

Self-Efficacy and Sentence-Level Revision

Planned for 03/16/2018

Revised for 09/05/2018

Goals:

- Introduce self-efficacy
- Practice sentence-level revision

Content:

- Walk students through revision process
 - Identify repeated errors
 - Reverse outline; Do any paragraphs have multiple ideas? Do any key ideas appear in multiple paragraphs? Is the evidence used appropriate to the key idea?
 - Identify thesis statement; Does each topic sentence make a claim that relates back to that thesis statement?
 - Transitions
- Review instructor's thesis guidelines:
 - Subject, Purpose, Claim, Specific language
- Write a sentence on the board
 - Jane Eyre has learned that large spaces make her vulnerable, either to the attacks of the Reed children or to the scrutiny of fellow students or of Mr. Rochester's company or of Mr. Rochester himself, but she looks for something more so she becomes a character who is shaped by a small, yet free, space.
- Give students the opportunity to identify areas for improvement
- Revise in real time on the board, showing students that a brilliant sentence doesn't just come out of nowhere
- To test the student's revision, identify each of the four components

Activity:

- Break into groups and have them revise their own thesis and paragraph
- Start with the first sentence: Are there any issues (run-ons, fragments, punctuation, diction, etc.)?
- Do the same for the second sentence?
- How does the first sentence relate to the second? Is there a transition?
- Repeat

Reflection for March 16:

The lesson went way better than I thought it would. I went over the meta-analysis pretty quickly and answered their questions. Then I wrote the thesis statement on the board and let them take the lead. They had a lot of really good thoughts. In the end, they got it down to "Through A, B, and C, Jane Eyre is shaped by a small space." (A, B, and C were the pieces of evidence that they didn't have because it wasn't their paper.) I then had to guide them through making it a stronger thesis. I pointed to the phrase "she looks for something more" and asked them why the writer might include that even though it seems completely useless. We eventually got to "Through A, B, and C, Jane Eyre develops freedom of thought in otherwise limited spaces." I pointed out how the distinct contrast, emphasized in the second but not the first revised version, is important to

why we would talk about the small spaces at all. They did really well with it. I left all the revision work on the board and used it to talk about how time-consuming but also important the revision process can be.

Then, I admitted that this is one of my thesis statements from my first semester at the University of Maryland. I did not get the grade I had hoped for on that paper, so I asked the instructor if the grade would change with that level of revision on just one sentence. She said it would. I forgot to send her my lesson plan, so she had absolutely no prior knowledge of the sentence or my question. Our students are not easily surprised or even really intrigued by our lessons since they are older and have heard much of it before. I actually got a reaction on this one though. The lesson seemed to demonstrate the importance of revision effectively.

For the remaining ten minutes of class, I gave them an equally problematic paragraph from later in that same paper on *Jane Eyre* and had them focus on the relationship that sentences have to each other (i.e. sentence-level revisions).

I was really nervous for this lesson, but I think it went really well. It's the first lesson I've done that I wouldn't change at all. The materials worked really well together.

Note: I taught this lesson in the following semester (Fall 2018) to a non-transfer section of First-Year Composition, and the students had just as much fun going through the process. Many of them also showed significant improvement in their drafts. One student in particular went from somewhat broken written English to very clean, well-structured English in the course of one assignment.

Reflection for November 05:

The exercise went about as well as last time. The instructor is using my lesson, only with one of her own thesis statements, for the other section of class. We spent about ten minutes on attendance and revision. After giving them time to ask questions, I asked them to list off the four components of a good thesis. Then we started revising. It got off to a rough start because I forgot to preface the thesis statement. Since many of them are not familiar with *Jane Eyre*, I went back and explained that this is not an exercise in knowing *Jane Eyre*. Regardless of the content, a thesis statement should be understandable to even an uninformed audience. They jumped right back in and we revised for about half an hour. Then we talked about how it took half an hour and that's what all revision should look like but to different degrees (e.g. one sentence might just need one word changed, where another might need to be completely rewritten or taken out). As I did last semester, I revealed that it was my thesis statement and asked Jade if my grade would have changed with these revisions. She said Yes. They spent the rest of class (about 10 minutes) revising their own thesis and paragraph, which is due Monday. They were active and asking questions the entire class and actually worked on revising their own papers during that last ten minutes.

Next time, I would want to try to find a way to offset overly picky revisions. At one point, we got caught up on the word vulnerable and it took a minute to get back on track. I can understand how students would want to say something or would get caught up in the critique and start questioning everything, so I want to provide an introduction or guiding questions that don't make them feel like that's where they need to take the conversation.

One really successful revision that didn't happen last semester was in the first part of the sentence. They had already change it to "Because Jane Eyre has been scrutinized and bullied in large, crowded rooms," but they wanted to change it again to "Because Jane Eyre's past of being scrutinized and bullied in large, crowded rooms." We then did a mini lesson on dependent and independent clauses and referents to show how that was no longer a sentence. I suggested "Because Jane Eyre's past of being scrutinized and bullied in large, crowded rooms has made her vulnerable" and showed how the referent changed. They didn't like the new revision though, so they went back to the original. It did allow me to talk about referents, which was fun, but it also showed them that sometimes revising is just determining why you made a perfectly good decision to begin with.

End product: Because Jane Eyre has been scrutinized and bullied in large, crowded rooms, she looks for security in small, free, spaces, which affect her identity as a woman.

The parts were to determine if the thesis was foreshadowing what would appear in the rest of the paper. Based on this thesis, we though the author might show evidence in the form of instances of bullying in open spaces, her transition into smaller spaces, and her responses and actions in those smaller spaces and how they shaped her as a character.

