

Athletic/Academic History Writing Prompt

Critical Incident in Athletic History

Describe one incident during your athletic experiences (childhood through now) that helped define your self-concept—positively or negatively—of your athletic ability. In your description, identify the key characteristics in the incident, your age at the time, the context of the experience, what happened, the people involved, and it influenced your thinking about your athletic ability.

Critical Incident in Academic History

Describe one incident during your schooling experiences (preschool through now) that helped define your self-concept—positively or negatively—of your academic or intellectual ability. In your description, identify the key characteristics in the incident, your age at the time, the context of the experience, what happened, the people involved, and it influenced your thinking about your academic or intellectual ability.

Athletic/Academic Relational Model

ATHLETICS	FACTORS	ACADEMICS
	PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES	
	MOTIVATION	
	SKILLS	
	STEREOTYPES	
	SOCIAL CONTEXT	
	PROCESS	
	COACH/TEACHER	

Simons, Herb (1998). University of California, Berkeley. Project TeamWork—A former program of the National Writing Project in collaboration with the NCAA

Educational Strategies (Simons):

- Teachers and coaches understand and learn from each other. Cooperate to improve both academics and athletics.
- Transfer of personal attributes from athletics to academics. Make students aware of relationship.
- Use athletic interests for school literacy instruction (e.g. read and write about athletes, etc.).
- Add literacy activities to athletics (e.g. read and write about athletic competitions).
- Make athletic participation contingent on academic performance (e.g. minimum GPA, athletic punishments, etc.)

Text Rendering¹

Text rendering asks participants to read over and then select the parts of the text that are most meaningful to them to read aloud. It gives voice to both the text and the participants equally and in turn, and encourages careful listening, re-hearing, and thoughtful silences. This strategy can work well to form and focus a group of people who are relatively new to each other.Teachers can use this strategy with students to solicit their different readings of a text in class. [Allow 30 minutes for text rendering and 30 minutes for writing and sharing.]

1. First everyone reads the selection silently.
2. Participants select a sentence that strikes them and read it aloud going around the circle without interruption. [Repetition is fine throughout this exercise.]
3. Participants select a phrase that stands out to them and reads it aloud around the circle.
4. Participants select a word from the text and call it out, again going around the circle.
5. Participants select a word suggested by the text and call it out.
6. Discuss the range and emphasis of the group's selections. What has been learned about [topic of the reading]...? [Note the questions emerging from the discussion]
7. Reflective writing: Participants write about a theme or issue in their own classrooms, schools, teams, etc. How might they look at the issue from another perspective (e.g. student, parent, administrator, teacher, etc.)? What questions could be asked to learn more about their perspective?
8. Share the reflective writing with a partner.

¹ Macpherson, P., Cohen, J., Portney, D., & Buchanan, J. (1996). Homegrown Research: A Guide for School Communities. Volume I—Strategies for Listening to and Analyzing Student Voices. The Philadelphia Education Fund.

Ideas for Classroom Use of Sports and Literature

Poems and Stories²

- Read and discuss Joyce Carol Oates' "**First Pro.**" Try to imagine what each rookie fighter was thinking and feeling and feeling at the time. Using the voice of one of the fighters, try to record some of his feelings in monologue form.
- **Mayfield Crossing** raises issues about sports, friendship, and race. When black and white childhood friends are forced to attend school in a segregated town, the white boys are permitted to play baseball in the newly constructed field but their former black teammates are not. Imagine you are place in this situation, how would you respond? Role play one of the characters, acting out the scene as it was played out, or could have been alternately played out.
- Read Peggy McIntosh's "White Privilege"—Write about a time when your race, class, gender, or sexual orientation either afforded you a privilege or denied you an access.
- Read **Julius Lester's "Men: Being a Boy"** or **Jamaica Kincaid's "Girl."** Using either the Lester or Kincaid piece, draw on the remembered voices from your past that taught you how to be the person/gender you are. What teachings did you receive on being a member of the opposite sex? What messages (both subtle and direct) did you hear, see, sense, feel, as you were growing up to be who you are now? What did you learn from your family or religion about gender? What were the "musts;" the "forbiddens"? What messages do you hear even now? How do these messages about gender roles inform your life?
- **View the Girls Clubs of America's "Making Points,"** a film about challenging sex role stereotypes. What's most particular/peculiar about your life experience, what difference have you felt most keenly—your sex, race, religion, etc.? Tell when. How can this aspect of your experience serve as a starting point to overcome limitations?
- **Walter Dean Myers'** prize winning book, **Slam** is a complex story about friendship, sports, family, and drugs that raises many critical life issues. Try to recall an experience of your own or that of someone you know who is wrestling with a drug problem. Write and perform a dramatic vignette that in some way parallels a story situation and play it out.
- Read aloud **Ernest Thayer's "Casey at the Bat."** Invite students to pantomime hitting a home run and striking out, using their bodies to share with the class what Casey looked like when he struck out. In cooperative groups, write a play showing what happened after Casey struck out. Present the play to the class as a culminating activity.
- Write about personal experiences you have had or someone you know has had which are like Casey's. Read **Emily Dickinson's "Success is Counted Sweetest."**What connection would you make between this poem and Casey's experience

Sport Images

- Using images from magazines to prompt writing about a topic. Some examples include:
 - LeBron's Vogue cover
 - ESPN the Magazine cover with Candace Parker
 - Danika Patrick posing for the 2009 Sports Illustrated Swimsuit issue

² Philadelphia Writing Project (1998). Project TeamWork—A former program of the National Writing Project in collaboration with the NCAA