

Orchestrating Voices with Integrity

This is a 2-day exercise aimed to help students put themselves in conversation with scholars. It should help them to:

- Execute the technical elements of scholarly citation (using quotations etc)
- Consider how they can develop their own ideas in relation to established scholarly ideas
- Practice maintaining academic integrity when orchestrating a scholarly conversation.

***Before doing this exercise, we had watched a film (Sarah Polley's *Stories We Tell*) and read an essay that analyzed it (autobiography scholar Kate J. Waites' "Sarah Polley's Documemoir *Stories We Tell: The Refracted Subject*"). My examples for the exercise are included below.*

Day One: Discussion

- Post a discussion question related to the primary text and ask the students to work in groups and record their answers.

1) When Mark asks Sarah what the film is about, she says "memory" and "reconstructing the past." But Michael suggests that perhaps the film is a way for Sarah to avoid the past, to avoid contemplating the truth of the situation. And throughout, both Joanna and Sarah voice insecurities about why anyone would care about their story anyway. What do YOU think the film is about? What do you think its scholarly value is?

- Post a follow up question related to how the scholar interprets the primary text – and ask the students to return to their groups and note their answer.

2) How does Waites answer this question? Locate her thesis.

—> Have the students submit their notes. Typically, not all of the groups are successful at formulating an answer to the first question, but some are and you'll need those for Day 2 of the exercise.

Day Two: Writing

- On the same slide, juxtapose the best answer to each of the two questions from above.

1) Group answer: "This film is about deconstructing the autobiography genre by showing a story has no singular narrative. Through her representation of multiple unique perspectives, Polley creates an 'autobiography' of a collective family memory."

2) *Waites' answer (as located by a group): "By employing fictional elements in her self-reflexive film, Polley highlights the degree to which the self that is represented in and produced by the film is a dynamic, ongoing performance constructed in relationship to others" (543).*

- Discuss each answer and what they imply about the film. (I.e. make sure the students understand each answer)
- With both answers still visible on the slide, ask students to "Put these two scholars [the student group and Waites] in conversation. Orchestrate a one-paragraph debate, where you show how scholars have been interested in different elements of Polley's film."
- Prompt the students to reflect, in their paragraph, the elements of academic citation you have been discussing. In our case, these were things like...
 - Instructive reporting verbs
 - Author tags
 - "Sandwiching" direct quotes with your own words
 - Making the scholarly conversation visible – and transparent
 - Using MLA citation format