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Writer's Notebook Final Submission

My Writing/Language Philosophy

Teachers can set many goals for their students when it comes to writing. The goals of teaching writing could be to ensure that students have the writing skills for basic communication and for work environments. Or, it could be to simply schedule in time where students can create works of art and have the ability to express themselves in various writing formats. In my opinion, the overall goal of an English class should be for students to be able to develop all these aspects of writing for future use and enjoyment. I will also aim to get students engaged in their writing, and I will do my best to get them see how useful and important good writing skills are regardless of whether it is for work-related or enjoyment-related purposes. This engagement can happen through a self-exploration of their identity, creativity, and writing voice.

Language is only one of the many ways in which people can express themselves, but it is an incredibly important one. The labels, concepts, and connections that language creates are what people use to define themselves. Without the tools given to us by our language (or languages), there would be no way for us to express and understand who we are or who we want to be. Further, no one would be able to write about their identity and life in literal, metaphorical, and/or

abstract ways, cutting out a large portion of media that people use to relate to each other or find guidance from.

Most students are attempting to figure out who they are and who they want to be when they are in High School. By using the writing tools teachers give them and the labels and concepts that their language(s) afford them, students can sit down, think, and reflect on their identities. For instance, some of the most common ways that students can explore, express, and determine their identities is through the creation of poems, journal entries, and short stories. In addition, exploring the various ways in which language and media forms can be used, created, and consumed can help students become passionate about writing and eventually discover a part of their identity within that.

In order to find a part of that identity, students need to find their writing voice. No form of written expression, essay or otherwise, is fully removed from the voice of its writer. The writing voice is the tool through which a writing piece presents itself. It is the same as when someone's appearance gives an onlooker a first impression of that person. It gives us a hint as to who that author is. The author's writing voice can show that they are professional, realistic, flamboyant, witty, sarcastic, or a combination of all or some of these traits. If students can figure out what their voice sounds like, and understand how it should be adjusted for writing work emails for example, they can add that to what they already know about their writing and overall identity. Us English teachers need to give students the time and the opportunities to be able to explore what works best for them. Additionally, I firmly believe that students should not be punished for taking these risks unless a specific requirement was made and thoroughly explained beforehand.

A question still remains: how can students gain the confidence or find the inspiration to let their creative spirit and unique writing voice shine through? First off, students need to have practiced and feel somewhat comfortable with using writing conventions for various forms of writing. For instance, students must learn about the various structures, conventions, hooks, voice, etc. that are applicable to the particular form of writing you want them to emulate. However, these conventions and rules are not the only aspect that students will need to succeed. Teachers need to provide prompts for creative writing that their students can connect to in meaningful ways. Providing those specific prompts for assignments would also be important for those who struggle with open-ended creative and formal writing assignments. Additionally, teachers should provide samples of their own writing. If you expect your students to put themselves out there, show them the confidence that they need to emulate by doing it yourself. It is a goal of mine to be able to have a wide range of age-appropriate pieces of my own writing that I can show to my future students (see some of the possible future examples below). Dissecting what conventions you put in that piece of writing and what you maybe could have added or done differently will likely help to put students at ease as well.

Finally, students need to have agency, time, and opportunities to be able to self-explore, find their voice, and exercise their writing creativity within the conventions of a specific piece of writing, whether it be academic, creative, or workplace-focused. Teachers know that time is the resource that we often lack the most, but we still must create the time, space, and supports for our student's writing skills to sharpen and flourish.

Writer's Notebook Entries

("Burning the Old Year" Prompt)

Backstabbed

The daggers of words are hard to remove.
Leaving gaping wounds of sorrow,
Bleeding and writhing with pain.
They take time to heal,
Time to mend.

The worst are the ones left by friends,
By family that betray your trust.
The tether of safety that you once felt,
Is disconnected by one swift thrust.

The pain and blood will eventually ebb,
The wound is stitched, stabilized, and healed.
That dagger will become a distant memory.

After healing you must aim to thrive.
Let that scar only be a reminder,
Of what you once survived.

(Playing With Digital Forms Prompt)

My Condition

Breathing/Aching/The Panic Never Fading
Knives/Chest/Puncturing the Rest
The Doctors/They Don't Believe You
The Doctors/They Don't See You

Suffering/Silence

Everything/Fading

Muscles/Straining

Doctors/Don't Believe

Please

Believe

Help

Me

Bring

me

there

to

(Where do you live? What do you remember about your home? Prompt)

Summer Time

Home is split into three places for me right now. It never used to be that way, but life marches forward and changes will inevitably come. At this point in time, I almost feel like a nomad. Never staying in one place for too long and bouncing between points that I know are safe and will welcome me with open arms. But before all of that changed, the community I come back to every summer used to firmly be my home. Even just thinking about the summers that we would have brings me back to that time.

When I was younger, my home was the whole town. We would roam the streets and visit the parks and the pool each and every day. The thick, warm summer breeze would rustle the bright green leaves of my favourite tree every morning. When the tree's leaves were at their largest, I loved to hide in them and either read or watch the people walking down my street go by. I usually did this until my friend would text me to come over to her house. After I saw that, my feet would be running on the hard, rocky pavement. I would even time myself some days to see how long it took me to get to her house and see if I was getting any faster. We would play at the playgrounds, and lay in the water-starved grass with her cats, or bunnies, or dogs, or turtle. Really whatever animals she had at the time.

