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Book Club: I like how you reflect on how reading with care is not the same as teaching a text with care. I agree. I like how it helped you to think about your own strategies that you've developed over time, how writing helps you, how discussion helps you. This is very detailed analysis of your own practice. And I appreciated your honesty about how translating your own skills into something you can teach a student is much harder to do. But that is where you start—knowing what works for you. I really liked the place where you talked about how you started to read the text thinking about how to teach it—I totally do that. Nice connection at the end to the theorists we read—it is true; it's crazy when you see it all in action. Book Club grade: A

Revision to Mentor Text Memoir: You have really committed to the process of revision here. I see it, of course, in your entirely new opening paragraph. You build to a thesis here in a way that is stronger than in the original. That positively affects the rest of your opening. I see your attention to reduce your repetition and instead include more analysis of the reading situations you are describing. I think attaching it to character as well as theme really works here now. I still think that you tend to repeat occasionally—I know it comes from a place in you where you worry that people aren't getting your point. But that's still something to keep working on. However your real effort in terms of revision paid off. Mentor Text Memoir Grade: A-

Reading Journals: Your reflection was so interesting to read given what you had to say in both your book club reflection and your mentor text memoir revision. You present a really coherent exploration of your learning in these three sets of documents, which is kind of cool for me to see. Rosenblatt and Iser have always resonated with me in similar ways to how they have affected you. Over all, you are just excellent with reading journals. I see how, as you say, writing about reading really helps you to decide what you understand. You use the assignment to its best effect. Reading Journals: A

Philosophy of Teaching: I liked your opening line and suggest that you consider using that as a start of thesis for your philosophy—teaching is complex. In your final draft, you'll want to drop references to our class (though they were certainly nice to read here). You want this to be a document that lives beyond this class. Here are the big things you talk about in your piece: teach to the individual, use the moments you have (like that one a lot), responding to writing as that moment (again, like that a lot), valuing effort, considering student interests, and, also, not counting on that and designing assignments. You've got a lot going on here and how they are all connected is what I would suggest you work on—using that idea of the complexity of teaching. This is too long, and you'll need to be more careful in what you include—some things will just not be able to be talked about in this short space in the final (which is one page), but this is an excellent start. Remember what you value and think about how that can help you develop a thesis. Cover letter/portfolio grade: A

Semester Grade So Far: A

Reading Journals: It's so interesting to me that you simultaneously weren't a big fan of Rose but still included him in your reflection—but Rose can grow on you. I have found Smith to be a text that, though tedious, can really inform how you think about what needs to happen to teach a student how to read well. I don't know if someone learning to read would have the skill to read the text, but using it to inform the study of reading, teacher-mediated might really help. If you ever do it, I'd love to see it. Overall, your work on reading journals always have real moments of smart analysis—sometimes a lot, sometimes, when I think you are busy, less, but still, always something good. Smarty pants. Reading journal Grade: A

Book Club: I appreciated your enthusiasm for the experience of book club—that really came through in class. I appreciated your thinking about Frank Smith here—and a nice connection to your reading journal reflection. You are absolutely right that building knowledge about the market crash and immigration policy would add to understanding the book—as would knowing almost anything about Cameroon. Your reflection on what our group contributed was your most detailed. I found what you had to say about reading the 101 papers brief but interesting—where you saw one of the students “reading like a reader.” I'd be curious to know how you responded to that—how did you help this reader to read *more* like a reader. Your reflection is bold with enthusiasm, but a little light on analysis. Book Club Grade: B+

Mentor Text Memoir Revision: The most significant revision to this piece is your opening paragraph which does, for sure, set the tone for the idea that you are developing—that we really only learn to read when we push ourselves to read harder texts. Beyond that, there is not that much revision beyond editorial sorts of things. The paper is better for that one major change, though I think that you might have then and gone and written more about the implications for that in the classroom in your closing paragraph. However, it's a fairly successful draft as it stands. Mentor Text Memoir: A-

