Gerardo Chapa

Midterm Self-Assessment Assignment 300 words pp

1. Expectations and Goals

- What, specifically, did you expect to learn so far in this course?
- What, specifically, have your goals for the course been so far?
- How has your approach to the course so far helped you learn what you expected to learn and achieve your goals?

Going in to the course, I expected to learn skills that would help me learn how to use tools that would allow me to be able to research for a topic of interest more efficiently. I expected for the general structure of the class to give us useful activities that would allow for our research question to become more apparent. It was my expectation that this would be done as we continued to work through exercises and activities designed to be able to gauge our interest in a certain topic. My goal for the course so far has been to allow myself the opportunity to dive deeply into the content of my research and to have time for connections between texts and the development of my research question to come by organically, as opposed to being forced to choose a topic set in stone and have to adjust everything to a predetermined idea. So far, the course has been very helpful in providing enough structure to keep being realistic in moving forward with the process but also laid back enough to allow for flexible research that allows for the question and interest to develop more naturally as the research into potential topics progresses. This structure has allowed me to move forward efficiently in finding material and content to evaluate while also keeping a pace to the research that keeps the thesis progressing forward, which as a result has helped me achieve the goals I originally set out for myself of developing a question of true interest based on how my research has been going, as opposed to the other way around.

2. Performance

- Have you completed all the assignments and done all the quizzes and activities?
- How has your performance been so far? Are you on track to earn a B under the basic contract?
- How, if at all, have you improved as a writer so far?
- What specific strategies have you used to find a way through confusion, hang-ups, procrastination, your workload and life outside of class, lack of

experience, or unfamiliarity with the work? These might include using the Writing Center, coming to my office, asking me questions, and other strategies too numerous to name here.

In terms of performance, I believe that I have been successful in maintaining the correct balance and speed in which my question has developed. I have been engaged and participating actively to hone down my question. I have completed all assignments and activities to the best of my ability and believe that my performance is on par with the expectations delineated to us at the beginning of the year, placing me on track to earn a B under the basic contract. Over the course of the semester, my writing has improved by several aspects that can be attributed to the exercises that we have done in class. Among them are the Beam Heuristic, which has been essential for considering sources and analyzing them objectively, the distinction between source types and levels of citing, and a new restructuring of how I write, which is moving from an overly academic tone into a more conversational one. To keep myself on topic, as well as focused on the thesis inside and outside of class, I have used techniques such as time blocking to schedule time a week solely for thesis work outside of class, the creation of the honest weekly schedule which has given me more realistic expectations of how long things take and how much time I have at hand, and also strategies such as doing work more efficiently by breaking up in more manageable chunks spread out over time. When it comes to things relating to the thesis itself that are not related to external time management factors,one strategy that I have used to stay on track and continue to produce content has been productive procrastination. This strategy of procrastinating productively refers to being able to distinguish the levels of cognitive power that several factors of the thesis research process take, and being able to do the work according to how I feel my energy and motivation is. In times where I feel like I might be too tired or too inattentive to do deeper and heavier level work such as deep analysis of scholarly sources, I still am able to be productive by doing easier tasks that still pertain to my research such as watching informed videos on the topic or absorbing media that does not require as much effort, such as watching videos, documentaries or listening to podcasts on the topic I am researching.

3. Ownership of Learning

- Have you been coming to class regularly, on time, and prepared? Have you taken proactive steps to avoid distractions, such as social media or texting (except for emergencies) during class time (in F2F classes) or work time? If so, how consistent were you? Have you found ways to improve so far?
- Have you made specific note of any problems and questions and shared them?

- Have you sought guidance outside of the classroom (office/videoconference visits, Writing Center, other)? If so, what, and how consistently? How has that helped, or not? If you have not been seeking help outside of class, what is your plan for doing so in the rest of the course?
- Which specific areas do you want to improve on in this class?
- What is your concrete, specific plan to improve in those areas during the rest of the class?

Analyzing the semester so far, I do believe that I have been taking ownership of the project by coming prepared and on time to class, in addition to using the time efficiently to work on my thesis. I have been consistent in keeping the development of my question into consideration when doing assignments and working, and have found myself improving in how I research thanks to some of the strategies that we have learned or read about in class. In thinking of my question and its scope, I have been good about taking the time to ask for help on how to think of the next steps of my research by sharing them with my peers and professor. I have found that this has been very valuable in showing me fresh ways to address a question. Outside of class, the meetings with my mentor have been highly rewarding and extremely productive. We have developed a mutual interest in the subject which allows for the sessions in which I meet with my advisor to be fruitful after I have taken the time to develop any ideas that were gathered from previous sessions. An area that I want to improve on this class is to be able to have more structured time for pure research in which I allot more time to reading and immersing myself in the material that I have gathered. During the rest of the semester, I am working on devising a plan to have more time structured for "discovery", in which I give myself chunks of time to look around online for things that can be helpful or added to my thesis in a more structured way, as opposed to just googling parts of my focus whenever it occurs to me without a certain time dedicated to it.