**Critical Reading & Writing** (Fall 2020)

**Assignment #3: Literacy Narrative Research Project**

*This project is worth 30% of your overall course grade.*

Much of our class discussion this semester has been about the different and complex social contexts that create, validate, and proliferate the literacy practices of a culture and, more specifically, the different discourse communities and individuals of which they are composed. Moreover, this course was designed, in part, to develop your understanding of the social, linguistic, and cultural influences that have shaped you as a writer, student, and individual. Therefore, this *project* is an opportunity for you to reflect upon your own literacy learning as well as that of your classmates and present your understanding of those experiences in writing.

**Major Components:**

* Classmate Interview & Literacy Profile (15%)
* Research Article Write-Ups (10%)
* Literacy Narrative (Rough Draft) (10%)
* Literacy Narrative (Final Draft) (65%)

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STEP ONE: Research Article Write-Up

For your literacy narrative, you will need to incorporate **at least one article** into your essay that we did not read for class. That means you’ll be doing your own research! How exciting! And in order to share that excitement with others, I’ve created a discussion forum called “Research Article Write-Up.” Here, you’ll post at least 250-350 words coming to terms with one article you’ve found.

This post should summarize the text and outline how you plan to incorporate it into your paper. Talk about why you chose it, and how you intend to useit in your paper. In other words, how does it fit with your main theme or “central finding”? How does it help you to analyze your literacy experience and present your narrative in a more interesting, critical and complex way?

Make sure to provide a link to and MLA Citation of the source you are writing about as well.

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STEP TWO: Classmate Interview & Literacy Profile Requirements *(15% of the assignment grade)*

The purpose of this project component is for you to reflect upon your own literacy learning in relation to that of your classmates (as well as the literacy narratives of Sherman Alexie and Malcolm X), and present your understanding of those experiences in writing.

At some point in Week 10, you will be interviewing your classmates about events, people, places, institutions, or things that have influenced their literacy learning. They will, in turn, be interviewing you. You will then write a brief “literacy profile” that describes your peer's experiences.

Again, the profile you write about your classmate should give the class a clear picture of some of the influences that shaped how he or she learned to read, write, and/or speak. **At the same time, your profile should highlight some of the interesting or significant features of his or her history—things that stand out to you as being unique or important in some way.**

Here are some questions to get you started, but you should ask about whatever else you are interested in learning about your partner’s experience.

***What is your earliest memory of reading and/or writing?***

***Can you name a person/group of people or something (a place/institution/object) who/that was extremely influential in your literacy acquisition? What did they/it do for you?***

***What kind of books did you like reading when you were younger? What kind of books do you like reading now?***

***What sort of writing do you engage in now? Personal? Academic? Social? Why is this writing important to you?***

***What is the most memorable literacy event that you can remember?***

***What other types of “literacies” do you possess? In other words, are you a musician or an athlete or a visual artist or a gamer? How did you come to acquire these “literacies” and why are they important to you?***

Once you have had the chance to interview one of your classmates about their literacy journey, it is time to write about what you learned from that conversation.

This profile needs to:

* be at least 400 words
* present the experience(s) of your classmate and what you believe to be significant about them
* relate your peer’s literacy history to your own experience in some way
* reference the ideas or phrasings of either Sherman Alexie, Malcolm X, James Gee, or Bronwyn T. Williams

**This profile will be posted in the discussion forum sometime before class on Monday, 10/26.**

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STEP THREE: Writing the Paper

This class has been dedicated to the exploration and critical reflection of your experiences with and relationship to **literacy**. We have read about and outlined critical reading strategies to improve our thinking and writing processes. We have discussed and written about the ways in which language is a “tool” that allows us to make meaning, enact significant social identities, and engage with many different groups of people. We have also analyzed the myriad social, cultural, economic, linguistic, and ideological contexts within which we all must navigate as part of our social and academic lives. And over the course of the last three or four weeks we have spent most of our time thinking deliberately and critically about our own personal experiences with literacy and everything that surrounds it. Now is your chance to put it all together.

This literacy narrative should tell **the story of you as a literate person** taking into account all of the different and complex ways that we understand what “literacy” even means. In this personal evidence-based, position paper, you will utilize your own experience, scholarly source material you found on RIT’s Databases, and your own primary research (the interviews you conducted with your peers) to create some sort of “argument” or develop a theme connected to literacy; how it is defined, how it impacts individuals, and what it means to be a writer, reader, thinker, speaker in the 21st-century. You will need to talk about significant experiences (or sites) of your own literacy acquisition as well as important people that have supported you along the way, or maybe even different tools and technologies that have played major roles in your development.

Remember that **you are telling a story**, a story that, ultimately, must have a point. In telling the story and making this point you will need to do the following things:

* Incorporate a direct quotation from and critical discussion of at least 2 scholarly sources
  + You can choose to use and integrate one (1) source from the database and one (1) class reading <<OR>> you can choose to use and integrate two (2) sources from the database.
* Point to something specific your classmate said to you about their literacy experience during the interviews you conducted.

**ROUGH DRAFT** (at least 1000 words) **DUE** in the **Assignment Folder sometime before class on Wednesday, 11/18.**

**After I provide you with feedback on your rough draft, your FINAL DRAFT will be DUE** no later than Sunday, December 6th. (6+ pages, no less than 1500 words)

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STEP FOUR: Drafting a Project Statement

Over the last couple of weeks, you have read literacy narratives, filled out your brainstorming worksheet, interviewed a classmate, written a profile about your classmate’s literacy experience, and read through several of these profiles on our Discussion Forum in myCourses. Hopefully, this has helped you begin to see some sense of direction or some different ***themes*** emerging in these stories.

Now, as you consider what you want to write about, you will need to consider the overall **“main theme”** (or “so what” point) that will guide *your* literacy narrative. Your main theme, also known as your central finding, should guide and control the overall direction of the essay. For example, you might have discovered that you were steered away from certain kinds of literacy, but this motivated you to pursue those types of literacy even more fervently. Or, you may notice an insight emerge that helps explain why you read, write, and/or speak as you do today. These are the types of realizations that will help to inform the kind of secondary research you will conduct.

So, for this portion of our final project I want you to write a **project statement** (no less than 150 words) that will give a general overview of the main theme of your personal literacy narrative, and briefly outline the significant events, people, places, technologies, or texts from your life that you will be describing and analyzing.

**Please post this project statement to the corresponding discussion forum on our myCourses page sometime before class on Monday, November 2.**

**Literacy Narrative Scoring Criteria**

* Narrative contains moments of compelling argumentation (through explicit reflection or implied through story events) regarding listening, reading, writing, speaking and/or another aspect of language.
* Narrative is sophisticated in thought and communicates unique ideas.
* Narrative contains strategic moments of rich detail and in-scene writing that contribute to the argument and rhetorical effect.
* Key moments of the narrative are evenly and sufficiently developed throughout.
* Narrative is appropriate for an audience of first year writing students.
* Narrative is well-organized with strategic transitions between ideas.
* Sources are incorporated smoothly to enhance the argument and adhere to MLA guidelines for citation (see me if MLA style does not match the style of your writing).
* Narrative answers the “so what?” question.