

Beyond Read-a-Book, Write-a-Paper Revisited

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FNED 346: Schooling in a Democratic Society • Spring 2006

MIDTERM EXAM PART I (20%):

Every member of the class must complete this section of the exam independently.

“We know what we do, we often know why we do what we do.

But what we don't know is what what we do, does.”

— Michel Foucault

As a teacher, I make a lot of decisions that have a direct impact on you.

- I choose the readings we do — I use a reading packet, rather than a textbook; I select things I hope will challenge you, but not alienate you from the content; I opt for readings that represent a social justice perspective on schooling in a democratic society; I arrange them in an order I hope will create a rhythm and flow to our discussions where one text builds on another.
- I choose the structure of our class time — we sit in a circle so everyone can see one another (I sit at the “front”); we often work in small groups, counted off by numbers so that you work with different people each time; we spend at least 45 minutes a week in informal discussion about the SL Projects.
- I choose the assignments/assessments — I start with the Think Pieces and then ask you to write Talking Points each week in preparation for class; I give a midterm like this one with lots of choices on it; I require you to talk every class period or risk your final grade.

These lists reveal some of my intentions in how I have thought about the structure and curriculum of this class. But as Lisa Delpit reminds us, good intentions are not enough. I know what I do, I know why I do what I do... well, you know the rest! So I want to hear from you about how the choices I make impact you personally.

For this part of the exam, I want you to write me a letter.

It should be anonymous (unless you feel strongly otherwise). It should be typed and double-spaced. Write as much as you want to... two pages, ten pages, it is up to you. This is not a course evaluation, though it shares some common elements with one because I will use it to think about strategies for the rest of the semester. But I don't want this to be about *me* — I really want this to be about *you*, to help me know what you are getting out of this. What are you learning here? Content? Strategies for becoming a better teacher? Strategies for being a better friend? Nothing new? What is working here? What is not working here? Are you bored? Enlightened? Frustrated? Challenged? Overworked? Stimulated? Are there particular readings that made an impact on you? Are there texts you have already forgotten? Do you read for class? Can you get by without reading? Do you take notes? Do you daydream during class? Do you feel engaged? Do you get offended by what others say? Do you feel like you have allies here? Do you think about this class beyond our class periods?

Tell me stories. Be specific. Be honest.

Please submit your letter in a sealed, blank white envelope. You can even choose to print in a different font than you usually do so that it will be completely anonymous. You will hand this letter to me in class as you turn in your exam and I will mark that you have submitted it. You will receive full credit if you turn it in, and no credit if you don't. I want you to be honest, specific and reflective about how this class is working or not working for you. What are you learning here, if anything?