"Language is the medium of democracy. Unless everyone's ways with words are accepted into the great conversation, any conception of public dialogue and mutual decision making is, at best, partial and, at worst, illegitimate, and unstable. Unless people can speak to others about what their lives are like-and be heard-there is no mechanism for the political system to work for all its constituents. Failing to ask people to tell their stories is not only rude and uncivil but a functional failure of a democratic public. If voices of the vulnerable are silent, there is no hope of renewal and justice" –
(p. 2) **From** *For a Better World: Reading and Writing for Social Action* **by Randy Bomer and Katherine Bomer (2001, Heinemann)**

Social Justice Through Story and Community
WSRA • Thursday, February 9, 2017 • 9:45-11:45 AM
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Learning Target:	Questions/Reflection:

I can articulate t**he purpose of giving students a voice** in writing so that I can implement an atmosphere of **empowerment**.
 	
  o I can explain the impact of choice on student engagement.
 	
  o I can explain the impact of writing with students to build trust.
 	
  o I can describe the impact that an authentic audience has on student engagement.	

Thursday, February 9, 2017 (9:45-11:15 AM)

When	What
9:45-10:05	**Opening: Introductions, Learning Targets, & Agenda** ● Develop a clear purpose of our work during today's session ● Based on our learning targets – what do I already know? What do I wonder? ● Text Walk (Annotate snippets of research based on choice, purpose, audience)

10:05-11:10	**Social Justice Through Story and Community**
	● What is Social Justice and why do we do it?
	● Exhibit 1: Grit Video
	  o Background
	  o Lifting a Line Activity
	● Exhibit 2: Student Work
	  o Read pieces of student work and think about the question: How are these pieces of writing linked to social justice?
	
	How do I start teaching for social justice through writing?
	● Watch. Listen. Find out what your students are passionate about.
	● Write with your students. Provide models or make a model.
	● Provide students choice, even if it is managed choice.

	• Give students time to write. • Provide time for students to share ideas, write, and talk. • Confer with students. • Help students find an audience that they care about.
11:10-11:15	**Debrief: (How did you get smarter today?)** ▪ Revisit Learning Targets ▪ Turn and Talk

Text Walk:

Choice 1: Build trust with students

Dream team Doug Fisher, Nancy Frey, and John Hattie discuss the practices that work best to accelerate student learning in *Visible Learning for Literacy* (2016). With an effect size of .72, teacher-student relationships are closely related to teacher credibility. "When students believe that the teacher is credible, they are more likely to develop positive relationships with that teacher, and then learn more from him or her. But relationships go deeper than credibility. Of course, relationships are based on trust, which is a part of the credibility construct. But relationships also require effective communication and addressing issues that strain the relationship. Positive relationships are fostered and maintained when teachers set fair expectations, involve students in determining aspects of the classroom organization and management, and hold students accountable for the expectations in an equitable way. Importantly, relationships are not destroyed when problematic behaviors occur, on the part of either the teacher or students. This is an important point for literacy educators. If we want to ensure students read, write, communicate, and think at high levels, we have to develop positive, trusting relationships with students, all students." (page 13)

From *Inside Writing: How to Teach the Details of Craft* (2005)*,* Don Graves and Penny Kittle share five compelling reasons to share and model teacher writing with students:
1. Writing with students building relationships and nurtures respect among all writers in the room.
2. Writing with students teachers them how to see things from a new point of view.
3. Writing together creates energy
4. Modeling your decision-making process helps them see that the process is ongoing.
5. Writing with your students saves time.
(pages 48-49)

From Kelly Gallagher's *Write Like This*, Gallagher shares his Ten Core Beliefs about the Teaching of Writing, including Core Belief 1: The Wizard of Oz Would have Been a Lousy Writing Teacher:
- "...If we want our young writers to improve, we have to plant ourselves in the middle of our classroom and demonstrate how we approach this confusing thing we call the writing process. I am the best writer in my classroom. You are the best writer in your classroom. Our students don't need the best writer in their classrooms to assign writing; they need the best writer in the classrooms to sit smack dab in the middle of those rooms and model the wrestling match we go through to produce worthwhile writing, Our students need us to adopt an "I go, then they go" approach in our classroom; the teacher steps out from behind the curtain and models how to write, and then the students follow suit…" (page 225)

In *Read, Write, Teach* (2014), Linda Rief shares a list of her core beliefs about teaching and language arts, including:
- Learning occurs best in a safe, stimulating, challenging environment that encourages curiosity, imagination, exploration, and risk-taking.
- Teachers form trusting relationships with students that build a community of learners when they know their students' strengths, interests, and needs and when they model and demonstrate their own writing and reading. (page 4)

In addition, Rief shares her beliefs of what students need to become fluent writers (and readers) includes real writing for real reasons and audiences and reading that engages, interests and challenges. She believes that students can do their best work when they are given:
- time
- choice
- response (word revision, while drafting)

- models of fine reading and writing (both fiction and nonfiction, from professionals, their peers, and their teacher)
- strategies for entering into, strengthening, and extending that writing and reading
- a writer's-reader's notebook-a place to collect their thinking
- encouragement to use visual tools to show their thinking as writers and their understandings as readers

(page 5)

