Feedback on Punctuation in HBS Essays (Class Of 2017)

Here are *few* improvements in punctuation in HBS essays (taken from [Harbus Essay Guide](#)) of applicants admitted to the class of 2017:

Hyphen was missing in each of these in the original sentence:

- ✓ We enabled small and <u>middle-sized</u> suppliers who only had access to one country in the region to expand their markets to all the countries where our client was present.

- ✓ I saw this challenge as my opportunity to apply everything I learned at Annapolis to a <u>real-world</u> situation.

- ✓ I threw a jab to stop him and <u>low-kicked</u> him again.

Comma missing:

- ✗ Four years ago I took my first step towards that dream and started training in kickboxing.

- ✓ Four years <u>ago, I</u> took my first step towards that dream and started training in kickboxing.

- ✗ As the Federation's president I gave press interviews and led diversity seminars in university campuses.

- ✓ As the Federation's <u>president, I</u> gave press interviews and led diversity seminars in university campuses.

Lack of clarity (this isn't punctuation):

- ✗ I was able to maintain our business's ability to quote projects after short notice of a supplier cut-off several months earlier than expected. (Difficult to understand because of its convoluted structure)

- ✓ After our supplier withdrew from the committed supply much earlier than expected, I stepped in to ensure our ability to quote for new projects. (Reworded to bring clarity)

Such mistakes aren't uncommon, more so in case of non-native speakers. In one such essay, there were at least eight clear mistakes, and this is not counting an average structure and flow, which, technically speaking, isn't a mistake.

When it comes to language - presentation (structure and flow), grammar, and punctuation - admission committees aren't looking for the class of next Pulitzer-award winner; they merely want professional writing. In fact, they are somewhat tolerant (at least for non-native speakers) to few mistakes, but we don't know if those applicants had exceptional profiles which compensated for few mistakes in their language. Strong or average profile, why would you give smallest of chance which may affect your candidacy. It's an extremely competitive process after all.