**WHY I WRITE**

***An Area-of-Inquiry/Unit/Week/Lesson/Activity depending on your needs. It’s important to continually remind our students (and ourselves) of the importance that writing has for the world and for us.***

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* **Begin**: Short Activity:
  + What was the last thing you texted that you NEEDED to say? Why did you need to say that?
* **Discussion:** Why do we write?
  + Student responses
  + Read article about the Kursk (“A Cry from the Deep” *Newsweek*)
    - Discussion points:
      * Their families already knew how they felt. Why write it?
      * Who is the writing for?
* **Reading**: “Cathedral” (Raymond Carver) excerpt
  + Discussion points:
    - Why can’t the blind man understand completely through listening to the video?
    - Why does the husband feel compelled to illustrate what a cathedral is?
    - How can the story’s act of drawing serve as a metaphor for the act of writing
* **Activity: *Cathedral*** With a partner:
  + Back to back -- one artist, one speaker
  + Speaker describes the face of a family member, without looking
  + Artist draws without speaking
  + Every minute, students take a break; ask artist to jot down questions they have that have not been answered or addressed
  + Reveal and discussion
    - Partners discuss the experience with each other
    - Share Artist questions that went unanswered
  + Class Discussion
    - How would you feel if you commissioned a drawing of your mother and it did not look like her?
    - How close is the drawing to a photograph?
    - How difficult is it to translate your image to paper?
    - Why is it difficult?

**Extension materials:**

* “Why I Write,” Joan Didion
* “Why I Write,”EB White
* “Why I Write,” George Orwell
* *The Writing Life*, excerpts, Annie Dillard
* National Writing Project: Why I Write: 2017 National Day on Writing

<https://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/events/1047?x-t=sites_eos.view>

* NCTE: “Why I Write” audio essays <http://www.ncte.org/dayonwriting/testimonials>

<http://mruliano.weebly.com/>