

READING WRITING IN THE DISCIPLINES

Writing for New Media Video Transcript

Jane Cunningham:

Today is a conference day. I have written a lot of notes on your scripts, and if you turn to the end you will see that I have about three or four notes for each of you specific to you.

Lance:

We're working on our seven-minute podcast about a certain subject of our choosing. Like mine is music programs here in Reading.

Cunningham:

They are writing their scripts, revising their scripts, editing what they already have for audio. They are finding music or sound to include in their podcast.

Student:

Do you like living in the town of Reading?

Cunningham:

They are still getting interviews.

This is the day to ask me lots of questions and workshop with me if you need it. Find a place to write when I hand these back. I have written a lot of notes on your scripts.

I had gone over those scripts before class.

What I had found was that conclusion was very difficult for a lot of you. Some of you just may not have gotten to the conclusion. Is there anyone in that category? Just didn't get to it? Okay, that explains a lot.

That's one of the tricky things about this project is that they're in different places pretty much at all times except for out of the starting gate. So they need different things at different times.

If you need some suggestions for what to work on today, there's a list.

Could they think about the things that I had asked them at the end of their scripts? And then could they go back and revise? Revision is difficult for high school students and possibly anybody who tries to do it.

Student:

I think my problem is trying to get it to flow better.

Cunningham:

So maybe you have a really brief story that you could tell. Something about your own recollection of Mrs. Cunha. Have you actually interviewed her?

Student:

Miss Cunha?

Cunningham:

Yeah.

Student:

No.

Cunningham:

You should interview her.

Student:

Okay.

Cunningham:

Yeah, and see what she has to say about her time here so far.

I think it's hard to conclude a podcast. I think that they're not really sure how to end or whether they should end with their own opinion.

So what do you want them to walk away with here?

Student:

Understanding, like, who she is and what her job is.

Cunningham:

Exactly. And it can be as simple as that.

So this project I feel like there's more activity in general. They're going out and finding interviews. They're talking with a partner about angle.

Student:

So how's our angle in it? What do we want them to be thinking about when they're done?

Joe:

Today we knew we had to make some edits to the narration of our script, so we first did what Miss Cunningham told us to do, which was how do we want the people leaving this and what do we want them thinking about?

Lexi:

Can we say something about tradition?

Joe:

Yeah, they exhibit the pride that the students have for their high school?

Lexi:

That works, I like that.

Joe:

I'm getting a lot of ideas that I never would have thought of and I think it's more productive to collaborate because you have both of these ideas crossing. We're really working efficiently.

Lexi:

You also have to have a good intent, though.

Joe:

Yeah. So to the students.

Cunningham:

A lot of them chose to work with another person, so that's also something that is a little different. When you write an essay you write it by yourself, pretty much. And this they could choose to work with someone else or work alone.

Student:

Are we using the word stereotyping too much? It's just going to stop sounding like a real word by the end of it.

Student:

I know.

Cunningham:

When I teach them to critique, part of it is about listening.

Student:

Do you feel like we should say formats? Like a variety of different like...

Student:

In different varieties. In different varieties.

Lance:

Writing for an audience, it's a lot more personal than writing just an analysis for like some teacher in a school because you have to really connect with the audience instead of breaking down minor details.

Cunningham:

So as your listener -- I'm on the outside, I'm listening to your podcast -- I'm interested in how you came to band. And I was... I talked with Charlie a little bit about this, but a story as a lead -- and it doesn't have to be long -- but you can...

Student:

So, like, we should be talking about, like, ourselves in that sense?

Cunningham:

Just something to connect you, the reporters, with this topic. You picked this topic for a reason. Stories work really well.

When I conference with students I think it, again, comes back to finding something specific to their work.

So what's going to be the music that you start with?

Student:

It's going to be like a couple clips of the theater performances, the chorus, and the band.

Cunningham:

If they feel like you're just being generic about what you want to say to them, then I don't think you are able to have a conversation. It's a dialogue, it's a discussion. And you want them to respond to you so you have to ask questions about their work and you have to know their work.

So if you tell a little bit about what brought you to band, chorus, drama, whatever the...

Student:

It all started at an instrument petting zoo at the end of fifth grade.

Cunningham:

Exactly.

There are a lot of reasons this project works for a lot of students. Being able to work independently, having help if they need it, being able to leave the classroom, go record somewhere. Those are parts of the project that work really well for a lot of types of learners.

Joe:

During this process, Lexi and I conduct interviews with several teachers, who discuss the severity of these pranks and their consequences.

Lexi:

And then just play that back and make sure that sounds okay.

Joe:

Yeah.

(recording):

Throughout our interview investigation...

Cunningham:

So it's kind of a loaded question. I get what you're trying to do.

Student:

No, no, no, we're just trying to like... We have to say it... we're saying that we have to say it because although it's awkward, everybody does it.

Cunningham:

I have some students today who are working on a piece, a feature on stereotypes.

Why are they uncomfortable? Why don't they want to talk about it?

Student:

Because it's awkward and it makes them sound like a terrible person, really. It's just...

Cunningham:

They're admitting something about themselves that they don't like.

They want to include this piece in their feature and they don't really know how to include it. So that to me was an interesting conversation.

Student:

We're sounding racist by saying this.

Cunningham:

Not really knowing where exactly to go. That was a surprise for me. But having them ask questions and think about it was leading them in a way that it seemed like they were going to get something good for themselves.

First you're asking people to tell you what they think stereotypes are, what some of the common ones are, but then you somehow need to go from there to this piece of like why people... this uncomfortable piece. And somehow there's a piece missing in there, I feel like. So if you need to go back to him and just talk to him more about the discomfort issue, that might be a good thing to do just to get somebody else's opinion on it.

Teaching this unit has been a surprise every day.

Student:

We just have to articulate what we're trying to say.

Cunningham:

I feel like that give and take with students and teacher has been really fun and exciting.

Can you put him in somewhere closer to the beginning?

Student:

Yeah, I put him in the second...

Cunningham:

I want my students to walk away with what it means to write something, keeping in mind your audience, what it means to be a good journalist, and why it's important to get other people's perspectives.

So tell me where you are in your script. So what have you added so far?