**Synthesis Essay Brainstorms Worksheet**

Brainstorming is a fundamental process to research and writing. More time fine-tuning ideas leads to better research which leads to better researched writing. This worksheet is designed to 1) help you identify topics that interest you, questions you have, and views you already hold; and 2) get you started on some quick research to gauge how “researchable” one of your prospective topics is. These are two strategies

STEP 1: Brainstorm Interests (if you already have a strong interest, skip to STEP 2)

List/freewrite here the various authors/topics/ideas you’ve found yourself drawn to when learning about the politics of language so far this semester.

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Gather and reread your various responses to course texts (at the end of your Rhetorical Situation Worksheets as well as the written responses you wrote for the last three classes). In what ways do your reflections overlap with your list/freewrite above, if at all? What sorts of topics/concepts did you focus on?

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STEP 2: Identify Topics that (You Feel) Need to be Exposed to Audiences

What is a topic/issue related to our class that you feel needs to be further investigated and shared? Why do you feel this way?

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STEP 3: Brainstorm Sources/Evidence (adapted from *Writing Arguments,* p. 102)

What personal experiences have you had with this issue, if any? What details from your life or the lives of your friends, acquaintances, or relatives might serve as examples or other kinds of evidence?

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What evidence/information might you hope to find in encyclopedias, magazines, newspapers, scholarly journals, and/or statistical resources (such as U.S. Census Bureau data or *Statistical Abstract of the United States*)?

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Which of our course texts might you draw on and why? What specific ideas might you paraphrase or quote?

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STEP 4: Do Some Quick Research Online

Try searching via google.com a phrase that captures one of the topics you’ve identified so far. Some examples include: language politics; language diversity; immigrant English; World Englishes; speaking English with an accent; English-only ideologies; prescriptivism; prescriptive language ideologies; language and race; linguicism; language discrimination; language and culture; etc. Add multiple phrases/terms together with AND (must capitalize) to fine-tune your search (e.g., “language diversity” AND “education”). Try searching with and without quotation marks. How many hits did you get? What are the titles of some of the more promising websites that populated? Save or bookmark any keepers. Jot down here the phrases you used that seem to capture your idea.

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| How many hits:  Titles of promising sources: |

Repeat the above search through scholar.google.com. How many hits did you get? What are the titles of some of the more promising scholarly sources that populated? Save or bookmark any keepers.

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| How many hits:  Titles of promising sources: |

Select one or two promising sources or websites that you’ve found so far through your searches. Skim through it. In what ways does it provide information or perspectives that relate to or differ from your own stance?

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STEP 5: Reflections

How strongly do you feel about adopting for your Synthesis Essay assignment the topic(s) you’ve been researching in this worksheet? What questions/concerns do you have, if any?

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STEP 6: Other Topics

What other topics (outside of language politics) are you interested in and that you feel need to be explored and shared? Why do you like this topic? What audiences need to hear about this topic?

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