

Assignment 3: Collaborative Essay

The goal of this collaborative project is to use a combination of informative and narrative writing to illuminate and explore some larger social, political, cultural, popular, or economic phenomenon in relation to writing (a millennial literacy sponsor). To support your interpretation of the concept's impact on writing, you will use concrete, specific evidence.

Your collaborative essay should take up a topic that has significance and relevance for/within your own life. For example, though an essay about required penmanship classes is relevant to some people's literacy practices today, your group would need to interweave your own experiences somehow into that topic—this isn't impossible, but it might be easier for your group to choose a first-hand experience. Your social, political, cultural, popular, or economic experiences can and possibly should be as mundane and everyday as possible: texting your friends and family, keeping a bullet journal, receiving a snapchat from a classmate, updating your resume, etc. In fact, the idea or concept your group works with should be one that has developed out of your other writing assignments, in-class free writes, journal entries, and readings thus far. That said, in this project, you are free to incorporate evidence you developed from earlier writing. Of course, if you use material from any earlier writing, your group will need to revise and reshape it so that it fits the current purpose to effectively communicate your group's idea.

Organizing Questions:

- What kinds of evidence will help us describe or question an idea or concept that matters to us?
- Where can I look for stories or concrete experiences to build our interpretation?
- What is at stake with this issue? In other words, why does it matter? In still other words, why is it important to examine and discuss?
- From what major social, cultural, academic, economic, and/or historical trends does this issue or question emerge, and/or what future directions does it indicate?

Goals:

- Connect personal observations or experiences with writing to a larger idea.
- Collaboratively identify, develop, describe, and discuss a concept.
- Practice planning, drafting, and revising with peers.
- Organize, develop, and consider diverse ideas about a topic.
- Evaluate evidence and make decisions about how best to present it in a group.
- Learn to negotiate choices for effective communication in a specific situation.

Tasks:

For your project your group will need to:

- Explore, describe, and/or define your idea.
- Provide evidence or support to help illustrate this idea (for example, personal experiences, other kinds of stories, descriptions, comparisons to other concepts).
- Use a form or genre that will most effectively communicate and illustrate your group's concept (analytical essay, reflective essay, story, poem, memoir, graphic essay, etc.).
- Think about what your group wants the reader to get out of reading (and/or viewing) this project.
- Think about what you want to get out of doing this project.

Note: Outside sources are not required, but if you use them, you will need to provide citations, as appropriate.

Options:

Option 1: Consider a current political, social, economic, cultural, or popular impact on literacy practices and use your own experiences and/or the experience of others you know (friends or family members) to illustrate specific aspects of the impact and/or complicate how others understand that impact. This may require some interviews and/or research.

Option 2: Write a mixed-genre essay, a blend of creative and analytical that brings together different types of writing or different forms in order to express your group's idea. If you choose this option, your group can piece together an essay from things you've already written, but you should also frame these fragments with a narrative that both describes your group's concept and how these pieces fit into this essay. While writing an essay in this form can be innovative and effective, your group also wants the reader to get your point. You can include memoir, analysis, poetry, philosophy—whatever forms you think will help your group to illustrate your phenomenon.

Option 3: Consider the unconscious or unacknowledged stereotypes of different cultural groups and how these are challenged or perpetuated via social media. For example, you could look at news coverage on Facebook Watch, advertisements and advertising algorithms, the proliferation of fake Instagram accounts, social media influencers, or even sharing practices (of memes, music videos, statuses, movie clips, etc.) within social media groups/ circles. Using your own experiences and/ or the experiences of others close to you, depict whether or not these representations are accurate, as well as what effect (positive or negative) they may have on fostering inter-cultural understanding and respect.

Option 4: Write a narrative essay that interweaves your group's chosen millennial literacy sponsor with other versions you've read about or seen in other contexts (perhaps another course looked at transnational/ multilingual communication methods between family members differently). However, rather than doing a simple compare/ contrast with these other versions, you should engage with these differences—that is, really work with these ideas and think about how they inform our understanding, how your group agrees or disagrees with these ideas, how they help us understand something (a)new. One way to approach this option is to analyze an event or experience that relies on your concept. For example, your group could attend a campus meeting, community event, or theater production and explore your group's concept in this situation.