

Assignment #1: Literacy Narrative

Perfecting Eloquence: Jesuit Pedagogy in the First-Year Writing Classroom

DUE DATE

Assignment Background:

In this assignment, you will write what many teachers call a “**literacy narrative.**” Literacy narratives are stories about how someone acquired a specific skill. This skill could be one that we normally associate with literacy, like reading and writing, but it can also be a skill that’s more distinct and meaningful to the author: for example, dancing, drawing, swimming, video games, or making a certain meal with family.

By transforming their journey with this skill into a story, writers are invited to **1.)** Better understand how they learn and where they find passion in learning, **2.)** Reflect on and explore an important aspect of their identity, and **3.)** Develop their ability as a storyteller.

Jesuit Inspiration:

Between 1553 and 1555 CE, St. Ignatius of Loyola dictated a “spiritual autobiography” to his friend and fellow Jesuit, Louis Gonzalez, S.J. This text, now known as *The Spiritual Autobiography of St. Ignatius*, describes historical events in his life—his experience as a soldier, his near-fatal injury in the Battle of Pamplona, his subsequent physical recovery and spiritual re-conversion to Catholicism. However, the *Spiritual Autobiography* also describes Ignatius’s formation as an individual by detailing the steps he took to deepen his understanding of and relationship with God. Moreover, through his famous *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius encouraged

others to reflect on their lives in a similar manner to find patterns and themes that would give them a deeper understanding of themselves and their relationship with God and others.

Prompt: Using the Ignatian practice of reflection modeled in *The Spiritual Autobiography of St. Ignatius*, reflect on a literacy that you've acquired at some point in your life. Then, write a story about how you acquired that literacy and why it's meaningful to you.

Assignment Goals:

After completing this assignment, students should be able to...

- Understand the meaning of “literacy” and how it impacts their life
- Identify the patterns and themes of a narrative in their own life and the lives of others
- Communicate why something is meaningful to them through the medium of a story
- Compose vivid descriptions in order to captivate a reader