

Practices for the Nervous and the Non-Verbal: Writing exercises for inclusion in core classes

1) One-word/one-sentence essays: Before sharing verbally in class, each student is asked to write down one word or one sentence that expresses a response to class material from that day (or one question that they have about the class material); the students can then either be asked to share their word/sentence with a pair/small group or everyone briefly shares w/the whole class (going in order around the class rather than taking volunteers).

2) The group worksheet: Students are assigned into small groups and spend the whole class session working together to complete a worksheet based on the required reading for the day. Some questions are factual (“According to MLK, what are the three concrete ways to love an enemy?”) and some require more creative thinking and/or consensus (“As a group, do you think that MLK’s strategy is practical and could work in our society today? Why or why not?”).

3) Tweets: Students are asked to write a Tweet responding to a specific question based on class material. I collect these at the start of class and read several of them as part of the class session, which allows students to “participate” anonymously (they put their names on the Tweets but I never identify them when I read the Tweets) and without speaking themselves.