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Reflection #6

Writing from Abundance: Neighborhood Map

During my summer classes, Mr. Jason Whitney gave me an idea that I've grown to love and have used many times the past year: The Neighbor Map Activity. The activity is simple, yet fun at the same time. Students are instructed to draw a map of their neighborhood or hometown, then write numbers next to points on the map that have stories attached to them. Once this is accomplished, students pair up with other classmates and one of the numbers is chosen to expand on, or write a story about. The reason why I used this activity as the opening lesson in my Writing From Abundance unit was because I wanted to enforce to my students that writing is much easier when you have things written down rather than trying to write "naked," or from scratch. I honestly feel that the students learned this as the activity did its magic.

The activity went so well that I received a lot of positive comments as the period ended. I had a handful of students say on the way out that the activity was "fun," and that it was "interesting to see how a simple map can create so many stories." This lesson marked the first time with my senior class that they openly seemed to like my teaching style and lessons, which was a very reassuring thing to me. Students that usually were *laisse-faire* were motivated and eager to draw their maps and write. Students that were usually into my lessons were full of positive comments. And students were just average actually wrote strong stories with an emphasis on description and metaphor, two characteristics that I stressed to them in my introduction.

Overall, this positivity transferred over to my next lesson and led to a quote that I will never forget...