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NMH SUMMER SESSION

2010
Middle School Program
WRITING

The object of this course was to help the students become better writers and enjoy the writing process. Through free-writing, drafting, and revision, they explored and developed the skills needed to communicate their thoughts more effectively on the page. The class explored the four main types of writing – persuasive, descriptive, narrative, and expository – through reading, writing, and exploring the intricacies of each type. Through the sharing of their work in a workshop setting, they sought to understand how their writing can impact others, as well as how writing and reading can be building blocks that foster both trust and openness. The reading of short stories, poems, and essays offered the students the chance to respond to an author’s application of his/her craft and provided numerous topics for writing and discussion. Elements of style were explored as we emphasized writing as a process: putting ideas down on paper and discussing and revising them as a means of clarifying and enhancing what one is trying to say.

Classroom sessions were spent discussing homework reading selections, analyzing in-class readings, and participating in writer workshops. Nightly homework assignments included topic-centered journal writing, reading various selected writings based on the type of writing at hand, and the preparation of essays for discussion. The students were writing and reading every day in and out of class. Each student maintained a writing portfolio of larger written assignments throughout the summer.

The students also had the opportunity to enhance vocabulary through the discussion of word choice and drafting experience. Vocabulary was assessed by the use of words learned in actual writing assignments, as well as in-class activities. Students were expected to complete one hour of homework each night.

Week One: Introduction to writing/reading
Week Two: Expository writing
Week Three: Narrative writing
Week Four: Descriptive writing
Week Five: Persuasive writing

READINGS: *Paula*, Isabel Allende
Various short stories and selections

The class met for 75 minutes a day, six days a week, for the five-week session.

Master Teacher: Kelsey Sullivan
Holderness School

Teaching Intern: Jessica Kimball
Middlebury College