**Disclaimer:**

My two boys are Minecraft fans. They could spend hours in that virtual environment digging about for blocky resources that they can use in creative ways. Likewise, I am always mining for gems that I can put to use in my classroom and other aspects of my life. Chiefly, I do this through reading. I keep this journal because it assists my memory and because I enjoy periodically looking back over what I have read.

Please note that there will be spelling and punctuation errors throughout this document. While others pull the worn notebook out of their back pocket and scribble some words, I pull out my MacBook and tap away.

**Taylor, Stuart. How to Ace a Job Interview: Quick Tips for an Excellent Interview. Mustang, OK: Tate Publishing, 2013.**

Slim book with some very good advice. Did not quite finish due to time and school starting. This would be very good to flip through for one expecting a slew of interviews approaching.

**Brooks, Landon. Building Great Sentences: How to Write the Kinds of Sentences You Love to Read.New York: Penguin, 2013.**

Borrowed this one from the library, but did not have time to read it. Heavy grammar, but explicated in prose. Yes, please! This would be good to return to for AP, etc.

**Hicks, Faith Erin. Friends with Boys. New York: First Second, 2012.**

Very engaging graphic novel about a girl that has been homeschooled going to HS for the first time. She has three brothers and she is haunted mildly by a ghost. She meets a new friend—a punker who reminds me strongly of Josie—and gets to know her brother, a kid that was recently at the top of the popularity food chain but has slipped down to the bottom. No teenage bitterness, but a group of kids that you enjoy getting to know for the entirety of the book. Mom had left. Dad is a police chief.

**Fournier, Ron. Love that Boy: What Two Presidents Eight Road Trips, and my Son Taught me About a Parent’s Expectations. New York: Harmony, 2016.**

Memoir by a previous white house reporter about the shame that he felt when he realized (when his son was 12) that the boy had Asperbergers. He is honest about the shame that he feels in his son, also his early frustration that his son did not have any interest in sports. He meditates at length about the outsize expectations that we have for our kids—setting ourselves up for disappointment when they take their own way. His daughter also almost broke under the strain of getting high grades, became depressed and contemplated suicide.

Fournier was able to hire therapists and use outstanding monetary resources to help his kids. His wife was almost a full time advocate for his son. His son made progress. Once they knew he was on the spectrum, they were able to target interventions which helped the boy connect socially with people and behave in manners that were more acceptable.

Larger message here to parents is to chill out and let your kids play a bit. Lower expectations and mold their work ethic. Let them pick the mountains they will climb.

Marc Gellman: “An Argument Against Happiness”. The synonym for happiness is not pleasure. It’s goodness. “True happiness, the kind of happiness we out to wish for our children and for ourselves is almost always the result of doing hard but good things over and over.” P. 134

Funny section where Fournier wonders if Bill Clinton is in fact an Aspie: “ but here he was: spewing mind magma…obsessed with certain topcis…dominating the conversation….misreading a conversation partner….”

Experience at a new school designed for Aspies. Culture of community. Their son grew.

His take-aways:

* Don’t parent for the future; parent for today
* Guide, don’t push
* Don’t beat yourself up
* Celebrate all victories
* Slow down
* Make different cool
* Be a spouse first, a parent second
* Share even the bad news
* Fight for your kids
* Channel your inner Aspie

**Delpit, Lisa. Multiplication is for White People. New York: The New Press, 2012.**

Intro: “Yes, Diane, I’m Still Angry.”

In response to Diane Ravitch’s question about why Delpit has not engaged in much angry confrontation with the current educational milieu. Delpit responds with a sturdy list of reasons that she is still angry about the state of affairs of education—many issues she delves into more deeply in the rest of her text.

She lists the following in order to create excellence in urban classrooms:

1. Recognize the importance of a teacher and good teaching, especially for the “school dependent” children of low-income communities
2. Recognize the brilliance of poor, urban children and teach them *more* content, not less.
3. Whatever methodology or instructional program is used, demand critical thinking while at the same time assuring that all children gain access to “basic skills”—the conventiions and strategies that are essential to success in American Society.
4. Provide children with the emotional ego strength to challenge racist societal views of their own competence and worthiness and that of their families and communities.
5. Recognize and build on children’s strengths
6. Use familiar metaphors and experiences from the children’s world to connect what students already know to school-taught knowledge.
7. Create a sense of family and caring in the classroom.
8. Monitor and assess students’ needs and then address them with a wealh of diverse strategies.
9. Honor and respect the children’s home cultures.
10. Foster a sense of children’s connection to community, to something greater than themselves. (p. xix—xx).

Part I. Inherent Ability

Acknowledges fact that Afrtican American children are not excelling in schools. She thinks that buried in the American Psyche is the idea that black kids are inherently less inferior. She dedicates this essay to “dispelling that myth.”

She takes issue also with the idea of the existence of a “culture of poverty” (6). Delpit makes the distinction that what is usually called “culture” here is a “response to oppression.” Gives example of a grad student in Alaska being told that drunkenness is part of the culture (for an indigenous group)—Delpit would say this is a response to oppression—that economic forces, etc. have created the environment. Beating your wife is no one’s culture. Drinking too much is no one’s culture. However, it can be an unhelpful response to other conditions which are not ideal for life.

Here, in dealing with the “culture of poverty” she gives too weak an answer. Certainly there are hugely powerful variables at work here and she later does acknowledge some of the complex psyche-driven variables that AA kids are dealing with. It seems to me that there is more to be dealt with on this topic.

One reason for lack of achievement for AA is simply that they are not being taught (or taught well).

Second, they are not excelling b/c they have been affected by our society’s deeply ingrained bias of equating blackness with inferiority. Here she makes a claim that racism is alive and well in US. In America, we live in a “racism smog”

Many AA kids have internalized all the negative stereotypes about their race. This is especially bad with black males who are stigmatized and are in a catch 22 of having their normal behaviors reprimanded. Constant reprimands reinforce the sense of being “less than,” and then they hide or act out in order to protect their sense of self. Their behaviors then reinforce the negative views of others. They “disidentify” with school. (15-16). A psychological coping strategy that allows an individual to maintain self-esteem in the face of failure. (19).

Many AA feel isolated and that their teachers support them. Delpit thinks that remedial programs only increase the sense of stigma and make things even worse. She recommends advanced programs give extra remedial supports.

Delpit also thinks that curricular content does not connect in meaningful ways to student’s culture and lives. She gives several examples (21-23) of teachers that got it right with specific lessons. They did not strike me as probable in terms of scaling out the idea to a full year of teaching. The point, though, might be to keep the kid’s interests in mind and KNOW WHO YOU ARE TEACHING!

Ch. 2 Infinite Capacity

She starts the second chapter: “In eras and locales where the inferiority of African American children has not been presumed, amazing things have happened” (p. 27). She is interested in the potential of an African-centered approach to curriculum. More community-centered and holistic. Delpit continually pushes against the “culture of poverty” argument that worries about what is happening in the home and environment. Instead, she says, “What is happening in the classroom?”

In shaky territory, she criticizes the Hart and Risley language study which cites that low-income kids hear less less distict language and it is reflected in the performance gap. Delpit doubts the usefulness of all that language and gives an example of her own daughter getting exasperated at her when speaking through too much experience (when she was a toddler). She does not full-out accuse the study of being incorrectly gathered, but she implies as much.

She is critical of pre-school (headstart) being thought of as a “vaccine” which solves the problem of poverty’s impact on education—wanting a stronger solution in the main grades.

Here, I think she is stretching b/c she does not want to admint that there is a “culture of poverty” and she wants to downplay its strength. She thinks that these kids are not being taught correctly—or that strategies need to be put in place that can serve these kids infinitely better.

Not a fan of pre-packaged curriculums, Delpit wants the curriculum to be better-centered around the kid’s experiences, world-view, lived cultures, etc. Clear away the foolishness that does not work, she is saying. P. 36-37.

Delpit seems to be making a large shift from her previous writing—writing that I found valuable in my own practice. She has connected—unfairly—the word disparity study, a general (supposed) belief of AA incompetence in the U.S. with white superiority. I think this is bogus. Other scholars have struggled trying to assist and improve the gaps and I do not believe that these can be dismissed simply b/c they are lost in some kind of biased, prejudicial swamp. Unlike Other People’s Children, this turn toward talk of straight bias against AA leaves me fairly cold. It undermines many eager professionals that are trying to do their best whatever color. It also over-simplifies much. Studies about immigrant groups and social uplift. Why the AA lag? Is it all simply racism? Do AA truly not have the access to social uplift that other groups appear to grip within a couple generations?

Her solution here appears to be less that they should be taught the modes of the dominant culture, but that through Afro-centric curriculum and a greater sense of teachers understanding who the kids are (and their culture) that things will improve. Also, she acknowledges the inferiority myth that the AA kids appear to believe about themselves—a self-fulfilling prophecy.

These solutions (the new ones) appear to have less real-world traction than her previous ideas about giving kids the dominant culture ALONG WITH their local culture. She now appears to see the dominant culture as inherently averse to AA culture. There are some problems with this. When the Asian community is being taught, do they need Asian-centered curriculum? Hispanics? Poles? Where does this stop? Other immigrant groups have experienced uplift by accessing the dominant culture.

Also, what is considered by her African-culture is not incredibly different from that dominant culture. Community relationships, real-life problem solving, group identity, etc. What makes this uniquely African American? This is weak stuff and she does not adequately satisfy me that she is not just desperately attempting to stave off what she sees as another attack on her race (culture of poverty). She does not discuss the AA family in this book. She concentrates on classroom practice and, though useful, it appears anemic to me. Her unwillingness to look critically within at her community is hampering her scholarship here, I think. She does not want to be one more voice burdening AA’s with more negative remarks.

She gives an example of a lesson which was Afro-centric (content was about Egypt). It was rigorous, involved much classroom management about community togetherness, brought inspiration based on the noble legacy of their race, had much deep discussion, and made connections to real life. In effect, this is not terribly different than other classrooms (effective ones) except for the inclusion of the African content and some side stories. The feasibility of this is troubling to me. Also, no where is mentioned that this type of curriculum might just be good for all kids. I believe it is basically very near to curriculum that is considered traditional.

Ch. 3: Stuff You Never Would Say: Successful Literacy Instruction in Elementary Classrooms

“If we are going to ensure that all children learn to read, I believe we have to turn our notion of “basic skills” on its head. What we call “basic skills” in literacy are typically the linguistic *conventions* of middle-class society and the *strategies* successful people use to access new information.” (p. 53)

She notes that middle class families teach basic skills, but that their kids do not get higher-order problem solving skills until later. Some cultures and some lower income kids get this sooner organically. Kids arrive after 3-4 years at home, having learned different things. Schools value the basic academic skills over the ability to do more social types of skills that many learn—comforting a crying child, cleaning up paint.

Delpit argues that many kids—the kids that do not get the basic skills at home—do know many things—like: “how to make accurate judgments and evaluate real life situations accurately and act accordingly.” (55). A bias toward the middle class with negative repercussions (kids deficient) when the lower-income kids do not meet expectations.

Delpit is frustrated that we concentrate so much on what low-income kids do not know and the assumption that we often make that the kid is deficient. She prefers that we concentrate on what is happening in the classroom.

Emphasis on teaching and speaking to kids about skills and strategies, in order to counter the idea that a student may have about not being “smart” or “intellectual.”

She wants a “consciously devised, continuous program that teaches skills and develops vocabulary in the context of real experiences, provides rigorous instruction, connects new information to the cultural frameworks that children bring to school, and assumes that children are brilliant and capable—and teaches accordingly.” She wants basic skills taught in the context of broader life-based lessons.

Teaching of skills should be intentional and explicit as well as

* Situated within engaging activities
* Embedded in real writing, reading and communication
* Taught flexibly when needed rather than as an unvarying curriculum

Good line: “I teach children, not curricula.” (66)

Delpit insists that focused strategies that are designed specifically for their cultural and academic backgrounds is what struggling AA kids need. She is critical of the value placed on pre-school initiatives and other thinking that sees family life as deficient.

Ch. 4: Warm Demander: The Importance of Teachers in the Lives of Children of Poverty.

Some kids are “school dependent.” Idea that many kids that are not part of the mainstream are dependent upon good teachers to help them access the modes of success. Kids from more privileged backgrounds can get by with weaker teachers. (72) (Gloria Ladson-Billings)

Qualities of a strong teacher… This is a strong chapter to look over when a good overview of strong teaching is needed. Have a backbone.

“Someone’s opinion of you does not have to become your reality.” (79) What one demanding teacher told a student when they placed limits on their own ability.

Many “warm demanders” are spoken of as “Mean.”

Some complex ideas about raised voices—different perceptions based on culture.

Importance of social support—higher achievement for students that feel as if they are supported.

One academic breakthrough with a child’s indifference: a teacher saying: “You just do not think that you are “smart,” do you? Child admitting through tears that it was the case.

Knowing students is a prerequisite for teaching them well.

This is a strong chapter for giving to white teachers of AA kids. Addresses some important and counterintuitive issues.

Recommended book: *Because of the kids*. Dialogue b/t white teachers and black teachers.

Ch. 5 Skin Deep Learning: Teaching Those who Learn Differently

Long anecdote about her child’s excitement of attending school and then the relatively quick diminishment of it, spinning out into behavior issues and not wanting to attend. Delpit moved her out of public schools into a private academy.

One reason she thinks that daughter was successful at the academy is that they focused on students’ strengths. Most (different learners) feel rejected by the school environment and get angry or try to disappear.

Extended discussion of problem of identifying kids as remedial, etc. and having that label multiply negative impacts spinning out of control.

How can educators perceive a child’s strengths rather than their weaknesses—and do this on a large scale? Really strong teachers can “deliver the human being to himself” (Phylicia Rashad) p. 99

The arts as a way to do this?

“We all mouth the mantra ‘All children can learn.’ I would modify the chant to ‘All children *do* learn.’ It’s just that some of them learn that we expect them to be successful, and some learn from us that they are dumb. Whatever we (the educators) believe, they learn.” (101)

“Learning styles, like the language we speak and the skin we wear, are not separate entities to be ‘fixed’ but part of the essential nature of any human being. If we can see all of the children we teach—skin color, culture, learning styles, income level notwithstanding—as complete, deserving, brilliant human beings, then perhaps we will manage to create the educational system we need. Education for all children should be ‘special’—that is, specially designed to discover the strengths and accommodate the needs of each child.” (p. 103)

Ch. 6. “I Don’t Like it When They Don’t Say My Name Right”: Why ‘Reforming’ Can’t Mean ‘Whitening.’”

During desegregation efforts, it is little known or focused-upon that thousands of caring, AA educators lost their jobs when schools were combined. She provides facts, figures and anecdotes to support the reality and injustice of this situation. She further makes the bridge to current reform efforts that “sweep” older, often AA teachers out of the teaching corps.

Delpit points out that a number of districts are cutting more expensive long-term teachers in exchange for short-term Teach for America candidates. She is critical of this and of TFA in general on several fronts, but especially b/c the program is resulting in the exit of AA teachers and their experience with the culture of the kids they are teaching.

She is critical of the optics that “belittle the value of experienced AA teachers and imply that young, inexperienced, minimally trained European American college grads are the salvation of low-income students of color.” (113)

We are providing these kids with “tourists” rather than long-term teachers.

Delpit says it is hard to underestimate the importance of “being known” among AA. Cultural knowledge is important in order to be effective for kids as teachers.

Delpit gives anecdotes of interviews that she had with AA high schoolers in a school with many white, young teachers. The kids leaned toward an AA secretary as a mentor. She was tough, “mean” and it was obvious that she cared. They also referred to one white teacher as “really black.” This teacher was tough, “honest,” caring, prim and proper. In Delpit’s estimation—these two professionals “got it.” They understood what the kids needed culturally, while the others were young, eager, but unprepared individuals that the kids did not truly respect. She does not want to do away with TFA etc., but she does want to support long-term teachers of AA and support the means of getting more and better educators. She is wary of racial implications of young white reformers as “saviors” of AA kids, etc. Does school reform have to mean making the system “whiter”? She does not want to replicate a racist past.

Part Three: Teaching Adolescents

Ch. 7 Picking up the Broom: Demanding Critical Thinking

Too little critical thought in inner city classrooms. Martin Haberman “pedagogy of poverty”

Pedagogy of Poverty Versus Good Teaching Phi Delta Kappan 74 (December 1991

Great illustration. Teacher in Native Alaska put broom on the floor at beginning of class. Majority of the class walked over it, not doing anything about it. She asks, “Why didn’t any of them pick up the broom?” Was it not dangerous? Did it belong there? She made the point that they HAVE TO THINK! If they are a minority (especially an oppressed minority) then they have to think for themselves, b/c it is dangerous to have society do their thinking for them. Otherwise they will be victims of society’s whims.

What might an environment of “real learning” in an urban setting look like?

* Students involved with issues they regard as vital concerns
* Students are involved with explanations of human differences
* Students are being helped to see major concepts, big ideas, and general principals and are not merely engaged in the pursuit of isolated facts
* Students are involved in planning what they will be doing
* Whenever students are involved with applying ideas such as fairness, equity, or justice to their world
* Students are actively involved
* Students are directly involved in a real life experience
* Students are actively involved in heterogeneous groups
* Students are asked to think about an idea in a way that questions common sense or a widely accepted assumption that relates new ideas to ones learned previously or that applies an idea to the problems of living
* Whenever students are involved in reading, polishing, or perfecting their work
* Teachers involve students with the technology of information access,
* Students are involved in reflecting on their own lives and how they have come to believe and feel as they do

Ch. 8: How Would a Fool Do It? Assessment

It is hard to assess the “expressed intelligence” of another culture that you do not understand. We are not always able to correctly measure kids that do not share the dominant culture.

The truly subjective nature of working with “author’s purpose.” Example of a prof. taking a test and getting a question about the purpose of his own writing. Another teacher telling the kids to adopt the perspective of “the little white ladies in Tallahassee”—the ladies that would be grading the test. (140-1).

What can teachers do to accurately monitor student learning each and every time? It is nearly impossible, she says.

She like’s Mike Schmoker’s Results Now—a book that argues that two things can provide us the opportunity to improve in schools:

1. Instruction itself has the largest influence on achievement
2. Most—though not all- instruction, despite our best intentions, is not effective but could improve significantly and swiftly through ordinary and accessible arrangements among teachers and administrators.

Schmoker’s list of essential teaching practices which he believes that schools do not keep teachers accountable:

* Being clear about what is to be learned and assessed
* Using assessments to evaluate a lesson’s effectiveness and making constructive adjustments on the basis of results
* Conducting a check for understanding at certain points in the lesson
* Having kids read for higher-order purposes and write regularly
* Clearly explicating and carefully teaching the criteria by which student work will be scored or evaluated (141-2)

Collaborations and PLC model is recommended by Delpit—she emphasizes that these groups should be centered around teachers actually collaborating to solve problems rather than simply gathering to report data, etc.

Example at end of the chapter about two different teachers (of different races) being assessed. From the dominant culture, one teacher looked very effective while the other did not. (A white teacher that stood to the side and allowed kids to work out problems on their own, versus an AA teacher who asked personal questions throughout the lesson). Assessment is complex and fraught with the possibility of getting it wrong.

Ch. 9: Shooting Hoops: What Can we Learn About the Drive for Excellence?

To the problematic lack of motivation to learn and perservere that we see in diverse schools, Delpit asks several questions:

* Are we connecting in positive ways to the culture that our AA young people bring to school?
* Are we ensuring that our students know that people who look like them, both in the past and present, have produced and are producing phenomenal intellectual accomplishments?
* Are we making connections between young people’s lives and the content that we attempt to teach? Do they feel welcomed into the school environment, or do they feel that they must change who they are to be accepted?

AA males interest in reading connected to larger ideals connected to their lives. (Alfred Tatum)

Read Alfred Tatum’s books. Look into this.

Delpit discusses Urban Prep as an example of how to reach AA males in dramatically different ways. “Pride” hour. A class discussion (excerpt) in which students called fellow students “doctor”.

Urban Prep’s “theory of action”:

* Provide a culturally relevant curriculum that centralizes, rather than marginalizes, the complete experience of urban young men
* Take responsibility for teaching and engaging our young men in learning, whether they are indifferent, resistant, or achieving significantly below grade level
* Gear our teaching styles, strategies and techniques to the learning styles of urban young men (165)

Another scholar saying that the largest barrier to AA achievement is the “disidentification” with school.

In this chapter, Delpit offers several examples of approaches to curriculum and school that might be ways to provide AA males with motivation and achievement in schools.

They need a way to value school AND to feel that school values their culture.

Steele: “You can be valued and rewarded in school (and society)… but you must first master the culture and ways of the American mainstream, and since that mainstream (as it is represented) is essentially white, this means you must give up many particulars of being black—styles of speech and appearance, value priorities, preferences.”

