

Reflective Narrative: “I Should Have Said Something”

Assignment

We’ve all had those moments—those *damn-I-wish-I-would-have-said-something* moments. Perhaps we’ve wanted to lodge a complaint about a former boss, or congratulate a friend on her acceptance to a good school, or challenge a teacher about a false claim he made during class. Why didn’t we say anything? What were the complex relationships surrounding the situation? How can situations shape what is possible? How can power relations challenge our urges to speak out? How can inopportune timing curb discourse?

With these questions in mind, write a reflective essay that describes and reflects upon a particular moment in your life during which you wished to speak or act, but for whatever reason did not. Stylistically, you should attempt to craft a narrative—that is, you should attempt to write an engaging story. But more than this, your narrative should attempt to explain *why* the situation constrained you to speak/write/act.

Purpose

This inquiry asks you to think deeply about the complexity of being a rhetor. More specifically, it asks you to examine a particular situation in detail, explaining the complex set of relationships between you and other people, between you and time, and between you and broader social and cultural relations. In other words, this inquiry asks you to think how issues of power, identity, and kairos work to shape the rhetoric you produce.

Evaluative Questions

Reflective writing is based upon your own experiences and your interpretations of those experiences. As such, there is no “perfect formula” for writing your narrative. But there are some questions you should keep in mind as you reflect on your moment:

- Have you identified and described a specific moment where you wished to write/speak/act but failed to do so?
- Can you describe the moment in depth and with engaging detail?
- In addition to describing the moment, are you able to discuss how the complexities of the moment shape your understanding of communication in terms of timeliness, effectiveness, and/or ethics?
- Have you written an engaging narrative?

Format

Approximately 1,000 words saved in a recognizable format (.doc, .docx, .pdf)

Important Dates

Rough draft due: Monday, Aug 27

Final draft due: Wednesday, Sept 5