Philosophy of teaching: Here is a summary of what I see you saying in your piece: setting high expectations, creating ways for students to do their best work, Making students feel like they belong in a class. I've got to say, this feels a little breezy Maria. Maybe you were pressed for time or maybe you just didn't have an idea, but this feels light. You've got three ideas—good ones—and I would suggest thinking about how those three ideas are connected and constructing an opening paragraph that sets that up. The one you have is sort of a lot of words that don't say that much. Also, I think you might want to go with a better title than “Teaching Philosophy,” just saying. Portfolio/cover letter: B+

Maria Victoria you are an exuberant student in class, and you make excellent observations at times. I appreciate that contribution to our class. I do wish the writing in this portfolio was as full and rich as what I see in some of your less formal work. I think you owe it to yourself to demonstrate your excellence in all the ways you are afforded to do so.

Semester Grade So Far: A-

Reading Journals: It's old, but it still resonates: it was good to see you writing about Rose. You write here with real passion and energy. I think Rose's story can have that effect on people. The two points you make here that are most interesting to me: I like when you talk about cultivating student intelligence. That's really what Rose is saying. And it's a good place to be as a teacher. And it fits with your ideas about advocating for marginalized students. These students, because they don't see their intelligences reflected in the classroom, often shut down. I see real connections between what you write here and what you say in your philosophy of teaching. You might see how this reflection could augment that philosophy in revision. Reading Journal Grade: A

Mentor Text Revision: I still like my title suggestion better than either of yours. I just can't not say that. In this revision, you've explained more how dyslexia affected your reading. That opening paragraph, I still can't tell if you feel traumatized by your father and reading or not, though I see developing here an idea about your mother having faith in you as a reader. If I had one more revision out of you, I would push you to tighten your focus on that idea. Keep the humor of the crying all the time, sure, but edit down a bit to focus on what you are really trying to say: reading was traumatic, but folks having faith in you made all the difference. What a great thing to learn about what you need to do to help your students. The other idea in your closing—that no adult ever explained why this was all important—could also be an element of the actual body of the paper. So these dueling ideas: having faith but not explaining the why. That could shape a whole draft. This paper is a step closer to having a laser sharp focus. Mentor Text Memoir Revision: B+

Book Club: There must have been some confusion about the book club reflection. This should have been a more substantial reflection on the process of roughly two, typed, double-spaced in length. What you've included here is your contribution to the pecha kucha. I can locate no other book club document. Book Club: B-

Philosophy of Teaching: Here is a summary of what I saw in your philosophy: fostering creativity, originality (not sure what you mean by that) and critical thinking, creating a safe place: word of encouragement, assessment ideas, discussion of physical space, small and big groups. So there is a lot going on. I think that using fostering creativity is a strong idea for an over-arching thesis. In a revision you want to explain what you mean by creativity. That can mean a lot of different things in a classroom. I think if you define it you will not need to use the vague "originality." Critical thinking gets lost in the piece, and I think that if you explained how critical thinking is creative that would help. You have a lot of practices; you might be more selective. And you need to better connect them to fostering a creative classroom. Finally, your closing paragraph does not really fit with the rest of the piece and reads more like an opening paragraph anyway—though I don't know that you need it or if it connects to your larger point. Something to consider. Cover letter/portfolio: A-

Semester Grade So Far: B+

Reading Journals: It's so interesting to me how many folks in our class said that part of what they thought about reading Iser or Rosenblatt (or Smith), was that they were freed up from the idea that the meaning of a text resided pretty exclusively with the author. I doubt you were the first class to think that, but you might be the first to write about it. And that made me think about how revelatory that would be for thinking about teaching: suddenly we must give our students a place to make a case for an interpretation. It's a call to be a generous listener to the work of our students. I think you've discussed this nicely here. Your journals are always of excellent quality. Reading Journals: A

