First Semester Honors English Conference

1. Writing Structure and Format

From my *Tuesdays with Morrie* summer essay to my *To Kill a Mockingbird* paper, my writing structure and format have improved drastically. In my summer essay, body paragraphs were all essentially structured with an introduction sentence, three details on the topic of the introduction sentence, and a link to the introduction sentence. This did not always link to the thesis itself. The *To Kill a Mockingbird* essay included an intro, two pieces of evidence and explanations of each, and a link to the overall essay topic. Previously, I wrote conclusions as a restatement of the topics of each body paragraphs. However, I feel that my conclusions have improved quite a bit as well. Rather than restating everything I already said, I impart final thoughts on the topic to the reader.

1. Improvement

In my writing, I see considerable improvement in how I write out my arguments and ideas. In my *Tuesdays with Morrie* essay, I used plot details in my argument that were not particularly meaningful. Also, my theme tended to consist of numerous points rather than a consistent theme. For example, in the *Tuesdays with Morrie* essay, my thesis statement was “The message of the book is about different aspects of life-commitment, culture, and death-but especially living while you could and realizing the important things in life while you still had time.” However, as I have continued writing, my theme statements have become clearer, relatable and meaningful. The theme for *To Kill a Mockingbird* was written “Overall, Harper Lee uses her novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* to symbolize the necessity of having the courage to fight against all kinds of ethical and moral injustices.”

1. Elements of Writing

I have found that the improved body paragraph format I have learned makes writing effective arguments or information much easier. Instead of just throwing in details, I use more meaningful pieces of evidence and add in an explanation for each. However, within a paragraph, moving smoothly between my evidence is somewhat challenging for me. Oftentimes I move between topics without a clear transition element. As such, paragraphs don’t always flow between topics and details.

1. Goals

As I continue to write, I hope to improve the flow of my writing and be able to improve explanations of my evidence. One goal I have is to work to diversify the transition words and phrases I use in my paragraphs. By doing so I can improve the way my writing sounds when read. Additionally,

I would like to continue learning about what makes effective evidence and how to explain it meaningfully. I hope to improve in my writing technique to create more effective arguments, informative pieces and analyses.