

Paper Three: Technology and its Role in Writing

Introduction:

For this writing assignment, you will be writing a collective paper with two of your classmates. Academics on the whole rarely write alone – in most disciplines, multiple authors will appear on a paper or on a book. Writing collaboratively, then, is a skill we will experiment with in this third assignment. The assignment itself is designed to be *dialogical* – this means that, by writing together and by bringing in other voices for your paper, you will meld different voices into a discussion of how technology impacts writing. What your group argues is up to you, but you will need to develop some sort of argument about technology and writing; this time, your argument *does need to come down to writing!*

Collaborative Writing:

Collaborative writing can be tricky, not only because of time constraints, but because you are all different people with different voices and different experiences when it comes to writing, so how to go about writing one paper that “comes together” cohesively and with a single (if multivocal) voice might be difficult. There are many ways to go about this – you can use Google Docs to collaboratively construct a paper in real-time (docs.google.com), you could each write a section of the paper and then bring your ideas together (though this will probably require significant revising and conversation in the later stages), or you could sit down together and write it with one person at the computer and the others speaking. How you do it is up to you, as long as you all work together and dialogue about the piece as it is being created (I will have a way of making you accountable for this time at the end of the unit).

Requirements:

This paper needs to follow these guidelines:

1. 4-5 double-spaced pages, Times New Roman 12-pt font, 1-inch margins (as per MLA guidelines)
2. In addition, each member should turn in a 2-3 page interview transcript/notes, which will be due in class on Wednesday, 2/16 (also double-spaced, 12-pt TNR, 1in)
3. The paper should echo all three members’ writing experiences as evidence of whatever you are saying about technology and writing, and it should also echo or reference the experiences of the three people interviewed for the paper (how can you bring ideas from all of the interviews together to create one argument?)

Note: this paper has *no genre requirements* and *no structural requirements*. In other words, you can piece this together however your group decides it would be best to do so. Six first-person narratives? Not a problem, as long as some sort of conclusion comes out of it. A blog authored by three people? Fine with me. An argumentative essay? That’s probably the easiest option! However you choose to do it, be sure your group *agrees* and be sure your group chooses a form that will contribute to the group’s argument (in other words, don’t write a story just because it’s more fun – have a reason why that you can articulate in the paper).

Grading Guidelines:

This paper, while not a research paper, will be largely based on the action research you do in preparation for the paper. I will look to see that you have incorporated information from the interviews and, where appropriate, cited the interviews and any other information you used in your group to construct the paper. You will also complete a group evaluation sheet when you turn in the paper on 2/23, which will ask you to evaluate not only your own work but your group members’ work on the paper – your grade will depend, in part, on how your group members rate your contribution to the final product.

Deadlines:

Wednesday, 2/16: Action Research Interview and Notes

For this assignment, find someone with whom to conduct a single *in-depth interview* about their writing experiences in the online space you wrote about for paper 2 and how they conceptualize writing in that writing environment. Some tips:

1. You will want to talk to someone who can give you a lot to work with – be creative with who you choose, and choose someone who you know will take it seriously.
2. Develop a set of questions before the interview; these can be questions revolving around the individual’s previous writing experiences, what experiences with the technology have most shaped the individual as a writer, and what experiences with the writing technology stand out in the individual’s memory. I would suggest at least five, if not closer to ten, questions. Be sure to ask questions that aren’t too “leading;” keep it open-ended so that you get honest responses!
3. If possible, either videotape the interview or use a tape recorder (or be ready to take some serious word-for-word notes); you will develop the conversation into a written transcript for class next Wednesday.

Monday 2/21: Rough Drafts due for in-class peer review – be sure to have a DIGITAL COPY available!

Wednesday 2/23: Final Drafts due in class – be ready to discuss your group’s findings and thoughts about collaborative writing!