The breeze is the only thing that you would often hear on those days in addition to the occasional sprinkler. The best time to be outside, when it wasn't too hot or too cold, was the time in between the sun hitting the horizon and the sun completely sinking below it. Although, we usually only got to experience that in August since it was so late in the night otherwise. The summer scenery of my home town was always brought about my joy amid that quiet and calming scenery. Or, maybe that quiet and calm is just reminiscent of a time with less responsibilities and the ability to sleep in for hours.

(The Quick Quick Write [Visual Prompts])

The Third-floor Bedroom Picture Rough Draft with Comments

Link to Rough Draft and Comments:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ex-FGK2DcaEyATLH3dd0SFC-n9AoCibg2ySNjN_Wmvk/edit?usp=sharing

Some of the comments from Justin appear after clicking this icon. →



The Third-floor Bedroom Picture Final Draft

Oh! How I wish I was the doves on the wall that fly toward the window! Oh! How all of us wish we could be free! I can see all that happens out there for miles and miles and miles. The land attempts to stretch, reach, and plunge into the horizon. But just as I, the land cannot touch the sky. This cage of walls was designed with that window just to torture me. The lattice of vines slither and constrict these walls, making them smaller and smaller each day I spend here. The doves are trapped here too. The uncrossable plane of the window being too solid to cross and too high above the ground to even want to try to cross it. The land, the doves, and I will never reach as high as the birds that caress the sky's dancing winds. The wind weaves and blows through the trees, teasing the ground down below just as the ground teases me now.

Oh! To be free and feel the grass beneath my feet! Oh! To be able to fly like a real dove and caress the sky! All I can do as a lowly human is open my window to feel the cool, entangling breeze. The white curtains flap. My gaze moves towards the doves on my wall. If I were only a magician, I could make those doves come to life, turn them into real birds to keep me company. Of course, I would have to let them go before I was caught. However, I feel as though I would be able to finally live a little again even if I could only bring to life one of them.

Oh! If I were a magician, I would maybe even be able to make those vines expand my world instead of shrink it! I could braid them and use them as a rope to make my descent out of the window. I could escape this dreary and boring existence that some call "living." Is it truly a life if you are held back from doing whatever you desire? From being who you desire to be? The vines would turn from my demise into my saviour. Oh! If only I could be a magician!

Reflection

In my Philosophy, I mentioned that I would like to ensure that students are able to explore all different kinds of writing as well as find their voices within those writing forms. In order to figure out their voice, students must be able to practice and play with those forms of writing to find what works the best for them. My personal goals for this semester were closely related to this aim; to explore a greater variety of literary forms and to imbue my writing voice with more descriptive language. I hoped that putting myself out of my comfort zone would help me find a writing style that I actually enjoyed. In many ways, I do feel that I have accomplished those goals. I feel more confident with my creative writing skills, with using my descriptive, “5 Senses” language, and I feel that I have been able to semi-master some new forms of writing that are not essay related and that I actually enjoy. I have surprised myself in all these aspects as it has been several years since I have been able to explore and experiment with a writing form that is not an essay. For instance, the last piece of writing I included has a more experimental voice and concept than anything I have ever written. It is a combination between of the one-word exclamations from Shakespeare’s works, some women’s writing from that time period, and a bit of my current writing voice. I really did not believe that I would be able to write with that amount of descriptiveness nor be able to those poems with the voice, messages, and forms that I did. In addition, I am genuinely happy with all the pieces that I have created for this assignment.

I also believe a part of my successes with these assignments came from being able to experiment with my writing voice without the pressure of creating a piece that is fully presentable in a short amount of time. In addition, there was plenty of creative freedom with many of the assignments, so I could fully explore the topics I was interested in and mould my

writing voice in the ways I wanted to. I became more interested in seeing what I could accomplish through my creative writing because of the creative risks that I was able to take. Unique writing voice is also one of the aspects of writing that I would love for my students to be able to develop, because a unique writing voice can be integral to a student's exploration of their identity and who they want to become. Through these assignments, I was able to take more of a liking to my writing voice as well as become confident enough to play with it and try different perspectives that are not my own. This is something that I would like for my students to also experience, especially the students that typically do not like to write. I would give them as much time as possible and give as much grace as possible when it comes to handing in creatively risky assignments.

As for the future of my writing, I plan on exploring this more creative side of my writing voice to see what I can do. In a lot of ways, I have felt somewhat stifled by the seemingly endless stream of essays I have written for the classes I have taken in the past three years. I have had a great time getting back into the kind of writing that I have always wanted to do, and I want to focus on making time for more creative writing and experimentation. I aim to try and follow some different forms, rules, and styles to challenge myself and see what I can create. I would still like to work with more descriptive, "5 Senses", writing as well as combining that with some more dialogue-oriented pieces. For example, I would love to work more on trying to describe emotions without explicitly saying what those emotions are. Overall, I cannot wait to see where my creativity takes me!