The above is what Steel believes the ed mainstream is telling AA males now and it is not effective—it is harmful. A choice b/t culture and success. No winner.

Ch. 10 Invisibility, Disidentification, and Negotiating Blackness on Campus

Starts with a Ralph Ellison quote. Recounts story of her own daughter feeling “invisible” at Pre-school (largely white) then the issue going away when she went to a “family-based” AA majority elementary school. Other instances of black professionals feeling invisible.

AA experience is the swing b/t feeling invisible to hypervisible. Other examples that illustrate effectively that AM. Is not a color-blind society. No overt racists per se that she has met, but a subtle moments of insult and diminished perception and value. It is hard to describe the feeling of being unvalued in one’s own country. Microsaggressions: small psychic insults any one of which would not be of great consequence but when added together over time create a deadly psychological assault. (Chester Pierce) p. 177

The college completion rate for AA is approx.. 45%. This is about 20% lower than for whites. Why? Delpit suggests some of the above illustrations or the “invisibility, devaluing, stigma, and stereotyping” have an impact.

Delpit recommends five course of action to support AA students in college.

1. Make it more possible financially
2. Make the student feel valued and welcomed as a person
3. Avoid remedial programs and push for challenging curricula—with support. Remedial programs only make the kids question their self worth.
4. Ensure that complaints about racism are not minimized
5. More intentional inclusion of AA culture—build a social dimension around academics.

Ch. 11 Will it Help the Sheep? University, Community, and Purpose

Anecdote about assuring an elderly tribesman that his sheep will not be harmed. “Will it Help the sheep?” the tribesman asked. Delpit then goes on to talk about qualities of a strong educator—or, why she has spent her life trying to help the sheep.

Be courageous. Dr. Robert P. Moses runs “Quality Education as a Civil Right” and the National Algebra Project. Story about him (80 years old) standing before a group of 25 low income kids, silent until they stopped talking.

Learn Humility. Drunken father angry at teacher. They sit down later and teacher asks the father what he wants for his child’s future. This opened a path for honest discussion and ideals.

Look and Listen for Who is Missing

Ben E Mays, pres. Of Morehouse College said the purpose of college education is not only “to train the mind to think, but the heart to feel…the injustice of mankind; and to strengthen the will to act in the interest of the common good.” (202)

Delpit says the second purpose should be to “build bridges across the great divides, the so called achievement gap, the technology gap, class divisions, the racial divide. If we do not find a way to bridge the divide between the haves and have-nots, between white and black, between native and immigrant, then we are ensuring our ultimate demise. We are all part of the whole, and no part can be affected without affecting the whole.” (202)

Recommended books to promote literacy for AA young men: Small summaries on p. 207 and onward in Delpit.

Middle school

With Every Drop of Blood: A novel of the Civil War

47. Walter Mosley

The Beast. Walter Dean Myers

Handbook for Boys: A Novel (2002)

Nightjohn. Gary Paulsen

High School

Yo, Little Brother: Basic Rules of Survival for Young African American Males Anthony Davis and Jeffrey Jackson

Reallionaire: Nine Steps to Becoming Rich from the Inside Out Gray, Farrah.

The Pact: Three Young Men Make a Promise and Fulfill a Dream. Jenkins, Davis and Hunt.

3 kids from projects go to a magnet school and make a pact to become dentists.

Workin’ on the Chain Gang: Shaking Off the Dead Hand of History. Walter Mosley

A hope in the Unseen: An American Odyssey from the Inner City to the Ivy League. Ron Suskind

Rite of Passage. Richard Wright. Harlem in the 40’s. bright 15 year old learns he is a foster child, runs away and struggles to survive in a harsh world.

(From “Engaging African American Males in Reading” by Alfred Tatum. Educational Leadership 2006)

Under pressure to turn this book in—there would be value in owning and flipping back through. Many books and references listed in the back of the book that I would like to read.

I Won’t Learn from You” and other thoughts on creative maladjustment Herb Kohl.

**Pletka, Bob. Educating the Net Generation. Santa Monica: Santa Monica Press, 2007.**

The net gen is not like any other before them. This slim book—published in 2007 (I was surprised as it seemed very relevant still—the boom in cell phones and social media has taken place since then had some interesting insights.

They do not separate the world into digital and “real.” Thiers is a world of choices and only other gens look at them and see their choice of digital communication as somehow a barrier to real contact. Choice permeates everything—schools need to grapple with this reality.

The expectation is for multimedia, experiential, and interactive learning systems. Instant feedback. Community-driven interfaces (Wikipedia—this jibes with social media as well).

Thomas Freidman quote about the educational system creating mediocre students for a top-down out-moded economy. P. 44.

Pletka engaged in an extensive survey of kids called “My so-called digital life.” The following were “themes” that were gleaned from the survey.

Influence on Engagement: (Themes):

#1 Using computers to help

#2 Being Connected

#3 Applying Digital Know-how

#4 Trying their best

#5 Seeing things differently

Connecting content to the kids’ lives leads to meaningful learning experiences.

Idea: collaborating with Mr. Richards or other government teacher in order to give AP kids an intro to political terminology and current issues. This will help with utilization of the presidential race in study of rhetoric.

Keeping content relevant: asking important questions; solve a problem; plan an improvement; make a decision.

Make an “email simulation” in which you have a conversation with a historical figure. Here, you must display content knowledge and also do critical thinking and evaluation.

Story about an opportunity he had to take his kids to UCLA. They enjoyed it immensely and were better able to imagine themselves there on campus. Give real-world experience and broaden their perspectives.

**Silvey, Anita (ed.). Everyting I need to Know I Learned from a Children’s Book. New York: Roaring Brook Press, 2009.**

Only flipped through this. A collection of short essays by famous people explaining what they drew from a chosen children’s book. Would like to return to if I ever find the time.

**Nonfiction Walter Mosley to get my hands on:**

The Graphomaniac’s Primer;

12 steps toward political revelation;

This year you write your novel;

life out of context;

What next: A memoir toward world peace; Workin’ on the Chain gang.

**Mosley, Walter. Charcoal Joe. New York: Doubleday, 2016.**

This was my summer 2016 Walter Mosley. Ezekial Rawlings is now working with two other detectives and is happy more or less. That is until his love leaves him for a crippled king of a small African Country. The usual mystery takes over the book, but that is not the real point. As usual, I was happily lost in the poetic dialogue and cool, cool characters. Usual abundant sex and intrigue.

Good lines:

“Melvin was my friend but the world we moved in didn’t rate friendship very high. The difference between friends and enemies in our neck of the woods was that a friend said that he was sorry when he had to slip the knife between your ribs.” p. 218.

Love and devotion shown to his daughter “feather” and an unconventional family life is pure Mosley. Indication that biology means little in family, but love, care are what make a family.

Towards the end, I abandoned any hope of following the plot. He filled the last pages with lots of bow-tying and explanation which must have driven effectiveness down as a mystery novel. However, my enjoyment of Mosley does not center there. I continue to love pulling this guy’s books off of any shelf I can find them.

**Donoguhue, Emma. Room: A Novel. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2010.**

Finally was able to read this one—Kris, Elia and Josie had all gotten to it first. They had also seen the movie, but I had resisted. Read it while at Turkey Run spending time at the campsite and the pool.

A five year old boy narrates from his perspective his experience of being trapped with his mom in a room and held captive by a man. The man had originally kidnapped his mom and she bore him in captivity.

Easy to suspend disbelief in the narration of the five year old and enjoyed every aspect of this book as it unrolled. The first part of the book is fascinating as the reader gets used to the boy’s limited/skewed perspective of life and mom slowly gets him ready to make their escape. After escape, the boy has difficulty b/c he wants to go back to “Room”—the only world he has ever known. Mom has trouble adjusting also.

Mom and son blend words: My favorite was “Scave.” The boy must be “Scave” when he escapes—a realization that you can be brave and scared at the same time.

Riff on “Goodnight, Moon” at the end of the book. They visit the room one last time and the meditative listing of “goodnight” to each of the cherished parts of the room leave the reader with the sense that the pair will be ok.

Donoghue seems to lampoon the idea that the story should be read as an analogy to modern life—that the reader should intellectualize what happened as if she is saying that we are all emerging from our own “room” and wanting to return, etc. She allows for a short “clip” of talking heads being over intellectual about the boy’s experience. Her inclusion of this “clip” allows the reader to simply get lost in the story rather than creating clunky connections or lifelessons. This is not Faulkner, she seems to be telling us. Just enjoy the story.

**Jones, Preston (ed.) Is Belief in God Good, Bad or Irrelevant? A professor and a punk rocker discuss science, religion, naturalism and Christianity. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006.**

A compilation of letters between Jones—a historian and teacher—and Greg Graffin—ph.D in Zoology and lead singer of Bad Religion. Jones is a Christian with a nonconformist streak and Graffin is a “naturalist.” Graffin specifically does not call himself an atheist, but that is what he is. At times, he refers to “naturalism” as a “religion.” Though he is horrified and disgusted by most of what organized religion is all about, he considers naturalism a religion b/c it is his worldview and his decisions/perspective emerge from it. Not entirely sure I understood the distinction, and was surprised he would label it as a “religion.”

Was also surprised by the collegiality between these two. Graffin is not the callous bubble-popper kind of an atheist. He shows himself to be thoughtful and very willing to concede points and engage in back and forth born of curiosity and respect of dialogue. Much of the dialogue existed over my head in the realm of philosophy and science. Jones’ religious beliefs and leanings were familiar and I was at home with them, including his steep skepticism concerning many who claim the name of Christ. Jones is protestant (Anglican) but attends a Catholic church. Calls the heart of the Christian faith “barbaric” (God demands blood—first animal and then that of his son).

Talk of Brideshead Revisited by Evelyn Waugh. Jones prefers for comments on Christianity.

Their discussion ranges all over the place and was an interesting read. Two intellectuals that savor the back and forth of logic, illustration, and hypothesis. The correspondence was polite, sharp and very interesting. I got the feeling that Jones knows he was not speaking for the majority of American Christians when he was speaking as a believer. His willingness to be skeptical precludes that possibility. Thus Graffin would never be able to have such a conversation with the majority of believers. Jones’ belief is gritty and shot through with skepticism, reflection and the realization that he might be entirely wrong.

**Doerries, Bryan. The Odyssey of Sergeant Jack Brennan. New York: Random House, 2016.**

Part of Doerries “Theatre of War” Project, this graphic novel tells the story of Odysseus couched within a narrative of soldiers returning home from Iraq or Afghanistan. Doerries had previously worked with the Department of Defense, bringing stories from the ancient world—especially stories of soldiers returning from war. He drew connections to their experience of PTSD and that of modern day soldiers experiencing the same thing.

Artwork was done by a team, though this is not evident from the cover. A military platoon leader gathers his soldiers together on their last night “in country” and tells them this story, making connections to their own experience and the struggles they will have ahead. The story was powerful even if the “lessons” that were told at each point of Odysseus’ journey might be a bit of a stretch. The overall impression is strong.

I can imagine this being an effective tool in the hands of young returning warriors that have a long road of recovery ahead. A sneaky and smart way to introduce to them that they are not alone and that there are methods for addressing their symptoms of PTSD.

**Vandermeer, Jeff. The Steampunk Bible: An illustrated Guide to the World of Imaginary Airships, Corsets and Goggles, Mad Scientists, and Strange Literature. New York: Abrams Image, 2011.**

Flipped through this quickly, interested in a glimpse of what this style and genre is all about. Very thorough and featuring more sub-genres to a genre that I already thought was quite “sub.” There is “stitch-punk” and “diesel-punk” among others. Essays to begin the book that I did not have time for, but was interested in.

**Yakich, Mark. Poetry: A Survivor’s Guide. New York: Bloomsbury, 2016.**

Mined this quickly for tidbits and possible chapters for use with AP, but there was not much that was useful. Yakich arranges this book alphabetically by topic so it is like a mini-encyclopedia of poetry and ones approach to poetry. The observations and bits are not very deep and I did not find it useful. Special scrutiny was given to sections about diction, metaphor, imagery, etc., but the observations remained on the surface and did not latch.

**Curwin, Richard. Mendler, A. Mendler, B. Discipline with Dignity. Alexandria, VA: ASCD Press, 2008.**

Borrowed from colleague during summer school. A philosophy of behavior modification with some practical tips.

“”…caring, mentoring relationship often plays a huge role in contributing to the resiliency of at-risk youth” (Ellis, Small-McGinley, and De Fabrizio, 1999; Werner and Smith, 1989). Pg. 17.

* Must be integrated with effective instruction
* Fair is not always equal
* Acting out is sometimes an act of sanity
* Less teacher down to student action and reaction and the need to collaborate with students is stressed.

Most ideas in the book have been absorbed already and are part of common practice. The authors stress negotiation with tough kids, which in some cases would be unrealistic or even dangerous. There appears to be an idea that power is “shared.” This seems inauthentic. When it comes down to the root, the adult is the authority and responsible (in the place of the parent). Kids know that this is the case and I think laying a veneer or “power” into the kids hands rings untrue to even them. There must be at some level a realization that an adult has the final say and responsibility and therefore will be the bearer of the disappointing “no.” Authors suggest having kids make their own rules and participate in a social contract. Yes, but… This is a lot of effort to get them involved, but in many cases sets up a mirage of “control.”

Along with differentiation of instruction is the idea that not every punishment should be given equally to kids. The examples given here just do not ring true and seem like they are a set up for a lot of wasted time in class explaining to kids after flare ups when kids are upset at unequal punishment. Are we really going to explain to one kid that she gets a detention while another kid just gets a call home b/c the detention kids mom won’t pick up the line. It creates more problems than it solves. Selectively, yes, but as something that comes under discussion in the classroom, no.

This would be a fine resource to return to, but some of the underlying premises I simply do not buy.

**Forbes, Esther. Johnny Tremain. New York: Yearling Random House, 1943.**

Read this as a middle schooler and it made an impression. Challenged/forced my boys to read this along with me during the summer 2016. Enjoyed it once more. Am glad that Forbes gave a balanced view of the British—refusing to paint them as total monsters and allowing some of the Yankees to keep their warts. At time of writing these notes, the boys have not finished. They have enjoyed the first few chapters. Tremain, an orphan grows up during the run-up to the American Revolution. He finds himself as a participant in Key events and grows as a young man who hesitates very little before doing very brave things. Some complex insights and not preachy.

**Una. Becoming Unbecoming. Brighton, UK: Myriad Editions, 2015.**

Graphic novel. Una explores her experience of being a victim of sexual violence in her youth and her recurring bad decisions based from that experience. Facsinating use of memoir, psychological exploration and art creating a landscape of emptiness, longing and heartbreak. This is really art for the sake of self-exploration and therapy. An impressive, disturbing book.

**Crane, Stephen. The Red Badge of Courage: An Episode in the Civil War. Franklin, TN: Dalmatian Press, 2004 (1895).**

Never did read this in school, but have intended to for a while now. Psychological experience of war with a youth who is only given a name by his comrades later on (Narrator never mentions his name). He worries about his courage, has his courage tested, fail, and then finds the opportunity to regain his sense of pride. The disjointed experience of battle is evident and the narrative has gaps and blurriness that does not detract from the overall force. Realism in full force here.

At the end of the novel was a short story—“The Veteran”—in which the character from TRBOC is an old man and courageously enters a burning barn. The message is that the experience of facing fear and death made him live bravely and stand up to the test later in life.

**Gulledge, Laura Lee. Page by Paige. New York: Amulet Books, 2011.**

Girl finding herself after a move with her parents to New York City. She lives inside her head and the book is basically her ficitional memoir and journal. She threads her way through finding friends, herself, romance, etc.

**Inoue, Takehiko. Real. San Francisco, CA: Viz Media, 2003.**

Surprising Japenese graphic novel (reads backwards) about paraplegia. Follows two main characters who are paraplegic and relatively recently so. Characters appear to be related in some way, but story was unclear in that connection. There is a window into basketball culture in Japan—I was unaware there was such a thing. First scene is a wheelchair basketball game. By “real” I imagine that Inoue tries to get to the real experience of going through such difficulty. The real emotions are on display here. Guilt, despair, motivation, love, unmet connections. Story leaves on a content note (one character sleeping satisfactorily), but his journey is only beginning.

**Geary, Rick. The Case of Madelieine Smith. New York: NBM Publishing.**

Thick-lined drawing (reminiscent of wood carving) telling the story of a “proper” 19th century Scottish girl’s killing of her paramour via arsenic.

Social pressures/courting/desire, etc. Quick read and engaging.

**Gaiman, Neil. *Marvel 1602*. New York: Marvel, 2014.**

Was set to enjoy this one as Gaiman takes classic marvel heros and transmits them to 1602. Was disappointed. I suspect that I am simply not a comic guy. Not invested in overall story and too impatient to trace a complex plot. I like the idea and some of the woodcarved illustrations are beautiful.

**Fleming, Ann Marie. The Magical Life of Long Tack Sam: An Illustrated Memoir. New York: Riverhead Books, 2007. (5/21/2016)**

Grandfather was a Chinese Magician that got relatively famous in Vaudeville and world circuit. Grandmother was Austrian. This tells the story of her travels and interviews in an effort to better understand who her grandparents were. Very engaging art—mixed media between photos, drawings, and comic-style illustrations. Interesting peep into an unknown world: Vaudeville, Chinese magicians and stage performers, mixed-race issues (daughters became a large part of the act—their Chinese features were blunted by maternal Austrian). Fascinating stuff.

**Eisner, Will. Fagin the Jew. Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse Books, 2003/2017.**

Doing penance for utilizing a stereotypical AA character in his early series, The Spirit, Eisner late in life has given the backstory for the one-dimensional character, Fagin, from Dickin’s Oliver Twist. Jewish himself, Fagin stays within a world that he is familiar with and invested in. Evidently, the character is one-dimensional in the Dickens story—to a point that Eisner felt there was a need to explain how he developed to that point. Eisner does not romanticize and (as seems to be characteristic of him) is quick to prove that his protagonists are not heros. Here, Fagin is shown quickly by his father that they need to cheat and manipulate if they are going to be able to eat. Scant time is spent on establishing the low status of Jews in England, but discrimination is apparent throughout the tale along with ugly remarks and injustice based in race. Story continues on until what is apparently the end of Oliver Twist with the inclusion of Oliver himself. In the end, Fagin is hung and, among the last things he says is, “A Jew is not Fagin any more than a gentile is sikes!” Narrator in the Epilogue says, “Fagin was hanged and buried ignominiously, in a pauper’s grave, together with others whom fate had demeaned.”

Eisner, in an appendix, said that Dickens did not mean to demean all Jews, but by referring to him as “the Jew,” he did just that. Then, the popularity of the book along with the fact that it became a popular selection for schools reinforced the wrong. In the appendix, he continues with more information about images of Jews in illustrations, etc.

This, along with Contract with God, feels like an important book. Eisner casts a shadow in the world of comics and graphic novels.

**Guarente, Gabe. Satan’s Prep. New York: Sky Pony Press, 2014.**

Another occult high school-based drama. Art was engaging, but Kris recommended against wasting my time. I readily took the advice.

**Delisle, Guy. Pyongyang: A Journey in North Korea. New York: Garrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009.**

Fascinating account of an animator traveling to North Korea in order to do some work there. I know very little about NK due to its isolation and a window into that life was hard to ignore. Found myself wanting to go to bed in order to continue reading it (the true mark of a page-turner for a Livovich). It is a memoir and he does not hesitate to be critical of himself and the North Koreans. He has “handlers” that follow him everywhere and he attempts to see through the “veneer” of love for the great leader. Mainly, he finds that it is no veneer and those he associates with are seemingly honest in their devotion to the leader. Of course, he is only talking to those who are high in the party. He is steered clear of anyone that might be critical of the government. Notices many thousands through the trip that are “volunteering” their time to do extra work for the government on official days of rest. Constant upkeep of blame on the US for keeping the Korea’s apart. Strong cover with young women with painful smiles playing the accordion. Odd assortments of expats and NGO workers in Pyongyang. Would I have picked up a book about NK? Probably not, however, this one snuck into my pocket and got read.

**Gill, Joel. Strange Fruit: Uncelebrated Narratives from Black History. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2014.**

Fantastic graphic novel in the form of vignettes of little-known, but notable black figures from American History. Tales of fortitude abound. The art is especially accessible and engaging—downright humorous and creative. Nine true stories. Personification of Jim Crow as persistent crows that are out to get the characters. If I had the $, I would own this book myself so I could read it again periodically.

**Eisner, Will. The Best of the Spirit. New York: DC Comics, 2005.**

Collection of early comics by Will Eisner. I was unaware that he wrote this entire series. Intro by Neil Gaiman was instructive—the Spirit had a large impact on him as a child and he can remember buying his first copy. I enjoy the humor which Eisner includes in his work, even when dealing with serious topics. He always seems to be winking at the audience a bit—especially in this comic written in the forties. Large-chested female villians and consorts abound and silly asides and creative segues.

