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Why are Students So Apprehensive About Writing?

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Why Are Students So Apprehensive About Writing?

SIGNIFICANCE

- Changes in Modern Job Market
 - Fewer "Unskilled" laborers
 - Fewer Jobs for Individuals without College Degrees
 - More Competitive
- Writing Responsibilities are Major Component of Most Jobs & Careers
 - Private Companies Spend \$3.1 Billion Annually on Writing Remediation
 - State Governments Spend \$221 Million Annually on Writing Remediation
- Writing Is an Important Skill for Communication and Self-Expression



RESULTS

Tier 1—Questionnaire

- 52% of Participants (12/23) Said They Dislike, Do Not Enjoy, Hate Writing or Find It Boring
- 35% of Participants Listed an Aspect of Pre-writing as the Most Difficult Part of Writing for Them
- 46% of Participants Said Providing Better Prompts Would Be the Best Way to Make Writing More Enjoyable.

LIMITATIONS

- Only 23 students participated in the study
- Was unable to complete 3rd tier of data collection (focus group)
- Questions on both questionnaire and interviews were somewhat repetitive and failed to delve into important issues revealed during literature review (i.e. authentic writing, publication, digital literacies)

METHODOLOGY

- Tier 1—Questionnaire
- Tier 2—Individual Student Interviews
- Tier 3—Focus Group
- Goal—Uncover Underlying Causes of Student Aversion to Writing

Tier 2-Student Interviews

- 66% of Interviewees Admitted a Negative Emotion When They Think About Writing
 - "Darn", "Echh", "Boring" (x3), "Don't Want to" (x2)
- None of the Interviewees Consider Texting, IMing, Tweeting, Posting on Facebook, Blogging, or Sending Emails to be writing
- Half of Interviewees Said Better Topics Would Be the Change They Would Most Like to See
 - 33% Said More Choice
- 66% of Interviewees Do Not Consider Themselves Writers
- 100% of Interviewees Said They Do Not Like or Enjoy the Writing They Do in School
- 100% of Interviewees Said Writing Is an Important School to Have

ECHH!

CONCLUSIONS

- Students know writing is important but do not enjoy the writing they do in school.
- Students want better writing prompts and more choice in what they write about.
- Responses given during the study varied greatly—all students are different, and each one should be treated as the individual that they are.

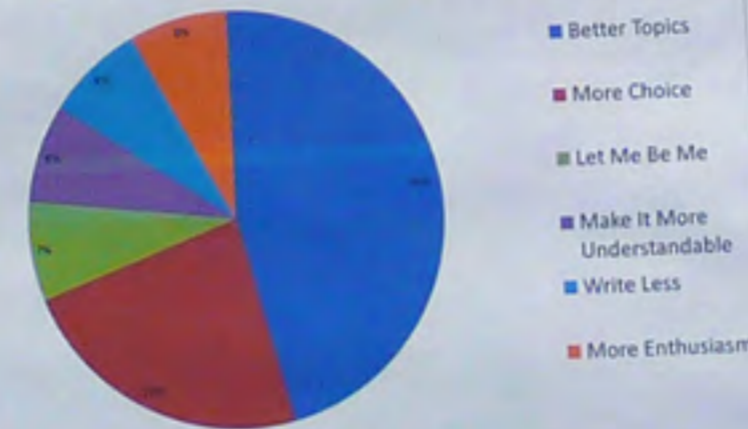
Darn!

WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

- The Literature Says the Best Ways to Motivate Student Writers Are:
 - "Authentic" Writing Products
 - Provides Purpose
 - Incorporate Digital Literacies
 - Texting, IMing, Facebook, Twitter, blogging, email, etc.
 - Explicitly Teach Audience & Purpose
 - "Real" writers want to cause a result in their readership—student writers are no different
 - Give Students Choice and Control Over What They Write About



What Could Your Teachers Do to Make Writing More Enjoyable for You?



What Do You Enjoy About Writing?



BORING!

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide prompts that are relevant and interesting to students—things that teens can relate to and that impact them
- Provide both choice (for those who want it) and structure (for those who don't)
- Get to know students—best way to provide exactly what each individual needs
- Incorporate as much authentic writing as possible into curriculum because it provides an automatic purpose
- Incorporate more computer mediated communication into curriculum to bridge gap between the social writers our students are with the technical writers they need to be

by: Justin Rush