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Teaching Philosophy

Becoming Effective College Students

“English is hard!” or “English is dumb!” are two phrases that I am all too familiar with. Students dread walking into English courses if it is not their major. For that reason, students do not acquire the skill the coursework is offering them. They focus too much on taking an English course as a requirement for their degree plan. As a student that has been in not only the English department but also in the psychology and education department, I understand the importance of oral and written communication; students in the English department are not the only ones responsible for being able to produce proper, professional reports, articles, and research papers. Students in many other disciplines must be able to complete the work just as effectively for their field. They must be able to communicate their theories, hypothesis, and conclusions just as any English major must over the literature they study.

For this reason, my view of writing and the teaching of writing is to approach it with the understanding that it is not a discipline reserved exclusively for English majors. My philosophy in teaching English literature, writing, and rhetoric is for students to understand how they must use the analytical and critical thinking skills they develop in their English courses and blend them with their own departmental studies. My approach to helping students is to investigate what they are trying to convey and then help them come up with an effective thesis statement that portrays that concept. From there, I provide several strategies that help students follow a writing process (drafting, outlining, creating topic sentences, and begin forming the bulk of the paper).

Becoming Effective Writers

Over the course of their studies, students learn that basic English composition courses provide information they can utilize in their area of study. I help them understand this early on. I advise students outside of the English department to realize that their field will also require writing. This idea allows them to associate each writing assignment with an understanding that it will allow them the opportunity to become more effective communicators. I discover students' ways of learning and studying and help them understand how to utilize their style of learning to their advantage, an approach that supports them into becoming more proficient writers. My aspiration is to help students understand ways in which they can efficiently produce writing that they are comfortable and tackling writing projects in a way that does not overwhelm them.

Becoming Effective Editors

When I think of helping others with their writing, I want others to see my help as something they can do for themselves and to understand that the services that student writing centers offer are to assist them in becoming effective editors. My goal is to support students in developing skills and techniques they can confidently utilize in their future writing assignments. A good starting point is helping others understand that a "good" story or "good" paper is not accomplished in an author's first sitting. "Good" takes time; it takes many different reviewing processes. From then, one can establish a discipline to study and review their own writing until it portrays the writer's argument proficiently.