

Assignment: Educational Memoir (5 points for version one; 5 points for version two)

Length: Three to four pages (1.5 spacing)

Description: You are currently a member of an educational community in the northeastern United States, and are increasingly familiar with the education culture at MIT (a fire hose?). Educational systems, and our experiences of them, are shaped by a variety of cultural forces. Some, if not all, of your formal K through 12 education may have taken place in another country. Extended family and social community are also influential in educating us about how the world works and what our place is in the world.

Ask yourself the following questions. How do you know what you know? What have your informal and formal experiences of learning been? What is the most comfortable way to communicate what you know? Why?

In your memoir, explicitly discuss the environments, people, systems, and tasks that have most shaped you as an educated young adult and provide an analytical reflection on your educational experiences. Consider the following sorts of questions as you get started:

- What *informal* experiences have had the most significant effect on your knowledge of yourself and the world--e.g., with parents, siblings, extended family, and friends?
- What *formal* experiences have had the most significant effect on your knowledge of yourself and the world—e.g., in schools, clubs, competitions, and sports teams?
- How has culture (race, gender, religion, class, history, language, etc.) affected your educational experience?
- What impact did the “K-12” (or the equivalent) school curriculum, activities, and pedagogical practices have on your understanding of society and yourself in terms culture (e.g., race, gender, class, history, language).
- What channels of communication have been typical of your educational experience: *reading* hard copy (literature, text books, handouts, articles); *reading* digital sources; in-class or homework *writing* tasks, or private diary entries; *listening* to live teachers and family/community members; *discussion* with live teachers, students, and family members; on-line classes of any kind? Other?

Grading is based primarily on the quality of the analysis and the links you make between your experience and the cultural influences we have discussed in class.

Peer Review Workshop

1. At home, write as much as you can for your first version of your educational memoir. The more you have done to discuss with your group, and to receive feedback, the less work you will have for your final version.
2. Watch the short video *No one writes alone* to understand the role that informal readers of our writing can play in refining communication strategy.
3. In class, you will work in small groups. Prepare to summarize your content and explain how you made choices about what to include.
3. Choose a half to one-page piece of your memoir that you would like to review in detail with your group members. Print out three copies of this piece to use in the workshop.
4. Make an appointment with Jane to discuss any questions or problems with your draft.
5. In response to the comments of your peer reviewers, adjust your strategy, content and expression. Hand in your “best” first version in the class after the peer review workshop.

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