

Summer semester, what will I take? I know I want to keep the school momentum but don't want to work too hard. I re-read Dr. Yehl's e-mail to DPA students: "ENGL 8300 Revision/Editing for Professionals, this course is designed to help you write clear, concise, readable prose – suitable for any paper or dissertation"! That's it! I can write well! Class will be a breeze! As Paul Harvey says: *and now, the rest of the story.*

Eight weeks later - a bit frazzled from the wear - but in a much more confident state. I have moved from feeling my writing is great to it is completely horrible to one of confidence because I know what will make me better. So now we end. Or do we begin? I choose a new beginning, possessing a deeper awareness of my diction, style, and grammar use.

The 10 pages revised proved to be a bad paper altogether. I'm not so sure if any of my papers would have been better. Thesis was too broad, and arguments were lame. There was no supporting theory to convince the reader of anything. I used a lot of academic jargon and spat thoughts of other researchers but never really told the reader what I wanted to say. Re-reading my paper sounded as though I didn't want to take a side, make a decision or stand on any principle. My existing writing style has been to spout information without drawing any connection to a supporting theme. Editing these 10 pages certainly improved its readability. It needs more work but is improved. Direct benefits of editing this paper will be realized when I begin drafting my dissertation. A significant accomplishment is my awareness to identify a major thesis, make an argument then write with intention to justify my argument.

My criminal justice class research paper submitted this semester was a much better paper than others because of this class. After writing it I went back and converted the *ing* words and removed the unnecessary *that's* from the paper. I limited prepositional phrases (my favorite!). I reduced a little over a page by the time I eliminated obvious statements and wordiness. Several

verbs were put into action, ending up with a paper that contained only 20% passive sentences versus my usual 70-80%. Success! I made a point and took a stand, providing evidence to support my argument. It may not be worthy of publication, but I felt much better about this paper than I did the 10 pages revised.

Another major realization is that effective prose takes time. I have never budgeted enough time to my academic writing assignments. As a busy professional and part-time procrastinator I work my studies in when I can. I have a new perspective today. This is my education and I've been short-changing myself. I want my future writing to be reflective of me and I want people to actually want to read the papers I write. Editing for grammar, style, and conciseness takes time, time I will invest more sufficiently in the future. I have stopped censoring my thoughts while writing. Putting my thoughts on paper just as they are then editing later is a much better process (is this the cleaner explanation of vomiting on the paper?).

I quickly realized that I have skill at bureaucratic writing; however, I'm not as proud of this accomplishment as I was before this class. To be an effective writer, I must lose the bureaucratic speak. It is so ingrained in me that it's difficult to break, but I am now more aware. The subtle grammar and punctuation mistakes I make was a little embarrassing, yet another learning process to improve by. I am a very effective speaker in my profession and use my personality and humor to convey my message and persuade. Analyzing my audience is a very important part of accomplishing this. I accomplish this in my business correspondence well but prior to this class I had never translated this theory to writing in my academic papers – professors wanted 15 pages, I gave them 15 pages. In retrospect, it's difficult to understand how I have maintained honor roll throughout my academics. On the other hand, I guess the official style

reigns supreme in academia. Lanham said “The pompous posturing of the official style lacks productive, usable, information.” *Touche*’!

I will continue to develop a writing style that reflects my personality. I never gave much thought to using Latinate over common diction, but I do tend to use more complicated words before common in my academic papers. I will cease the passive and impersonal constructions. I will take ownership of my thoughts put on paper and heed my moral duty to the reader. If I say it I will mean it and not cover my point with *skotison*. In this essay I began with a mass of clay, and then sculpted the prose using the paramedic method. I know my writing process and editing has improved. Writing style is something I will continue to work on and will develop over time. At least now I have a better understanding of what I need to do. I end with a quote from Lanham, “Writing properly pursued doesn’t make you better it makes you more alive.” I concur.

