

Self-Reflection Essay

Even though this term was to go the length of three months, it feels like less time has passed from start until now, where we stand nearly at the end. There is much room for one to grow as time goes on, and this is no different. Admittedly, it is a bit more stunted in terms of technicality and function as those sort of peaked out in high school, but while I didn't grow vertically in writing, I definitely grew horizontally. By that, I mean that my scope of writing increased in diversity. While I'd previously been tasked with writing essays on fixed topics or aims, like argumentative or historical pieces, it really was only this year that I had been given something new that allowed me to think more deeply on topics I didn't necessarily think could be written on before. How that came to be so will be articulated in depth here.

The first writing work of the term, which I can't remember the name of, was ultimately unremarkable. It was mainly in the second assignment, the NYC Spoken Narrative, that I began to open up a bit more. The subject matter I chose was my neighborhood, since, by the name of the assignment, I assumed there would be a heavy focus on the city itself. Although I eventually found out that we were allowed to write about any part of our own culture, as many of my classmates went on to, I still went forward with my original plan. I am a Filipino, and for a decent part of my life up until the present I have had some component of the country's aspects in my day-to-day performances. My family themselves are even quite vocal about their pasts when at home, and yet despite all of that, I have felt greatly disconnected from that component. Whenever it comes to personality, I feel that more of my own traits have been

lifted from various parts of the city itself, whether it be some part of the “New York Accent”, or the general wayfinding skill that tends to come with it. In that way, focusing on my own neighborhood as if it were my own culture sort of made sense. I was still prideful in my Filipino components, but I ultimately leaned in more to what I knew of New York City. Through that, I learnt to analyze my individuality, and further bolstered my ability to look deeper into things.

The NYC Spoken Narrative’s final product was a bit more stilted than what would have been preferable, but it served as a good first step towards the way ahead. The next major step along the way was the Inquiry-Based Research Essay, which leaned more into my personal outstanding ability to write nonfiction texts as ordered back in High School. I felt that my question of ‘which proposal for transit expansion would have been better for NYC’ was a bit oblique, but I still tried my best to work through it. That being said, the nature of the assignment being a free-topic writing assignment allowed me to still push into that, and thus tap into my own knowledge and sources to make my point. Through all of that I began to make more intensive use of databases compared to previous writing assignments, with websites such as the Internet Archive, Google Scholar, and various CUNY-integrated components being involved and allowing me to better illustrate my path to my final claim. It was also the more vast nature of those respective resources, whether they be explicit to my cause, only distantly related, or somewhere in between, that forced me to think even harder about how to link them. Whether it’d be an estimated map of routings from the 1930s’, to a 1960s’ plan from the MTA themselves, to a blog from the 2000s’, it was a long and diverse chain of linkings that satisfyingly came together in the end. In that regard, the Inquiry-Based Research Essay helped

me figure out how to effectively use databases, and assisted me in better understanding causality, and how to link each occurrence of such.

The Inquiry-Based Research Essay ended up being a bit longer than needed, having around 1.5 times the maximum word count. It was fortunate that I was provided leniency, but it highlighted the fact that word ceilings existed for a reason, and should not be so recklessly ignored in the future. In between those two major steps in self-realization came the more minor assignments. Such included the rhetorical questions, which I admittedly often skimmed before writing responses, but those gave me more space to think critically when I did. Additionally was the usage of all of the items learned in the former assignment in the writing of an essay based on structural racism for another class, where the understanding of causality made the citation of the text to the essay quite easy.

Overall, this term of Creative Writing was fairly simple, yet so wide in its ultimate impact on my writing ability. Small items like my analysis of myself and usage of databases did create, and will help to create more intensive texts in the future. College is a long road, and although this is the first easy step, it will still leave a long-lasting impression on the way that I write for road ahead, for the better.