**Emerson, Sharon and Kurilla, Renee. Zebrafish. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2010.**

More image than text, this book is for a middle school audience. The plot seems to meander a bit with soft-edged drawings and kind characters. Nice, non-didactic ending where things go wrong at a performance (the main character is an “indy” girl who is in a rock-band). She also makes the decision to help a local friend with cancer rather than to gather money for exotic animals. A good starter graphic novel for a younger set.

**Davis, Warren. Wrath of the Titans. Bluewater comics, 2014.**

Slim book, old-style greek myth.

**Moon, Fabio and Ba, Gabriel. Two Brothers. Milwaukee: Dark Horse Books, 2015.**

Graphic novel about two brothers locked in conflict. Distinctive art and harsh story-telling and lots of romantic, passionate love and hate. Plot was hard to follow at times, but the energy and motion and grit in the art moved me along.

**Abouet, Marguerite and Sapin, Mathieu. Akissi: Cat Invasion. London: Flying Eye Books, 2010.**

From an African comic, translated into English. Engaging drawings a bit haphazard, but playful. Likeable character (small child) getting herself into odd and humourous situations. Some of the translations were askew or jokes did not quite work. Fairly charming view into African life.

**Eldred, Tim. Grease Monkey. New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 2006.**

This lines and lots of text. This was not a recipe for finishing. Actually did not even start. The characters did not draw me in. Based in Space.

**Dorkin, Evan and Thomposon, Jill. Beasts of Burden: Animal Rights. Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse Books, 2003.**

Beautiful watercolor art and very engaging content. A group of dogs encounter supernatural occurences and the occult. Truly original stuff here.

**McCloud, Scott. Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art. New York: Harper Collins, 1993.**

An excellent and very thorough academic introduction to graphic novels and comics in general. Well-researched and exhaustive, this could be used as a college text book. McCloud has risen in my mind as one of the key figures in graphic novels and the fact that this was written in 1993 before the surge in popularity of this genre strengthens that inclination.

**Digilio and Cal. North Wind. New York: Boom! Publishing, Unknown.**

Strangely, looked for the copyright page here and could not find it. Arctic-based fantasy comic.

**Dalrymple, Farel. The Wrenchies. New York: First Second, 2014.**

This one is one to remember. Post apocalyptic zombies, etc. Children have formed in separate gangs and are tense with one another.

**Brosgol, Vera. Anya’s Ghost. New York: First Second, 2011.**

Angsty recent-émigré teen falls into a hole and meets a ghost and gets perspective (eventually). Ghost (Emily) is at first nice and kind and a secret is revealed along with her true intentions. Read this with interest cover to cover. Engagingly drawn, interesting story. Characters were cartoonish with bubble-soft edges, but realistic enough that protagonist keeps the male gaze.

**Berry, Hannah. Britten and Brulightly. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2008.**

Gorgeously drawn noir detective story based in Belgium? With a laconic, cynical, depressed main character that has basically given up on life and wants the reader to know it. The art is water-colored and beautiful. I lost the plot and did not care to find it again, but skimmed on to the end. A memorable protagonist, and notable for the artwork which is particularly well-done in angsty shades of grays and sad blues.

**Brooks, T. Dark Wraith of Shannara. New York: Ballantine Publishing, 2008.**

Did not even skim this one. No interest whatsoever in reading these fantasy-based books.

**Abouet, M. and Oubrerie, C. Aya of Yop City. New york: Ferrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008.**

A snapshot of life in the Ivory Coast. Engagingly drawn, plot about family life and contradictory expectations. The husband in a family expects his daughters to live a home-centered life, while he actually heads two households. Story begins with a daughter who has a child, but he looks nothing like the family members.

The strength of this book—and the reason that I made it to the end (the plot was not very compelling)—is the window into life in this African country. Poverty everywhere, but tight-knit family life with normal tensions based in personality and social restraints.

Oddly, “Aya” seems less of a main character. There are several other characters that receive the same amount of attention and the plot seems to be curtailed on several accounts. I bet the book was much longer and was cut back for publishing reasons.

**Wright, Michael. Batman Begins. New York: DC Comics, 2005.**

**Black, Holly and Naifeh, Ted. The Good Neighbors. New York: First Edition, 2008. (Also Book Two and Book Three. (4/6/2016).**

Not a fan of graphic novels about elves, evidently. Made it through book one but skimmed the rest.

I need to move more quickly with these books and am finding that I some of these graphic novels are skimmers rather than slow reads. It took another angsty non-human teenager graphic novel to convince me.

**Faulkner, William. Light in August. New York: Random House (Vintage Books), 1990.**

I read this in HS and remember enjoying it. Second time, I probably enjoyed it even more.

This is a complex telling—as complex as life can be with nuances shadowing every fact and each good characteristic in a character being canceled out by some mitigating factor. It is a wonderfully textured picture into southern life in the generations after the civil war. An examination of race and personality. What does it mean that I have some black blood in me? It is also about faith—or the impossibility of finding solace or meaning in faith.

Joe Christmas is a mixed-race child who looks white, but is haunted by the fact that he does in fact have some AA blood in him. This drives his entire dysfunctional life.

POV switches often, but the plot is more linear than many of Faulkner’s other novels

* In orphanage he is accidental witness to a tryst—he came to get a taste of sweet toothpaste—a treat to him. Instead, he has to hide while the tryst takes place and he nervously continues to eat toothpaste until he retches and is caught. The girl involved then is terrified he will tell and tries to get him sent away
* He is raised by a sternly religious man and wife—wife loves him and tries to serve him on the sly. Christmas defies him on principal and in the end eventually kills him
* He wanders for years taking safeharbor in and out of negro and white settlements. Often with his involvement in the AA settlements ending in violence, etc. He had the tendency to tell white women eventually that he had AA blood in him. Usually this caused problems.
* Eventually he took up with a white woman who was already anathema to her community b/c of her father’s abolitionist views. For several years, they had largely a physical relationship with complex aspects. She sexually attracted to idea of AA blood and violent sensuality while she began later to crave a baby and homelife, etc. He always emotionally detached and utterly fractured inside, running whiskey without her knowing.
* He kills her once she begins to change and to pray over him. He runs and a man hunt begins, ending in an entire county looking for this black man to lynch.

Other characters:

* Hightower: cuckolded minister who is dishonored by his wife and his community of faith, but refused to leave the community. He is an outcast. He is also obsessed with his family’s involvement in the civil war and his grandfather’s death at the hands of a soldier’s wife when he was stealing her chickens. This seems to be the way of things. A soldier fights courageously and valiantly, but, in the end, is killed stealing a chicken. Much here about faith and the inability to engage in that life again. He often would say, “ I should pray.” But then there would be some intrusion—some inability.
* Lena Grove. Young girl who is impregnated by a young man who then escapes town. She then spends the entire novel tracking this jerk. She finally finds him and confronts him mildly and he runs again. Meanwhile, while she is looking she is met by another man that does fall in love and wants to be her husband and to be her family. There is a small indication by the end of the book that she may have a place in her heart for this man, but the reader is also left with the idea that she would just as soon keep looking for the original jerk, all the while not complaining and just sustaining herself.
* Lucas Bunch. Is in love with Lena and is unassuming as if one could miss him in a quiet setting with him in the center of it. He has decided to seek the love of Lena and he does not give up. His persistence will more than likely be rewarded but not without suffering some more indignity. At one point, he summons the courage to fight Brown and decides beforehand that he is going to get his butt kicked. He goes forth anyway. This man is in love and is closest to the author’s idea of love in action in the book. He decides to love this damaged woman (socially) and raise another man’s child persistently choosing her, while the man that she is actively seeking persistently is avoiding her. Self sacrifice, etc.
* Christmas’ grandparents at end of the novel. Grandfather advocating that the child—Christmas—should be lynched and grandmother following him around in order to stop him. Some real neurotic love and hatred happening based in race.
* P. 105 Christmas ruminating over God’s love and the fact that he just killed the woman he had been in relationship with for the last several years.
* Wonderful passage about poetry and frustrated prayer (Hightower) p. 318. He wants to pray, but turns to poetry instead. “Soon the fine galloping language, the gutless swooning full of sapless trees and dehydrated lusts begins to swim smooth and swift and peaceful. It is better than praying without having to bother to think aloud. It is like listening in a cathedral to a eunuch chanting in a language which he does not even need to not understand.”
* P. 363. “Looking down at the unconscious face, it seems to Byron as though the whole man were fleeing away from the nose which holds invincibly to some fleeing away from the nose which holds invincibly to something yet of pride and courage above the sluttishness of vanquishment like a forgotten flag above a ruined fortress.”
* More religious language p. 367
* Bitchery and Abomination!
* p. 445. I don’t think that the old lady had any hope of saving him when she came, any actual hope. I believe that all she wanted was that he die “decent’, as she put it. Decently hung by a force, a principle; not burned or hacked or dragged dead by a thing.”
* P. 445. “She just didn’t hope. Didn’t know how to begin to hope. I imagine that after thirty years the machinery for hoping requires more than twentyfour hours to get started, to get into motion again.”
* P. 448-449. Dichotomy of white blood v. black blood in Christmas. Black Blood geared toward violence, etc. Faulkner’s understanding? Or, an exploration of the common thought?
* P. 492-3. Hightower thinks he is dying, and again has inclination towards frustrated prayer. Then instead has a vision of a cavalry squad passing him. Not divinity, but human glory and nobility swishes by him.
* Wonderfully comedic last section in which a husband traveler tells his wife about picking up Lena Grove and Lucas bunch.

**Brown, Box. Andre the Giant: Life and Legend. New York: First Second, 2014.**

Graphic novel. Engagingly drawn, telling the life story of Andre the Giant. Hulk Hogan in the first part is interviewed and complains that some people thought that Andre was simply mean. This was unfair, he thought. They forget how much pain he was continually in. He had to constantly deal with pain and inconvenience and nasty people.

However, the evidence is that—no matter what he was dealing with physically—the guy was a jerk. Mistreating people, leaving his child to be raised by his mother, drinking far too much, called a fellow wrestler a nigger, etc. He was not a nice guy. He was respected by other wrestlers as a real worker, etc. Was born in France in the 40’s. Ran up a bar tab during the filming of The Princess Bride which totaled $40,000. Also, had been driven to school by Samuel Beckett early on in life (famous writer).

**Ahonen, J.P. and Alare, K.P. Sing no Evil. New York: Abrams, 2014. (3/20/2016)**

Young man in a band loses a girlfriend and is generally a slacker except for being in a band. Has stage fright. Turns supernatural. Lost interest half way.

Everything in the universe has a rhythm, everything dances. Maya Angelou.

**Abel, J., Soria, G., and Pleece, W. *Life Sucks*. New York: First Second, 2008.**

3.20.2016. Graphic novel. Vampires and 20-something that runs a convenience store in California. He is in love with a mortal and drama ensues. Skimmed through this—not worth spending much time on.

**Lewis, J., Powell, N. and Aydin, A. March: Book Two. San Diego: Top Shelf Publishing, 2015**

Second book in the series of the same name. Entirely engaging content about the civil rights movement with John Lewis’ part as a focus. In book two, the Freedom Riders are the main story—still with vignettes of Obama on inauguration day. Learned that the Freedom Riders were making pretty much everyone anxious including the White House at the time. Much more story there than expected. Ends with Lewis’ speech during the March on Washington. This speech was fairly impressive on its own—talking about revolution of love—but is overshadowed by Dr. King’s speech. Includes bits about tension within the movement (Carmichael), etc. (2/26/2016)

**Hosler, Jay. Evolution: The Story of Life on Earth. New York: Hill and Wang, 2011.**

Graphic novel. Several space creatures discuss the evolution of the earth and the development of life on the blue and green planet. Odd premise, but that is used as a vehicle to give a very thorough treatment of the epochs that shaped life on Earth. So thorough that this could be used as a textbook—would love to see that happen. So thorough that I had to call it quits about half way through and give my attention elsewhere. Mentions important scientists here and there and what they are known for. Drawings are very attractive and effective and the page is packed tight with them. If I was more science-minded, I would be trying to pick up a copy of this for myself. Impressed by the detail and systematic nature of the text.

**Carroll, Emily. Through the Woods. New York: Simon and Shuster, 2014.**

Graphic novel. Haunting stories well drawn. Creepy stories of a time before our own. Favorite story is the first one: Our Neighbor’s House. Story of starving to death with a subtle twist. Very artfully drawn and enjoyable throughout.

**Goldsmith, Fancisca. The Readers’ Advisory Guide to Graphic Novels. Chicago: American Library Association, 2010. (2.17.2016)**

Short little reference book for “advisors” in libraries and schools, giving advice to them about how to best use and recommend graphic novels. Probably most useful for the categorizing and recommendations that are made. This would be useful if doing further study of many graphic novels or looking for exemplars in the genre.

**Lewis, J., Powell, N. and Aydin, A. March: Book One. San Diego: Top Shelf Publishing, 2013.**

**Graphic Novel about Jown Lewis’ life and the beginnings of the civil rights movement. Very well written and drawn. Wonderful section about preaching to chickens and connections to inauguration of Barack Obama.**

**Kuper, Peter. Ruins. London: Self-Published, 2015.**

Graphic Novel. A young artistic couple having trouble with their marriage go on sabbatical in Mexico, her place of origin. She wants to get pregnant and he seems emotionally and artistically paralyzed, not wanting to bring another soul into the world. Cut into plot are scenes of Monarch butterflies traveling from US to Mexico. She is having a cultural identity crisis along with wanting to write a book and have a baby. She engages in an affair. He re-awakens his art while observing teacher strikes in Oaxaca. In the end, they go their own ways—she pregnant to the US and he stays in Mexico, painting once again.

**Diehl, Matt. My So-Called Punk: Green Day, Fall Out Boy, The Distillers, Bad Religion. New York: St. Martins, 2007.**

Ostensibly, this is a book about how Punk broke into the mainstream, with Green Day’s Grammy for American Idiot as some kind of real barometer of success. It is, I suppose, and many Green Day-like bands were spawned. The author puts this forward as a positive thing, but then adds enough equivocating information to make the reader doubt that he sees this as a success. Here, he is in much safer punk territory, as it does seem like punk heritage to never trust entry into widespread popularity. If that is the case, something is probably amiss. With Green Day, comes the prefix “pop” added to punk and then bands afterward received the “neo” prefix which seems about appropriate.

Here are treatise on “what is punk” which was fairly non-solid, though it was thorough. A brief history of punk, some write-ups about his favorite bands (The Distillers and Rancid), criticism of neo-punk taken too far (Blink 182 and Good Charlotte), the dangerous interaction of punk and business, selling out, class and race and punk.

Very little talk about Bad Religion and FOB. Author seems to want to be happy that punk has finally hit it big, but it is odd that an enthusiast would see as valid some of the earmarks of popularity. Makes the whole book lean strangely.

**Munro, Alice. Too Much Happiness. New York: Random House, 2009. (1/20/2016).**

Short stories. No fireworks here, but stories which trace the interior life of normal individuals with their relatively mundane (yet extraordinary) desires and regrets. Mostly female protagonists, Munro avoids any punches to the gut or aha moments in favor of slowly and honestly unveiling the layers of decision, memory and experience. No explosives here or high drama. Simply an honest rendering of the commonplace.

In a couple instances, plot wants to stand center-stage (woman whose kids are killed by a husband; woman whose home is invaded), but in each case there is a restraint exercised by author and character which keeps much of the action within the mind and ribcage. Often the stories end with a character’s mental reflection and not much change has taken place. Simple language.

**Stegner, Wallace. *Crossing to Safety*. New York: Random House, 1987. (1/20/2016)**

Greatly enjoyed his Remembering Laughter, which was evidently his debut novel in the thirties. Each time I have gone in search, I have been disappointed by the size of his books, having little time to dedicate to a novel of inch and a half thickness. Still, picked this up at Christmas time and hoped to get through. No such luck.

Evidently his last novel, written in the eighties when he was elderly, it examines the relationship of two couples throughout the decades. It would sound boring if I did not trust in his abilities to weave the emotional states and decisions into words worth reading. Still, with limited time, the first few pages were sweeping and I found that I lacked the patience to allow him to slowly introduce these people to me. This is a beginning of summer kind of a book.

Would like to see if Stegner has short stories that are available and to pick up *The Big Rock Candy Mountain*—yet another book as thick as my wrist.

**Benartzi, Shlomo. The Smarter Screen: Surprising ways to influence and improve online behavior. New York: Penguin, 2015. Print. (1/20/2016)**

Kept shamefully long from WPL. Geared toward digital designers or companies that do their business online. Giving psychology-based tips for avoiding “cold zones” of attention, dealing with short attention span (8 seconds) and further details about traffic and business on screen. Targeting marketing and design. Not much utility for me.

**Fromm, J. and Vidler, M. Millennials with Kids: Marketing to This Powerful and Surprisingly Different Generation of Parents. New York: AMACON, 2015. Print.**

Geared to companies wanting to market to this generation.

Ch. One Key take-aways p. 44:

* Parents in this generation have come of age in economic hardship and digital innovation.
* The author believes this is a very pragmatic generation—interested in products that will make life easier. Useful has become the new cool and the author says that the brands that change to that mind set will be successful.
* Millennials hold less wealth than the generations that came before at this point in their lives. Tech is no longer new for them.

Ch. Two p. 85

* Co-creation is key. They expect to be involved in the creation process. They will market the product themselves via social media if they are impressed with it and feel that it serves their needs. Sharability is important.
* Personalization of content and vehicle should be encouraged and can generate conversations that lead to brand loyalty.
* Consumers now direct the flow of conversation in many cases. They hold brands to more inclusive standards and expect products to be available at any moment.
* Increased casualization has continued and is the vernacular of this gen. Along with this is a releasing of much business formality in communication, etc. Texts, hashtags, social media streams, looser grammar, etc.
* Like products that allow them to express their own identity and personality. Brands with a strong story which will allow them to become our” story will win the day.

Ch. Three p. 117.

* Dollar Shave Club interrupted Gilette and forced them to change their entire business model. Consider acting like a disruptor company—even if you are a mature brand—and leave room in your budget for risks. Brains over brawn.
* Brands that have a strong “why” and create a product that people can believe in will win with this gen. They want to be active consumer partners. Most loyal customers will believe in what you do, not just what you sell.

Ch. Four p. 155

* Value two way communication over one-way conversations; collaboration and engagement
* Consumers have much more power now to affect the messages of a particular brand

Ch. Five p. 190-91

* Create Millennial partners instead of targets
* “Gamifying” experiences helps to build relationships
* True participation and collaboration help this gen to identify with a brand. Some are calling this a “participatory economy”

Recent events on college campuses in which students (using social media) have organized powerful protests suggests that social media is giving this gen a very effective way to advocate and seek change. My fear is that—tho the vehicle is clearly effective—the content is sidestepping some of the usual avenues for edit, revision and refinement. For example, it is easy to gather a large number of young people quickly via text and FB message. All that is necessary is a sense of injustice, imflamatory rhetoric and time. However, the dubious anger at the edges of conflicts at Yale and other campuses causes me to want institutions to think real long and hard about making immediate changes. It may amount to loud bluster and reason and proportion is suffering.

**Doerries, Bryan. The Theatre of War: What Ancient Greek Tragedies Can Teach us Today. New York: Knopf, 2015. Print.**

From the new arrivals shelf at WPL, I picked this up always interested in gaining in the area of Greek and Roman myths. Was a bit disappointed at first b/c the book took such a memoir-ish cast in the beginning. I suppose I wanted more of a break down of important dramas and an introduction to connections which could be made to modern war. He spent a lot of time relating his difficult relationship with his father who believed in fate and the uselessness of human agency and the death of his girlfriend of Cystic Fibrosis.

What Doerries gives is an account of his “theatre of war” project in which he endeavored to introduce a battle-fatigued US military to the (in many cases) catharsis of community of those who have suffered due to a first hand experience of war. Specifically, after painstakingly convincing military officials of the possible utility of exposure to ancient theatre in starting a conversation, he produced *Ajax* by Sophocles, a military general himself, about Ajax—a Greek warrior who suffers PTSD-like symptoms, becomes insular, pulls away from family, slaughters a flock of sheep and then falls on his own sword in suicide. Ajax does this after losing his best friend Achilles in battle and suffering the indignation of being passed over for the honor of receiving Achille’s battle armor. There is indication that he felt unjustly dealt-with and also that the Generals orchestrating the war were corrupt. Sophocles originally staged this play for an audience of war ready and experienced fighting men who would be experiencing similar trauma themselves.

Interesting connections b/t military suicides and Ajax. P. 97.

p. 54-55 “Through tragedy, the great Athenian poets…were giving voice to timeless human experiences—of suffering and grief—that, when viewed by a large audience that had shared those experiences, fostered compassion, understanding, and a deeply felt interconnection. Thgrough tragedy, the Greeks faced the darkness of human existence as a community.”

