Research assignment: The I-search project

1500 words suggested total

Simplified Explanation for Final Submission:

Write a research paper of 1300-1500 words with a personal connection. Currently there is a limit of 8 sources. **Use MLA 8 format for in text citations and include an MLA 8 formatted list of Works Cited.**

Due Dates:

11/09 Bring suggested topic to class

11/16 Post Proposal on Blackboard

11/23 Post preliminary Works Cited List and First Draft on Blackboard

11/30 Peer Review due and Part 2 (write about your search)

12/09 Second Draft (This draft is for feedback only and will not be graded)

12/18 Final Draft posted on Blackboard and in Final Portfolio

We do research all the time… we consult reviews and blogs before buying a new computer, ask people about the best places to eat, visit forums or watch videos for technical help. The purpose of all this research is, simply stated, to find out information.

Academic research has the same purpose as our day to day inquiry process: to increase our knowledge of a particular subject.

The main difference between general (day to day) and academic research may be the goal. We typically conduct general research for practical purposes. Academic research intends to draw data from sources and add information back into the existing pool of knowledge through our own unique analysis, interpretation, and reflection.

Another difference may be motivation. It's kind of fun to do general research because the information we're seeking can be put to use right away. Academic research can also be satisfying but, since it's a much longer game, motivation can wane. The secret to staying interested during a research project? You need to be involved. If you really want to broaden your understanding of a particular subject, research can be deeply engaging rather than a chore.

In effort to keep this paper personal, we're proposing a mixed genre "I-search" project rather than a traditional research paper. Even though an I-Search project is less formal and more personal than a traditional research paper, its purpose is the same - to find out information, to conduct research. The difference is that the topic of an I-Search Paper is one the writer has a personal connection with.

Although the purposes of I-search projects and traditional research papers are aligned, I-search projects differ from traditional research papers in the methods of topic selection, the research process and, sometimes, the sources used, and the look and feel of the final product. Genres included in this I-search project are process writing, narrative, traditional academic writing, and reflection.

The subject of your project is your choice. The only condition is that you must be able to relate the topic you choose to the themes explored in the NM topic section class.

The I-search project (15% comp section)

I-search projects are generally broken into 4 parts:

I. **What I know/think/believe/have heard/have been taught about X and what I want to discover about X** (200 min/350 max): this section should be narrative and can include anecdotal evidence—first person recommended. **(You can use your proposals for this section)**

II. **The Search (documenting the research process)** (250 min/500 max): write about your research process in the style of a journal entry. Document your experience: what worked well, what did you learn.

III. **What I learned** (1250 min/1500 max): this section is traditional research paper; includes a thesis statement, paraphrase, summary, synthesis, comparison etc.)—traditional academic writing/traditionally formatted (MLA 8 including works cited list).

IV. **What I think about what I learned (or didn't learn)**: (250 min/500 max)—reflection on the research—first person recommended

Revision: Parts I, II, and IV are to show your process. You can include them with your final submission, or you can submit section III as your final draft, since you have been sharing your process as you work. Sources can be used/quoted in any section but are only required in section III.

Note: The I-search paper will also provide the content for your final presentation in the topic section class (20% of total grade). You will get more details about this from your topic section instructor closer to the end of the semester.

Required Sources (8 total):

- 2 primary (interview, survey, diaries, letters, eyewitness accounts, speeches, datasets)
- 2 academic (from library database/journals)
- 1 text from the NM topic section reading list
- 3 other (narrative, newspaper articles, videos, screen grabs, Tweets, blog posts, movies, images, songs, poems advertisements, novels, essays, video games, cartoons, whatevs. You may choose another text from the NM topic section reading list, but 2 is max for class sources).