

Laura Byron
Process Review

1. In class free write, 9/13/12 Session 2

During this free write, we were asked to brainstorm about initial ideas for our semester long project. When I first started writing I did not have any idea what I wanted my semester long project to entail. The first few sentences in my free write were vague and jumbled, focusing only on my desire for my work to influence my students in some way or another. After rewriting this idea for a minute or two, an idea suddenly popped into my head. I literally wrote on my paper "Got it!" and took off writing about my intention to focus my semester long project on the teenage brain and addiction. This particular free writing experience was very meaningful to me. In the previous free writing exercises in class, I felt like I was forcing words onto the paper in order to fit the allotted time. Not until this free writing experience did I see the true beauty in uninhibited stream of consciousness thinking. Only after having this spontaneous epiphany come through my free writing, do I have a better appreciation for this type of critical thinking.

2. Weekly Check-in, 10/25/12 Session 8

One of the most important parts of each class session was the weekly check-in. Knowing that a check-in would occur at the beginning of class held me accountable for working through my weekly installments at the right pace. As a result, my installments were more germane and well thought out. The weekly check-ins were also a time for immediate feedback from the professor or classmates. This opportunity for informal feedback was significant in the overall development of my project. For example, my check-in on 10/25/12, was about my installment on the metaphor of the "hijacked" brain. After I spoke about my ideas for a lesson plan involving this metaphor, some class commentary stretched my thinking further. Instead of only having my students unpack the hijacked brain metaphor, it was suggested I could push them a bit further and ask them to create a new and better metaphor to replace the "hijacked" brain. This immediate feedback stretched my own thinking about lesson plans for my students and gave me a better understanding of what the purpose of my semester long project entailed. At this point in the semester, my weekly installments became more streamlined and contained richer, deeper lesson plans for my students.

3. Installment on Causal Explanation, 11/1/12 Session 9

This particular installment on causal explanation was a direct continuation of the previous 2 installments. At this point in the semester, I had felt like I had hit my stride and was creating rich and applicable lesson plans that incorporated the themes from each week's class session. The themes that connected most strongly with my topic of the teenage brain and addiction were metaphors and causal explanation. The "hijacked" brain metaphor that became an underlying theme in my

installments directed related to the causality of drug use and drug addiction, bringing up questions such as, "If your brain is not hijacked, then what is it? Why does a person become addicted in the first place? Is addiction a choice or a disease?" These questions began to be ever present in my last few installments- including this one from Session 9. This installment included a lesson plan utilizing a rapid PBL on causality of teen drug use. I think this installment in particular highlights the progress I had made as a student in this Critical Thinking class. By bringing in exercises from our own class sessions and incorporating them into my teaching, it was apparent that I was finding my own experiences enlightening and meaningful and wanted to create the same learning opportunities in my own classroom.

4. Developing the final presentation before the final paper, 11/29/12 Session 12

While sitting down to organize all of my installments over the course of the semester to create my final presentation and project, I decided to start the PowerPoint presentation first. This ended up being incredibly helpful when moving on to write my paper. By creating the presentation first, it was like developing an outline for my paper. I then kept my PowerPoint presentation open on my computer while writing the draft of my paper. By consistently referring back to my presentation, I was able to create an organized paper that paralleled my presentation to the class. I found this technique very helpful in organizing the copious amount of installments, notes, and resources I had collected throughout the semester on my topic of the teenage brain and addiction.