



GRANITE CITY SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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3 December 2020

Dear Class,

Fall 2020 has presented, for me, both many challenges and many rewards. As a teacher I've continued to work on ways to help you grow as writers and how to do that via online methods and remote techniques. Some things went better than expected, and others . . . well, let's say there are things I know I won't do again. My absolute biggest struggle was keeping up with your writing—simply finding the time and mental bandwidth needed to read and comment in ways you deserve.

If I were submitting a fall portfolio, it would likely contain examples of my writing from the semester (and some from before as I have been pressed to find time to write alongside you while keeping up with planning for your instruction). I might include the memory book chapters about a favorite high school course and where I grew up along with my quickwrite expansion inspired by Phil Kaye's poem "Camaro." You would likely also find my college application essay written from a prompt I found online and an analysis piece that looks at the rhetoric of rap by taking a closer look at Mos Def's "Mathematics."

When it comes to process, I find myself a mental writer who spends considerable time thinking and rethinking before hitting the page. After I draft, usually at the keyboard but sometimes in my notebook first, stepping back and looking meta-cognitively (at the "big picture") helps me gain perspective, and focusing on the details of word choice and arrangement through editing continues to make my prose more powerful. Revising can be hard work, but it is almost always worth it. I didn't ask you for much feedback on my writing this semester; there wasn't time for everything I "normally" do. But watching you make WRITE CLUB work (sometimes) despite tech hiccups and breakout rooms reminds me that you are not just high school kids, you are *my* writers (teachers get a bit possessive sometimes), and your comments and sharing help make each other's and your own writing stronger.

As a teacher, I hope this course has helped you think about writing (and reading) in new ways—some of them large and all encompassing, some of them minute and specific. I hope a few of the readings or videos we watched inspired you or provided illumination. Through the notebook, I hope you learned writing can be about *anything*, the key is finding the angle, the passion for your topic, and your own voice. And the form, well, the form is fluid too. Just say what you need to say and let the content dictate the structure.

I don't claim to be a professional writer—but I am a writer. And it is my job to help you see that you are each and every one a writer—if you choose to be.

Best regards,

Mrs. C =)

P.S. Thanks for the wonderful papers. I really have enjoyed reading and thinking about them. And my biggest reward has been and continues to be watching your writing change and develop through the semester (and into the next one).