

I hadn't really thought about doing anything close to a writer's notebook since middle school, and even then, it was forced journal prompts with questions like, "What's the biggest challenge you conquered?" or, "Write about your favorite memory." It was always something forced that didn't necessarily challenge me, it just made me write. I got so excited about the questions too and answering them out loud that I always got too distracted to finish my journal prompts. Our teachers let us talk about the prompts together so I always got distracted by everything. It wasn't until we started doing the deep reflections within the writer's notebook that I began to get excited about diving into writing and especially going into more than surface level thinking with ideas I could put towards my teaching pedagogy and my own values and morals.

Writing is meant to be very complex, involving different levels of thinking, imagination, and reflection on ideas to craft something so unique to the author and to craft an experience unique to the reader. Writing is multimodal, which was a great idea to explore in both a seminar and in a writer's notebook entry. Thinking of the different ways multimodal literacy can impact writing helps to build that experience for both the author and the reader, since writing ultimately leads to reading throughout the process. Multimodal literacy can help students, especially younger students, learn how to piece together information or ideas to form a story, whether that be through words, a collage, or even just a simple drawing. Children are very creative in their younger years, and it's more important to keep their creativity afloat by encouraging them to use it rather than push it down to focus on writing. The biggest thing is keeping a balance of teaching formative and informational writing, but also allowing students to indulge in storytelling and creative writing through their writing in the classroom.

I remember the biggest thing was following the SOLs because I came from a school system that was so heavily focused on accreditation, and because my middle school was very

behind on accreditation, our curriculum was extremely structured. It made me think writing always had to be persuasive or informative because that's all I was introduced to, but it wasn't until my Dual Enrollment English class when my teacher had us write a creative, fiction story that I was blanking because I hadn't had any opportunity to think like that and create stories since I used to make up stories and games with my brothers when we were younger. She had to help all of us because we wanted to write so structuredly so we spent multiple class periods trying to get our creativity flowing to open us up to write stories. It made me enjoy writing instead of putting facts on a page and adding fluff words. Whether I'm in an elementary or middle school classroom, I want to teach multidimensional writing and encourage students to try to write on their own, whether it be journaling or coming up with stories in a notebook.

Another big thing I want to pull into my teaching style is not only typing but also writing by hand. I do remember having to write essays by hand, which was the worst thing to me at the time because we had access to computers, but our teachers wouldn't let us type essays until high school. I won't make students have to write an essay by hand, but even finding a way to learn how to write and craft both by hand and through technology is the biggest thing for a 21st century learner. We should learn to use technology to our advantage when the moment is necessary, but also remember that our hands can do so much more than just type and click, and have students realize how their writing can be impactful either way.

I don't always like to write by hand, especially when we're timed for writing because I feel like I'm rushed, but I wish I had applied the same philosophy to my writer's notebook to realize my reflection can also mean a lot when written by hand too. The material we engaged with, not just the course content but the application of the course content within our lives and our classrooms, was such a deep finding within ourselves that writing in an actual notebook could

have made my thoughts and ideas to the prompts that much more powerful. The writer's notebook could also be so helpful for students with the course material much like ours, where students can reflect on either what they learned that day or use what they learned to write a story or recall a memory to either share with the class or keep to themselves. A writer's notebook is such a powerful tool to use in the classroom, regardless of the age of the students.