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My Development as a writer in FIQWS 10108

This semester changed the way I write and the way I think about writing. At the start of the course I often wrote to describe what I noticed. By the end I learned to argue, to use evidence, and to choose the best form and language for different topics. The ecoliteracy narrative, the poem response, the PSA, and the position paper shows this development. Each project taught me a different skill like close reading, storytelling with purpose, using different formats to communicate, and using research to support my work. In this essay I will explain what I did for each unit assignment, how that work connects to the course learning objectives, and how my ideas about language and writing have changed. I also list the skills I still need to build and my plan for continuing to improve.

My Unit 1 story, “Garden of Wonder,” began as a personal memory of a school trip to the New York Botanical Garden. The original draft had clear and vivid sensory details, sunlight on my face, birdsong, the giant corpse flower, but the writing lacked a clear argument. In revision I focused on structure, I clarified the turning point at the corpse flower and shortened the ending to show how that moment changed my responsibility toward nature. This revision taught me an important lesson, good writing is about more than beautiful sentences, it is about fixing those sentences so they support a clear idea. That lesson improved my drafting and revision skills and helped me see drafting as organizing meaning, not just fixing grammar.

Unit 2, my poem response to Mary Oliver's "Wild Geese," taught me the value of using simple language. Close reading showed me how Oliver's direct address and plain word choice create trust and moral impact. Analyzing lines like "You do not have to be good" and "the soft animal of your body" helped me understand how voice and tone can persuade without using force. This unit changed my view of the way of writing and voice, instead of something I needed to hide or correct, my own way of speaking became a tool to reach different readers. That idea helped me into the PSA and the position paper, where I used plain language to make difficult ideas easier to understand.

The PSA project forced me to work in a different mode. I made a short video script and a design to reduce food waste at CCNY. The biggest challenge was saying something useful in very few words and choosing images that support my message. I learned to write short lines like "Take less, Donate more, Compost," that are easy to remember and think about. This project taught me to think about the audience and that students are busy, so messages must be short, quick and clear.

Unit 4, the position paper "Saving the South Bronx," pushed me to use research for government rules and decisions. I used sources like ICCT and NYC health data to show that the oldest diesel trucks cause the most harm and that targeting them gives large benefits for health per dollar spent. Writing this paper meant turning complicated facts into easy steps to follow like grants, vouchers, upgrades, programs, and financial protections for small owners. I learned to plan for people's concerns, especially the worry that replacements are too expensive for small truck owners, and to include financial help in the plan. This unit shows that writing can be persuasive and practical, it must explain evidence and give fair solutions.

When I compare my work to the course objectives, I see clear progress. I now view language differences as resources, my own voice became a strength when I used plain language to speak to people. I improved reading, drafting, and revising, Unit 1's revision and Unit 4's clearer use of sources are examples. I worked out different goals and audiences by changing tone and format between the PSA and the position paper. I focused on working through peer reviews and planning. I practiced writing analysis and multiple formats with the PSA, and I learned how to take a position and defend it with my position paper. Finally, I used online sources and practiced quoting, paraphrasing, and explaining evidence in simple words, though I recognize I still need to do better.

There are three main areas I want to improve. First, combining information from different sources, I can summarize and quote, but I need practice combining studies to make a great argument. My plan is to write short comparison paragraphs that pull together two studies and explain what they mean. Second, design skills, I want to learn basic layout and color choices to make posters and web pages more effective. Third, explaining data clearly, I want to show numbers and facts in a way that's easy for readers to understand.

This demonstrates a change from curiosity to action. The Garden of Wonder began as a memory that taught me to notice, the PSA and the position paper asked me to use what I noticed to change behavior and policy. I will keep practicing revision, testing messages, and learning design and explaining data skills so my writing can better inform and improve.