

“Good Writing” Analysis Example: Partial Draft of Introduction and Methods

I created this GWA to show my students an example of their final essay. I provided three drafts to students: a first draft, a revised draft with Track Changes, and a final draft. Throughout the semester, I used these drafts to discuss the GWA, peer review practices, and revision strategies. These resources proved themselves valuable models as students conducted interviews, collected data, and wrote their drafts. Below is a partial draft of the final copy of my GWA: the introduction and methods.

Revising for Your Reader

Introduction

Some writers may view revision as a chore as unbearable as doing the dishes or taking out the trash. Like these chores which take up time and energy we would rather spend doing something else, revising is more of a necessary evil than an important part of the writing process. In addition to believing revising is time-consuming, some writers consider their first draft to be their best draft and do not bother revising work that they are already happy with. However, other writers believe that revision is an essential part of the writing process. Though we might initially believe that revision only involves checking grammar, revising spelling, and other copy-editing techniques, revision goes deeper than these sentence level changes. According to Nancy Sommers, a leading scholar on revision in composition studies, revision involves a reimagining and recreating of ideas, a process of “discovery” (154). Scholars and educators like Sommers agree that revision is far more complex than only copyediting one’s work; revision is a much larger and therefore fulfilling step in the writing process.

So far, research has discussed in depth how writers define revision. Specifically, Sommers asked her experienced and beginning writers in her “Revision Strategies” study about how they define revision, but her research did not explore many specifics about why they found revision important. Additionally, while our overall understanding of revision has understood it as a re-creation of writing for the writer, scholars have not discussed enough the importance of

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revision to a writer's audience or reader. Because writing is intended to communicate with a wider audience than just the writer themselves, revision plays an important role in effective written communication. As a result, we should consider further how we define revision, the impact of revision on the writing process, and how revision is an essential writing practice for both writers and readers.

In this paper, I affirm that revision does mean going back to your first thoughts during writing and making these thoughts clearer, whether this is by adding or deleting content, changing word choices, or completely rewriting paragraphs. Revision goes beyond simple copyediting then, because while the goal of copyediting is to polish writing, revision means looking at the bigger picture and whether or not a writer is clearly communicating their ideas. However, revision is an important step in the writing process for readers as well as writers. Without revision, writers may not effectively communicate or readers may misinterpret a writer's ideas. Therefore, my paper will discuss how good writers use revision to benefit themselves and their readers so that future scholars can continue to unpack how revision impacts the writing process.

Methods

For this project, I interviewed three people who I identified as good writers. Bill and Cheyenne are both have graduate-level writing experience; Bill is a current Ph.D student in composition studies, and Cheyenne has a TESOL degree and teaches high school English. My third interview participant is Peter, and although he works as an IT helpdesk technician, he is an experienced writer who does a lot of writing in the workplace such as email, helpdesk tickets, and instructions for computer hardware and software. His experience with workplace writing is significantly different from Bill and Cheyenne, whose writing experience is more academic. It

was important to me to discuss revision's impact on writing with good writers who had a variety of writing experience, which is why I included Peter as an interviewee.

I sent my three interviewees six questions over text asking them about how revision impacts their writing process. They responded over email and text over the course of a few days, and I copied all of their answers into a Word document in order to code their transcripts for common themes. After coding my transcripts, the two most important codes that I found were the importance of clarity for conveying ideas and consideration of audience. These are the codes that I chose to focus on for this project.