Exemplars of Supervisor Comments

Exemplar 1 - comment supportive of assessment of criterion E Essay

Title: The Lebanese Civil War and the Involvement of the Palestine Liberation Organization

The candidate's connection with her topic of a rather personal nature: as a matter of fact, one would be hard-pressed to identify as an example that would hit closer to home. The student is Lebanese and lived in Lebanon raised by a Shia Muslim father, and Sunni mother. The EE process turned out to be a rewarding one, as it offered the candidate the unique and invaluable opportunity to study and begin to understand a conflict that she was aware of but not familiar with in terms of the historical significance of names, events and places. By looking at the facts, the student discovered that the underlying cause was the religious factionalism. In addition, the candidate was surprised how she was able to maintain an objective distance from the topic, despite her background.

One difficult aspect involving the research process was getting started in terms of laying the foundation and finding reliable historians. However, once started and after finding several good sources, everything moved forward smoothly. Another challenge involved time management and the writing and rewriting of the essay. In general, the student spent most of her time establishing how various religious groups in Lebanon viewed each other and, in relation to this, how to separate opinions from facts.

Overall, in the candidate's assessment, the EE process was very much worth it. Main future application and benefit of having gone through said process is an awareness of the importance of managing one's time well by getting a head start and spacing out time wisely. The candidate appreciated how the personal nature of the essay made her motivated to want to write and research.

Value of Commentary: The comments show the student's personal connection to the topic as well as her struggles with the process of writing an extended essay. The comments further demonstrate how the student consciously avoided bias in her research despite her obvious personal connection. Finally, the commentary focuses on how the student developed good research and time management skills through her work on the EE while demonstrating perseverance in executing the final product.

Exemplar 2:

The student was reflective in his writing process. He freely shared ideas with enthusiasm and was open to suggestions. He understood that the EE is about the process, not just the product.

Value of the commentary: The supervisor is obviously positive about this student. ***However, the comment lacks details and/or examples that address the importance of engagement in the process.*** For example, though mentioning that the student has engaged in reflection of the writing process, there is no sense of what type of reflection was done nor any mention of the outcome of such reflection.

Exemplar 3:

The student chose this area because it relates to research he is currently involved in as a temporary intern at a local university. When discussing the extended essay process, he described how his greatest challenge was understanding the different journal articles he consulted. Because of the high level of knowledge needed to fully understand the concepts involved, he re-read the articles numerous times to try to comprehend the processes they employed. Through this approach, he has improved his use and understanding of scientific language and terminology, though his grasp of some of the concepts remains somewhat vague in the essay. The student showed himself to be something of a risk-taker in choosing to look at other scientist's research and data to come to new conclusions instead of doing his own experiment.

Value of Commentary: The comment indicates student individual initiative and personal growth through engagement in the process. Even though the candidate's knowledge and understanding may be limited, this does not affect the level of engagement. ***The level of student reflection is not indicated in the commentary.***