

Portraits of the WKU WP
"The Locker Room"

The Student:

A senior in regular English class at Glasgow High School.

The Teacher:

Bonnie Meyer, English teacher grades 9-12, Glasgow High School. This year I'm teaching two levels of seniors (AP and regular) and two levels of sophomores (regular and at-risk). Writing Project 12, 1997.

The Assignment:

Students and I go through a relaxation exercise. Then with lights out and eyes closed, they listen as I prompt them to consider various memories, including specific prompts to recall each of the senses. Next, they record as many recollections as possible in brainstorming. Then we look at models of poems with various structures, including a couple I have written. Then we all draft, and finally Revise, Revise, Revise. This includes peer and teacher conferences with special emphasis on strategies of poetry—precise language and line breaks.

The Text:

The Locker Room

Floors covered with bugs and moisture,

The smell of sweat and every other bodily fluid reeks,

And the dust settles on everything.

Descriptions of a prison?

Far from it!

These floors, nasty and dirty, are red carpet to me.

Freshman initiations, exhausting weight training, team meetings, watching film;

All of these happen here.

The room represents unity.

Lockers side by side,

All facing toward the center,

Symbolize just how close the team is.

For four years on Friday nights,

The fire that burns inside of me on the field is lit behind this door.

After waiting patiently for game time,

I release that fire.

It is a place of emotion.

A place of warmth.

Tears of happiness, tears of sadness,

Are all shed here.

Not just a dressing room for football players,

But an assembly line of good men.

The final product, usually not an All-State player,

But most of the time, a good man.

Classrooms will be forgotten,
Grades will soon be irrelevant,
But never will the memories of the locker room
Fade from our minds.

Student Commentary: What about this assignment helped me learn to write.

This assignment helped me learn how to do something simple. That is, write about something that is important to me. I tried to use good details to support my passion for this place.

Teacher Commentary: What I do to help students learn writing.

Use models to help students see possibilities and that there is not one "right way" to write. I write with them and share my problems, sometimes taking guidance from them. I try to value their successes and help them see weaknesses to make work more effective.