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# Restorative Writing: Connecting Adjudicated Students to Local and Global Communities

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# Restorative Writing

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# Purpose of the Presentation

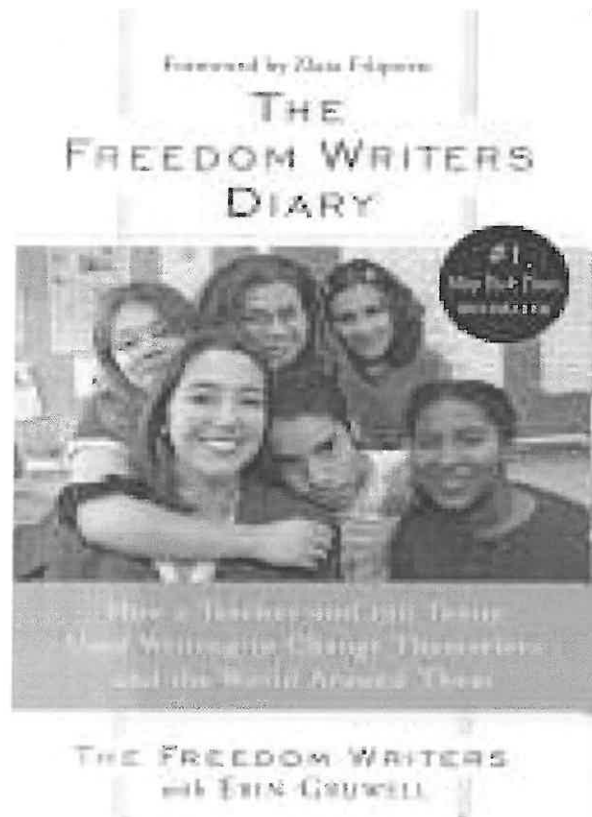
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- Suggest principles and activities which help a writing program address students' holistic needs
- Invite dialogue on your own activities, barriers, frustrations, inspirations....

# Building Community

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- Activity adapted from *The Freedom Writers Diary*





## Room 5C: Tell Your Story

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To encourage community, mental health, social critique and to build writing skills, I designed a blog for my detained students where they can share thoughts, experiences and memories anonymously.

<http://room5c.blogspot.com>



## Why It Seems to Work

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- Journals as non-threatening “in” to writing
- Self-expression in confusing, scary and difficult context
- Student discovery of their own voice
- Builds community in mercurial, unpredictable and conflicted environment



# Writing and Empathy

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“The ability to use language to describe one’s feelings, tell one’s story, and share experiences intensifies and deepens empathic expression....Not being able to tell someone how one feels weakens the empathic impulse and response.”

from Jeremy Rifkin’s *The Empathic Civilization*



## The Take-Away

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- Invite students to be leaders and fair, informed critics of status quo.
- Connect them to a real audience.
- Be explicit about shaping curriculum around ideas of peace and justice.





# A Typology of War and Peace

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## **War**

- Selfish behavior
- Authoritarian methods
- Traditional teaching
- Moralistic explanations of behavior
- Coercion
- Structural violence

## **Peace**

- Responsibility
- Open classroom
- Innovation
- Causative or social science explanations of behavior
- Self-motivation
- Freedom to pursue interests

Source: Harris and Morrison, 2003



# Invitation to Dialogue

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- Thoughts and feedback on the methods, activities and ideas presented?
- What methods have worked best for you?
- What barriers, to your mind, do we still face?



# Brief Bibliography

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