



University of Sussex

Sussex Centre for Language Studies

Academic Writing Guide – Stage 3, Part 1

Chloé talking about writing the first draft and getting feedback

Sue: You wrote your first draft, Chloé, working/sort of building on the work that you'd done with your annotated bibliography and your mind map; submitted it and got tutor feedback on that draft, and from there went on to write your final essay. Talk to me a bit about the process of drafting, feedback, and then revising.

Chloé: Drafting the essay was really hard because it was a 2000-word essay so it seemed like a lot. And when I saw my annotated bibliography, my mind map, I just thought I would never get to the 2000 words. I did, then I went over it, so I had to rework it, and in the end I thought 'it's just a draft so they would not mind having a bit more words'. So that's why the feedback was really helpful because they told me where I could potentially delete some of the sentences, get rid of them and not work on it because it's not really important, and then start focussing on my thesis statement.

Sue: So when you completed your draft did you feel that that was a final product in a sense?

Chloé: I felt like it was, but it also felt like it was missing a lot of things, that I didn't talk about everything because I already went over the limit of the words so I just thought I would stop there. The fact that I got all the feedback helped me to delete some of the parts and just focus on my main argument and develop it and work more on it, so my final draft felt much better, better to read, easier to read than my first draft.

Sue: So about readability. About taking your reader into account and about helping your reader follow that argument all the way through. Is that the kind of feedback you got?

Chloé: I got this feedback, and I also got about my thesis statement – because it wasn't really clear where I was going, so I needed to make that clear. And when I read over it on my draft and on my final essay I could see the differences; how the stage 3 essay was a bit messy because you kept telling us 'it's just a draft, don't stress too much about it' and the fact that you told me 'you need to make your thesis statement clear' and you would give me ideas of how to do it, or help/where I could get help. I immediately tried to do all of that and at the end when I came up with a thesis statement it helped me to develop my essay and actually delete a lot of things and develop more on some of the arguments.

Sue: So actually even though you'd already gone through quite a long stage of the preparation process that thesis statement still benefited from being tightened up a little bit more.

Chloé: Definitely.