

## Group Essay Plan

First thing you have to do is pick two pieces from the Anthology for the students to read as homework the night before. I had the class read Sontag and Turkle. (You could also pick two short chunks from the Anthology and read them out loud in class.) You will need tape, 3 scissors and 3 pieces of newsprint. I have extra newsprint and there is some in the faculty dining room.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Session

1. Freewrite. 5 minutes
2. Read pieces of the text chosen out loud. (We talked about the issues of compassion, sympathy and desire that came up in both the Turkle and the Sontag.) 15 minutes
3. Divide the class into three groups of 4 or 5. (I did not assign myself a group, but walked around listening to the discussions, checked in with my students.)
4. Explain to them how the group essay works. In small groups they will use the texts chosen and decide on a question or issue they want to explore. They will choose one primary text and one secondary text. One student will write 1 or 2 paragraphs to open the essay, one will write on the primary text, one will use both texts together and write how the secondary texts illuminates the primary text, one student will write down an experience, memory or association they have to the topic chosen. All of them will write the conclusion together. 10 minutes
5. They meet as a group to talk through the topic chosen and have 30 minutes to write down their contribution to the essay.
6. They come back together and read their bits to each other.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Session

1. In their small groups they will look at their work and decide the order of their writing and edit their pieces together. (I had them make sure that they were clear and straightforward in their intention and to look for good use of the texts and the topic chosen.) They then write their conclusion together. They will then cut their pieces from their notebooks and collage/tape them together to a large piece of newsprint. 30-45 minutes.
2. They will come back to the classroom, tape their pieces to the wall and read each essay out loud. 15-20 minutes.
3. Have them write about the experience, what they learned and what they observed. 5 minutes
4. Read these out loud.
5. Talk about what creates an invested (because they care about their idea) analytical (the use of ideas and texts) essay (the space that holds the place for rigorous exploration of ideas).

They should walk away from this with a sense of accomplishment and a new sense of what creates “essay”.