’s Impact on Eviction” and “Past Choices Affect Today’s Elderly.” Through the progression of these essays, pre-writing, and individual conferences along with comments made on my drafts, I have begun to understand what my strengths in writing are, what I need to continue working on, and what I have significantly improved on. After almost completing this course, I feel I’ve become more confident in my writing skills and understand how to write a proper college-level essay.

Since beginning my first essay and having the pre-writing session in class, I have realized my strength of organization. The pre-writing sessions are similar to what I always try to do before writing on any topic. I like to map out my thoughts and get my ideas and evidence organized so key components will be present in my writing. I make sure to plan out my thesis, reasons, and pick quotes from sources that correspond with what I’m trying to express. By doing this, I feel my essays are easier to write because I’m not thinking and researching for ideas and planning structure as I’m trying to write. It also makes the first draft less daunting because I’m not looking at a blank screen with a long list of criteria and four articles to choose from. The pre-writing sessions are also very successful for me because it’s centered around the thesis statement and helps to condense my thoughts into one topic instead of having a broad range of ideas that are harder to compact into one or two sentences. For example, in my rough draft of Essay One, I state, “The sociology professor is a creditable researcher who uses people’s real-life experiences

to bring awareness to this highly important part of poverty known as eviction” (Spencer, 2020a, p. 1). This thesis statement is very broad and doesn’t clearly explain to the reader my three reasons why Matthew Desmond is trusted and worthy of receiving a research grant. After revisions, I have refocused my thesis statement and clearly listed the reasons I would be supporting throughout the piece and claim. I say, “The sociology professor utilizes the appeal of pathos, thoroughly explains an organized plan to reduce the effects of poverty, and calls attention to the general experiences found in Milwaukee, Wisconsin” (Spencer, 2020a, p. 1). Questions in the pre-writing stage such as, “Which articles will correspond with your topic?” and “What is your topic/ thesis statement?” (Spencer, 2020c, para. 1-2) have helped to get me on the right track and understand what is necessary for a particular essay.

Comments made by my professor on all drafts of both essays has made me realize that I need to improve my word choice and phrasing to make my essay smoother to read and less redundant. In my rough draft of Essay One, I had received comments such as, “work on the flow of your introduction” and had sentences re-written to make my discussions more clear (Spencer, 2020a, p. 1). From the changes made, I have seen a difference in my final piece from the first draft. It had smoother transitions and doesn’t need to be read several times by readers in order to understand the discussion and usefulness of the included statistics. My second draft of my second essay also contains changes such as, “Most elderly people also had different values when they were young” to “Most elderly people have also maintained more traditional values when they were young than current young people” (Spencer, 2020b, p. 2). I feel that this change in wording has made my writing more formal and focuses on my reasoning of traditional families instead of the broad topic of values that can cover anything. After reading the comments and corrections on my past papers, I want to try to re-read my pieces in the mindset of someone uninformed on the topic presented. By doing this, I can get a better idea of what my essay sounds like to a neutral party instead of re-reading as myself, one who already understands the point I’m trying to get across.

Through this course, I have seen a major improvement in my reasoning and discussion. From high school writing pieces to the first essay, I have always received feedback such as, “Discuss!”, “Why is this important?”, and “How does this relate to your thesis?” I would receive these comments but wouldn’t understand how to explain a topic any further because I felt the quotes were self-explanatory and anything else I added would be too repetitive. After having the conference for my first essay and being given direction on what to explain such as, “Stay focused on why pathos is an important appeal” and “Why do readers like to see a solution for a problem?” (Spencer, 2020a, p. 1-2) I was able to understand what points were unclear. When I made the corrections for my essay one final draft, I then knew what I needed to include in my paragraphs, and with the suggestions, I have been able to add to my essay without staring at the page and wondering what my reasoning was lacking. By the time I had written my initial drafts of essay two, I had noticed an improvement in my writing style. The second essay has been much easier for me to write because I had an idea of what needed to be present in my essay and made sure to express my every thought on the topic.

Through this course, I have seen major changes in my writing style. I am a more confident writer and understand the components that make a good essay. The activities done in class such as pre-writing, feedback from my professor and peers, and individual conferences have helped me to understand my strengths and weaknesses. I have realized my strength in organization, an improvement in reasoning, and still need to focus more on my phrasing and word choice.

References

Spencer, S. (2020a). Matthew Desmond's Impact on Eviction (Revised Essay One). State University of New York, College at Cortland, Cortland, New York.

Spencer, S. (2020b). Past Choices Affect Today's Elderly (Revised Essay Two). State University of New York, College at Cortland, Cortland, New York.

Spencer, S. (2020c). Notes October fourteenth (Notes in Class). State University of New York, College at Cortland, Cortland, New York.