EDUC 100 Assignment #3 Final paper

Schedule for In Class Writing on Final Paper

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Mondays</th>
<th>March 8:</th>
<th>Finalize Proposal (bring draft to class)</th>
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<td>March 15:</td>
<td>Produce Outline; work on Citations (format)</td>
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<td>March 22:</td>
<td>First Draft Due: bring to class for peer editing</td>
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<td>March 29:</td>
<td>Revising; Editing; Refine Introduction &amp; Conclusion</td>
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Evaluation of Final Paper  (total marks: 30%)
You will be marked on 3 parts:
1. Participation in in-class writing (5%)
2. First Draft  (5%)
3. Final Paper  (20%)

Criteria for evaluation (in addition to criteria for written work detailed in course outline)
- Explains/explores/examines connections between personal experience and social, cultural and political issues related to education
- Choice of complex area of experience to analyze
- Use of readings to develop critical stance on the issues

Writing an educational autobiography: connecting personal experience to the social, political and cultural meaning of education

You have been asked to write an educational autobiography and over the past several weeks you have been reading, discussing and analyzing many chapters from Experiencing Difference. We have examined the educational autobiographies in Experiencing Difference and found that they all share some basic features. This handout builds from our analysis of these basic features and is meant to provide you a kind of a road-map for generating the kind of constructing, writing up, and editing that your own personal critical narrative will involve. We call this a rubric – a rubric is a set of guidelines or “rules” for doing something.

Purpose of the assignment: To get students to connect one of their own personal experiences to a larger social issue in education and society.

Form of the assignment: An educational autobiography.

Audience: The ideal reader for this assignment is someone you wish to interest in an educational event that has impacted your life in a profound or meaningful way. (Another important reader is your instructor – who you could think of as a friendly but knowledgeable and critical reader – like a book editor for Experiencing Difference).

Criteria for assessment: Is it a good (compelling, thought-provoking, meaningful, concise) story? Does it make links to between personal experience and social, cultural and political issues related to education? Does it explain/explore/examine connections with course material? Is it a sufficiently complex area of experience to analyze? Does it use the readings to develop a critical stance on the issues? Does it include issues that have been explored in class, or does it raise some new issues?
Features of the Personal Educational Autobiography:

Title: A title gives a clear idea of what your piece is about or the issue that you will explore.

Development of the Paper:

The power of an educational autobiography lies in the ability to make links to more universal human experience through story. It does not simply tell a story. Rather, the writer shows the reader how a personal experience can be linked also to bigger themes, issues, and theories. The great thing about an educational bibliography is that there are no right or wrong answers; the difficult thing is that you have to convince the reader that your interpretation of experience is meaningful and connected to bigger issues.

The development of the educational autobiography has several distinct parts. It starts with a key event or experience, it links that experience to a broader pattern within a theme or set of issues, and then it draws in other sources you have been reading in the course.

A key event or experience at the core of the narrative: This is the "centre of gravity" of the piece. Most of the chapters in Experiencing Difference are organized around a key event that crystallizes the experience that the writer is trying to communicate. Such a key event illustrates the writer’s most important ideas. It "shows" rather than "tells" these ideas. As such, the key event needs to be vivid to the reader; this part uses specific details and precise language (i.e. not "interesting", but details showing what is interesting).

Analysis:
1. The first part: making sense of the description of the key event. The first part of the analysis looks for patterns in what the event means to the writer and, specifically, it shows how a personal experience connects to a larger social issue. To help you do this, think about how class discussions have helped explore the "so what factor" of each chapter. We suggest you start by just making rough notes or a concept map (not an outline!) about a key event and then try and think about possible "so what?" emotions or connections to events, themes and issues that are larger than your own personal life. For example, you might want to explore thinking through why an experience surprised or frightened you, you might want to imagine how representative your experience was within your own social group, or you might want to think of your experience in terms of abstract categories such as gender, class or race dynamics, social control, curriculum versus authentic learning, boredom as a form of student resistance, sports and identity, friendship as education, dropping out as a form of protest, etc.

2. The second part: connecting your personal experience to course material. In academic writing it is important to make links to the ideas of others to support your own perspective. Once you have generated a key event narrative and you have identified links to a larger social context, you need to integrate similar connections from course readings. In academic writing, we often assume that we are writing to other people who are working in the same subject area that we are studying. In this case your academic context is critical education theory and sociology of education. You can therefore expect readers to be thoughtful about issues of education, but you should not assume they have read exactly what you have read.

Conclusion: In the last section you must summarize your paper. That means, you "refresh" the reader's memory by highlighting the important events of your narrative in order to link them suggestively with significant implications in education. However, when you wrap it up, don't add any new big ideas, for instance that your story provides a solution for world peace or discovers an end to racism or bullying in gym class.
Checklist:

Title: Give strong clues about your topic and theme of the narrative

Introduction:
• Write in first person and present tense
• Set up key event or experience as the heart of the educational autobiography
  o Identify specific time, setting or context of the key event
  o “Show” don’t “tell” the experience; use descriptive, precise language
• Use related event examples to illustrate the main story (optional)

Analysis:
Part 1
• Write in first person and present tense
• Introduce a larger abstract concept to describe your key event
• Show how the personal connects to larger social issues; trace the links between the event and the concept for readers
• Clarify the “so what” factor for readers

Part 2
• Write in first person and present tense
• Link your narrative to ideas explored in the course
• Refer to course readings that dealt with similar ideas or experiences
• Integrate references from other readings to provide evidence for your analysis:
  o E.g. “Just as Davison’s story of gender and masculinity describes the dynamics of gym class for boys, my story explores how femininity and girl’s identity is also shaped by group dynamics in the change-room/home-economics classroom, grade twelve physics lab, etc.”
• Imagine you are writing for a reader who is familiar with the ideas of the course theory but wants to see how you are making connections to other writers and concepts

Conclusion:
• Write in first person and present tense
• Remind the reader about the key event and how it links up with a bigger picture in terms of how you understand its implications
• Keep to the scope of the personal/concept significance – don’t add any new ideas you haven’t discussed before.

Bibliography, Citations and References:
• Make sure you include a bibliography, proper citations and references to any other article that you referred to in your narrative.

Finis! You have written your own educational autobiography narrative – share it with your former teacher, parents, or high-school classmates. Consider how will it make a difference!