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## Making a Statement with Images

### Contentions

#### **1. Writing comes in many forms and we need to help students see these non-traditional forms as “writing.”**

*“...the act of writing has changed with the introduction of digital tools, and standards that ask for collaboration, creativity, and effective design. Yet, in many ways, writing is the same as it ever was--a task that requires writers to examine rhetorical context and craft messages suitable for the intended audience” (105).*

*“Sometimes this (the ability to engage the audience right away) is best done in only a few words, instead of a lengthy essay....In many cases, the ability to compare what works for different audiences across different media, modes, and tools presents an ideal opportunity for literacy learning” (91).*

DeVoss, Danielle Nicole, Elyse Eidman-Andahl, and Troy Hicks. *Because Digital Writing Matters*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010.

*“Today’s students need to learn how to use images, graphic design, and social networking software to compose and represent their ideas”.*

Gere, Anne Ruggles et als. “Writing Now: A Policy Research Brief produced by The National Council of Teachers of English.” National Council of Teachers of English. 2008.

#### **2. Writing (in all forms) helps solidify what we know and are; therefore, it is an essential social and life skill.**

*“Writing is still an important act and an essential tool for learning and social participation” (1).*

DeVoss, Danielle Nicole, Elyse Eidman-Andahl, and Troy Hicks. *Because Digital Writing Matters*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010.

#### **3. We write to make a difference in our world and to have our voices heard.**

*“...the most worthwhile goals of writing: writing to think, to move another person, to create something that will be remembered... (xii)*

*"Voice is the human spirit. It is the essence of self. It calls to us from the page and says, 'Listen to me. This is who I am.'" (128)*

*"Voice makes us human, individual, unique" (133).*

Spandel, Vicki. *The 9 Rights of Every Writer: A Guide for Teachers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2005.

## **The Approach/Process**

Warm-up: Think of a photograph you love--one that you can not imagine losing. It might be old or new, of you, a family member, or a pet. I might not have a person in it at all. It might be torn or blurry, but it is important to you.

Write a descriptive paragraph of the photograph. Include sensory details.

Under the paragraph add:

Why is it important to you? What memories does it trigger? What would others see if they looked at the picture without knowing the background?

Teacher writes as students write. Share.

Discuss importance of images and words, leading to introduction of Dorothea Lange as contemporary of John Steinbeck. This is done in the classroom only after an introduction to author, as well as introduction to the Great Depression, has occurred.

Students are next instructed to read brief information Dorothea Lange found at [Eye Witness to History](#). Students complete a "3-2-1" on the web information. For this, the students record 3 facts/pieces of information they found interesting or learned from the site; 2 reactions to Lange's own words; and they are to mark 1 thing you'd be willing to share). Use "whip-around" technique to get feedback.

The class views Dorothea Lange's pictures via [Historyplace.com](#)

Students may now choose from the two sites ([www.historyplace.com](#) or [www.eyewitnesstohistory.com](#)) to do the following:

- Choose one photograph that made an impact on you or one that you found intriguing. You might need to view the sites again. After choosing, return to that photo. Write a short response. Include things like:

How does it make you feel?

What do you think the photographer was trying to make you

understand or feel?

What was the photographer trying to document?

- Pair/share these responses. A few will share some observations with the whole class, leading to the idea of what deeper understanding of the plight of the migrant mother, and those in similar situations, is gained through the photographs.
- **(This is a step done with my students, but will be skipped with CRWP participants due to time issue).** With a partner, students create a new caption for one of the photographs. Guidelines to [criteria](#) are discussed prior to students writing.
- Again, students the photograph of their choosing (from the two sites). Students are to pretend they are the subject of the photograph or a witness to the event. Write a first-person account of what was happening. Pair-Share. Whip-around sharing for whole class. **(Skip for CRWP?)**

Teacher transitions into importance of this type of writing and [photo-essay instructions](#).

Sample photo-essays are available, as needed. These samples include a [student sample](#) and professional samples. Some are listed below and in the accompanying [slideshow](#).

Other samples:

[Time's Essay on Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)

[Time's Essay on Hiroshima](#)

[Time's The Deadliest U.S. Hurricanes](#)

[Memorial Day 2011](#)

After viewing a couple samples, students brainstorm. A template is available for this process.

My students would take their own pictures and create photo-essay on their own. For the CRWP SI, I will have participants go online to choose a couple of photographs that fit their theme or message. I will have them write a caption and/or title, and begin the introduction. These items will be completed in Google docs and shared with a partner.

The demonstration will end with a brief discussion of how my students showcase their work through a “gallery walk” and I will share the prompt for the reflection/conclusion.

Further information on the brainstorming template, introduction, gallery walk, and conclusion are linked to [slide show](#):

## **Bibliography/Related Reading**

DeVoss, Danielle Nicole, Elyse Eidman-Aadahl, and Troy Hicks. *Because Digital Writing*

*Matters*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010.

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<http://www.esiponline.org/classroom>