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АНАЛИЗ АКАДЕМИЧЕСКОГО ЭССЕ

REVISION OF THE ACADEMIC ESSAY

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Annotation

When writing an academic assignment, good writers do not express themselves perfectly on the first try, but they do work hard at revising their initial efforts. Revision should not be confused with proofreading or editing, the final stage of the writing process, where the writer carefully inspects your word choice, spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Revision is much more drastic, often involving an upheaval of the draft as the writer changes its content and organization in order to communicate more effectively.

Ключевые слова: быстрый подход, акроним ФАКТ, восстанавливать, поток идей, уточнить связь, исправления, стилистически несовершенный, тезисное утверждение, многословие, схватить, передавать, неточный, чрезмерно сложный.

Key words: a quick-fixed approach; the FACT acronym; to resurrect; the flow of ideas; to clarify the connection; readjustments; stylistically deficient; the thesis statement; wordiness; to grasp; to convey; imprecise; excessively convoluted.

Most of read information has been considerably altered and improved as the writers progressed through early drafts. This fact should not surprise you. After all, a rough copy is merely a first attempt to jot down some ideas in essay form. No matter how well you gather and organize your material, you can not predict the outcome until you have prepared a draft. Sometimes only touch-up changes are required. More often though, despite your efforts, this version will be incomplete, unclear different idea, focus, or approach buried within it.

During revision you keep changing things – your focus, approach to the topic, supporting material, and thesis statement – until the results satisfy you.

Inexperienced writers often mistakenly view initial drafts as nearly finished products rather than as experiments to alter, or even scrap, if need be. As a result, they often approach revision with the wrong attitude. To revise successfully, you need to control your ego and your fear and become your own first critical reader. Set aside natural feelings of accomplishment /'After all, I've put a great deal of thought into this'/ and dread /'Actually, I'm afraid of what I'll find if I look too closely'/ . Instead, recognize that revision offers an opportunity to upgrade your strong features and strengthen your weak ones.

Preparing to revise

To distance yourself from your writing and sharpen your critical eye, set your first draft aside for at least a half day, longer if time permits. When you return to it, gear up for revision by jotting down your intended purpose and audience before you read your paper. These notions will help keep your changes on track. In addition, note any further ideas that have occurred to you.

The right attitude is vital to effective revision. Far too many students hastily skim their essays to reassure themselves that 'Everything sounds OK.'

Avoid such a quick-fix approach. If your draft appears fine on first reading, probe it again with a more critical eye. Try putting yourself in your reader's place. Will your description of a favourite gateway spot be clear to someone who has never seen it? Will your letter home asking for money really convince parents who might think they have already given you too much? Remember: if you aren't critical now, anticipating confusion and objections, your reader certainly will be later [1, p. 242].

Read your essay at least three times, once for each of these reasons:

To improve the development of the essay as a whole;

To strengthen paragraph structure and development;

To sharpen sentences and words.

When you finish reading your paper for content, make a final, meticulous sweep to search for errors and problems that mar your writing.

Considering the whole essay

If you only inspect your draft sentence by sentence, you can easily overlook how its parts work together. A better approach is to step back and view the overall essay rather than its separate parts, asking questions such as 'Does the beginning mesh with the end?' 'Does the essay wander?' 'Has anything been left out?' In this way you can gauge how part relates to part and to the whole. Use the acronym FACT to guide this stage of your revision.

F. Ask yourself first whether the whole essay FITS together, presenting a central point for a specific audience. Have you delivered what the thesis statement promises? First drafts often include paragraphs, or even large sections, that have little bearing on the main point. Some drafts contain the kernels of several different essays. Furthermore, one section of a draft might be geared to one audience and another section to an entirely different audience. As you read each part, verify its connection to your purpose and audience. Do not hesitate to chop out sections that do not fit, redo stray parts so they accord with your central idea, or alter your thesis statement to reflect better your supporting material. Occasionally, you might even expand one small, fertile section of your draft into an entirely new essay.

A. Whenever we write first drafts, we unwittingly leave out essential material. As we revise, we need to identify and fill these gaps. Ask yourself: 'Where will the reader need more information or examples to understand my message?' Then ADD the appropriate sentences, paragraphs, or even pages.

C. First drafts often contain material that fits the thesis but does not contribute to the essay. Writing quickly, we tend to repeat ourselves, include uninteresting or uninformative examples, and crank out whole paragraphs when one clear sentence would suffice. As you revise, CUT away this clutter with a free hand. Such paring can be painful, especially if you are left with a skimpy text, but your message will emerge with much greater clarity. As you have probably guessed, revising a draft often requires both adding and cutting.

T. Carefully TEST the organization of your essay. The text should flow smoothly from point to point with clear transitions between the various ideas. Test the organization by outlining your major and minor points, then checking the results for logic and completeness. Alternatively, read the draft and note its progression. Look for spots where you can clarify connections between words and thus help your readers [1, p. 264].

