Writing Project 3: A Theory of Writing

Background and Overview

A “theory” is a system of explanation, a particular way of thinking that helps to explain phenomena in the world. As writers learn, work, and grow, many of us find it helpful to construct a “theory of writing”: a description of what we understand writing to be and how our own writing practices have worked in the past, currently work, and might work in the future.

For your third project—and as an important part of your final e-portfolio—you will have the opportunity to construct your own theory of writing as a way of helping you to chart, analyze, and enrich your own writing. This theory should be developed from your literacy practices throughout the course and beyond.

In this short essay, you will reflect on your development as a reader, writer, and critical thinker and explain how your learning has led you to a specific theory of writing. Your theory should be informed by your literacy practices and the learning outcomes of the course. It should also suggest how your prior experiences with writing will prepare you for successful engagement in future personal, academic, professional, and civic occasions for writing. Your reflection and theory of writing should be supported by concrete evidence (i.e. quotes, examples, screen shots, anecdotes, and/or other examples) from your own work and composing practices.

Requirements and Deliverables

1. Your essay should include a thesis that makes a claim about what you understand the act of writing to be, and your essay should be organized in such a way that a reader can follow your thinking and reasoning from paragraph to paragraph and within each paragraph.

2. Your theory of writing should illustrate your current struggles, accomplishments, and abilities as a reader, writer, and critical thinker.

3. Your essay should relate your writing and your writing process to one bullet point of each of the four outcome areas of the “WPA Outcomes Statement” (i.e. “Rhetorical Knowledge,” “Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing,” etc.). Additionally, you should discuss how you used one of the Habits of Mind from the “Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing” to achieve one or more of the WPA Outcomes.

4. You should support your claims about writing with specific and concrete references to your own work (i.e. notes, process work, passages from your essays, project reflections, Writer’s Journals, feedback on your peer’s work, etc.). This support might take the form of quotes, screenshots, excerpts, narrated examples, peer reviews, anecdotes, etc.
5. Within your essay, you should not merely provide support; instead, you should explain what your support is support *for* and how that support works. In other words, as you offer evidence to your readers, make sure you explain what that evidence is meant to demonstrate or prove to them.

6. Your theory of writing should conclude by suggesting how your growth as a reader, writer, and critical thinker throughout first-year composition prepares you for future personal, academic, and professional writing and research projects.

7. You should include 2-3 multimodal elements such as photographs, hyperlinks to relevant materials, and so forth. You must make sure your reader understands why you are including these elements and why including them enriches your piece of writing. Since you will be making concrete references to your previous work, these multimodal elements could be the same multimodal elements that appeared in your other writing projects or assignments.

8. Your completed essay should have a title and be approximately 1700 words in length.

**Project Submission**

- Rough Draft: Your rough draft will be submitted for peer review and to your e-portfolio.
- Revised Draft: Your revised draft should be uploaded to your e-portfolio.

**Tips**

- Get started early.
- Review this week’s materials and discussions, and pay close attention to the template materials.
- Set a writing/research schedule and stick to it.