Writing as Leadership: Inviting Reflection & Development

How Might an Understanding of Today’s Educational Context, Adult Development Theory, and Writing to Learn Inform English Leadership?

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- Write & Think: When you think about teaching English today, what do you find most challenging? What does this mean for you as a leader?

Leading English Today

- Read & Annotate: What might we learn from the past? What, if anything, resonates with you? Why? What’s the basis for your thinking? What, if anything, challenges you? In what ways?

Being a Midwife

The wise leader does not intervene unnecessarily. The leader’s presence is felt, but often the group runs itself.

Lesser leaders do a lot, say a lot, have followers, and form cults.

Even worse ones use fear to energize the group and force to overcome resistance.

Only the most dreadful leaders have bad reputations.

Remember that you are facilitating another person’s process. It is not your process. Do not intrude. Do not control. Do not force your own needs and insights into the foreground.

If you do not trust a person’s process, that person will not trust you.

Imagine that you are a midwife; you are assisting at someone else’s birth. Do good without show or fuss. Facilitate what is happening rather than what you think ought to be happening. If you must take the lead, lead so that the mother is helped, yet still free and in charge.

When the baby is born, the mother will rightly say: “We did it ourselves!”


Writing as Leadership: Inviting Reflection & Development, CEL 2012, Jennifer K. Rauscher
Development-Focused Leadership

- Write & Think: What do you understand about development-focused leadership at this point? What questions or concerns do you have?

Writing & Knowing Teachers

- Read & Annotate: Focus on the top half of the “How Do You Know?” handout. How do we, as individual, make sense of our world? How do we know? How might knowing teachers in a developmental sense inform our leaderships?

- Example: Teacher Survey Questions
  
  o In what ways are your leaders helpful to you in your work as a teacher?
  o How are your leaders unhelpful?
  o What do you wish leaders knew or understood about being a teacher today?

Writing & “Discretionary Space”

- Examples
  - Read & Respond Journal: Powerful Literacy
  - Graphic Organizer: Deep Discussion
  - Read-Think-Write Reflection: Why Write?

Writing & Inviting Development

- Read & Annotate: Focus on the bottom half of the “How Do You Know?” handout. What types of experiences or activities might invite development? How might writing allow you to invite development (your own or others’)?

- Example: Curriculum Process Recommendation
  - To align curriculum, assessment, and instruction to the CCSS, I propose that we—
  - With this process, I realize that we risk—
  - However, I still recommend this process because—
  - To help this process succeed, I’m willing to—
  - The district can support me in this process by—
  - Comments:

Writing & Reassessing

- Example: Exit Ticket Prompts
  - Today, I’m proud that I...
  - I want to remember...
  - I have questions about...
  - Tomorrow (or next week or next month), I still need to...
  - To move forward effectively, I need...
Read & Respond: Powerful Literacy

Please Read:
According to Finn (2009), there are four levels of literacy:

- **performative**, the ability to “sound out” words and turn sentences that are typical of informal face-to-face conversations into writing;
- **functional**, the ability to meet the reading and writing demands of an average day of an average person;
- **informational**, the ability to read and absorb the kind of knowledge that is associated with the school and to write examinations and reports based on such knowledge;
- **powerful**, the ability to evaluate, analyze, and synthesize while reading and listening and to persuade and negotiate through writing and speaking. It is literacy used to understand and control what’s going on around you. It is the literacy of persons who are conscious of their own power and self interest. It’s the literacy of negotiation. (p. 257-58)


Please Respond:

- Which type of literacy would you want for your own child?
- Which type of literacy do we want for our students?
- Do our current beliefs and actions lead to this type of literacy for all students?
- What are the implications for us as a school? As a department? As a collegial team? For you personally?

**Deep Discussion Organizer**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What does deep discussion of text look and sound like?</th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>During</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are teachers doing?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are students doing?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on your chart, what do you think we should include in our expectations for deep discussion?
Read—Think—Write

Please read...
- “The act of writing is the act of discovering what you believe.” David Hare
- “Writing is how students connect the dots in their knowledge.” National Commission on Writing
- “How can I know what I think until I see what I say?” E. M. Forster
- “I write in order to belong.” Elena Poniatowska
- “Writing offers an excellent pathway for brainstorming, clarifying, and questioning. There is evidence of increased student performance when writing is used as a tool for thinking.” Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey
- “A word after a word after a word is power.” Margaret Atwood
- “The reason I write is to find out what I mean.” Leslie Marmon Silko
- “Analyzing student writing is a great way for teachers to determine what their students know.” Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey
- “Every word written is a victory against death.” Michel Butor
- “[Good teachers help students to] read and write and talk their way to understanding.” Mike Rose
- “We read to know we are not alone.” C. S. Lewis
- “I write in order to understand as much as to be understood.” Elie Wiesel
- “Until we attempt to write what we learn or read, our thoughts will lack the precision, depth, and clarity that mark first-rate thinking.” Lisa Ede
- “We do not write to be understood; we write to understand.” Cecil Day-Lewis
- “The only end of writing is to enable readers better to enjoy life or better to endure it.” Samuel Johnson

Please think about...
- The role of writing in your personal life
- The role of writing in your professional life
- The role of writing in your students’ lives

Please write...
- What do you want, wish, or hope for your students as writers?
References