As you read your own essay, note on a separate sheet of paper problems to solve, ideas to add, and changes to try. When you mark the actual essay, make your job easier by using these simple techniques:

a. To delete something, cross it out lightly; you may decide to resurrect it later.

b. To add a section of text, place a letter /A, B, C, D/ at the appropriate spot and write the new material on a separate sheet, keyed to the letter. Make changes within sections by crossing out what you don't want and writing the replacement above it or nearby.

c. To rearrange the organization, draw arrows showing where you want things to go, or cut up your draft and rearrange the sections by

taping them on new sheets of paper. Use whatever method works best for you [2, p. 78].

When you finish revising your draft, you might want to team up with one or more classmates and read one another's work critically. The fresh eye you bring to the task can uncover shortcomings that would otherwise go unnoticed.

Strengthening paragraph structure and development

Once you finished considering the essay as a whole, examine your paragraphs one by one, applying the FACT approach that you used for the whole paper. Make sure each paragraph FITS the paper's major focus and develops a single central idea. If a paragraph needs more support or examples, ADD whatever is necessary. If a paragraph contains ineffective or unhelpful material, CUT it. TEST the flow of ideas from paragraph to paragraph and clarify connections, both between and within paragraphs, as necessary. Ask the basic questions in the checklist that follows about each paragraph, and make any needed revisions.

- Does the paragraph have one, and only one, central idea?
- Does the central idea help to develop the thesis statement?
- Does each statement within the paragraph help to develop the central idea?
 - Does the paragraph need additional explanations, examples, or supporting details?
 - Would cutting some material make the paragraph stronger?
 - Would reorganization make the ideas easier to follow?
 - Can the connections between successive sentences be improved?
 - Is each paragraph clearly and smoothly related to those that precede and follow it?

Do not expect to escape making any changes; some readjustments will undoubtedly be needed. Certain paragraphs may be stripped down or deleted, others beefed up, still others reorganized or repositioned [1, p. 253].

Sharpening sentences and words

Next, turn your attention to sentences and words. You can improve your writing considerably by finding and correcting sentences that convey the wrong meaning or are stylistically deficient in some way. Consider, for example, the following sentences:

- Just Mary was picked to write the report.
- Mary was just picked to write the report.
- Mary was picked to write just the report.

The first sentence says that no one except Mary will write the report, the second says that she was recently picked for the job; and the third says that she will write nothing else. Clearly, each of these sentences expresses a different meaning [3, p. 215].

Now let's look at a second set of sentences:

Personally, I am of the opinion that the results of our membership drive will prove to be pleasing to all of us.

I believe the results of our membership drive will please all of us.

The wordiness of the first sentence slows the reader's pace and makes it harder to grasp the writer's meaning. The second sentence, by contrast, is much easier to grasp [4, p. 44].

Like your sentences, your words should also convey your thoughts precisely and clearly. Words are, after all, your chief means of communicating with your reader. Examine the first draft and revised version of the following paragraph, which describe the early morning actions of the writer's roommate. The underlined words identify points of revision.

First draft:

Coffee cup in hand, she moves toward the bathroom. The coffee spills noisily on the tile floor as she reaches for the light switch and turns it on. After looking briefly at the face in the mirror, she walks toward the bathtub.

Revised version:

Coffee cup in hand, she stumbles toward the bathroom. The coffee she spills on the tile makes a slapping sound as she gropes for the light switch and flips it on. After squinting briefly at the face in the mirror, she shuffles toward the bathtub [5, p. 12].

Note that the words in the first draft are general and imprecise. Exactly how does she move? With a limp? With a strut? With a spring in her step? And what does 'noisily' mean? A thud? A roar? A sharp crack? The reader has no way of knowing. Recognizing this fact, the student revised her paragraph, substituting vivid, specific words. As a result, the reader can visualize the actions more sharply [3; p. 218].

Do not confuse vivid, specific words with 'jawbreaker words' – those that are complex and pretentious. Words should promote communication, not block it.

Reading your draft aloud will force you to slow down, and you will often hear yourself stumble over problem sections. You will be more likely to uncover error such as missing words, excessive repetition, clumsy sentences, and

sentence fragments. Be honest in your evaluation; don't read in virtues that are not there or that exaggerate the writing quality.

- What sentences are not clearly expressed or logically constructed?
- What sentences seem awkward, excessively convoluted, or lacking in punch?
- What words require explanation or substitution because the reader may not know them?
- Where does my writing become wordy or use vague terms?
- Where have I carelessly omitted words or mistakenly used the wrong word? [1, p. 279]

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**ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ КОММУНИКАТИВНОЙ КОМПЕТЕНЦИИ УЧАЩИХСЯ
ПРИ ПОМОЩИ ИНТЕРАКТИВНОГО УЧЕБНОГО ТЕКСТА
FORMATION OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE OF STUDENTS USING
INTERACTIVE EDUCATIONAL TEXT**

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Аннотация

В статье рассматривается проблема интерактивного потенциала учебного текста и возможностей его использования в целях повышения эффективности обучения иностранным языкам в вузе. Интерактивность учебного текста рассматривается в контексте формирования коммуникативной компетенции. Представлены результаты работы с интерактивным текстом на продвинутом этапе обучения.