Mentor Text Memoir Revision: Still no title? Or is that really your title? Sigh. I can't tell. Anyway, in terms of revision, your opening paragraph is a refreshing bit of it. I like the quickness of your sentences and the repositioning of the Emerson quote. I appreciate the details of the books you've read and the overall effect of the entire paragraph. I have a much clearer idea of what this paper is going to be about. I liked how we moved much more quickly through your middle school years. Your decision to actually re-write so much is impressive, but not because of just the effort, but for how it changes this paper. Your in-depth reading of your experience with *The Things They Carried* does an infinitely better job of getting at a larger point about reading than your previous material. I think we could have used a little bit more about how great reading is about hope in that paragraph—because your reading of *TTC* does not immediately seem to be about hope. Your last paragraph is strong (if a tiny bit rushed), and I wish you had brought the opening of your story a bit more inline with the powerful middle. But really thoughtful excellent work here. Mentor Text Revision: A

Book Club: There is a relationship between what you talk about in your philosophy of teaching and your reflection here: the role of writing in support of reading. Most of all, I appreciated how you dissected what happened while you read and responded to student writing. Your reaction—that it was quite negative—was how I felt as well, but not just for your group, but the entire class. This actually surprised me, and I've shaped some of the exercises we've done in class since to try to help students develop more empathy to their future students. Trying to figure out how a student came up with a particular reading is actually a very useful and important part of what I would call reading like a teacher. This was very thoughtful work. Book Club: A

Philosophy of teaching: In all my many years of teaching this class, only one other student ever came to the realization that it is in assessment that we, as teachers, demonstrate what we really believe in in the classroom. So it's certainly a pleasure to read what you have to say here. The big ideas I take from your piece is something about assessment, the value of learning through writing, the power of reflection for both teachers and students, engaging with students as individuals—I was particularly fond of how you said your job was to believe in their natural curiosity. Your reflection here is deeply personal and a good start at a philosophy, but it is not yet a philosophy and too much like a reflection. In a revision, you'll want to write a document that lasts beyond the end of this class and serves as a document you might use professionally. You'll want to think about how your ideas here are united thematically—what is the ethos you bring to teaching. I see this in your last paragraph when you talk about teaching to the individual student, believing in their abilities. In my own philosophy that ethos is creating structures that encourage my students to take risks as readers writers and thinkers. That's the uniting idea. Everything stems from that. That's your challenge as you change this from a reflection to a philosophy. Philosophy/portfolio: A-

Semester Grade So Far: A

Reading Journals: Colin you technically lost the right to turn in reading journals you didn't turn in when you failed to turn anything in the first time they were due. They are also not of acceptable length or complexity. It will cost you the grade for the entire project. But you've at least turned them in here (is this all of them? It doesn't seem so), and I will accept them. Your reflection on the reading seems flipped. You open by talking about stereotyping students—though you contradict yourself and say that you can often spot troublemakers—and how that affects teaching. It's your second paragraph that you talk, briefly, about how the reading informs this. I'm surprised that you see it as validating stereotyping—or do you see it more about knowing who your students are. I think the point I'm unclear about is how you see Rose and Rosenblatt explaining to you *how* we get to know our students. I am pretty easy on reading journals, but you need to turn them in. Reading Journals: C

Book Club: there must have been some misunderstanding about what the book club reflection should be. It was meant to be a two page, typed and double-spaced reflection on your entire experience of book club, including reading the 101E journals. You've included a brief overview of your work on the Pecha Kucha, but that was meant to be in addition to your actual reflection. Check the book club assignment online for complete details. I will revise upwards if you turn it in. Book Club: C

Mentor Text Memoir: Colin you did not turn in your draft of your mentor text memoir so I can't actually evaluate your revision. I can only evaluate what I see here. I re-read my original comments on your paper and, basically, I have the same thing to say about this draft: One thing that I think is strong about your paper is that it is focused on one text. I also value that it is not a story about a class book but one you wanted to read on your own. I don't actually think you need to call it literature. It's not. It's reading. That's really what we are trying to get at anyway. Where I struggle with this draft is that I don't understand the connections you are making between extracurricular activities and reading and being a successful student/person. That seems to be what you are trying to do. I think we just need more information. You never really talk about their being some relationship except that reading that book made you want to keep playing hockey. That is not a particularly universal story, and that's OK, but thinking more broadly about how reading that one book affected your hockey career and then, as you say at the end of the essay, how it helped you in life can help you conclude the essay. I need to understand better how any student reading any book that meant something to them could find a way to connect it to the same kinds of success—not necessarily hockey—that you seem to be suggesting it can do. I think this will be an excellent and strong revision/start to a philosophy of teaching. Mentor Text Memoir: B-

