

Emily Santiago

ENG 364

Dr. Elaine Lux

**Week 1. By Mon. Jan. 27** - Purchase your texts (urgent). Then answer a) and b). Then watch the assigned film (*Freedom Writers*) and give your responses to it. Both assignments can be on one Word Document.

*Welcome. Introduction to the course and the syllabus.*

a) Write and submit into the dropbox an initial response of 8-10 sentences to the following claims by Peter Elbow, in *Writing without Teachers*, that people can learn to write without teachers, that “everyone in the world wants to write” (xi), and that doing “freewriting exercises regularly” is “the most effective way [. . .] to improve your writing” (3).

b) Also, comment on these questions: What is voice? What metaphors do you have for writing?

c) Watch the film *Freedom Writers* and give a response to the ideas about getting students to read and write that are presented in the film. (1 ½ pages)

**A) Write and submit into the dropbox an initial response of 8-10 sentences to the following claims by Peter Elbow, in *Writing without Teachers*, that people can learn to write without teachers, that “everyone in the world wants to write” (xi), and that doing “freewriting exercises regularly” is “the most effective way [. . .] to improve your writing” (3).**

I don't think that people can learn to write without teachers. Everyone learned how to write through someone. Although, there have been special cases where people have taught themselves the art of writing, for the most part the majority of people cannot say that they learned how to write all on their own. Someone taught them. Whether it was their mother, father, family member or friend, someone helped them on their journey to becoming literate. I agree partially with Elbow's statement that everyone in the world wants to write. You can see it in early emergent readers/ writers that even when children are too young to read or write correctly, they can make attempts to. For example, it's through scribbles on a piece of paper with a crayon. This starts at an early age when children copy what is modeled for them by their parents or the environments that they are in. but on the other hand, down the road I think some children may lose interest in writing, because they might find it too difficult and may have learning disabilities or they become frustrated with the tediousness of it. I think it all depends on the environment that they are brought up in. Are they encouraged to read and write? Or do their

parents not care so much for an education, so they feel it is not necessary? I agree with the second statement by Elbow Completely about how free writing exercises regularly is the most effective way to improve writing. I think in any craft, that practice makes perfect. If you practice writing the better you will become at it. The more natural it will become to you, and it will become easier to write fluently.

**B) Also, comment on these questions: What is voice? What metaphors do you have for writing?**

Not only will free writing help with fluency, but it can help with finding your own voice. I think voice is the story that you have to tell. Everyone has a story to tell, and a message to send to the world. It all has to do with the God given purpose that each and every single one of us has as His creation. There are many metaphors that can be made about writing such as my favorite metaphor for writing: "The artist must create a spark before he can make a fire and before art is born, the artist must be ready to be consumed by the fire of his own creation." -Auguste Rodin.

**C) ) Watch the film Freedom Writers and give a response to the ideas about getting students to read and write that are presented in the film.**

This was the first time I have watched this film and I must say, This truly encouraged me as a teacher candidate and gave me hope, that I too can have this level of effect on my future student's lives. I recognized many of the strategies that Mrs. Erin Gruwell uses in the film, as I have been studying them in my classes here at Nyack College. I saw Allusion, Autobiography, Dialect, Foreshadowing, Hyperboles, Irony, Memoirs and personification portrayed in the film. Many of the students in Gruwell's class were unmotivated and had no desire to learn, but she helped them discover the power of reading and writing. She helped them find their voice. While many students felt like it was them versus the world, Mrs. Gruwell showed them that

there were people that were on their side and rooting for them. Many students in Gruwell's class were seen as lost causes, but she saw the potential in them and helped them succeed in their academics.

While watching this moving account of the Erin Gruwell and her students, I saw many riveting ideas and strategies that Gruwell used to help encourage her students to want to learn. The first idea was to do some activities/games to get the students up and moving. She had a tape down the side of the classroom and she asked questions to the students, and if the question applied to them they would stand on the line. She asked them questions that were deep and she was able to get a better understanding of the type of students that were in her class and she was able to get a better idea of how to reach out to them. She really got to know the students. And instead of strictly following a curriculum, she saw the needs of the students and adapted the curriculum to their needs. Once she realized that her students didn't know about the holocaust she immediately attended to the need and began to teach them in a way that was relatable to the students. She related everything to the students lives, which probed them to want to learn more. Because they saw themselves in the books that they read. Gruwell was able to teach the students how to make connections to the text and literature to their own lives. This was what made the movement so powerful. They no longer saw literature as

separate from their lives, they began to relate to the text, and that is what made all the difference.