Strongest aspects of the book are when he relates the discussions that would occur after the play. The military did hire the author to travel and perform the play in numerous settings for those returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. The play generated strong conversations and dialogue and emotional reactions from some surprising military figures.

Likewise, Doerries did similar work with the play *Prometheus Bound* by Aeschylus. Here, the story of Prometheus (God imprisoned on a cliff and tortured continually) was used in prison settings for audiences of corrections officials. This seemed to be less successful except in patches, yet the account was still interesting with corrections officials distrusting the author’s motives yet still taking away an identification with the protagonist. Some comments about solitary confinement also.

He also tried another initiative involving Hercules asking his son to kill him and put himout of his misery at the end of his life. Here, the connection was with end of life workers and medical staff.

**Mosely, Walter. The Right Mistake. New York: BasicCivitas, 2008. Print.**

A Socrates Fortlow novel. Socrates leaves his hole-in-the-wall home and creates a series of Thursday night meetings which explore what it means to be a black human being in modern society. It is a “thinkers” meeting where they do not preach, but ask important questions without aligning answers to specific ideology. The meetings stir up trouble by including many gang-members (the meetings were used as truce and reconciliation initiatives) and prostitutes and other “trouble makers.” The police try to infiltrate and eventually try Socrates for murder. Socrates continues to try and work out the guilt he feels for the murder/rape he committed in his early life and still in many ways feels like a prisoner to that act.

These books serve as vehicles for Mosely to wrestle with the responsibilities, boundaries and definitions of being black in America today. What is the experience? What is owed to them and to each other, if anything. What is the emotional landscape of a black male living near the streets? Always the struggle of relating to white America, but without shutting angry doors—Well, maybe sometimes. Always the desire to continue communicating, but not to simply agree. Mosely likes philosophy, psychology, race relations, violence, dialogue, the language of sex and desire and always the whiff of crime everywhere. In Mosely’s world, a man may be a criminal, but that only makes him more qualified to speak truth and act and ask questions with the intention of making things better.

“How could he be wrong,” Socrates said, “when we all know that pain is the only way most men learn anything? A dog that bites, a match that burn. You learn right away from sumpin’ like that.”

“Some men never learn, “ the elder Twiner proclaimed.

“That’s right,” Martin agreed.

“Don’t mean he didn’t make the right mistake, Socrates said.

“Just that he too stupid to get something out of it. But there still something there he could’a known.”

p. 112 “”Billy’s right. You cain’t get no honey you ain’t reat to git stung.”

**12/24/2015. Towle, Ben. Oyster War. Portland: Oni Press, 2015. Print.**

Silly, whimsical graphic novel about an attempt to eliminate oyster “piracy” in a fictional community in the Chesapeake Bay in the 1800’s. Supernatural elements, sea culture and fun plot. Handsomely bound in 11 X 8.

**Napoli, Donna Jo. Song of Magdalene. New York, Scholastic Press, 1996. Print.**

Napoli continually impresses me with her ability to write deceptively simple stories. Language is clear and unpretentious. Her stories always involve character, ethics, morality and, very often, religious themes.

This is the story of Mary Magdalene, but she only meets Jesus in the final pages of the book. This does not take away from the story at all as I was continually wondering where she was going to go next. Napoli gives her epilepsy and the fear that she will have a fit in public and thus be labeled a demoniac. She loves a disfigured boy from within her own household and eventually they consummate and she conceives. They are exiled from their society by his illness and her willingness to be connected with him. He dies and she is brutalized by a local braggart. She is exiled from all that she knows and eventually finds herself among the Essenes. From there, she helps to take a disabled to child to Jesus and there is only the barest of details provided as to what happens from there on…

I read this at least a month and a half ago and wish that I remembered more—Was impressed with it.

**Schiff, Stacy. The Witches: Salem, 1692. New York: Little Brown and Company, 2015.**

Thick book about Salem Witch Trials. Heavy with endnotes, this narrative telling would happily occupy a couple weeks, but no time. By an author that has given a similar treatment to Cleopatra.

**Abu-Lughod, Lila. Do Muslim Women Need Saving? Harvard: First Harvard University Publishing, 2013.**

Picked up for possible use with AP but found little applicability. Heavy academic/theoretical language. Had little time to digest.

**Orwel, G. Animal Farm.**

Enjoyed immensely. Part of my campaign to pick up books that I should have read in high school. Allegory ostensibly about communistic control, but really about human nature. Did not expect to take so much pleasure in the story, but enjoyed the plotline with the animals quite a bit. One of those read by a page and a half at night before falling asleep. Surprised by the natural suspension of disbelief in the enjoyment of this one.

**Bertram, V.M. One Nation Under Taught: Solving America’s Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Crisis. New York: Baufort Books, 2014.**

Did not get the time to read this, but would like to return to it. WPL find.

**Kelley, M.D. All Thumbs: Mobile Marketing that Works. New York: Palgrave Mcmillan, 2014.**

Flipped through to see if it would be useful for Sugarfield. Focus on sales rather than service and did not seem to apply.

**Long, A. Leadership Tripod: A New Model for Effective Leadership. Camby: Power Publishing, 2005. (September 2015)**

**Fullan, Michael. Leading in a Culture of Change. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001.**

**Ottaviani, Jim & Wicks, M. *Primates: The fearless science of Jane Goodall, Dian Fossey, and Birute Galdikas.*  New York: Square Fish, 2013.**

Graphic novel. Not much interest in this kind of science, but the book was engaging. All three women were protégés of a famous scientist named Dr. Leaky. These women were fascinated with primates and were drawn to study them. He sent them to study them before they had their phd’s—thinking they would be unencumbered by preconceptions. Friendly, engaging pictures and little personal tidbits about the women. Jane Goodall loved Tarzan even when she was a young kid.

**Alexie, Sherman. *Flight.* New York: Flat Cat, 2007.**

A young misfit indian boy (teen) named “zits” for obvious reasons is angry and alienated, hopping from foster home to foster home. Complex affection for parents (father abandoned) and mom (dead). He meets another boy who has a strange hold on him and he slowly morphs into having a willingness to kill in a public setting. Right when he goes to pull the trigger, he changes into the body of a bad cop. He is inside the cop for a time and then occupies other lives, until he finally occupies his drunk, homeless father’s body. Wish I had time to flip through this and find some more significance. At one point, he is a soldier ordered to massacre an Indian villiage in the 1800’s. At another, he is an indian being encouraged by his father to kill a captured boy solder. A happy ending with a kind cop who has become a father to him (along with his brother). Ends with the request to call him by his real name. Simple language.

**Brown, Don. Drowned City: Hurricane Katrina and New Orleans. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015.**

Graphic novel. Fairly objective but emotional book. Drawings blurry about the edges and full of dignity despite the content. Lays blame with government response and fairly evenhanded in observations of Bush’s mistakes here. Focus on resilience, etc.

“The world is a hellish place, and bad writing is destroying the quality of our suffering. –Tom Waits.

**Brooks, David. *The Road to Character*. New York: Random House, 2015**

Not finished and shamefully late to WPL for awaiting notes; worth picking up again.

Brooks begins with the idea of resume virtues and eulogy virtues. Most would say that the virtues that loved-ones will invoke about you at your funeral are the more lasting, important qualities to seek (honesty, faithfulness, kindness), but that he (and others) spend the sheer majority of their lives building lesser, more practical “virtues.” He divides these into “Adam I” and “Adam II” motivations based on a Rabbi’s book. Adam one is external, and visibly successful, while Adam two is inward, spiritual and valuable in ways unseen.

Brooks sets out to focus upon people that have made Adam I kneel to Adam II—folks that have radiated a sort of “moral joy” (xvi) and have nurtured their spiritual and inner selves. The book profiles these people.

“the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either—but right through every human heart.” –Solzhenitsyn.

Brooks heard a re-broadcast of a radio show celebrating the end of WWII, then went inside his house and began watching the continuation of a football game. After a two-yard gain, a receiver celebrated and in that moment did more self-congratulatory celebration than the entire WWII celebration. Self-effacement once was the order of the day and it has gone.

David Foster Wallace’s speech at Kenyon College: self-centeredness.

Out of the crooked timber of humanity, no straight thing was ever made—Kant

The war with the self. Self-mastery. It is possible to love lower-order things rather than higher-order things.

Only the one who descends into the underworld rescues the beloved. – Kierkegaard

He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how. –Nietzsche

Frances Perkins—cabinet official under FDR helped secure much of framework for labor relations and much of the social safety net we take for granted today.

“He that conquereth his own soul is greater than he who taketh a city.” P. 52 (bible)

Freedom has been defined as the opportunity for self-discipline. P. 61 Eisenhower at 1957 State of the Union Address.

Alber Schweitzer—Only a person who feels his preference to be a matter of course, not something out of the ordinary, and who has no thought of heroism but only of a duty undertaken with sober enthusiasm, is capable of being the sort of spiritual pioneer the world needs. P. 92.

Dorothy Day Chapter, General Montgomery Chapter

This is a religious book. Brooks in talking about crooked timber is really talking about sin. In fact, he says as much on p. 13. He believes that the nation has left that moral tradition behind, but that this is a net loss. He wants people to immerse themselves in the stories of people who have lived the old tradition.

At what points do my talents and deep gladness meet the world’s deep need? –Frederick Buechner

And on the loftiest throne in the world we are still sitting only on our own rump. --Montaigne

Confusion is the sweat of learning. (Gleaned from Carol Chesak on FB.)

**Green, John. Paper Towns. New York: Penguin Random House, 2008.**

A young man is in love with his neighbor Margo—an alluring, selfish, playful, destructive, and (as the story progresses) egomaniac who leaves their Florida hometown just weeks before graduation. Quentin follows signs and hints to try and find her, then, finding her finally, decides that she is not the one afterall, some of her faults lay bare. This is a teenage romp—a relatively good natured one—in which the teens are super-smart and expound on literature and pop culture at will.

I read this months ago, so details are not entirely fresh. Worth a second reading. The telling involves a long close reading of Whitman’s “Song of Myself” which is interesting and has possible classroom use for the right kids. Green has Quentin meditate on Whitman’s meaning over the course of several chapters. Also revealed the possibility of close reading a poem for meaning and interpretation—something that has been done before for Lang and Comp.

Green writes enjoyable stories and interjects enough literary geekiness and detail fairly accessible to those familiar with the usual cannon. Teachers name is Ms. Holden, etc. He is an easy target for snobs, but I enjoy his lack of posturing and his enthusiastic embrace of literary geekitude.

**Cain, James. The Postman Always Rings Twice. New York: Random House, 1934. (8.15.2015)**

Read back in the Spring of 2015. Quick read. Noir crime story involving an affair between a drifter and an unhappy housewife. Explores inner thoughts of motivations and doubts when committing murder. Turns into a detective story later in the novel. Language is guarded and details about sensuality are missing per the time period, but the text still powerfully transmits eroticism. Written from POV of the drifter who ends up on death row. His “account” is finished by the priest helping him in his last days. Would like to read again.

**Bradley, Heather. Design Funny: A Graphic Designer’s Guide to Humor. Cincinatti: HOW Books, 2015.**

An incredibly thorough and smart book about graphic design and humor. This is jammed with useful information not just about “how to” but analyzing why humor is effective and where it comes from. Pg. 18 and 19 give a history of visual humor which is a stitch. Talks about humor scientifically and gives theories about why humor is so effective. “Six serious reasons to design funny”—pg 66 to 79 and onward. This section could be used in AP for a section on the strategic use of humor in writing. Use as a textbook.

Design ideas about also for website design, etc. I would love to own this book just to flip through occasionally and to get bits of inspiration. Practical use in class also.

**Ng, Celeste. Everything I Never Told You. New York: Penguin, 2014. (8.1.2015)**

Very thoughtful novel about the painful dynamics of one family. Father is second generation Chinese and wants to fit in, mother nurses the wound of not becoming the doctor that she wanted to be. The children ripple out and echo back with their own perceptions and desires. Eldest daughter dies and we watch the chips fall, tracing the emotional pathways and channels carved by unmet dreams and latent longing. Similar to Lovely Bones in certain ways but with a more hopeful ending—and less fantastical. Dad has an affair with his grad student, mom had left the family for a time seeking to at last become a doctor, the oldest son seeks Harvard and to become an astronaut (but craves dad’s love and approval), Lydia (dead daughter) wanted to please her parents and lived a quiet, desperate second life. Her death was caused by her won little ritual of freedom from her fear. Youngest daughter is lost and seeking her parents above all. Neighbor Jack who is gay and loves Nath the older brother while Nath despises him for an earlier ethnic slight. Police officer’s act of kindness in bringing drunk Nath home after a trauma inspired bender.

Strikes me as an emotionally balanced novel. Some awful things occur (death, abandonment, affairs, resentment) but Ng is able to bring a sense of resolution and hope in the end and the hint at renewal comes from a careful narration of the family’s internal landscape. Multi-race family; family dysfunction; parenting; inability to communicate to those who mean the most…

**Bradley, Phil. Social Media for Creative Libraries. London: Facet Publishing, 2015 (second edition)**

Did not have time to read this as of 7/22 and needed to return it. First edition was copyrighted 2007, so hopefully it has been updated thoroughly.

**Joosten, Tanya. Social Media for Educators. San Francisco: John Wiley and Sons, 2012.**

Already three years old, this book may be a bit stale considering how quickly the social media landscape has been moving. Joosten writes largely from the perspective of University educators, but many elements can be transferred to k-12.

Main reasons to use social media in classroom:

* Enhance learning and pedagogical needs
* Students are already using
* Importance of interactivity in learning
* Variables are drivers of quality in education
* Develop contact b/t student and staff, cooperation b/t students (p. 3—many references)
* Possiblity that out of classroom work is what drives change in students

Joosten provides many references to studies throughout and this is an academic text.

Teachers should become social media users themselves and begin learning from the inside and increase effectivenss.

Educator should build their own personal and professional network first. A wealth of information and groups for education-related issues.

As you build network and continue to learn effectively, consider issues regarding self-disclosure. Balance b/t letting personal traits and qualities loose upon the network (which is needed for genuine relationship building) and the chance that you are putting too much out there.

Joosten explains benefits of using facebook fan pages or Twitter (among others)

Benefits of social media use for course updates:

* Increases interactions b/t instructors and students
* Enhances communication
* Builds feelings of connectedness
* Overcomes the challenges of students at a distance or in remote locations
* Facilitates providing timely student feedback
* Helps students stay organized
* Increases student performance
* Provides a medium for instructors to enhance their identity and encourage students
* Results in high levels of satisfaction of instructors and students

Students check email much less than most professors believe, but use social media almost four times at day average.

Jones-Kavalier and Flannigan (2006) “Connecting the digital dots: literacy of the 21st century. EDUCAUSE Quarterly. describe current mismatch b/t students and their instructors: “classroom filled with digitally literate students being led by linear-thinking, technologically stymied instructors” (p. 8)

Check out Diigo for educational applications.

Benefits of social media for content aggregation and development (p. 62).

* Improves student learning
* Helps instructors manage their workload
* Enhances twenty-first century literacy skills for instructors and students
* Helps students stay organized
* Facilitates the use of rich and current content
* Enhances student engagement
* Creates the opportunity for active learning

Chapter on guiding implementation of social media policies in institutions—good advice for educators and administrators and geared toward college level.

In the appendix were some survey questions, categorized that might be helpful for constructing a pre or post survey for a class that uses digital media. The items could be used for other digital initiatives also.

**Symons, Mitchell. The Weird World of Words: A Guided Tour. San Francisco: Zest Books, 2015.**

A short paperback with some interesting commentary and facts about language development. Many claims made in this book about language evolution and word origin, but no substantiation or bibliography whatsoever. Fun read, but slow to use the info found within for the above reason. Certainly a fun book for those who already love words and how language works.

Includes sections about people who gave their names to words, the words that shakespeare coined, How dogs bark in twenty different languages, originations of famous expressions, obsolete words and many others.

“The beginning of wisdom is the definition of terms.”—Socrates

“Words, so innocent and powerless as they are, as standing in a dictionary, how potent for good and evil they become in the dhands of one who knows how to combine them.”—Nathaniel Hawthorne

Words are but the vague shadows of the volumes we mean. Little audible links, they are, chainingtogether great inaudible feelings and purposes—Theodore Dreiser

The limits of my language means the limits of my world—Ludwig Wittgenstein

If you could say it in words, there would be no reason to paint—Edward Hopper

**Haddix, Margaret. Leaving Fishers. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997.**

Picked this up at Elia’s behest. Young girl arrives at a new school and feels like an outsider. She is youngest in the family and there is a large gap b/t her next youngest sibling. Angst, but kind and gentle. She is drawn into friendships with some kids who are religious, becomes interested, gets baptized and then finds that the group leans cultish. I read about half and then could see where it was going. “Fishers” was the name of the group. Simple, non-saccharine story progression. Haddix evidently has published quite a few YA novels with a female protagonist.

**Wilson, G. Willow. Ms. Marvel: Crushed. Vol 3. New York: Marvel Worldwide Publishing, 2015.**

On the back of this edition, there is a fantastic sum up: “Kamala faces a new, terrifying threat: Excessive feelings!” Once again, a thoroughly likeable conservative muslim teenage girl fights badguys with her superpower and modest dress. Good humor and respectful tone throughout. Am interested in reading interviews with writer/creators to get a wider view of perspective here. At one point, Kamala’s brother explains to the caucasion friend (who has a crush on her) that it will never work out. He explains that her parents will always stand in the way b/c they want their heritage to live on and for K’s kids to be proud of their religion. They want it to go on. An explanation of what is viewed as a “closed-down” system from outside. An unusually respectful stance on religion, custom and restraint from a comic book.

**Zane, Peder (ed.) The Top Ten: Writers Pick Their Favorite Books. New York: Norton, 2006.**

Skimmed through this—interested in the premise, but after about 10 pages all the information just jumbles and scrambles like ants on a page. Gathered lists from many authors about their 10 favorite books, then gives short summaries of each book’s stories and significance. Dozens of authors submitted lists. Below are the titles that were most mentioned by authors.

1. Anna Karenina: Tolstoy
2. Madame Bovary: Gustave Flaubert
3. War and Peace: Tolstoy
4. Lolita: Nabokov
5. The adventures of Huck Finn: Twain
6. Hamlet: Shakespeare
7. The Great Gatsby: Fitzgerald
8. In Search of Lost Time: Marcel Proust
9. The stories of Anton Chekov
10. Middlemarch: George Eliot

**7/7/2017. Gill, C.M. Essential Writing Skills for College and Beyond. Blue Ash, OH: Writer’s Digest Books, 2014.**

Stressing the importance of writing in college, this book, written by a professor at a community college, is a novel-sized introduction to concepts important to writing in academia for undergraduates. She gives an intro about what are basic expectations for collegiate writing, brainstorming tips, a full chapter on thesis statements…

Composing body paragraph: She recommends using P.I.E. = Point, illustrate and explain. She says that if these were split into a pie chart, point would be 20%, Explanations would be 30% and illustrations would be 50%. (Illustrations: quotes, examples, statistics, research findings, interviews expert testimony or opinion, analogies, surveys)

Reinforced idea that Google search is not appropriate for academic research. She did say that “Google Scholar” is sometimes acceptable. Look into that.

p. 123-124. Gill basically gives a method for close reading, or a way to deal with difficult research texts. “SQ3R”: Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review.

**Survey:** look at title, chapter titles, pictures, summaries, table of contents, major heading, diagrams, etc.

**Question:** As you read, ask yourself questions:

What is the author’s main point?

Who cares about this point?

How does this info relate to my thesis? What major evidence does this author present?

Do I agree with him? Why or why not?

**Recite:** (see it, say it , hear it, write it) All of these help to reinforce the material. Consider changing “read” to “re-read”.

Not much in the way of newer, unique methods for keeping track of sources. Email citations to yourself for easy copy and paste. Use a research summary template, etc.

Extensive chapters on incorporating a writer’s ideas with a students: agreeing, disagreeing, qualifying. How to use a quote, explains difference b/t editing and revising. Includes (toward the end of the book) a guide on proper use of punctuation and common problems, etc., along with some tips for the psychology of a grader.

Overall, am glad that I read/skimmed it, but there was no need to copy or retrieve further for use in class.

**Dunham, Steve. The Editor’s Companion: An indispensible guide to editing books, magazines, online publications , and more. Blue Ash, OH: Writer’s Digest Press, 2014.**

Much information for those in the publishing/writing industry and may find themselves with editing responsibility. An interesting glance into a somewhat “wonkish” world. Features some interviews of those who have held editing positions in various capacities.

He suggests that when doing freelance work the editor ask what specifically the writer wants him to edit. Often, people have been upset with him for because he would edit for content when they wanted a superficial look-over for mistakes.

“Better say nothing at all. Language is worth a thousand pounds a word!” Lewis Carroll (Through the Looking Glasss).

