

Preface to Our Sourcebook

By Jennifer Matters

The sourcebook before you includes two hundred some odd pages of writing that comprise the to-be-published pieces we wrote for our “Teaching of Writing” class. These include several personal essays, research essays, stories, and teaching units.

The definitive theme running through each and every piece can be summed up into three simple words: writing is important. And while many different individual topics are discussed, appearing consistently in these texts is the struggle to determine *what* writing is and *why* it is important.

Here is what can be concluded about what we, as a class, feel writing is and why we feel it needs to be an integral part of the lives of our students. Writing is argument, reflection, entertainment, thought in action, and a way to learn. It is stories, poems, plays, portfolios, faery tales and ‘zines. Writing is student-centered, peer review, and editing for your ‘newspaper staff’. It is *not* scratching words down on a page to please your teacher, only useful while still in the school setting, or the evil five-paragraph essay. Writing is important because it helps us learn about the world around us, about ourselves and about the connections between the two. It is a way to escape the here and now and a way to put the here and now in front of us and make it more real. It can be used to change the world, outside the classroom and in, to make people laugh and to prove a point.

We would like to say that we determined all of this in a revelatory manner in the short duration of this semester. More likely than not, what we realized and wrote about this has been an accomplishment twenty or twenty-one years in the making. We now welcome you to read the culmination of sixteen weeks of writing, editing, learning, thinking, researching and staying up to obscene hours of the morning.