

Academic Journal

While you are working with the students at Lincoln International High School (LIHS) you will be developing entries in your reading journal in order to help you think through and process your experience and connect it to the coursework you're doing in our English class and in Jack's Justice & Peace Studies course. These journal entries will also give you the foundation and details for your second long essay.

While your experience will naturally be a very personal one, and it is likely that you will have a lot of feelings to explore (and you will be asked to describe and reflect upon those feelings), your journal entries will be *academic* in that they will address concerns that are specific to the learning you're doing, and in that you will be asked to *analyze* those concerns as well as describe them.

There are 7 entries: one for each week at LIHS, plus a "pre-launch writing" on your preconceptions. Basic format: the equivalent of at least one page. You do not have to have cheery, positive responses. I am much more interested in your awareness and analysis. Be thoughtful, specific, detailed.

Below I have given specific assignments for each entry. You are free to add to these, especially to add connections to the texts you're reading and/or discussions you're having in either class (or in your other St. Thomas classes, for that matter).

Pre-launch writing: HMMM...

After Chris Nevin's orientation, before you go to Lincoln for the first time.

Title this page Hmmm... Write at least one page in which you articulate your honest feelings, thoughts, anxieties, and anticipations of the project in which you're going to participate this semester. Write freely and openly, acknowledging any pre-judgments or stereotypes. Later you will draw on your initial thoughts/questions/feelings.

First entry: DESCRIPTION

October 23

Write a detailed paragraph describing LIHS **as a place**: the building, the environment, the people with whom you work (you can just use first names), what you're doing there. What were your first "eye-openers"? Be very specific; imagine that you are writing for someone who has not been to LIHS.

Then write a detailed paragraph describing **your own feelings about this place** and the work you're doing. How do you feel in this environment, with these people? Why did you come here? Why did you choose this course in the first place, upon reflection? How is the experience making you feel about yourself? Describe how you think you are seen by the students and faculty at LIHS. How do you feel about this?

Second and Third Entries: ANALYSIS

October 30

How does the language you use affect the way you think and the actions you take? Are you bilingual? If so, discuss the ways that the experiences of the LIHS students are similar to or different from your own. If you are not bilingual, discuss the experience of being monolingual in a bilingual environment. How much have you studied a foreign language? Have you traveled to a place where you don't speak the language? If so, describe the experience.

Analyze the *literacy* work you are doing with students at LIHS. Think about big picture/little picture issues here. How does your work address the needs of individuals and at the same time fit in with the larger picture of LIHS, the institution you are working within? How does your work fit in with the institution of St. Thomas? What role does your work play in the workings of the state of Minnesota, or the United States?

November 6

Analyze the literary work you are doing with students at LIHS. Describe the collaborative writing project you're working on. What are you learning *about reading and about writing* from the authors we're reading and from the students in your Lincoln class? In what ways have they made you become aware of the power of language?

Nearly all of the literary works we've read this semester emphasize **the importance of storytelling** in our lives. Telling our own stories, and hearing others' stories, affirms our humanity. In what ways do you see this manifested in your work with Lincoln students? In what ways are you telling and hearing stories?

Fourth and Fifth entries: INTEGRATION

November 13

Dave Eggers has said that when he first started writing *What is the What*, it was just one atrocity after another, because Valentino didn't think the rest of his life would be interesting to Dave. But Eggers needed to "balance all the horrific parts with some measure of relief and calm and . . . laughter and romance, all these things that make a full human life." If he didn't do that, he would be "ignoring [Valentino's] whole humanity, saying all he is is a product of statistics. . .—there's no other aspect of his life that's of value." How do you see this principle at work in the novel? Cite specific passages to show how the book works to present Valentino's whole humanity.

How has reading *What is the What* while working at LIHS been affecting your understanding of that book, Valentino's experiences, and your understanding of the LIHS students' experiences? Cite specific passages from the book to illustrate your thoughts

November 20

Integrating your own history into this story. Begin by discussing what you knew about immigration policies and the lives of refugees *before* you began this class. Did your family immigrate to the U.S.? If so, when? What do you know about their experience? How much have you known about colonial history and the history of slavery? What is your place in this history? In what ways have your previous views on immigration and/or on colonization, on slavery, or on Africa or Latin America in general been complicated by your experience at LIHS? What connections do you find between your family's experience and concepts you've read about and discussed in Justice & Peace Studies, in English, and/or in your other classes?

Sixth entry: REFLECTION

November 27

Describe your sense of community and sense of service *before* you began this class. What have you been learning about yourself over the past six weeks? Does this experience confirm or challenge your personal values? Do you think your actions had any impact? If so, how and why? If not, how and why not? How have you or your views changed, or how have your views been reinforced?

What do you think you've learned from this experience *intellectually* or *academically* (in contrast to personally, which you discuss above)? Given what you have learned, what will you do now? What choices will you make? How might your choices be different than those you might have made before the experience of this class and community-based project?

If you were allowed just one sentence to describe the most important lesson from this course, what would that sentence be? Introduce your "one sentence" with a brief explanation of how you developed the sentence (why you chose it), to explain who the audience would be for such a sentence (your peers, members of a certain organization, political leaders, people in power, people who are underprivileged, people who are powerful, a person walking down the street, television viewers, teenagers, kids, your parents, etc.) Then write your one sentence boldly as the very last sentence of this journal assignment.