Editors use style sheets—forms that note various unique aspects to the editing of the book so that throughout the editing and publishing process there is consistency and efficiency in question response. Also used are copy-editing and proofreading checklists.

Dunham quotes another source as saying copy editing should take about 750 words per hour—about 3 double spaced pages per hour. Substantive editing takes about twice as long as copy editing.

Resource which might be useful: The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual. This is Dunham’s #1 reference—primarily a guide to clarity. Has preferred AP spellings to preferred abbreviations to preferred guides for capitalizing titles.

The Word Detective ([www.word-detective.com](http://www.word-detective.com)) --entertaining discussions of etymology and meaning.

Dunham includes many sample paragraphs in the back of the book which contain examples of specific edits. Also, almost 20 pages of examples of copy that had mistakes within but was printed anyway. This part could be useful in class, but I judged it not useful enough to copy for future use.

**Jimenez, Francisco. Taking Hold: From Migrant Childhood to Columbia University. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015.**

Story of an underpriviledged child who excelled—from migrant farm field to becoming a professor of languages. Did not have time to read—only about the first five pages. Memoir with heavy descriptive narrative.

**Riley, Jason. Please Stop Helping Us: How Liberals Make it Harder for Blacks to Succeed. New York: Encounter Books, 2014.**

Riley—a black man himself—laments that progressive politics which try to assist the AA population in fact hurt them. He believes that in the last decades AA leaders have focused upon gaining political power (and the dominant liberal establishment has—with both good intentions and with cynical intentions—has made things worse by not allowing this segment of the population to stand on its own.

Is racism responsible for holding back AA’s as a group? Riley says no. He believes that politics and legislation is not the answer. Quote: “One lesson of the Obama presidency—maybe the most important one for blacks—is that having a black man in the Oval Office is less important than having one in the home.” P 33.

Ch. 2 is a stinging critique of modern AA culture, saying that the real difficulty that AA’s are facing and the reason they are “held back” is a decaying family life and self-harming culture which values “otherness” (even if it is self-harming) rather than accepting the norms of the dominant (or, as they see it “white” society). Riley shares personal his personal story of interest in school and personal achievement set against the examples of his brothers and sisters (and cousins) who accepted the culture of the neighborhood and died early or ended up in prison. Story of a 9 year old niece who made fun of him for speaking “white.” She asked him, “why you trying to act ‘smart’?” Already, at so young an age, she had identified speaking standard English as being antithetical to her own racial identity. Strong chapter—possibly of some use in English 11. This chapter bears reading again.

Ch. 3 about high crime rates of AA men. Progressive tendency is to talk about victimization, etc., but Riley says that this will change when AA behavior changes.

Chapters on voting rights laws, schools—he is a proponent of voucher systems and Charters and definitely critical of teacher’s unions—and affirmative action.

From the bibliography for further study:

Giant Steps: The autobiography of Kareem… (Bantam Books, 1983) p. 16. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. He relates the negative pressure he received from peers when he arrived at a new AA school speaking standard English and caring about school. Other AA peers quickly went on the attack.

Ogbu, John. Black American Students in an Affluent Suburb: A study of Academic Disengagement. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2003. P. 35.

Lee, Felicia. “Why are Black Students Lagging?” New York Times. Nov. 30, 2002.

Gay, Geneva. Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research and Practice (Teachers College Press, 2010), 23-24, 27.

Steele, Shelby. The Content of Our Character: A New Vision of Race in America. (Harper Perennial, 1990)

Comer, James and Poussaint, Alvin. Raising Black Children. Plume, 1992)

Williams, Juan. Enough: The phony leaders, dead-end movements, and culture of failure that are undermining black America—and what we can do about it. Three Rivers Press, 2006).

Smarick, Andy. The Urban School System of the Future: Applying the Principles and Lessons of Chartering. Rowman and Littlefield Education, 2012.

Coulson, Andrew. “America has too many teachers”. Wall Street Journal, July 10, 2012.

Gabriel, Trip. “Despite Image, Union Leader Backs School Change. New York Times, Oct 15, 2010.

Whitman, David. Sweating the Small Stuff: Inner-City Schools and the New Paternalism. Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2008.

Brill, Steven. Class Warfare: Inside the fight to fix Amercian’s schools. Simon and Schuster, 2011.

Fryer, Roland and Greenstone, Michael. “The Changing consequences of attending historically black colleges and universities”. American Economic Journal: Applied Economics 2, no. 1. Jan 2010. (The gist here is that standards have plummeted at these places of higher learning due to widespread skills gaps and low performance of entering freshment. Further questioning of their overall merit also.

**Santiago, Wilfred. The Story of Roberto Clemente. New York: Norton, 2011.**

Graphic novel with some off-beat choices for framing and story-telling. Born poor in Puerto Rico, Clemente experienced loss and pain in his early years, fell in love with baseball and followed his love to the major leagues. His family was religious and Santiago includes a detail about the three Magi that he weaves from beginning to end. Was involved in charitable works for most of his life and was killed in a plane crash delivering aid to Nicaragua after the strong earthquake in the 70’s. Santiago includes long prose sections about Puerto Rican culture and history—found these to be useful. PR ethnic makeup is indigenous Tainto culture, African (slave) and Spainish. The word “Boriqua” comes from a Taino culture. “Boriken” meant “land of the brave lord.”

**Rall, Ted. *After we Kill you we Will Welcome You Back as Honored Guests: Unembedded in Afhanistan.* New York: Hill and Wang, 2014. Print.**

6.25.2014. Love the title here—comes from a quote from a village elder explaining to Rall the timeline for expected withdrawal. No deep enmity, but occupation is occupation after all.

Interesting set up here. More or less a journal of this journalist’s two ventures into Afghanistan during the last decade. He was not embedded with US troops, thinking that that was no way to be objective—that embedded troops serve the mission of the soldiers and infrastructure that protects them. He draws instead of writes. This text was an interesting mixture of both. He destroys any sense of objectivity with an overly harsh caricature of Bush, etc., but overall his take is interesting. He suggests that the war was about the Transatlantic pipeline and that the idea of this war as “the good war” is myth, with many more civilian casualties, etc. He compares his trips in 2001 and then 2010. Infrastructure had improved much, he acknowledged. (roads, mainly)

Rall makes a big deal of the lack of objectivity that “embedded” have compared to those who travel without the protection and the blessing of the US military. He has a point, but his overly harsh visual comments about bush destroy any sense of objectivity that he may have. Yes, be critical, but you do not need to be absurdly critical—this chips away at your credibility. He seeks to travel with two friends unembedded into war-torn Afghanistan, get to know what the people think and then lay eyes on the transatlantic pipeline. In the beginning of the book, he posits that The TIP was a large reason for the war in the first place—that Us oil companies approached Taliban leaders (actually had them to Texas) about building a pipeline across some shady areas of the afghan landscape. He quoted an unnamed attendee saying something about burying you under a carpet of bombs—quite the imflamatory statement to toss out without a source. He wanted to lay eyes on the remnants of the pipeline in order to prove that the US was truly nefarious in its prosecuting of the war. He never does find it, though his search is truncated and he is never able to fully travel where he desires.

He claims that there were many more Afghans killed than has ever been acknowledged by the US media—especially in the early part of the war. His point about embedded journalists is hard to argue with—what type of unbiased journalism is possible when you are entirely reliant on the troops around you for safety? Then again, Ernie Pyle was “embedded” but was he any less of a journalist? Rall has a definition of a “journalist” which denies the chance of utility to a greater national effort. A journalist must always be skeptical—was Pyle ever skeptical of the war effort in print and did it get through censors?

Rall scorns this war as an “optional” war which we lost from the beginning when we sent more soldiers than aid. He envisions that we could have rebuilt the country many times over if we did not militarize the place.

**Eisner, Will. A Contract with God. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006. Print.**

According to the Publisher, this is one of THE FIRST graphic novels. Drawn in classic comic book style about one tenement building in New York during the 30’s. The title short story is one to remember and return to. Story of Frimme Hirsh, Jewish immigrant from an eastern block country, and his contract with God. Begins with Hirsh returning from his daughter’s funeral, dejected. Reader is informed of backstory: As a promising young man, the leadership of his village gathered funds and sent him to America in anticipation of being wiped out by a pogrom. On the way, he forges a contract with God—no details given, but the intent to serve a silent God and to obey and live right is clear. He starts in NY and lives an upright life, adopting a daughter. She dies and in a heavy downpour cries out to God about the violation of the contract. He spits on the rock on which the contract is drawn and throws it out the window. Free of the contract, he turns to the world, earns money through investments, buys the building, is unjust to tenets, takes on a mistress and is successful according to the world’s rules. He contacts a council of Rabbis and draws up another contract with God, thinking that perhaps as a young man he made a mistake and this time God will honor it. The Rabbis say that they will not “deviate,” but they will “abbreviate.” He divests and makes changes so that he is living rightly. Genuinely joyful, he signs his name to the contract with the idea that he will have another daughter and begin afresh, right with God. He dies immediately with contract in hand. In the epilogue, a young jewish boy, fending off bullies in an alley, finds his original contract (written on a stone) and decides not to throw it but to keep it—seeing its value. He signs his name to it also.

Of interest to me is the desire to be right with God at Hirsh’s core. He wants to turn his back, but cannot entirely. God remains inscrutable, but worthy of attention. Love the epilogue. The child who could defend himself with a stone (the bullies were targeting him b/c of his Hasidic dress) but takes the stone home and seeks to honor God. Many ideas to explore here. What is the nature of the contract—the contract is religion itself. Is there any fair contract b/t God and man? Was there any value in Hirsh’s contract? For such a grim story, the hope is unavoidable. This is the story of one who may want to kick religion to the curb, but finds it impossible.

Other very interesting stories:

The Street Singer, The Super (about a Superintendent of the tenement with dirty pictures on his walls who is accused of a little girl of taking advantage of her.) She takes advantage of his weaknesses and winds up counting her stolen money and causing his death.

Last story would have been considered a dirty story about city folks taking a break from their work lives and from their marriages to go to upstate and pursue affairs, etc., at summer encampments. This done with a critical eye and not to glorify.

**Olive, M. and Edwards, R. The German Soldier in World War II. Mechanicsberg: Stackpole Books, 2014. Print.**

What’s not to love about a book full of B and W photos taken by German Soldiers during the second world war. Strangely engaging book, mainly showing soldiers at rest. Interesting psychological journey while you flip through. These are supposed to be the bad guys. As I flipped, I did not slowly change to sympathy—was still entirely able to see these young (and middle-aged) men as capable of the crematorias. Something in their fastidious uniforms and riding boots and superiorly designed weapons and equipment hold a fascination. No doubt I am not alone in this, as WPL would not have ordered it if there were not other wonks who would enjoy flipping through this thing. Mike and Del looked through it with interest and pointed out some weaponry the recognized from Call of Duty with some enthusiasm. All pictures were taken by the troops themselves and were concentrated on the Eastern front (invasion of Russia).

**Mosley, Walter. Black Betty. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1994. Print.**

An Easy Rawlins Mystery. This was the first Mosley book that I did not finish. Usually the “Mosley” SOP is this: Introduce character and setting, introduce problem and then the main character (Easy Rawlings, Socrates Fortlow, or Paris Minton) go about the business of solving the problem while forging interesting conversation and social critique of race issues in America and the world. Generally, by working this magic, Mosley hypnotizes me into forgetting entirely about the plot and I am very willing to forgive the fact that I cannot any longer trace the solution—there is a Mosley fog created by strong dialogue, fascinating commentary and vigorous sexuality. All is forgiven because the writing is so good. This time, however, the voodoo did not take and boredom set in. Did not even finish this one—characters not as interesting as usual. This gem, however, in the epigram:

Ghetto Pedagogy:

“Dad?”

“Yes?”

“Why do black men always kill each other?”

(long pause)

“Practicing.”

**Napel, Doug (Doug Ten Napel (2010). *Creature Tech.***

Graphic novel about a techie kid that shirks his faith and turns into a well-known scientist, returning to his home town for which he has disdain. He becomes part creature and battles a super bug turned space leech thing. Interestingly drawn and has an even-handed approach to faith and science intentionally. Villian is more interesting than the hero a la Paradise Lost. Elia liked this one too.

**Page, Kathy (2014). *Alphabet.* Biblioasis.**

Novel picked up from WPL. Thick and not enough time to read. Did not immediately grab me. Prison story—Britain. Well-written, but not a good fit for beginning of summer reading.

**Hale, Nathan (2014). Treaties, Trenches, Mud and Blood. Amulet Books, New York.**

Graphic novel about WWI. Very engaging and creatively made. Author has taken on the persona of his historical namesake and pushed to center stage a masked executioner—the executioner of Nathan Hale—who makes humourous asides throughout. Strange but fun. Deals with the complexity of the treaties and other less-interesting aspects of the war which would make a historian appreciate this. He simultaneously is lighthearted and wry while taking the history seriously. Nations are represented by animals and the U.S. is made a bunny which was particularly silly.

**McPherson, James (2003). Hallowed Ground: A Walk at Gettysburg. Crown’s Journeys: New York.**

Civil War scholar writes this slim book which imagines a walk around the battleground. He probably allowed himself the leisure of imagining that he was leading a tour on the printed page. Conversational tone is casual and humorous and he takes the opportunity to debunk some myths that have grown up around the battlefield. An enjoyable read, especially after just returning from visiting the same fields.

**5/2/2015. Gold, Jodi (2015). Screen-smart Parenting. The Guiliford Press: New York.**

Had to skim through this quickly as I had it out from WPL for a ridiculous amount of time. Very good information for navigating this new tech generation. Geared for parents, but useful for teachers. May take another look at it during the summer b/c it is worthy of more time. Especially good info re: early years and later teen years. Would like to review sections on video gaming, ADHD, and setting boundaries. She dislikes screens in bedrooms and thinks teens should surrender their phones at night and during homework, among many other suggestions. Much research cited.

**GodDuffy, Chris (ed.) Above the Dreamless Dead: World War I in poetry and Comics, 2014.**

Gorgeous illustrations and powerful poems. Heavy topic, but beautifully captured in this short book.

**Jamison, Leslie. The Empathy Exams. Graywolf Press: Minneapolis, MN, 2014.**

Not enough time to read, but was interested and disappointed to leave it behind. First essay about a young woman who is paid to act as patient for medical students. She memorizes a script and takes it all quite seriously. Jamison uses that conceit to weave her own story about an abortion and relationship. Empathy is examined closely from unusual angles.

**Hall, Donald. Essays After Eighty. Houghten-Mifflin: New York, 2014.**

Picked this up due to the interesting elderly angle. Great shot of elderly Hall on cover, super close-up. No escaping that this writer is OLD. Surprised that the essays were really engaging. Had the feel of an old writer sitting over drinks and telling stories. Some name dropping, but entirely forgivable as it was so entertaining.

**Butzer, C.M. Gettysburg: The Graphic Novel. Harper Collins: New York, 2009.**

Great illustrations and a fantastic way to begin studying the battle. Touching connections to Civil Rights Movement. WPL.

\_\_\_\_Printing Line\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**4/17/2015** The following books were checked out in preparation for and during a recent trip to Gettysburg with my father, sons, and a nephew:

**Weeks, Michael (2011). Civil War Road Trip Volume One: A guide to Northern Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania 1861-1863.**

**Venner, William (1998). The 19th Indiana Infantry at Gettysburg. Fantastic book that I just skimmed through.** There were many Hoosiers involved at Gettysburg and this is an in-depth look at the minute to minute participation of one regiment (about 300 men) and their fight at McPherson’s ridge at Gettysburg.

**Frommer’s Washington D.C. 2013.**

**Wills, Garry (1992). Lincoln at Gettysburg: The words that remade America.**

Have not been able to read yet, but stands as a possibility for use when talking about the Gettysburg address in class.

**3/30/2015. Rakoff, Joanna. My Salinger Year. New York: Random House, 2014.**

A young grad student quits her Master’s program in Europe and goes to New York to become a writer. She ends up applying for jobs and lands at an advertising agency which is old-fashioned and more 1950’s than the 1990’s of the setting. Turns out the agency has as its most famous client Jerry Salinger and the girl finds herself replying (via formletter) to his fan mail. She plays with responding genuinely to the heart-felt letters, but this does not get her in trouble as I half expected. She has a useless socialist boyfriend and she is still in love with a boyfriend from college. Not much weight here, but an enjoyable read and a unique story which was seemingly based on real events. No revealing details about Salinger—all was consistent with his reputation.

**Brown, Dan (2013). The Great American Dust Bowl. New York: Harcourt Brace, 2013.**

Graphic novel about the dust bowl. Complete history—beautiful drawings.

**Parker, Scott (editor). Eminem and Rap, Poetry, race Essays. North Carolina: Macfarland and co., 2014.**

Some interesting stuff here and possibly some applicability to Eng 11 or AP. Especially “Race and other four letter words,” “The black vernacular versus a cracker’s knack for Verses.” ”Eminem 2.0”

**3/10/2015. Chandra, Vikram. Geek Sublime: The Beauty of Code, the Cod of Beauty. Minneapolis, MN: Graywolf Press, 2015.**

Grabbed from WPL on strength of title alone. Programmer and writer writing about the beauty of language and computer design, etc. Flipped through, but no time to read thoroughly. Looks fascinating.

**3/6/2015. Lewis, John. March: Book One. Marietta, Georgia: Top Shelf Productions, 2013.**

**1/15/2015. Cracking the AP English Language and Composition Exam 2013. New York: Random House Princeton Review, 2012.**

Retrieved from WPL, this book appears to have some good strategies for MC and for writing the essays alike. Had to return before I had properly made notes, but will get again before tackling synthesis essays.

**1/9/2015. Lamott, Anne. *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life.* New York: Anchor Books, 1994.**

Great book with rye observations and some very practical insight on how to approach writing. Also, Lamott tackles some basic psychological challenges to writing: fear, enjoyment, envy, etc. Includes funny anecdotes and does not hesitate to make fun of herself or point herself out for ridicule.

p. xxi: C.S. Lewis: “ a zoo of lusts, a bedlam of ambitions, a nursery of fears, a harem of fondled hatreds.” She experienced a moment where Lewis put words to the feeling/confusion that she was living inside.

Short chapters which lend themselves to assigning and teaching (as opposed to Prose)

Ch. 1: Getting Started.

Lamott teaches writing workshops. Most of her students are driven to publish and are looking for practical advice on how to find an editor, agent, etc. What she tells them is to just write. Writing comes from a place and need deep within her and she only is a “success” b/c she is faithful to the urge. She has no script to sell them in order that they become successful and published. She diminishes expectations at the same time raising up reading and writing as methods for fundamentally finding meaning in life.

Ch. 2: Short Assignments.

Lamott says that short assignments are the lifeblood of her writing. Otherwise, she gets too overwhelmed or allows other flow-killing creepers to seep in. Her analogy is of writing a bit of the story or piece that will only be seen through a one inch picture frame. Summary: try not to be so stressed all the time.

E.L. Doctorow: “writing a novel is like driving a car at night. You can see only as far as your headlights, but you can make the whole trip that way.” (p. 18).

Anecdote about brother: he had been assigned an essay about birds and procrastinated and was overwhelmed. Her dad put his arm around him and told him, “Bird by bird, buddy. Just take it bird by bird.” (p. 19).

G.K. Chesterton: Hope is the power of being cheerful in circumstances that we know to be desperate (paraphrased). Lamott says that writing can be a desperate exercise and we tend to take ourselves too seriously.

Bill Murray movie Stripes: Intense, angry guy named francis: “My name is Francis. “No one calls me Francis—anyone here calls me Francis and I’ll kill them. And another thing. I don’t like to be touched. Anyone here ever tries to touch me, I’ll kill them.” Someone responds: “Hey—lighten up, Francis.” She recommends that the reader tape this to the wall.

Ch. 3: Shitty First Drafts

Possibly use with AP

Write without much regard for quality at first. Just produce. Then go back and look for nuggets in the shit. Polish them up.

At end of Chapter, she gives practical advice for quieting the “voices” in her head. The distracting ideas that come, or the disagreements with people, etc.

Her priest friend: You can safely assume that you’ve created God in your own image when it turns out that God hates all the same people you do. (p. 22)

“Very few writers really know what they are doing until they’ve done it.” “For me and most of the other writers I know, writing is not rapturous. In fact, the only way I can get anything written at all is to write really, really shitty first drafts.” (22)

Ch. 4: Perfectionism.

“Perfectionism is the voice of the oppressor, the enemy of the people.” (28)

Vonnegut: “When I write, I feel like an armless legless man with a crayon in his mouth.”

“What people somehow forgot to mention when we were children was that we need to make messes in order to find out who we are and why we are here—and, by extension, what we’re supposed to be writing.” (32)

Ch. 5: School Lunches

Start simply and write about your childhood. If you get stuck, write about your school lunches.

