

Project One: What is Knowledge?

Overview. What counts as “knowledge?” What is “intelligence?” Can knowledge and intelligence only come from formal education? What other ways might people be viewed as being “intelligent” or as having “knowledge?” Why might it matter how these concepts are understood? How can knowledge be used in ways that, at first, seem to be unrelated?

In his essay “Blue-collar Brilliance,” Mike Rose examines the perspective that people with school educations are intelligent or knowledgeable but that those without a formal education are not. He argues that “generalizations about intelligence, work, and social class deeply affect our assumptions about ourselves and each other, guiding the ways we use our minds to learn, build knowledge, solve problems, and make our way through the world.” For Rose, the idea that schools are the *only* place that learning and knowledge-building happens in a false one.

Are you an “expert” at something that you didn’t learn in school? What examples from your own life can you think of that echo what Mike Rose is arguing? For example, have you worked in retail for a long time and have learned how to read people as a result of that work? Are you in the military (or have you been) and so have learned how to be disciplined when the situation calls for it?

Guidelines. For this project you will write an essay about something in your own life that you feel has given you a kind of intelligence or knowledge. Choose something that you learned outside of the traditional school classroom. This could have been something you’ve learned through working a job or series of jobs, through engaging in a hobby or special interest activity, from playing a sport, from mastering a personal challenge (perhaps more than once), through playing video/computer games, from watching other experts engage in behavior, etc.

- Identify these learned abilities
- Describe the circumstances under which you learned them
- Include in your writing reasons why and how these abilities should be viewed as knowledge
- Show how this knowledge has been useful to you elsewhere and/or how this knowledge might be useful to your current life (as a student, a worker, a parent, a romantic partner, a friend, etc.).

Formatting: MLA—paper layout, in-text citations and works cited

Word Count: No less than 700 words (can be more)

Other Criteria: In your introductory paragraph, summarize Mike Rose’s main points (arguments) from “Blue-Collar Brilliance.” Use the summary to lead to a statement you make about your OWN experiences. You can refer to Rose’s work elsewhere in your essay, but your writing should primarily be about you and your experiences.

Due Dates

Peer Review: Thursday 2/17. Essay must be electronic format and able to be opened in MSWord.

Rough Draft: NO LATER THAN Sunday 2/21 turned in through Safe Assign on CE6. Submit through DRAFT folder online. I will give you instructions on this later.

Final Copy: Thursday 2/24 turned in through Safe Assign AND submitted on paper (in a paper or plastic folder)