Philosophy of teaching: Here is what I see as the takeaways in your text: instilling values in your students, providing opportunities for improvement, exposing them to new cultures and new ideas. Then we have somethings about how we respond to students, creating a safe environment—including heating and cooling—and how to decorate bulletin boards, you talk about using portfolios, self-reflection, choice. Some of these are like a philosophy and some of these are practices which can support a philosophy—though some are more important to talk about than others. What is really missing is a deep and heartfelt ethos: In my own philosophy that ethos is creating structures that encourage my students to take risks as readers writers and thinkers. That's the unifying idea. Everything stems from that. That's your challenge as you change this from a reflection to a philosophy. Also, you'll want to think for the final draft how to make this a document not so tied to our class but one with longevity, so with less references to our class this semester. Philosophy/portfolio: B/B-

Your semester Grade so far reflects the above as well as attendance issues: C+

Reading Journals: I can always see that you are giving serious thought to what the readings have to offer us as teachers, and I see that you are trying to make your way through these difficult reading. And that is to your credit. Rosenblatt and Smith are powerful texts. They make us think about our own practice and then think about what that means for our future students. I appreciated that you thought about how these ideas apply to other kinds of classrooms and to special education. I think they have great relevance in, as you say, helping us to think about what sort of environment promotes learning for all of our students in all of our classes. I hope some of these ideas find their way into your philosophy of teaching. Reading Journals: A

Book Club: I liked that you wrote about how book club was an opportunity to engage with the supplementary reading in sort of like a lab experience of reading your novel. I'm even more happy to see your application to other classes. Your discussion of where to read echoes what you say in your reading journal reflection. You have a particularly good bit about the role of discussion in making sense of the text. Your observations about the 101E readers echoed what I saw in a lot of portfolios—the realization that this group was reading at a far more surface level than you folks. I liked what you said about reading the book as teacher and reader. I absolutely see that in my own work—when I know I'm going to teach something, I read with an eye towards what I think my students will need help with. And I liked how you talked about patience—that's another theme across reflections that I saw—even when you do see them, written response requires restraint and patience. Nice work here. Book Club: A

Mentor Text Memoir Revision: Stephen you did not include the first draft with my comments on it with this draft and so I can't really comment on the revision in it. I can only respond to the draft that I have in front of me. As I read this draft, it's not really until you get to where you talk about the text that I feel like you start to say something specific about reading. Until then, the first few paragraphs talk so widely about the idea of reading that it feels almost generic. Once I got to the text I was able to go back and pick out the idea that reading is valuable to everyday life. That point needs to be hit harder. In a revision, what I would have wanted to see is for you to focus in on one idea about reading, one that allowed you to use the texts you want to use and to talk about some of the many issues you talk about in the first page and a half, but in a more pointed and specific way. You really only spend a very little bit of time actually talking about any text and the connection between particular teachers and reading and this book are not clear at all—it's like there are two different papers here. Mentor Text Memoir: B

Philosophy of Teaching: Here are the big ideas I get from your draft of a philosophy: attending to specific student needs, making students feel welcome, visual representation, using a smart board, student involvement with classroom materials, teaching life skills, accommodation, positive effects on student growth. So most of these are not so much a philosophy as they are classroom practices. What do all of these practices say about your ethos of teaching, what you most value? That's what I miss seeing here. In my own philosophy that ethos is creating structures that encourage my students to take risks as readers writers and thinkers. That's the uniting idea. Everything stems from that. That's your challenge as you change this from a reflection to a philosophy. You want to establish a clear theory of why you do what you do and then talk about how what you are doing accomplishes that. Philosophy/portfolio: A-

Semester Grade So Far: A-