Essay Prompt:
In many colleges and universities, the research paper is a common assignment for determining a student’s course grade. Some people argue that students don’t see much value in doing a research paper when other types of assignments may be more relevant to their major. Others argue that the research paper is a vital part of a student’s education. Do you think the research paper represents an important part of a student’s education? Support you position with reasons, examples, and explanations.

Sample Developing Competence Essay
In many colleges and universities, the research paper is a common assignment for determining a student’s grade. I do believe that the research paper is a vital part of a student’s education because it allows you to examine/show your writing skills to the professor, and it allows you to also learn new information as you are composing your research paper. I will show with these reasons along with my examples why I believe doing a research paper makes up an important part of a student’s education.

One reason why a student should write a research paper is because it shows off their writing skills. We may think that writing a simple essay will describe our writing skills, just like the WST; a research paper goes more in depth of writing to show our professor how much English composition we know. For instance, my friend who is currently working on her research paper is taking some writing classes so that she can practice her writing skills and get a better score on her paper. Even I had to review my writing when I had to write a research paper for my class and I did get an A on my paper and as a final grade for the class. So, writing competence in an important factor in a research paper.

Another reason why a research paper is because it allows the student to learn new information. People think it is not good since it doesn’t relate to their major and so disbelieve in writing a paper. But, despite the paper being non-relevant to a student’s major, it still gives us a chance to accumulate new information that we did not know before. When I was writing my research paper I had to look up a lot of details in order to write my paper and while I was doing that, I learned new information. Today I look back at my paper and am proud that I chose to write on a topic that I would remember forever since it was new to me.

Another example that I think surprised me was when I heard about a man at Stanford University. This man’s major is electrical engineering, yet while studying engineering he decided to write on a topic completely new to him just because it interested him. His decision was to write on how brain cells control arm movements. I thought that why he was going to write on this, but he said he was interested in doing so. He gave so much thought into writing about how our brain has a special role in controlling our arm movements. This news become so famous that is published in the Journal of Science and he has now been one of the 13 people to receive a Pioneer award. This award gives recognition to those who do new research in the science field. I am still shocked to hear about how this is possible—writing a paper leads to such a big award the whole world will know.

So, in conclusion, I truly believe that writing a research paper should be an important part of a student’s education because it shows off our writing skills and because it allows us to learn new important. The example of my friend who took writing classes to improve her grade and of the man who is still studying, yet still got such a big award just because he wrote on something that was new to him – and new to the world both show how developing a research paper should be an important part of a student’s education. I never knew that our talent in writing and skill of learning new information can lead to a wonderful research paper and public
So, we should all keep this in mind when writing a research paper so that we can get a passing grade in the course.

Analysis:
Overall, this essay exhibits inadequate control of the task of writing a timed essay. The essay is formulaically organized, underdeveloped, and has irrelevant examples and logical fallacies. Additionally, the essay has an accumulation of grammar, mechanical, and lexical errors that occasionally interfere with meaning.

Strengths:
1. The essay has a thesis that states the writer’s position on the issue of the prompt.
2. The essay has the basic structure of a complete essay with an introduction, several body paragraphs, and a conclusion.
3. The essay has some transitions.
4. The paragraphs show some development of the topic sentences.

Weaknesses:
1. The writer plagiarizes the prompt. It is fine to paraphrase the prompt, but do not copy it word-for-word.
2. Although there is a thesis, it is weak because it is “announcing” the writer's intention rather than directly making a claim: “I will show with these reasons along with my examples why I believe doing a research paper makes up an important part of a student’s education.”
3. The thesis is also weakened by the use of the personal pronoun I, which is not necessary in a thesis because a thesis is what the writer believes.
4. The essay has simplistic development with minimal variety of developmental strategies; the essay mainly uses narration of writer’s experience with little connection of how these anecdotes support the writer’s claims.
5. The development is not always relevant; for example, the example of engineering man does not really relate to writing a research paper assigned in a college class, which is the topic. Therefore, the writer “significantly slights” the topic, which is a common feature of essays that score a Developing Competence.
6. The development is repetitive in places, which is another common feature of essays that score a Developing Competence.
7. The essay has the logical fallacy of circular reasoning, essentially saying that writing practice is good because you practice your writing.
8. The conclusion is repetitious.
9. The language is too informal, and there are too many instances of the use of second person: you, your, yourself.
10. The vocabulary is limited.
11. The essay lacks variety in transitions, which creates a formulaic organizational structure.
12. The essay has a weak rhetorical style that is too simplistic for academic writing.
13. The essay has an accumulation of grammar and lexical errors that occasionally interfere with meaning: missing and/or incorrect words, sentence fragments, run-on sentences, comma and other punctuation errors, and verb from errors.