

***"Bringing it Back to the Classroom"***

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This year, I will incorporate into the daily/weekly routine of the class, a built-in and regular time to freewrite. Five minutes is more than enough. Focus should be on "keep the pen to the paper" and just letting the writing flow. De-emphasize grading, and value more the willingness to RISK and create and imagine. The way we make room in Language Arts for independent reading is the way that we should approach developing writers.

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In my Language Arts classroom, I need to focus on the peer feedback/conference aspect of the writing process as PIVOTAL. Imperative! Looking at other people's writing (better or worse) teaches you how to be a better writer yourself. Being forced to simply explain to a weaker writer, for example, why a particular technique is needed, improves the stronger writer. **It's win-win reciprocity.**

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The value of reading (and writing) memoir is to see our own stories reflected in someone else's. Once you realize that everyone has their stories, and you listen to them, you comprehend that their stories are your stories. It's all the same HUMAN STORY, told over and over again. If we can understand that, maybe then, we can treat others with compassion and fairness. I will focus on this in the memoir and biography/autobiography units in our curriculum.

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Revision Tips:

- 1) Get rid of the scaffolding- all those intro phrases, clauses, and statements that got you to where you needed to go.
- 2) Avoid abstractions.
- 3) Take out clichés.
- 4) Always go for present tense, active voice verbs; cut down the -ed and -ing.
- 5) Avoid redundancy, unless it's for rhythm or effect.
- 6) Take out anything self-referential, which won't help readers.

Murphy's Moments:

What to do if you have Writer's Block:

- 1) "What Am I Afraid Of"- write down a list.
- 2) "What I Am Afraid to Write". Then burn it once you've written it down!

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See "Murphy's Moments" listed above. (For advanced writers only.)

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Revision is the real work of writing.

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- 1) Focus on the end result of writing.
- 2) Talk about the multiple purposes of writing.
- 3) Writing/Poetry is messy and imperfect!
- 4) Work towards a sharing/celebration of the writing process so that students are more invested in the end product.