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Honors 3100

Spring 2016

**Unit 1: Literacy Narrative on Place**

**Introduction**

People often think of personal experience as a non-academic form of writing. But many scholars, including Donald Murray, argue that personal experience can serve as evidence to support your arguments. Because personal experience can be useful in academic settings, it is important to learn how to craft reflective personal experience into the form of a narrative. Writing a reflective personal narrative involves more than relating a series of events; rather, it focuses on finding the *significance* in the series of events.

**Brainstorming and Research**

Start your literacy narrative by considering your *history* as a reader, writer, speaker, listener, and thinker. Think about your attitudes toward literacy and how those attitudes relate to particular places or settings in your life. What kinds of reading and writing have you done in the past? How did you feel about this reading and writing? What particular literacy memories are significant to you? What people and *places* have shaped your ideas about literacy? As you think about the answers to these questions, you should begin **to focus on 1-2 specific events or memories** that you want to explore in more depth. Using some of the narrative writing strategies we’ve discussed in class, (sensory detail, pacing, dialogue, etc.), write a narrative – a story – about those experiences and places.

**Analysis/Reflection**

As you tell your story, you will arrive at an overall argument, central “finding,” thesis, or conclusion about a significant place in your literacy life. You might, for example, reach an insight about how a certain class impacted you as a reader and writer today. Or you might describe an ongoing conflict or tension that you experience when you move from one setting to another. Or you might write about how attending a place like church, for instance, has helped you with your academic writing. Regardless, you should examine and analyze a re-occurring place in your literacy history.

During the process of writing and analyzing your story, you may explore the ways in which your ideas about literacy intersect with your ideas about place. In other words, think about how the place has influenced you (as a writer, student, person, etc.). This reflective analysis could be located at the beginning of the story, at the end of the story, or interspersed throughout. Regardless, it should be substantive and thoughtful.

**Goals**

The goals of this assignment are (one) to use storytelling strategies to write a personal narrative and (two) to use reflective analysis to make connections between your past influence(s) and your current literate self.

**Content**

For this assignment, you’ll write a 3-5 page paper in which you focus on one (or possibly two) influences or events in your personal literacy development. Not only will you want to tell the story of that influence, but you’ll want to spend time reflecting on *why* it was influential and *how* it brought you to where you are today.

**The Process and Writing Calendar**

**Monday, February 8 – Wednesday, February 10** – Conferences (first draft due at your conference)

**Thursday, February 11** – Second draft due (bring two copies)

**Tuesday, February 16** – Portfolio 1 due (along with the final draft of the Literacy Narrative)

**Rubric/Requirements**

(Please note that some items, like analysis/reflection, are worth more points than others. Also, these requirements are subject to change as announced.)

Structure/Organization:

* Follow prompt, use approved topic
* Clear purpose
* Focus on 1-2 experiences or places
* Well-written thesis that represents the essay in its entirety
* Introduction is attention-getting
* Clear organization that emphasizes content and analysis over chronology
* Plot: beginning, middle, and end are present and developed (though not necessarily in that order)
* Thoughtful, appropriate, and logical sequence/plot with appropriate paragraphing
* Clear transitions
* Resolution/conclusion

Development/Detail:

* Analysis/reflection explores the relationship between the event and your current literary self
* Descriptive, vivid, and sensory language
* Shows, doesn’t (just) tell
* Figurative language, including metaphors or similes, to describe the experience
* Developed characters
* Voice: maintains a consistent and life-like voice
* Dialogue: brings characters’ voices to life
* Appropriate to the audience
* Avoids clichés, language that is too formal, and easy answers
* Demonstrates maturity and professionalism
* Revision – makes substantial changes from draft to draft, not just sentence-level changes

Polish:

* Clarity
* Grammar and mechanics
* Active verbs
* Sentence structure and variety
* Punctuation