

Syllabus 2018-2019
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How is the process of writing related to the process of analysis and therapy?

Being a therapist or an analyst is a very personal experience. We know this because we know that our own analytic work is at the center of everything we do. However, we are also in conflict about this defining fact. How do we use the self-knowledge we gain from being in our field? Writing is a way to become more aware of how we are always having inner dialogues about how to recognize and how to use our internal worlds; with ourselves, with our patients, consciously and unconsciously, and while writing psychoanalytic papers and presentations. While reading for this class we will think about how other forms of writing and our own writing can help us become more aware of unconscious process, and how to think and feel creatively as therapists/analysts and, maybe, as writers as well as readers.

We will also try to focus in this class on how to love/struggle with writing for its own sake. If we can do that, it will be more fun and more interesting to engage in writing for an audience, writing in our private journals, writing and reading in the field, or writing and reading of any kind.

Structure of Class: You do not have to have any writing experience to benefit from and enjoy this class. The focus of this class will be to understand more about our wishes, our excited feelings, our fears, or *wherever we are at* about writing. The assigned reading for each class is for inspiration and to serve as a reference point to help us to discuss our own writing. Although some people may want to talk more directly about their writing and others may not, we will do our best to help everyone to start where they are at.

I will ask everyone to write something during a 20 minute class writing experience. You can use your weekly writing as the starting place for a longer piece of writing which you can share in class, if you wish, or just turn into me. Or, you may want to share something else that you are working on. Everyone will have a chance to share something they have written with the class.

Educational Objectives:

Participants will be able to:

1. Candidates will discuss the relationship between writing and a psychoanalytic identity.
2. Candidates will practice writing as a means of enhancing an analytic and self analytic process.
3. Candidates will discuss examples of their own, as well as with their patients, of how writing inhibitions interfere with creative, playful and productive experiences in many areas of life.
4. Candidates will discuss their paradoxical wishes for privacy and recognition in the act of writing.
5. Candidates will practice using tone, metaphors and language to expand creative internal space in writing and in analysis.

6. Candidates will participate in writing exercises that differentiate writing as “being” as well as “doing.”
7. Candidates will think about how all kinds of writing can enlarge ways of thinking about writing about clinical work.
8. Candidates will think about and discuss how writing can enlarge awareness of unconscious processes and how to apply that knowledge to clinical work.
9. Candidates will give examples of how writing can contribute to ones’ knowledge of oneself.
10. Candidates will develop more awareness of how their anxieties about writing interfere with writing.

Week 1:

“There is a quality of trust and revelation in such work (journals) that is immediately recognizable, impossible to fake, a generosity of spirit and fearlessness that I wish to emulate. Working with journals helps me to remember how vulnerable I make myself within the creative act and how vigilant I must be to stay honest...how hard it is to work against silence, shame, how hard to be brave.

“The Tenor of Memories” Diana Abu-Jaber

Reading:

Birkerts, S. (2008). *The Art of Time in Memoir*. Graywolf Press:Minneapolis. Pp3-24

Reader

Recommended:

Bender, S.(1997). *The Writers Journal*. Bantam Doubleday Dell: New York: New York

Ueland, B. (2008). “If You Want to Write.” BN Publishing.pp 9-19.

Week 2:

“I had read many descriptions of the contents and habits of the unconscious mind, which by definition was something I could never, by unaided effort know by myself. But I learned through writing that the no man’s land which lay between the dark kingdom of the psychoanalyst and the cultivated domain of my conscious thought, was one which I could profitably explore through my writing.” Marion Milner (1936).

Field, J. (Marion Milner) (1936). *A Life of One’s Own*. London: Chatto and Windus. pp 11-33. **Reader**

Week 3:

Grusky, Z. (2002). *Conviction and Interpretation: Hiding and Seeking With Words P.Q.*, V71 pp81-113. **PEP-Web**

Why are we reading the following book in Week 4?

While planning this syllabus I began thinking about how a part of this writing class might be about recognizing that writers and analysts/therapists are sometimes the second

generation, the children of the survivors who must metabolize the experiences of trauma/conflict that were primary for the parents/survivors or the first generation. As therapist/analyst writers it is interesting to think about the words and descriptions that writers who are not analysts use when they write about the process that we call “metabolize.” The word “metabolized” is an example of how our psychoanalytic jargon is a shortcut for a process that we know is very complicated and can perhaps be written about in a more compelling way by some of the writers we will be reading who are not in the field.

Week 4:

Kingston, M.H. *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts*. Random House: NY: NY. Pp 3-16. **Reader**

Week 5:

No reading assignment. Work on your own writing

Week 6:

“You’ll never be a poet unless you realize that everything I say is wrong. It may be right for me, but it is wrong for you. Every moment I am, without wanting to or trying to, telling you to write like me. But I hope you learn to write like you... at all times keep your crap detector on. If I say something that helps, good. If what I say is of no help, let it go. As Yeats noted, your important arguments are with yourself.”

Richard Hugo, “Writing Off the Subject.” (Bender, 1997).

Sweetnam, A. (2010). People Are Not Cabbages: Reflections on Patient and Analyst Change. *PQ* 79:4 1025-1048. **PEP-Web**

Week 7:

“Where do you get your ideas from, a poet gets asked... and seldom answers, “from other people.” Of course we use books, other people... a journal is to stumble on scraps. Things needn’t be finished, just stored... and “idea” is too big a word. It’s not scrappy enough. A scrap of another persons’ idea might lead to another, to the exposition of an argument, and from there to the discovery of your own article, or poem.”

“Consigned to the Unconscious” William Matthews (Bender, 1997).

Pass, S. (2014). The Mummy at the Door: Play Therapy and Surviving Loss. *Journal of Infant, Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy*. 13: 152-163. Copyright at Taylor and Francis Group, LLC, ISSN 1528- 9168 print **Reader**

Week 8 :

No reading assignment. Work on your own writing, journal writing, integrating the reading we have done, “dreaming” into your own feelings or “dream- thoughts” about the writing that you could bring to our last class.