Reflection on WR100

Throughout the time I spend in this writing course, I am constantly reminded of how my persuasive writing can, at times, appear unacceptably weak either because of an unclear main claim or inefficient support evidence. However, looking over my four papers, all of which required me to formulate an opinion with strong support, I have come to see apparent improvement in both getting my point across and how I get my point across.

In the first paper, when asked whether I agree with the Supreme Court’s decision that Murphy lacked a disability, I agreed stating that “the Supreme Court made a valid and thoughtful ruling that Murphy truly lacked a disability because he functioned normally in a medicated state,” but failed to continue that notion in a clear fashion. Later in the essay, I wrote that UPS should have never dismissed him, but failed to justify where this opinion came from. I think my poor argument in this case arose because I was too focused on the details of diction and syntax. Although in academic writing these aspects are crucial, they hid my main claim, and in turn, weakened my evidence.

After many drafting exercises in class and discussion of significant writing tools in They Say I Say, I believe my second paper marked my halfway point as an improving writer. In this assignment, I was asked to develop an opinion on the moral issues of designer babies. With a strong claim stated upfront in my introduction paragraph, I made it clear from the beginning that gene therapy should “not be permitted in the process of producing a child unless it prevents a child from developing deadly diseases or disabilities,” but weakened my support as the paper progressed. In the third body paragraph, I paralleled designing babies to selective abortion. Initially, I failed to follow through with this sub claim in the remainder of the paragraph, but later added the line “if parents alter the genetics of their unborn child for the removal of a disease or disability, or any gene for that matter, they might as well abort a fetus” to clearly illustrate the correlation. At this point in the writing process, I was able to write a strong thesis and support it with evidence in a straightforward manner.

With this ability, my third paper allowed me to clearly communicate with the reader through a consistent claim and, for the most part, solid proof. In which I was asked if disability comedy was properly executed in the movie There’s Something About Mary, this last paper periodically echoed my main claim that the movie was offensive and failed to instill humor in scenes with disabled characters by referring to the disabled population at large and how their reactions might unfold. My strong and apparent thesis permitted my evidence to have reason to be included in the argument. Furthermore, I successfully took advantage of colloquial diction and syntax throughout various portions of the paper which did not cloud my argument. As much as my writing accomplished over these three assignments, one central goal I had for the fourth and final assignment of this course, was to incorporate new insights by bringing something new to the table which would not only support my main claim, but make my argument more interesting.

The fourth assignment required a compare and contrast essay between The Curious Incident of
the Dog in the Night-Time’s portrayal of autism and the media’s while arguing which one was better. In this paper, my last topic sentence was “Haddon’s novel and the media pieces overall give light to autism in different ways, the novel being more holistic and the media pieces being more specific, but some might say that they both result in overall positive outcomes, specifically a child’s innate intelligence.” Not only did this sub claim act as a naysayer, it introduced a new theme not discussed before in class: intelligence. Incorporating intelligence allowed me to compare Haddon’s novel and the media in a different way with several examples in addition to backing my thesis with a new piece of evidence. One of these examples compared the origin of Christopher’s intelligence where I state “His intelligence comes in the form of numbers; he is definitely beyond average when it comes to arithmetic, and autism does not stop him from succeeding in that subject at school” and the origin of Carly Fleischmann’s intelligence where I write “Her inner voice, thoughtful and expressive, finding its way out to the public shows autism does not retract from intelligence”. Both examples show how intelligence surpasses autism’s barrier. Even though I provided adequate analysis on this comparison, one aspect of this paper I struggled with was finding direct quotes, especially in the novel. I felt there was actually plenty to choose from, but I wanted to find the most effective quotes. In retrospect, the examples I decided to quote became effective when I embedded it with my opinion and my voice. Once I made this realization, drafting this paper, for the most part, went smoothly.

Although each of the papers I wrote during this course exemplifies my progress as a writer, I consider my second, third, and fourth papers to truly represent my writing because of their depth in their respective prompts. The last three papers not only applied summarizing, like the first paper, they also practiced quoting, including naysayers, and connecting with transitions. For this reason, these essays should be the main focus of this final portfolio. Ultimately, having included strong claims, supporting evidence, and new ideas in cohesive and organized essays, I feel I succeeded in growing as a writer in this course.