Ch. 6: Polaroids

Good chapter for AP

A first draft is like a polaroid. You have an idea of what the photo is about or what you want, but then you realize that there is other, more interesting detail in the frame. The story becomes that. Or, the filter process was screwy and all is overcast. This becomes the story. You must stay flexible and see where it goes.

Wonderful story about covering a story on the Special Olympics. Simple powerful diction. Follows the evolution of a story with touching imagery and details. (42-43)

Ch. 7: Character.

Some great anecdotes. Follow where your characters lead.

Ch. 8. Plot, Ch. 9 Dialogue, Ch. 10 Set Design,

Ch. 11 False Starts

Her friend was dying in a convalescent home. Anecdote about busyness and stripping away the surface to get at inner-connectedness. (84)

Ch. 12 Plot Treatment

Describes a large failure of hers and how she fixed it by coming at the same story from a different route and not drinking and coking herself to death.

Ch. 13. How do you know when you are done?

Part Two: The Writing Frame of Mind

Ch. 14. Looking Around

A spiritual perspective

“I honestly think in order to be a writer, you have to learn to be reverent. If not, why are you writing? Why are you here?” (99)

Ch. 15: The Moral Point of View

Follow the passion in you.

Molly Ivins: Freedom fighters don’t always win, but they are always right.

Ch. 16: Broccoli.

Listen to your broccoli and your broccoli will tell you how to eat it. When you do not know what to do, then get quiet and that still small voice inside may speak. The problem is that so many of us lost access to our broccoli when we were children. We listened to our intuition when we were small and then told the grown-ups what we believed to be true, we were often either corrected, ridiculed, or punished. We now doubt the voice that was telling us quite clearly what was really going on. We need to get it back. (quoted and paraphrased 110-111).

Ch. 17: Radio Station KFKD

Lamott says that the single greatest obstacle to “listening to your broccoli” is the radio station KFKD (or k-F—cked). She says it can play in your ear in stereo 24 hours a day if you let it. In one ear is a constant recitation of how special you are, etc. and in the other ear is nothing but self-loathing, reasons you will fail, unsupportive parents, etc. If you let this station play you will be unable to progress.

Ch. 18 Jealousy

Lamott talks the reader off of the edge where jealousy is concerned. Others are doing better than you are. Ok. Go get a sense of humor. Lose some friends. It will be all right. Take a “sabbatical” from a friendship or two.

Hillel: “I get up. I walk. I fall down. Meanwhile, I keep dancing.”

Part Three: Help along the way

Ch. 19: Index Cards

Lamott: “I like to think that Henry James said his classic line, ‘A writer is someone on whom nothing is lost,” while looking for his glasses, and that they were on top of his head.’

We cannot remember everything. Use index cards. Jot down little bits of information that you intend to use later. Great stories. Cards as her professional and personal memory-keepers.

Ch. 20: Calling Around

Rely on the expertise of people that know better than you. Story of learning what the “wire thing” is on the bottle of champagne (wire hood) and the satisfaction of providing that detail to her readers.

Ch. 21: Writing Groups

You can criticize others but do it kindly for goodness sake and with a stinking sense of humor.

Bill Holm: “August in Waterton”

Above me, wind does its best

To blow leaves off

The aspen tree a month too soon.

No use wind. All you succeed

in doing is making music, the noise

Of failure growing beautiful.

Ch. 22: Someone to read your drafts

Lamott: “The person may not have an answer to what is missing or annoying about the piece, but writing is so often about making mistakes and feeling lost. There are probably a number of ways to tell your story right, and someone else may be able to tell you whether or not you’ve found one of these ways” (163).

Ch. 23: Letters

Stuck? Write a letter.

Ch. 24: Writer’s Block

Ch. 25: Writing as a present

Write for an audience of one or two and you write soulfully as if a letter straight to them.

Toni Morrison: “The function of freedom is to free someone else.”

p. 198. One of Lamott’s friends said: “When I was still drinking, I was a sedated monster. After I got sober, I was just a monster.”

Pg. 204 “One is that I have come to think of almost everyone with whom I come into contact as a patient in the emergency room. I see a lot of gaping wounds and dazed expressions. Or, as Marianne Moore put it, “The world’s an orphan’s home.” And this feels more true than almost anything else I know. But so many of us can be soothed by writing: think of how many times you have opened a book, read one line, and said, “yes!” And I want to give people that feeling, too, of connection, communion.”

Story about giving on 205. Boy asked to give blood transfusion for sister who had leukemia. Boy says he has to think about it. The next day he tells his parents that he is willing. The procedure happens and, as the boy is laying there, he asks, “How soon until I start to die?”

Lamott says sometimes you have to be that innocent to be a writer. “Writing takes a combination of sophistication and innocence; it takes conscience, our belief that something is beautiful because it’s right.”

This chapter takes for granted the psychic struggle that we all face day to day. We are masses of neurosis inside and we anesthetize ourselves in order to not be stuck in the fetal position all day. Writing is part of that therapy and she wants writers to give truth away as a form of self-help.

Ch. 23: The Final Class

“Lighthouses don’t go running all over an island looking for boats to save; they just stand there shining.” (p. 236)

So why does our writing matter, again?

“Because of the spirit, I say. Because of the heart. Writing and reading decrease our sense of isolation. They deepen and widen and expand our sense of life: they feed the soul. When writers make us shake our heads with the exactness of their prose and their truths, and even make us laugh about ourselves or life, our buoyancy is restored. We are given a shot at dancing with, or at least clapping along with, the absurdity of life, instead of being squashed by it over and over again. It’s like the raging storm, but singing can change the hearts and spirits of the people who are together on that ship” (p. 237).

**1/2/2015. Prose, Francine. *Reading Like a Writer: A guide for people who love books and for those who want to write them.* New York: Harper Collins, 2006. Print.**

Some great material which would be useful for teaching close reading, analyzing tone, etc., for AP students.

Ch. 1: Close Reading. Some biographical information about her relationship with books from a young age. In High School, a teacher assigned them to locate any language about vision/seeing, etc. in Oedipus Rex in relation to an essay on the theme of blindness. This instigated her first close read and it was an epiphany. Prose now teaches grad students, but she does a more laborious “close read” in which she sometimes covers only three to four pages in a two hour class.

Ch. 2: Words. Wonderful analysis of diction and meaning in many great authors. This could be used easily (or parts of it) in teaching tone. Flannery O”Connor’s “A Good Man is Hard to Find”—used as an example. Many other examples of the power of individual words to convey specific meanings. This chapter might be too long or have some examples that would not work for high school AP, but there are portions that would be great.

Ch. 3: Sentences. Prose enthuses about beautiful sentences, though struggles to describe what a beautiful sentence is made of—ineffable. Invokes Emily Dickinson’s definition of poetry: “If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know this is poetry.” (38) Talks about clarity, economy, display of a lively mind at work, breaking grammar rules

Analogy for grammar, punctuation and usage. They are an “old fashioned etiquette. “writing is a bit like inviting someone to your house. The writer is the host, the reader the guest, and you, the writer, follow the etiquette because you want your readers to be omore comfortable, especially if you’re planning to serve them something they might not be expecting.” (42). Or—I would add—if you are trying to convince them or persuade them of something. Prose recommends Strunk and White style guide—says she continually returns to it and gleans new things.

First sentences are particularly important in drawing in a reader. Think Kafka. She says Hemingway is not nearly as “simple” and “declarative” as his reputation presumes. He wrote some georgeous, complex sentences.

She mentions (p. 56) the rhythm of a sentence and the musicality produced—even when one word is not quite right but right for the rhythm. Example: The things they carried by Tim Obrien. She also mentions meter, alliteration, assonance, etc. in this discussion with examples.

Hemingway said that when he got stuck he would write “one true sentence” and it would break out from there. (61). Prose says this is tough because what does he mean by “true”? Does he mean beauty? Still, whatever it was, it kept him going. He certainly respected the power of the sentence.

Ch. 4: Paragraphs. Begins chapter with a couple examples. Mainly geared to fictional writing (the entire book is). She quotes Strunk and White on the paragraph (p. 73). Paragraphs are helpful to the reader. Large chunks of text are intimidating to the reader—break them up. Many short paragraphs in secession are distracting. Use moderation.

On p. 77, a selection from Franzen’s The Corrections is a striking example of narration with a twist.

Other Chapters specific to fiction writing: Narration, Character, Dialogue, Details, Gesture,

Ch. 8: Details. (193) Interesting chapter and some good examples. Not much utility in AP Lang and Comp, but plenty in 12th Lit. Small details that are used heavily by authors to drive plot and points. What makes a story true? Or believable or powerful? Often the telling details. Salinger detail of the robe in Franney and Zooey. O’Connor detail of the hat in “Everything that Rises must Converge”.

Ch. Ten: Learning from Chekov (introduction to a world of sorrows and promise—the mysteries of reading),

Chekov on the role of the artist: “You are right in demanding that an artist should take an intelligent attitude to his work, but you confuse two things: solving a problem and stating a problem correctly. It is only the second that is obligatory for the artist.” (244).

Also Chekov: “It is time for writers to admit that nothing in this world makes sense. Only fools and charlatans think they know and understand everything. The stupider they are, the wider they conceive their horizons to be. And if an artist decides to declare that he understands nothing of what he sees—this in itself constitutes a considerable clarity in the realm of thought, and a great step forward.” (245)

Final words in Chapter on Chekov (Prose): “Forget about life. Read Chekhov, read the stories straight through. Admit that you understand nothing of life, nothing of what you see. Then go out and look at the world.” (248)

Ch. 11: Reading for Courage.

Writing per Prose is difficult and scary. Reading helps to decrease the pressure to write in a certain way. Reading reminds us how flexible and stretchy language is (and fiction) and how much it can accommodate. This chapter is geared specifically for the writer that is trying to manage their own fears that come into play before putting ideas to paper.

**1.5.2015. Ambrose, A. 5 Steps To a 5.: 500 English Language Questions to know by test day. McGraw-Hill, 2011. Print.**

Novel-sized book with many selections of difficult text which are appropriate for practice for the AP Language and Comp Exam. Chapters are organized so that they can be uses as sample MC tests. Not sure if the questions that are given are entirely parallel with the questions on the actual test, but this book could still be useful for practice for student and classroom. This would be a good source for difficult pre-1900 texts for practice.

**1/6/2015. Donoghue, Denis. The American Classics. Integrated Publishing Solutions (Yale), 2005.**

Written by a British Scholar, this author takes five American classics and reflects on them in high-minded literary fashion. He’s teaching a grad class and assigned most of these and expected that the majority of his American students had read them, but they hadn’t. I picked this up thinking there would be some insights that I could bring into AP concerning Moby Dick or Scarlet Letter. Instead, his mind’s meanderings did not take root and I gave up on this book as a waste of time, having skipped to the chapter on the Scarlet Letter. He compares and contrasts with various other books on the same subject and theme, but annoyingly is too “academic” and does not connect to the reader.

**12/30/2014. Stegner, Wallace. 1937. Remembering Laughter.** Reminded me much of Wendell Berry—agrarian based novel about relationships, repression and love. I believe that Berry had referenced Stegner as an inspiration in a poem or two. Little dialogue—Stegner uses an omniscient third person narrator and conveys a lot of the inner emotions, motivations and analysis. His language is beautiful.

A younger sister comes from Scotland to join her sister and brother in law in a rural Midwestern state in the very early 1900’s. Brother in law is a winning fellow who makes up stories and brings joy and laughter wherever he goes. Wife/sister (Margaret) is concerned with social mores—dislikes her husbands occasional drinking and reader can infer sexual prudishness. She relates to traditional religion and morals while husband is open to the world, experience, creativity, and simple joys of being alive. Young sister shows proclivity for this same joy and younger sister and brother in law are drawn together and become lovers. Sister is consumed with guilt. When discovered, wife takes the moral high road and “suffers” through allowing them to live under the same roof together in a frozen amber of domestic unhappiness. Younger sister (Elspeth) has a baby that they call Malcolm—they all three strangely remain together and raise the boy allowing him to think that his father was a tenet from long ago and that his mother had died. The women are destroyed by guilt, derision and frozen inability to argue, lash out and talk about their feelings. Alec (brother in law) is able to show joy with Malcolm, yet they put it away before rejoining the morose women in the house.

Magnificence of the natural world contrasted with the barren inner landscape of some characters—Margaret especially. No redemption available through the religion described and ascribed to Margaret. Sin and guilt exist but no sense of expiation and relief. Love of the boy is acknowledged, but is restrained and unsatisfied. Alec causes all conflict, yet is the only source of joy and relief in the text.

**1/1/15 Alphona, Wilson. *Ms. Marvel: No Normal.* New york: Marvel Worldwide, 2014. Print.**

Muslim girl living in Jersey City wishes that she could look more like everyone else. She does not regret her upbringing or her faith, but wishes she could fit in better. Still she wishes to be extraordinary and gets the opportunity after a strange fog enters the city and she is visited by superheroes. She gets superhuman powers and begins fighting crimes while getting grounded by concerned parents. Her brother is more conservatively religious which bothers her folks some. She adopts a modest costume and preserves her tradtion and family life without bitterness or anger. She exhibits normal teenage tensions and anxieties, but not born of her “other” status in America. A valuable alternative voice coming from the comic world.

**Gardner, H. and Davis, Katie. The App Generation: How todays youth navigate identity, intimacy, and imagination in a digital world. 2013.**

Researched-based book beginning to elaborate on the impact of digitized life on the digital native generation—or, the “app” generation.

* From educator’s POV, the App generation is a nightmare or a heaven. Students can get caught using apps (or, as an overall approach to the world) for artificial purposes and never reach beyond for creative use of the material—passive consumers. Or, they can master the material and push beyond and create something new
* Draws connection b/t the increasing (according to Gardner) amount of students who try to interpret what is wanted by the teacher so that they can give it back and get an “A” as that they are learning the App of their teacher’s expectations. The teacher sets expectations in which the App is to be obeyed explicitly or to be tweaked and played with creatively for a new creation.
* Use of “App” generation is meant to get at the psychology involved with the heavy use of the new technology. As opposed to the “web” generation, or “net” generation.
* Personal identity in the Age of the App. Pgs. 60-61. Identities of young people are increasingly packaged. They are developed so that they convey a certain desirable, upbeat image of the person. This minimizes a focus on an inner life, on personal conflicts and struggles, on quiet reflection and personal planning and discourages the taking of risks of any sort. On the positive side, there is a broadening of acceptable identities (geek or gay). There is an overall packaging of a sense of self—an “omnibus app.”
* Snapchat as a venue for “miniperformances” for an audience of one. As opposed to the more conversational atmosphere of facebook, etc.
* Some researchers believe that narcissism is being caused by self-focus of this generation. (Facebook selfies, self-tracking, etc.)
* Many researchers concerned about impact on children from lack of downtime—every moment is taken with some kind of digital task (listening to music, texting, posting) and there is less time for self-reflection, wondering and thus less time to actually know themselves. P. 72-76.
* Sherry Turkle (*Alone together*) talks about narcissism not to indicate people who love themselves but a personality so fragile that it needs constant support. (77). The need for external assurance is high. This generation shows more self-confidence in what they say they can do but are less willing to test their abilities through action. Failure, now, is witnessed by all peers and is not forgotten—but becomes a part of a permanent digital footprint.
* Other causes of insecurity are pointed out: 78-80: High stakes testing, helicopter parenting (do not allow to suffer unhappiness), job uncertainty.
* Compared to the 80’s, many fewer kids are getting their driver’s license by the age of 18. A function of the impact of apps?
* Researchers are studying a sense that this generation has a less-developed sense of self. Tech allows the tether to parents to remain for longer amounts of time. Some kids do not feel as if their thoughts/ideas have relevance unless they are put before an audience.
* New media technologies can open up new opportunities for self-expression. But yoking one’s identity too closely to certain characteristics of these technologies—and lacking the time, opportunity, or inclination to explore life and lives offline—may result in an impoverished sense of self. (91)
* In regards to intimacy: increased connectivity has helped friends and family keep in touch, made opportunities for young people w/ similar interests to find and interact, and makes it easier for kids to express feelings to one another. However there is a dark side: the quality of our relationships in this app era depends on whether we use our apps to bypass the discomforts of relating to others or as sometimes risky entry points to the forging of sustained, meaningful interactions (93).
* Eli Pariser in *The Filter Bubble* explains how search engines and social media sites show us only what we want to see—or what the algorhythm supposes we want to see. Two google searches which are identical will reap totally different results depending on the depending on the account doing the searching—based on a large amount of gathered past data. We only encounter like-minded people and ideas online. It is difficult to empathize with perspectives that we never see.
* A sense of social isolation is on the increase, despite an increase in “connection” with family and friends. “Connection” may be more artificial and shallow. Many pits are available within the landscape of “connection”—bullying, self-centered fawning, pornography, ironic posturing, separation from feelings, etc. to --110).
* There is little question that apps and other digital media tech have altered the landscape of imaginative expression. They’ve affected virtually every facet of the creative process, encompassing who can be a creator, what can be created, and how creations come into being and find an audience.
* Noted decrease in original creation among kids—art teachers with more than 20 years of experience were asked. Original ideas had decreased while an increased expectation of being told what to create and how to do it had risen. Previously, kids were given materials and they experimented and let the materials guide them. Camp counselors say they are more apt to get versions of sit-com re-written rather than original compositions as they did in the 90’s, etc.
* In 2013, Boston College placed a supplemental requirement to write a 400 word essay in its application materials and saw a 26% decrease in applications.
* Less time for reflection due to multitasking and thought level is kept artificial and not deep. Inspiration kept at bay by many shallow entertainments. Distractions have increased. 146-7.
* SketchBook, Brushes, ArtStudio, Procreate, and ArtRage =iphone and ipad apps that help you to be visually creative. Check out: DeviantArt, Figment, LiveJournal.
* Gardner concerned that apps be used the right way which allow for creativity and the creation of new ways of solving problems. Apps can be used to close down solutions to those which the designer has included and eliminating a host of others—or, eliminated the potential of the learner to create an additional one. He suspects that apps cause kids to be over-reliant on the answer given by the designer.
* Final words of the book: We desire a world where all human beings have a chance to create their own answers, indeed, to raise their own questions, and to approach them in ways that are their own. (197). Clearly, Gardner thinks is not negative about apps and an app worldview, but he does fear that they closedown and limit the possibility of individual freedom in constructing knowledge and solutions.
* Educationally, Gardner sees himself more as a “Constructivist” which favors increased freedom for students.

**12/20/2014. Frederick Douglass and the Fourth of July.** James A Colaiaco. Skimmed through for some context for Advanced Placement work. Equality and Liberty unit.

**12/27/2014. Walkin’ the Dog. Walter Mosley 1999.** A Socrates Fortlow novel. An excon who spent more than half his life in prison in Indiana now lives in LA and lives a simple life trying to do right, but continually having brushes with the law. As always, an interesting peep into African American life with some philosophical and artistic touches that are wonderful.

He finds a wino trumpet player in his alley, cleans him up as some kind of sacrificial act toward music and art. He takes care of a boy named “Darryl” and is a second father to him, teaching him the way of the world. He takes a stand against a bad cop (sandwich board sign with his crimes) and starts a riot. He first was going to kill the bad cop and was feet away from him with a pistol in each hand, ready to die himself. However, he decides to combat him with an exercise of his freedom of speech instead (sandwich board).

Latter part of the novel is a meditation on the question “Does the black man/woman have a right to be mad?” No pat answers, just more questions. The fact that Mosley asks the question with a mist of doubt as to the affirmative answer says a lot. However, due to plot, there is substantial reason to think that the answer is certainly yes, but that tactics are up for question.

I would love to use Moseley in school, but am having trouble finding an appropriate place to begin. This novel was read with an eye for using portions as short stories, but could not find a solid portion that would stand alone. Need to do some work looking for a Walter Mosley article—look for some non-fiction essays, etc.

**(5/2014) *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail*: Cheryl Strayed.** A woman loses her mom to cancer at an early age (mom in forties and author in twenties) and she spins out of control. Loses a good husband due to her own rampant infidelity. Seems to have a sex addiction, but it is not addressed in clinical terms. Some mild connection between her problems and desire for “connection” with men. She embarks on a rigorous journey on the PCT and “finds herself” in the process. While on the trail, she still shows an oddly strong craving for sex in personal details of hikers that she meets and at least one encounter with someone that she just met. Strong, temporary fraternity with others who were hiking the trail at the same time. Interesting details during the account of her hike, but the narrator kept losing my sympathy due to her harmful choices which she did not always “own up” to. She talks about losing a husband to her unfortunate infidelities, but then proudly and in great detail relates a sexual encounter with someone she had just met on the trail. If her theme was that sex is used as a misguided tool for connection, she certainly had not learned her lesson while she was on the trail. Considering this, her moment of self-realization seemed hallow to me.