Writing Workshop: The Essential Guide (2001) written by Ralph Fletcher and JoAnn Portalupi, perhaps one of the most influential educational books about guiding young writers shares this wisdom about writing with students:
- Write with your students. This may be the most important strategy of all. Nothing creates a supportive writing tone as when you walk in the shoes of a writer yourself. When you take even a few minutes in the workshop for your own writing you give kids something they rarely see-a real live adult actually writing! Even if writing isn't your strongest suit, you can use your model for your students. At the same time, a powerful message: We're all writers. We're in this together. (page 26)

Choice 2: Provide choice to students

Respected reading researcher Richard Allington and Dr. Rachael E. Gabriel provide suggestions to engage students in literacy from the article, "Every Child, Every Day." (*Educational Leadership*, March 2012). Allington and Gabriel include six elements of instruction that each student should experience **every day**:

1. Read something s/he chooses.
2. Read accurately.
3. Read something s/he understands.
4. Write about something personally meaningful.
5. Talk with peers about reading and writing.
6. Listen to a fluent adult read aloud.

Under the heading of *Write About Something Personally Meaningful*, Allington and Gabriel share:
"As adults, we rarely if ever write to a prompt, and we almost never write about something we don't know about. Writing is called *composition* for good reason: We actually *compose* (construct something unique) when we write. The opportunity to compose continuous text about something meaningful is not just something nice to have when there's free time after a test or at the end of the school year. Writing provides a different modality within which to practice the skills and strategies of reading for an authentic purpose."

Allison Marchetti and Rebekah O'Dell, authors of *Writing for Mentors: How to Reach Every Writer in the Room Using Current, Engaging Mentor Texts* (2015) share how choices are crucial for writers:
- Donald Graves said that when students don't have any choice over their writing, their work becomes "dishonest" and removed from the true purposes of writing. As a consequence, "the student can even graduate without learning that writing is the medium through which are most intimate thoughts and feelings can be expressed." (Graves 1994, 62) By offering choices in topic, process, and mentor texts, we promote creativity and diversity in our student writers. (page 5)
- Perhaps even more important that engagement, however, is the way choosing their own topics for writing helps students craft powerful personal identities at such a critical time in their lives. What they choose to write about makes students known-to themselves, their teachers, their classmates, and the larger world-in a way quite unlike anything else. (page 6)

Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximizing Impact on Learning (Hattie, 2012) contains a meta-analysis of learning strategies. In Hattie's research, he found that student-centered teaching, where students are given voice and choice, has an effect size of .54. Anything above a .4 effect size results in more than a year's growth on student learning.

Choice 3: Provide purpose for students

Ron Berger, Libby Woodfin, Suzanne Nathan Plaut, and Cheryl Becker Dobbertin, authors of *Transformational Literacy: Making the Common Core Shift with Work That Matters* (2014) describe three components of high-quality work, including authenticity:
Authenticity
- Authentic word demonstrates the original thinking of students-authentic personal voice and ideas-rather than simply showing that students can follow directions or fill in the blanks.

- Authentic word often uses real work formats and standards from the professional world rather than artificial school formats (e.g., students create a book review for a local newspaper instead of a book report for a teacher).
- Authentic word often connects academic standards with real-world issues, controversies, and local people and places.
- Authenticity gives purpose to work; the work matters to students and ideally to a larger community as well. When possible, it is created for and shared with an audience beyond the classroom.
(pages 122-123)

Ron Berger, Leah Rugen, and Libby Woodfin share the importance of making learning public in *Leaders of Their Own Learning: Transforming Schools through Student-Engaged Assessment* (2014):
- "Celebrations of learning are created for an audience beyond the classroom. Preparing work to be shared with the public-the authentic audience-motivates students and creates a purpose for them to care about the quality of their work. Presenting work to an authentic audience also raises the states and sets the expectation that all students, not just a select group, will share their high-quality products." (page 214)
- An authentic audience demonstrates for students that their work is real and important and increases their motivation and engagement…" (page 215)

From *Because Writing Matters: Improving Student writing in Our Schools* (2006)
Based on a 1998 NAEP Writing Study, in which the Educational Testing Service (ETS)/NAEP analyzed writing assignments from thirty-five fourth-grade and twenty-six eighth grade classrooms and focused on effective writing assessments. The study considered the use and balance of these four key elements: Content and Scope, Organization and Development, Audience and Communication, and Engagement and Choice.

- **Audience and Communication**
  An effective assignment goes beyond the use of a "pretend" audience and offers the student a genuine opportunity to communicate to a real audience. For example, an assignment asking students to explain a process is a staple of many writing classes. A typical eighth-grade assignment asks students to write to the teacher explain how open a school locker. But the student knows that the teacher already knows how to do it. A more effective approach might ask students to identify an area of expertise (tying a fly fishing fly, or collecting baseball cards), not shared by the reader and then explain something to that audience on the basis of the writer's unique experience, knowledge, and perspective. (Page 48)

In *Literacy and Learning Lessons from a Longtime Teacher* (2012), Regie Routman, writes that teachers must infuse purpose and authenticity into all we do:
- "Making our teaching as authentic and purposeful as possible makes it much more likely that we engage and motivate all learners. When students understand and value the "what" of curriculum and standards, they are willing to invest in the "how." When they don't see the relevance of the lesson or activity, many make minimal efforts and even shut down"... "If we want students to invest full energy into their schoolwork, they must see the work as important to their lives in some way. A growing body of research confirms that the more authentic and meaningful our instruction is, the greater gains students make." (page 7).