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5-21-19
FIQWS

Self Assessment Paper

From the start to end, this course has made me grow as a writer, reader, and overall student. As the semester progressed, I became more accustomed to what was required of me. Each project/assignment was an opportunity for me to work on pre-existing skills or build ones that would make me a more successful student. The evidence of this is in the work I produced over the semester. Even from the start to end of the semester, the obvious change in the work I was putting out paralleled the struggle I had to go through

Vocalizing my ideas was a skill I learnt over this semester that helped become a better student as the semester progressed. The first major project of the semester, Digital StoryTelling, was one that seemed manageable at first. I soon "ate" my words when I found out I must dictate my own writing. Even though I have always been a decent reader, reading aloud and the idea of someone listening to my work made me nervous. I ended up making 30 attempts to record my voice and I was dissatisfied with all of them. Soon, I found myself making less mistakes with each recording as I became more comfortable speaking, until I finally recorded an audio file I was satisfied with. The good grade I received on the assignment made me confident in my vocal skills. I never would have imagined that a class focused on writing would require a project so heavily based around my voice. This project ended up making me more versatile as the semester continued and adapt to complete the necessary work provided to me.

When I first started college, it was hard to imagine that peer review would be as helpful as it was. During my first semester, all of my classes seemed to stress the idea of doing work independent of help from my peers. As a result I was caught off guard when such a huge importance was placed on peer review in this class. I was even reluctant at first, to the benefits of peer review due to the fact that it never seemed constructive in my past experience. My whole outlook on it changed when I started working on the research paper. I had only worked on a project this big once before, and I received a lot of hands-on help from my highschool teacher every step of the way .I felt as though the photographer I was suppose to do research on didn't have a lot of information and so my thesis would have to be very limited. To add on to all the obstacles I believed were in my path, I was still stuck on just coming up with anything for my thesis. On my own the only semblance of a thesis I came up with was "How did Ulmann reveal the truth of people in dying societies." In the end it wasn't a thesis and was very vague. During the first peer review workshop, my classmates gave me assistance with immediate problems concerning my work. I was able to rephrase and expand on ideas I was struggling with on my own. With my writer's block being cured, I was able to further evolve my writing. The final version of my thesis ended up being "Doris Ulmann documented cultures to preserve them throughout the ages for future generations , but she could not capture the whole essence of these cultures due to her being an outsider." Compared to what I first come up with, I was more satisfied and ended up completing an assignment I first thought would be insurmountable.

Even in Prof. Handy's course, the quality of weekly Reflection papers I was given improved drastically throughout the semester due to the constant feedback given to me. As I first entered the course, I was a little wary of writing only 3 pages of reflection for a 70+ page reading. Even as I annotated what I read, squeezing so much important information into 3 pages seemed like a harder task than it actually was. Everything I wrote seemed to be vague and not concise at all. One example could be seen from my first reflection paper on photographer Dawoud Bey, "His work from the 1990's gives me a sort of portal to the past. I can get a glimpse of what type of environment my mother must have been shaped by. A lot of his photos that I have seen show you people in their most natural state without alterations to their characters or attempts to modify them in any way. In the reading, it stated that he did it out of respect for the people and it shows through all his work." With no context whatsoever, one can still observe how from this quote that idea was just stated and never expanded upon. This trend soon ended as I became more aware through feedback how to fully flesh out what I have read. My later reflection papers like the one on photographer Nan Goldin showed considerable change compared to my first one, "Susan Fletcher, a performer, who met Goldin at the age of fourteen recalled that the girl loved to record the lives of her friends and subjects through visual journals. She drew the conclusion that Goldin did this as a coping mechanism to help her deal with her loss of her sister. I agree with this assessment from what I have read, since it seemed like Goldin never properly mourned for her sister. Goldin did not find the closure from her absent parents and the broken home they created, she simply rebelled to the point where she thought there

was nothing else left for her to do but move on ." The way I expanded on and fully fleshed out the ideas I spoke on is proof that I as a writer have grown considerably due to the skills I have nurtured throughout the semester.

In-closing, throughout this course I have been able to develop my skills as a writer, editor, and even a speaker. This FIQWS course has been fundamental in helping me realize my flaws in not only writing, but in several areas. Though my skills have improved tremendously in only a short 4 months, I know there is room for growth and must continue to better hone my skills.