**Assignment #1:** Critical Synthesis

***20% of overall course grade***

In our primary text, *Rewriting: How to Do Things with Texts*,Joseph Harris states that one of his major aims in writing the book is “to help *you* make interesting use of the texts you read in the essays you write” (1). And, as we have been discussing over the course of our first few weeks together, this aim stems from the value that academic discourse places in **dialogue** and the **interplay of ideas**. In this, our first, formal essay of the semester, you are being asked to enter and *add to* “the conversation” surrounding issues of **writing**, **d/Discourse**, **literacy**,and **identity** examined in James Gee’s “Literacy, Discourse, and Linguistics,” Gloria Anzaldua’s “How to Tame a Wild Tongue,” and Vershawn Ashanti-Young’s “Should Writer’s Use They Own English?”

Harris also says that **“[i]n writing an academic essay […] there is usually a set of texts and perspectives that you need to consider at some length so that you can define your own views in relation to them”** (16). Ultimately, this is exactly what this essay assignment is asking you to do. Reflect on the ideas that both **Gee** **and** **EITHER Anzaldua OR Ashanti-Young** present, as well as your own experience, and see what sort of insight you can add to this “set of texts and perspectives.”

Identify the “conversation” you are interested in writing about, present your critical understanding of their perspectives (**i.e. “come to terms” with the texts of Gee and Anzaldua or Young**), and then join the conversation by offering what your experience has shown you. For example, how does what these writers say challenge or confirm notions you have about literacy, language, identity, and d/Discourse?

In a strong Critical Synthesis essay a writer:

* presents information from the two (2) sources clearly and carefully into the essay.
* uses information from the two (2) sources to create a conversation or dialogue about d/Discourse, identity, literacy, knowledge and/or the social, cultural, and institutional contexts that inform those concepts.
* responds to other’s ideas by offering what their experiences have shown them.

**Rough Draft and Peer Review Workshop:**

* **This first draft of this essay is due in class for Peer Review Workshop on Thursday, February 6th.**
* **It must be at least 750 words, or three (3) typed, double-spaced pages and in Microsoft Word format (or something compatible).**
* **It must incorporate *at least one* direct quotation from EACH text you choose to discuss.**
* **It must be in 12-point Font (Arial or Times New Roman).**
* **It must be properly cited and formatted in MLA Citation Format.**
* **It must be submitted to the corresponding Dropbox on our myCourses page.**