**(6/2014*) Revenge of the Whale:* Nathaniel Philbrick.** This Young Adult book gripped me from start to finish. Picked it up due to the connection to Moby Dick which I am still savoring and in the process of finishing. The real life story of the Essex—a whaling boat from Nantucket Island which was attacked and downed during the first voyage of George Pollard, Jr. as Captain. The tragedy occurred on November 20, 1820. Interesting details of Nantucket as insular, proud and fierce in its love and dedication to whaling; now, it exists as a sort of modern whaling themepark. Pollard is seen as honorable, though innocently hapless as if fate stood in the corner shaking its head grimly at his prospects. He Captained a ship again, but it ran into trouble on coral reefs and needed to be abandoned. This was the end of his whaling career. After the Essex was attacked by an angry whale and sunk, the crew spent 90 odd days on the smaller whaling craft while slowly starving and resorting to cannibalism. They resorted to shooting dice in the end for the next person to be killed and then eaten. Pollard participated in the killing and eating of his nephew in this fashion—a detail which of course haunted him when he survived the situation. Melville heard about the Essex and used accounts in order to write Moby Dick.

**(6/2014) *Debbie Doesn’t Do It Anymore*: Walter Mosley.** A book about a porn star, the plot had surprisingly little sex except for a memorable first scene. Debbie Dare’s husband dies in lascivious fashion and she must plan his funeral while coming to terms with her own life-choices and the now-obviously denigrating 20 years that she has spent in the business. He husband Theon was a lout, but he genuinely loved her and she respected him for it. Mosley once more concentrates on the inner life and dialogue of a person going through difficult circumstances. Debbie’s (or Sandra Peel’s) interactions with a kind detective, a strange mortician, a make-up artist for the porn industry and many others allow Mosley to weave memories of her own traumatic childhood and neglect during her time of need after he father was shot. Her father was a gangster and she plainly admits that he was a “bad guy” but she expresses deep love and loss for him. Memorable scene: she visits a her families church and the female minister says that the people in the pews are not interested in doing God’s work—they are more interested in being seen in fancy hats, etc. The real work is to be done in the small, dirty apartment of a lonely, bitter old woman down the street.

***6/24/2014 The Perfect Resume: Resumes that Work in the New Economy.*** **Dan Quillen.** Picked up because I wanted to make sure that I was up-to-date on necessary features of a good resume. Pretty well on target. Quillen does not like “objective” sections and says that he skips over them immediately. There were not tons of tips about resumes in the digital age. According to author, they have not changed much in the internet age. Suggests not giving dates for college as that allows employer to approximate your age—also, only put last 10-15 years of experience for the same reason.

**6/25/2014 Modern Civility: Etiquette for dealing with annoying, Angry, and Difficult People. Cynthia W. Lett.** Not sure what I was expecting but was disappointed with this book. Turned out to be categorized “annoyances” with short solutions or suggestions for dealing with them. Not much gained.

**6/27/2014 The Girl Who Owned a City. OT Nelson, Dan Jolley, Joelle Jones and Jenn Manley Lee.** Graphic Novel about a girl’s attempt to run a “city” after a catastrophe occurs in which all adults over the age of 12 die in an epidemic. Girl uses language calling the city “hers” b/c she was instrumental in building it up. Others that helped to build the community begin to strain at this, but the author seems to affirm the girl’s motivation and dedication at the end by allowing final victory for her and her way.

**7/1/2014 Spartan Up! A Take-no-Prisoners Guide to Overcoming Obstacles and Achieving Peak Performance in Life. Joe De Sena.** Author founded the “Spartan Race” which involves long-distance endurance running/hiking with obstacles created to test the body in unpredictable ways. Certain to drive any normal mortal crazy with exercise zealotry, De Sena nonetheless creates a well-written self-improvement book which was fairly motivating. Delay gratification. Do not take the easy way out. Entire chapter on nutrition (eat whole foods and other Michael Pollard stuff); Greatest obstacle is your will; change your frame of reference. Anecdote about a professor who, at the end of a test, asked the name of the janitor that cleaned the building—do not ignore the essential but overlooked people around you.

A child without discipline is a child without love—Mr. Rogers

Don’t think I would enjoy spending time with Mr. De Sena (a couple comments about being rough on your own kids gave me a chill even though I do basically agree with him that we need to expect MORE from the kids in our charge) but he accomplished the task of getting this reader to do some push ups after he closed the cover of the book. Now tomorrow….

**6/29/2014. The Fault in Our Stars. John Green.** Warrants another reading. Two literate teenagers with cancer fall in love and reflect upon the fall-out. Green does an excellent job of engaging readers in a story that snags the emotions—tears all around here. Much play with “genre” of cancer literature and experience which includes the kids riffing off of what would happen in the normal cancer narrative—beginning foundation to so that life will go on, “the last good day”, etc.. A book about reading and the impact of literature / stories upon our lives. The two read a fictional book called *An Imperial Affliction* about a girl who has cancer and they obsess over the fact that the author breaks off in the final page and does not resolve plot points. The assumption is that the girl in the novel dies, but Hazel Grace wants to know what happens with the other characters.

Memorable aspects:

* Title comes from Shakespeare (Julius Ceasar—the fault lies not with our stars, but within us) but the TFIOS says that, no, the fault is in the stars rather than within us.
* Some infinities are bigger than other infinities
* Augustus Waters hangs an unlit cigarette from his lips ironically
* Okay? Okay.

**7/4/2014 Think Like a Freak: Steven Levitt and Stephen Dubner.** The authors of Freakonomics try to change our approach to thinking through problems by encouraging leaving aside predispositions, embracing the facts and other ideas. Main ideas of Freakonomics:

* Incentives are the cornerstone of modern life,
* knowing what to measure, and how to measure it, can make a complicated world less so,
* the conventional wisdom is often wrong,
* correlation does not equal causality

Where should a soccer player aim during a penalty kick? The goalie must choose a side and dive (90 MPH) and they usually go left or right, but statistically, the kicker should aim right for the goalie.

“Everyone is entitled to their own opinion but not to their own facts.” Patrick Moynihan

Authors suggest putting away your “moral compass” when trying to solve a problem. “When you are consumed with the rightness or wrongness of a given issue it’s easy to lose track of what the issue actually is. A moral compass can convince you that the answers are obvious or that there is a bright line between right and wrong when there is often not (not an exact quote).

Study shows that the likelihood of suicide increases when you have no one to blame for your problems. Those angry at parents or governments usually do not kill selves, while many blind people who have their sight restored do.

Company who bought advertising for many years without testing whether it was effective or not. A mistake was made and someone did not do the buy and it did not change sales numbers at all. However, company was so blinded that they only wanted to punish the person who made the mistake instead of reading the data.

On p. 50-51, authors insist that we ask the right questions for school reform. Studies show high impact of home life on student performance. Need parent reform more than school reform. Are we asking too much of our schools and too little of our parents? Before spending time and resources, define the problem correctly.

Japanese professional eater revolutionized eating contests by thinking through the task of eating as much as you can in a short time. Hot dog contest. Separate dogs from bun, chop dog in half, lace water with vegetable oil, etc. very effective. Think differently and isolate important variables.

Chapter on “Think Like a Child”. Less preconceived notions, less knowledge that something is “impossible”. Don’t be afraid of the obvious. Have fun. Think about small problems even when they are a part of a larger difficulty—larger difficulties are made up of smaller problems, but smaller problems are more pliable.

Kids are a tougher audience for magicians—they can figure out tricks better and are harsher critics. Why?

* They are less prepared to follow cues—magicians are falsely cueing the audience
* Adults “pay attention” when kid’s have more diffuse attention
* Kids don’t buy into dogma—free of assumptions
* Kids are genuinely curious
* Kids are sharper than adults—hardware
* Kids don’t overthink a trick

People respond to incentives—challenge is to climb into their heads and see what really matters to them—often it is not what they say matters to them.

National park put up sign warning hikers that many petrified remains were begin stolen—even more got stolen after the signs were put up. P. 116.

Example of philanthropic organization (Smile Train) which asked for donations but gave donors the option to opt out of any future communications—this alongside several other limited options for communications. Donations grew. Many opted out but very many decided to continue hearing from the organization. Control, novelty, candor.

Freakonomics incentive scheme:

* Figure out what people really care about, not what they say they care about
* Incent them on the dimensions that are valuable to them but cheap for you to provide
* Pay attention to how people respond
* Create incentives that switch the frame from adversarial to cooperative
* Never, ever think that people will do something just because it is the “right” thing to do
* Know that some people will do everything they can to game the system—applaud their ingenuity rather than curse their greed.

Ch. 7: Hold up King Solomon baby solution as a great way to have a “garden weed itself”. Also, David Lee Roth asking for no brown m and m’s in the dressing room as a way to find out if the venue took his large contract seriously—would the band have to double-check everything?

“How to persuade people” chapter. Tell stories rather than giving instructions. Example: rather than people remembering the ten commandments, they remember the stories of the bible. Adam and Eve, Solomon, David getting criticized by Nathaniel? By a story with the lamb.

Perform a “pre-mortem” when you have a new initiative. Discuss what might go wrong before it does.

**Don Quixote. Miguel De Cervantes.** (A paraphrase by Martin Jenkins and illustrated wonderfully by Chris Riddel). Only skimmed after the first five chapters or so. Enjoyed, but thought it useless to read the whole thing. Apparently, the play “Man of La Mancha” changed Aldonza into a prostitute—there is no such inclusion in the book as far as I could find. However, there was an odd inclusion of a side character saying that Dulcinea could “really salt cod.” Maybe there is something to it. Loved how many of the chapters contained information like “ Don Quixote receives his seventh beating at the hands of….” The novel ends with Quixote’s death. Many of the details in the play are from the novel—barber’s helmet of “Mambrino”, wizard of mirrors, niece and a marriage situation, his knighting in a local inn.

**Moby Dick by Herman Melville**. Began this about three years before after Grandma and Grandpa Kuznicki had given it to me for Christmas. Read it just several pages at a time before closing my eyes for sleep. Enjoyed it heavily and found it an inspiring way to fall asleep—no sarcasm here. I have read before that Melville wrote Moby Dick only after coming to fully appreciate Shakespeare. This is the only way to appreciate this soaring text. Constantly characters are making philosophical remarks about fate, the sea or death in what amounts to soliloquys, which would be appropriate on a stage. Might be eye-roll inducing but the language is powerful and the sea jargon is gripping for some reason.

My bed-time enjoyment was not ideal for my usual marking of the text. Many times I thought that I should underline delicious lines, but found that I did not have the appetite to get out of bed to find a pen. No doubt, had I marked the text, I would have many lines to type here. This is ripe for a re-reading. Enjoyed especially the first part of the novel with the introduction of Ishmael and Queequeg. Found the humor in the first night of their lodging together at the inn when the cannibal disrobed to show his tattoos. Found this to be especially evocative when considering the racial memory of the nation—two men of disparate background sharing a small bed together with one fearing death at the other’s hand. More humor in the beginning than I expected. Near the end, I was surprised that the water closed over important characters like Ahab and Queequeg with little fanfare—was expecting some long meditations, etc, but the foul facts were given with little flowery language. Ishmael survives by grabbing Queequeg’s coffin and a day later the Rachel (Ahab had previously refused to help in this ship’s search for some lost crewmembers which included the captain’s son) picked up an “orphan” while she never did find her own children.

Starbuck was a Christian who was troubled by Ahab’s monomaniacal quest and was not afraid to holler at his captain about it. He predicted that Ahab would pull the whole ship into hell.

Listing of sea terminology at the end of the novel. Fascinating. Idea: have students create their own lexicon for a certain profession or hobby—vocabulary which is particular and specific to that domain. Kids could get into it by choosing things they are interested in.

Not doing this novel justice here, but recording it nonetheless.

**7/7/2014 Paper Towns: John Green (2004)** Did not complete. Early novel by Green using teenage voice (or younger). Did not catch me right away like TFIOS. About young boys fascination with the girl next door and looking into some kind of mystery alongside to her mysteriousness, etc.

**7/8/2014 Life in Classrooms: Philip w. Jackson.** Written in 1968, this book was simply too old to spend too much time with, but I have some regret about it. Chapter titles like “The Daily Grind”, “Involvement and Withdrawal in the Classroom”, etc, show that Jackson has a critical eye for what is occurring in the classroom.

**7/16/14 How to Write a Business Plan: Mike McKeever.** This manual is dated (2004) but served as a good introduction to the basic features of writing a business plan. Looked into as a part of studying-up to write the initial plan for Sugarfield Flowers.

Title page

Plan Summary

Problem Statement

Business Description

Business Accomplishments

Marketing Plan

Sales Revenue Forecast

Profit and Loss forecast

Captial spending plan

Cash flow forecast

Futretrends

Risks facing your business

Personnel plan (Business Personality, staffing schedule, job descriptions)

Specific business goals

Personal financial statement

Personal background

Appendix

So you want to be in business…getting started:

Evaluation of strong and weak points personally in regards to your specialty and business in general

My specific business goals

Problem statement? This is largely subsumed in the business description

Financial portions of the above template: since this is not my expertise and I am afraid that I would get lost in the “swamp”, I am skipping over this. Also, Sugarfield has little in the way of overhead costs which simplifies the financial portion quite a bit. This would be a good book to check out when ready to accomplish this.

Ch. Four goes through ways to use your plan to raise money—not our focus. For us, we might need several thousand at a time. This is more easily done via credit card or family loan.

Profit and Loss forecast: a projection of how much you will sell and how much profit you will make. Worthy of study and execution but not now. Not difficult but is tedious. This would be absolutely necessary if we were looking for a loan.

Chapter 8: Write your marketing and Personnel plans. Entire chapter is useful

* Business Personality (if not appearing earlier)
* Competition analysis
* Differentiate your business from your competitors
* Describe your target customer
* Decide how to reach customers
  + Create goals in regards to reaching customers
* Create a marketing budget
* Discuss the risks facing your business (competition, cycles and trends, slow times, owner’s expertise, cash flow

Example of marketing plan p. 8/9

Personnel Plan

Job Descriptions

**Good Quote:** “To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often.” John Henry Newman

Kris should subscribe to floral industry magazines or newsletters in order to keep up with trends/threats. She already does this by watching blogs by trendy social media florists but she should continue to see what is happening with “old world” florists.

Example (appendix) of sole proprietorship is useful—print this off in order to refer to it. It features “Central Personnel Agency” and some similar circumstances.

**7/17/2014 Business Plans Kit for Dummies: Steven Peterson and others. (2014)**

Flipped through and skimmed for appropriate information. CD Rom was included and I downloaded a template which was useful. Printed off many forms which will help with self-analysis, business overview, SWOT forms, Competition analysis, customer profile, etc.

Parts of customer profile:

* Geographics—where?
* Demographics—whom?
* Psychographics—lifestyle characteristics? (Attitudes, beliefs and opinions that affect customer-purchasing patterns)
* Behavioral patterns—How? How customers buy, including when, why, how much and how often they buy, their level of loyalty, their purchase occasions and timing, and whether they make buying decisions based on price or quality, on impulse or after careful consideration, based on personal decisions or on the recommendation of others…

Google adwords keyword tool : <https://adwords.google.com/o/KeywordTool>

Helps you find out what keywords people are using to search for products similar to yours. Then you can tailor your SEO to suit those results.

Measure your online footprint.

* Open a google search for our company name and see what comes up.
* Pretend you are a customer looking for flowers and you type in a simple search in google. What comes up? Maybe do this at the library to approximate a customer’s experience without the interference of our private computer’s cookies.
* Open your website on a number of different devices and gauge effectiveness or look for problems. Tablet, laptop, PC, cell, etc.
* Ask someone or many people to check out our digital footprint and get their impressions.

\*\*\*\* Create form which Kris can use for initial conversation with Bride and family. Include spaces for email, phone number, address. Provide for space for more than one person since often brides have their mothers along or a father is going to pay for the service.

Portability of Sugarfield—list this as a goal or a unique characteristic in the overview. The Livovich family intends to move around and this business model should be uniquely portable.

**7/15/2014. Instagram Power: Build Your Brand and Reach More Customers with the Power of Pictures. 2014. Jason G. Miles.** Instagram was “born” on cell phones and mobile devices, is uniquely visual in nature.

Contest idea: ask followers of Sugarfield to take photo of a flower or nature and #Sugarfield or something else specific and then give away a free bunch.

Instagram is similar to FB but is less time intensive. It is less based on a conversation and more visual. This is good for Sugarfield—put pretty pics on and continue / grow relationship with customers but with minimal time use. High virality for both.

Basic Marketing plan for Instagram:

* Strong profile
  + Logo / headshot
  + Welcoming Greeting
  + Clear statement about what the company does
  + Credibility indicator
  + Descricption of types of images you will share
  + Link to your website

What is your company’s focus with its use of instagram? Will it give an insider’s view of the company? Will it give a view into your private life? A preview of coming events and gigs?

Find and follow good PROSPECTS—these are not just your friends and family but possible customers. Follow in batches of 40-50 (the “follow-to-be-followed strategy”) Begin liking and commenting on images, etc. Unfollow those that do not follow you back. Do the same thing for those who are using similar hashtags.

Make sure to seek a good balance between the number of those you are following and the number who are following Sugarfield. Do not look like a Spammer or desperate.

Shoot for at least 1,000 followers. Try to like images quickly after they are uploaded b/c after 10 likes your name disappears. Always post excellent images.

It is possible to add words onto pictures using third-party apps. (Color Cap, instaCap).

If you have created an ad on a desktop that you want to move to mobile—Browse to your account on your cell and take a screen shot of the add as it appears there. Take that image and submit it.

Building your brand on Instagram. Brand is the sum of the thoughts and emotions that individuals have about a product or company. This can drive sales.

Your brand needs a personality and a single driving idea. We need a solid, positive perception with no mixed messages.

Do we need a tagline? What is our typeface?

We need to identify our personality and purpose (business plan)

Use the power of free rather than discounting—discounting usually trains the customer to wait and be patient for the discount. Free solidifies relationship and grows followers.

Statigram: online tool for helping you find IG statistics and when the best time of day is to post a pic. Also follower engagement and likes you have received, etc.

Check these out:

Statigram—web viewer with statistics help.

Carousel—good for macs. “elegant” viewer for desktop

Hashtag and follower management utilities:

Instatag: quick way to tag your IG photos with the most popular and relevant hashtags

InstaFollow—follower management tool lets you see who is following you, who you follow that is not following you and who is following you that you are not following.

Set goals.In order to build to 1,000 followers do some of the following:

* Invite your FB fans, etc.
* Like 100 pics a day from people you know are interested in your niche
* Leave 10 comments a day on pics from people in your niche
* Follow people who are already following industry insiders in hour niche
* Use hashtags relevant to your niche or industry
* Look at the analytics and determine how to optimize your postings

**7/17/2014. Stone in Water: Donna Jo Napoli.** Interesting Young Adult novel based in Italy during WWII. Several children—boys over 10—skip school and go to the movies and are swept up by German soldiers and enslaved as work crews. Interesting first person narrative. One of the kids is a Jew and is helped by his friend to hide it. Captivating and yet simple use of language. Eventually, the Jewish child dies of starvation/abuse and the other finally is on his way to making it home with the help of an Italian deserter.

**7/10/2014. Other People’s Children: Cultural conflict in the Classroom. 1995. Lisa Delpit.** Collection of articles by an African-American Scholar. Harvard, etc.—and a single mother during important parts of her schooling and work-life.

Some opening anecdotes about white teachers who are exasperated by black children’s behavior. The white teacher usually feels that the student is behind or behaving inappropriately and the author intervenes to try to give the teacher a different perspective on motive, etc.

**“Skills and Other dilemmas of a Progressisve Black Educator”**

p. 11

Author contrasts things she learned in college (teacher education) and what she experienced in life and classroom.

For example: People learn a new dialect most effectively through interaction with speakers of that dialect, not through being corrected constantly, but she was corrected constantly and learned to speak pristine English.

Also, she was taught that kids learn to write not by being taught skills and grammar but by writing in meaningful contexts. This was also counter to her experience as a child .

Her first teaching experience. Came to an alternative elementary school where most of staff was white and progressive (open classroom, process instruction for writing) and this suited her and her education and outlook. Several Black teachers who were more focused on skills and authority and grammar were looked down on by the progressives for not realizing how “smart” the kids actually were. Author’s white kids zoomed ahead in the progressive environment, but the black kids did not even though she was doing the same thing for all the kids? What was the problem here?

Slowly, she took on more “traditional” characteristics like pulling back in some tables, writing on the board, practicing handwriting, etc. She felt a failure. She experienced some other things, then went to grad school and became a devotee of “process” approach to literacy—focusing on “fluency” nadn not on “correctness”. The idea that a focus on skills would stifle writing. Seen as more “holistic”, etc.

