Writer's Statement for "The Research Skills Learning Gap: What Is It, and How Can It Be Fixed?"

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The learning gap has been a prevalent issue in our educational systems, and our educational leaders and even political leaders have been trying to correct it for years and years. We have looked at the learning gap between different races, gender and economical outlooks. Even though I realized my paper would not touch on these crucial areas that need to be corrected, I hoped that the research I conducted would bring up a different kind of learning gap that can be corrected within UCF and other local schools. At first, my paper started with the idea of comparing and contrasting the different high school English classes of my classmates with ENC 1102, but soon after consulting with my professor, it evolved into research on the possible learning gap that first year college students must overcome when transitioning from a high school English class to a college level English class. Once this idea was cemented, I had to start with making a survey for two of Professor Al-Harastani's ENC 1102 classes, in order to get data on what high school English classes students took and how well they felt prepared for ENC 1102 based on the literate activities they participated in their high school English classes. From here I had to analyze the data and generate results based on the student responses to the survey. Once I started realizing that there was indeed a learning gap present, I understood that this paper could be much more than just a grade in a college Composition class. I found that there was a learning gap in the research skills of students when entering college from high school. Yes, this learning gap isn't as significant as the learning gap in students that live in poverty or ones that differ in race, but this learning gap does affect thousands of students at UCF and probably at other colleges or universities.

Even after establishing a specific route for my paper, I still had struggles in creating the paper. I had to conduct lengthy research on secondary resources on how the learning gap could be corrected and relate these methods and ideas to the research skills learning gap that my paper was based on. I had to find very specific secondary sources so that I could relate it to my paper easily. Also, there was the problem of trying to find the balance in my paper of talking about my own research as well as the research of others, and then talking about them both coherently. The feedback from Professor Al-Harastani and the writing of many drafts helped me overcome these struggles.

I received feedback from my peers that mainly told me to keep doing what I was doing, but there wasn't that much valuable feedback on any major changes I should make to my paper going forward. This proved to be a little detrimental as I moved onto revising my paper and adding more information to it because I was not sure what previous information I should change. Saying this, I

was able to ask Professor Al-Harastani questions on aspects of my paper I wasn't sure about such as how much plain information from my secondary sources I should include in my paper before I started analyzing the sources in respect to my primary research. The feedback she gave me on this question helped me a lot on cutting down paragraphs that were longer than they should be as well as writing the other parts of my paper moving forward.

In general, the writing of this paper was a challenging task that took time and effort but I think I overcame my struggles well and was able to write a paper that can hopefully bring to a light a learning gap that hasn't been talked about a lot in society. This paper was directed to not only students who feel that they have struggled in Composition classes, but also to professors and other educational leaders, so that they are able to bring about change and correct this very fixable learning gap. I feel that once the research skills learning gap is corrected, students will succeed in their Composition classes as well as other important classes that require research skills.