

Appendix E

Triple-Entry Notetaking Assignment

[Given to Philosophy of Education students in early spring 1999]

Please do fifteen minutes of “triple-entry” notetaking on any 5 pages of Plato’s *Republic*. After completing your notetaking, take ten minutes to freewrite a brief essay about this section of the text.

The “triple-entry” notetaking technique is a way of responding to a text that helps you voice your own views. It does not ask you to memorize the text or to guess what someone else finds important about it. To do “triple-entry,” divide a blank page into three columns.

1. In the right-hand column copy from the text a passage that strikes you (plus the page number where it appears). By “strikes you,” I mean a passage with which you disagree, which you don’t understand, which you wholeheartedly endorse, or which triggers an association with something else.
2. In the middle column, write your response to the passage you chose, telling why it strikes you.
3. In the third or left column, write a response to your response. That is, reread what you wrote in the middle column and muse about it, reflecting further on what you said, why you said it, any further associations, etc.

How can you generate an essay from “triple-entry” notes? One suggestion involves going back through your triple-entry notes and circling anything which surprises or especially interests you. Then look over what you have circled, pick out one phrase to put at the top of a fresh sheet of paper, and begin your short essay.