Author went to dinner with a fellow black educator and the friend ranted against liberal progressive “fluency” approaches, saying they were basically racist. These kids were fluent—just listen to them in the hallway or look at the rap songs they are creating. But they cannot do well on College entrance exams. They need reall skills! The white kids get what they need at home, but the black kids don’t and they spend all day in school “learning” to be fluent. Not necessary.

Process literacy problem: White teachers seem to say to their balck students, “Let me help you find your voice. I promise not to criticize on note as you search for your own song.” While black teachers say, “I’ve heard your song loud and clear. Now, I want to teach you to harmonize with the rest of the world.”

p. 19. Author does not want reader to misinterpret her idea of skills. She does not mean drill and kill kind of skills-based pedogogy. Skills within the communication in meaningful contexts who is reaching for critical thought and creative problem solving. Skills within the context of critical and creative thinking.

“The Silenced Dialogue: Power and Pedagogy in Educationg Other People’s Children”.

Addresses the furor over her last article (above).

Ideas of power, dominant culture and the classroom.

p. 24.

1. Issues of power are enacted in classrooms
2. There are codes or rules for participating in power; that is, there is a “culture of power”
3. The rules of the culture of power are a reflection of the rules of the culture of those who have power
4. If you are not already a participant in the culture of power, being told explicitly the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier
5. Those with power are frequently least aware of—or least willing to acknowledge—its existence. Those with less power are often most aware of its existence.

Unless someone has the leisure of a lifetime of learning, it is far easier for some kind, concerned soul to introduce a novice to the culture of power, including norms, rules, expectations, etc. than to leave them to learn them on their own. (Author relates her experience learning in Alaska with Native communities.)

Distar method of literarcy instruction (explicit phonics instruction, blending, teacher led and driven, call and respond) was criticized by progressives due to its “fascist” authoritarian approach.

“To provide schooling for everyone’s children that reflects liberal, middle-class values and aspiration…”s is to ensure the maintenance of the status quo, to ensure that power, the culture of power, remains in the hands of those who already have it. Some kids arrive with the accouterments of the culture of power in place and the goal is for them to become autonomous, to develpp fully who they are in the classroom setting. This makes sense these kids that have already “internalized” these codes.

But parents who don’t function within that culture want something else. They want the school to give their kids discourse patterns, interactional styles and spoken and written language codes that will allow them success in the larger society.

Distar pacing is incredibly slow and placing much emphasis (p. 30) on initials skills and identification. For kids that already know these it is reinforcement and then painful b/c it is boring, etc. But it is great for those who do not have these basic skills –cause not getting it at home—b/c they are getting the building blocks. Great for some kids and terrible for those of quite different backgrounds.

Delpit acknowledges here (p. 30) that some kids do not get certain knowledge at home. She is not advocating that kids get split up into cultural groups or for a simplistic “skills-based” approach. Do not treat the kids as if they are incapable of critical thought, etc. “Rather, I suggest that schools must provide these children the content that other families from a different cultural orientation provide at home. –endsuring that each classroom incorporate strategies appropriate for all the chilfren in its confines.”

“And I do not advocate that it is the school’s job to attempt to change the homes of poor and nonwhite children to match the homes of those in the culture of power. That may indeed be a form of cultural genocide. Sometimes, black parents will say “But that’s the school’s job,” but what school personnel do not understand is that if parents were members of the culture of power and lived by its rules and codes, then they would transmit those codes to their children. In fact, they transmit another culture that children must learn at home in order to survive in their communities.

p. 32 some anecdotes about black students frustrated by process white teachers who “don’t teach anything”. Switch to more skills-approach and find relief. White teacher’s reluctance to exhibit power in the classroom. Somehow, in liberal circles, to exhibit personal power as an expert source is disempowering to one’s students. But some students consider it a denial of the expert/teacher’s knowledge and skill.

Allow the student to be an expert too. Harness what the student does know. Relation of Rap song structure to grammar to shakespear’s plays.

Actual writing for real audiences is important, and also student-centered conference with the teacher about the writing.

p. 34 differences in how cultures direct their children. White teacher: Is this where the scissor’s belong? Did someone forget to put their name on their paper?

Whereas, AA can be quite direct. Difficulty interpreting those indirect requests. The child may require explicitness in order to obey the item. This can have an impact on behavior, discipline, etc.

Some expect that the authoritative person will act as the authority. They will have my respect or I will fulfill requirements of my side if they fulfill their role as the authority. Whereas often in upper middle-class. An authority figure is respected BECAUSE he has that role. They respect the role itself more.

What p. 36 characteristics do blacks give to good teachers? Usually “mean” teachers are the good teachers. She “pushed” us. She “made” us learn. Kids try to take them on and they only make clear who the authority is in the room.

Delpit says it is impossible to create a model for the good teacher without taking issues of culture and community context into account. Different cultures have different attitudes about what makes a good teacher.

Student at collegiate level cannot write. Author takes to her collegues an example of her writing in order to start a conversation and is surprised by the response. Some said that she was acting as a gatekeeper and basically doing violence by submitting that there was a problem with the technical mistakes in student’s writing. Author submits that what caused student’s inability to write at collegiate level bad teaching at least and institutionalized racism at worst. Author: “The answer is to accept students but also to take responsibility to teach them. “ give them what they need NOW!

To act as if a culture of power does not exist is to ensure that the status quo remains the same. To imply to children or adults that it doenst matter how you talk or how you write is to ensure their ultimate failure. She says to be honest to students, that their language and cultural style is unique and wonderful but that there is a political power game that is also being played and if tey want to be in on that game there are certain games they too must play. P. 39-40.

We must teach the codes of power. Also they must be taught to understand the value of the code they already possess and other realities in this country.

p. 42-43. Two styles of language. Home language and Standard English. How to get the kids to understand importance and value of standard English while honoring their home language? Author suggests begin open about power structure and have open conversation.

Anacdote: teacher gives student book written in black dialect and through questioning helps the student better understand that the use of both languages is related to the power structure. Black student believes implicitly that the book might be harmful for students—they need the language of power.

Use interview as a way for students to explore home language and school language. Dialect.

p. 45, To summarize, I suggest that students must be taught the codes needed to participate fully in the mainstream of American life, not by being forded to attend to hollow, inanae, decontextualized subskills, but rather within the context of meaningful communicative endeavors; that they must be allowed the resource of the teacher’s expert knowledge, while being helped to acknowledge their own “expertness” as well; and that even while students are assisted in learning the culture of power, they mustalso be helped to learn about the arbitrariness of those codes and about the power relationships they represent.

Needs to be more involvement with black parents, teachers of color, members of poor communities . Good liberal intentions are not enough. Study in 1975 “Racism without Racists: Institutioanl Racism inUrban Schools”—with best intentions and “being nice” teachers have essentially stopped attempting to teach black children. In their words: “We have shown that oppression can arise out of warmth, friendliness, and concern. Paternalism and a lack of challenging standards are creating a distorted system of evaluation in the schools.”

Author (in summary) says the problem is really in communicating across cultural lines. Black teachers and parents silenced by the forces (liberal educators) that want to give kids their “voice”.

Guidelines:

* Keep perspective that people are experts on their own lives. They are the only authentic chroniclers of their own experience.
* We must believe that people are rational beings, and therefore always act rationally. We may not always understand their rationalebut that in no way militates against the existence of these rationales or reduces our responsibility to attempt to apprehend them.
* We must be vulnerable enough to allow our world to turn upside down in orer to allow the realities of others to edge themselves into our consciousness (to become ethnographers)

“Language Diversity and Learning”

The “affective filter”—when learning a new language, the extra cognitive wheeling that occurs in order to communicate. Ditmer says it is not entirely analogous to dialect work, but that, under constant correction, the “affective filter” is heightened and difficulty increases when a student is trying to simply communicate.

Attitudes toward teachers who constantly correct speech are usually negative.. Students misinterpret motives and it is easier for students to take personally as an attack on their identity.

p. 53. Teachers must help students acquire an additional oral form. First, recognize the value and beauty of the existing form of language. Secondly, realize that if we do not give them the dialect of power, they likely will not succeed economically or be able to compete.

Teachers need to support the language that students bring to school, provide them input from an additional code, and give them the opportunity to use the new code in a nonthreatening real communicative context.

* Creating bidialectial dictionaries of their own language form and Standard English.
* Role playing—doing a newscast or playing at being a superhero. Would Conchrite say that? Would captain America put it that way? The focus is away from the speech of the child and toward the exemplar speaker’s.
* Draw on language strengths of linguistically diverse populations. Greater speakers of various cultures.

The author is against teachers continually correcting students spoken grammar and pronunciations. Reading as a meaning-making process and those kids that understand the text believe they are doing something wrong. Constant corrections are likely to cause students to resist reading and to resent the teacher.

Author says not to confuse dialect intervention with reading instruction. Writing may be the arena in which to address standard forms. Writing lends itself to editing. Conversational talk is spontaneous and must be responsive to an immediate context. Writing is a mediated process which may be written and rewritten any number of times before being introduced to public scrutiny.

\*\*\*Note: the above is excellent reason for a continual editing process in class—especially w/ AA students who need access to Standard English. Helps solve the difficulty of the need for correction away from constant correction of spoken word.

p. 62. Often, in households students emerge from, they only use reading for practical tasks. Reading recipes, fix-it books reading names of cars to find a wished-for model, reading for church. Seldom a time where students read simply as a recreational activity and those who did were thought of as strange.

Questions posed in real life contextualized circumstances is recommended.

Find ways to celebrate, not just tolerate diversity in our classrooms. Students can be asked to “teach” the teacher and other students aspects of their language variety. They can translate songs, poems, and stories into their own dialect or into book language compare the differences across the cultural groups represented in the classroom. P.67.

“Hello, Grandfather”: Lessons from Alaska”

“In our Western acadmic worldview, we assume that literacy is unequivocally good, and that everyone should aspire to be literate. Most of us have not taken the time to think about the possible drawbacks or political implications of this ideaology. Literacy can be a tool of liberation, but, equally, it can be a means of control: if the presses are conterollled by the advertsaries of a community, then reading can serve as a tool of indoctrination. Governments may want more people literate so that they can be held accountable for upholding laws—whether or not those laws are in the best interest of a particular community.

Diverse views of literacy. Literacy as a solitary endeavor and some cultures frown upon those types of endeavors. Get outside and play—put that book down. Native Alaskan Indian teachers who led their whole class in reading together rather than round-robin had strong cultural reasons for doing so.

Author p. 95: We risk failure in our educational reforms by ignoring the significance of human connectedness in many communities of color.

Author p. 102: I have found that if I want to learn how best to teach children who may be different from me, then I must seek the advice of adults—teachers and parents—who are from the same culture as my students.

Why do we have such a hard time making school a happy place for children of color? The purpose of education is to learn to die satiated with life—so full of the wonder of life, so full of connectedness, so embedded in the context of our communities that we can leave truly satisfied.

“The Politics of Teaching Literate Discourse” p. 152.

Are educators acting as “agents of oppression” when they teach kids to put aside the language of their homes and communities?

Literacy specialist James Paul Gee (Literacy, Discourse, and Linguistics: Introduction”) Literacy is much more than reading and writing, but rather that it is part of a larger political entity. On enever learns simply to read or write, but to read and write within some larger discourse, and therefore within some larger set of values and beliefs. 152-3. There are primary and secondary discourses and they are not equal in status. Power dialectics, etc.

Author disagrees with Gee’s theories in a couple ways. She thinks that students are not “locked into place” as much as Gee asserts. She is concerned that sensitive teachers would take Gee’s teachings and believe that it is not worth-while to teach the primary discourse to certain kids.

p. 156. Anecdote about large bunch of very successful AA’s who came from one school in Virginia. Why? Attributed to teachers who successfully taught the “superficial features “ of middle class discourse—grammar, style, mechanics. Also more subtle aspects of the dominant discourse: to speak and write eloquently, maintain neatness, think carefully, exude character and conduct themselves with decorum. They attended to hygiene issues with the kids also. They told the kids that they had to be twice as good as white kids to get noticed and to succeed. Teachers, teachers, teachers and rough, insistent expectations.

Despite the difficulty entailed in the process, almost any aa or other disenfranchised individual who has become successful has done so by acquiring a discourse other than the one into which he or she was born. And almost all can attribute that acquisition to what happened as a result of the work of one or more committed teachers.

p. 160. Herb Kohl writes about kids who choose to “not-learn” what is expected of them rather than learn that which denies them their sense of who they are. P161. Well-meaning teachers that encounter this by trying to “empower” student by refusing to teach the superficial feathers of the dominant discourse. (Grammar, form, style, etc.)

Acquiring the ability to function in a dominant discourse need not man that one must reject one’s home identity and values—discourses are shaped by those who participate . MLK, Malcolm X, etc.

1. Teachers must acknowledge and validate student’s home language without using it to limit students potential.The point is not to eliminate a student’s home language, but to add to it another discourse.
2. Teachers must recognize the conflict that Gee details between home discourse and the discourse of school. Many students will resist what they see as an attack on their own identity. To do so, teachers must saturate the dominant discourse with new meanings, must wrest from it a place for the glorification of their students and their forbears.
3. Teachers must acknowledge the unfair discourse-stacking that our society engages in. allow discussions of oppression to become a part of language and literature instruction. Only after acknowledging the inequity of thesystem can the teacher’s stance then be “Let me show you how to cheat!”

“Education in a Multicultural society: Our Future’s Greatest Challenge”

Good article—more things to note, but I am tire of making these notes! Vivian Paley’s book White Teacher gives open discussion of “I don’t’ see color, I only see children”—the differentness is important, real and needs to be dealt with.

When there are problems at school and the parent says “ but they are fine at home, “ get the parent’s suggestions for helping. Be honest and forthright in asking for help.

7/24/2014. **The Rise and Fall of the American Teenager. Thomas Hine (1999).** This was an inter-library loan that I DID NOT HAVE TIME TO READ. I would very much like to return to this book and enjoy it. New perspectives on teenagers throughout American history including more modern times.

**7/27/2014. Likeable Social Media: How to Delight your customers, create an irresistible brand and be generally amazing on Facebook and other social networks. (2011 and updated in 2014) Dave Kerpen.**

Author runs “Likeable Media” –a social media and word-of-mouth marketing firm. He is helping (with this book and his work) to teach the marketing world that the game has changed completely. Change with it or suffer the consequences. There are no more powerful sales or promotions than the words, “your friend likes this”.

Now, in marketing, the loudest, biggest spenders don’t win anymore. The smartest, most flexible LISTENERS do.

Listen first and do not stop listening. Listening matters b/c you are building relationships. Do not initiate a venture without some kind of test or conversation with your network of friends. Get feedback.

Listening vs. monitoring. You are engaged in a conversation.

IBM has a “social listening program”. Volunteers troll around on social media for conversations happening about computer replacements or problems and then connect those people with the sales department. Sales contacts them directly.

Facebook allows companies to target their audience better and more specifically than ever—even down to an audience of one. What is cooler than reaching one million customers? Reaching the PERFECT one to one hundred on FB. Isolate search criteria.

Define your target audience as precisely as you can. Refine your marketing and make sure each dollar counts.

Targeting just begins the conversation. Think like a consumer and not like a marketer. Do not interrupt—join the conversation.

For long-term success (using social media to grow your business) aim to get customers to “like” your page. The “like” is more important than the link to your website. Begin the relationship.

How to get the “like”? Do not give this as a call to action: “like us on Facebook”. Instead, just be “likeable”. Ask questions. Engage in content the customer finds worthwhile. Go for the “like” rather than the sale at first.

Top reasons consumers like fan pages on facebook:

* To receive disounts and promos
* To show support for brand to friends
* Get freebies
* To stay informed about company activities
* For updates on future projects
* Updates on upcoming sales
* Just for fun
* Get access to exclusive content
* To learn more abut the company
* For education about company topics

Why should anyone want to “like” Sugarfield flowers?

Once you have a community of fans and followers, give them engaging content and seek to ENGAGE them. Do not just float interesting content to them, but have them participate in various ways.

Social media is the new comment card and it is essential that you respond quickly to all bad comments.

Do not delete rule: unless a comment is obscene, profane, bigoted, or contains someone’s personal and private information, never delete it from a social network.

Not responding is a response.

Solution: Quick public response, then move to a private conversation. Do not be afraid to say “I am sorry”. Often this is a way to create even more fans.

Respond to good comments too!

Develop an authentic voice—be willing to be vulnerable. Let people view behind the curtain. Authenticity breeds trust; inauthenticity breeds fear.

Ask your community questions. Be consumer-centric rather than brand-centric. Demonstrate your openness, honesty. You care about what your customers have to say.

Consider crowdsourcing: the act of outsourcing tasks, traditionally performed by employees at an organization to the community.

Give stuff away. Products and expertise.

People love stories… Share stories about you, the company, family members, etc.

Create videos

Inspire your customers to tell stories. Connection between flowers and love—moments of connection. Prizes can inspire stories

Many companies are doubting the need for a website anymore. Most traffic is on FB.

Facebook Advertising:

“Friends of Connections” Ad. Identifies to the friends of your likers that the liker is a fan of the product.

Eight cool things you can do with Facebook Ads:

1. Target people on their birthdays
2. Target your fans with reminders about cool events and promotions or just to say thank you.
3. Target your employees
4. Introduce yourself to a new company
5. More that did not apply directly.

Keep the ads social—engage them. Start the conversation. Sales comes later. Create an audience and a relationship.

Open question: What would an ad on Facebook look like?

“Events” feature in FB. Starbucks uses this effectively to promote certain days that they have free pastries, etc. People can plan ahead.

Consistently deliver surprise and delight.

Don’t sell! Just Make it easy and compelling for customers to buy.

According to the author, the following companies have good/effective facebook pages: dunkin donuts, 1800flowers.com, Ocean City, MD, Zippy’s, CareerBuilder.com

Dell computers using twitter to get rid of refurbished computers. Selling out inventory. Kris already does this when she sends out messages about extra flowers. We can develop that further.

The Five most engaging facebook updates: Photos, videos, links, questions, interactive applications (polls, quizzes, virtual gifts).

Sum up (last part of the book): Listen up, Transparency is the new default, Respond to everyone, Just be likeable.

**7/27/2014. Start at the End: How companies can grown bigger and faster by reversing their business plan. Dave Lavinsky.** 2012. Concentrating on long-term vision and better attaining your goals. Did not have enough time to read page to page, but skimmed for important information.

Key Performance Indicators: What is the KPI that will allow us to say that we are meeting our goals? To author, these were essential. What is most important and what are we tracking.

Author had many things to say in regard to leading an organization—interesting but just not enough time.

**Shakespeare Insult Generator: Mix and match more than 150,000 insults in the bard’s own words. 2014. Barry Kraft.**

Fun. Fun. Fun. Little flaps with interesting slur words which can be mixed for great combinations. Wish I could keep this one and am wondering if there is some kind of a mobile application that would do the same thing. On the back side were explainations of each of the words. “Beslubbering beast-eating fustilarian.” Calumniating beef-witted giglet” “Churlish hard-haired horse-back-breaker”.

**Call to Action: Secret Formulas to Improve Online Results.** (2005). Bryan and Jeffrey Eisenberg. Checked this out in order to optimize searches for Kris’ business, but now that I am recorded this I believe that it is too old to be of much help. Google hardly existed when this was written. Still, I would like to skim through this if there is ever time. WPL may have other, newer books about SEO.

**Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?** Beverly Daniel Tatum, Ph.D. (1997). Checked this out from WPL but did not have enough time to read it. Not entirely sure that the book will be personally useful—is more a psychological study of identity, but might be worth checking out again in order to explore more fully.

**9/1/2014. The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children.** (1994) Gloria Ladson-Billings. (Interlibrary loan) Did not have time to finish this entirely before returning it. Gained a bit. Teachers must have some sort of appreciation for African American Culture if they are going to be successful with them. Cannot adopt a fully “assimilationist” approach. Question: there was not much discussion here as in Delpit which acknowledged that power structure is mainly outside of poverty-ridden class of African Americans. Wouldn’t it be best to make them fluid in that particular structure? More time and effort needed to properly analyze this—do not have the luxury at this time.

**Becoming Adult: How teenagers prepare for the world of work**. (2000). Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Barbara Schneider. (Interlibrary loan)

Did not read—no time.

**9/10/2014. The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian. Sherman Alexie.** Based in part on his own heartbreaking life experience, the novel is about a Native American boy living on a reservation in Washington who dares to leave the Rez and go to a better high school. He comes to the realization that he will die in spirit and likely literally if he stays on the rez for his education. He suffers the consequences. His tribe turns their back on him and he feels divided. He loses a friend and gains him again. The book is complex, profane and, therefore, is somehow believable in the gritty landscape of lowered expectations of Reservations and abusive childhoods. The child is resilient and believes in himself and his capabilities. Rez culture in a death spiral on full display. Interesting insights into rez life and the damaged psyche of a native American.

Notes:

Switched to digital format in 6/2014.