

Why You Value writing

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Readers value writing. After I asked how much writing a school should expect, some of you responded with unexpected, funny, practical and personal reasons for learning to write clearly. A few examples:

From Diana, in the Mille Lacs area: "I have repeatedly used, and so have both of my sons, the ability to address problems via the written word. We have seen manufacturers, employers and homeowners respond favorably because our case was well-presented and documented."

"My husband and I were missionaries in Indonesia for 16 years, with the last six years of our term operating as directors. There were no procedures or instructions on how to run the mission, even though our work was multi-faceted, involving overseeing missionaries and national workers. We developed these procedures and documented them in an 80-page booklet. When we left the field, there was a sense that the work would carry on. It did, and within a few short years, became completely indigenous."

Yes! I feel passionate about teaching thinking and writing skills to our young people!

"I am grateful for an excellent English teacher in my sophomore year at Cambridge High School back in 1967. She taught me how to think logically and organize my thoughts via an outline, and then to develop them. I have used these skills over and over again throughout my life. In high school, I wrote several 10-20 page papers through the discipline of writing lengthy documents, I was taught how to stay on track with a goal and how to persevere to the end, disciplines which apply to much more than just writing a paper."

From Paul, in Indiana: "I write, revise and edit everyday as an entrepreneur/business owner; email primarily, but also letters, proposals, promotional materials, agreements, etc. Our unique niche as a book publisher of student work brings me into contact with a variety of student writing."

This is not an endorsement as I do not know his work, but Paul has a

fascinating business (PenandPublish.com). He helps schools produce books composed entirely of student writing.

Some years ago Detroit Lakes teachers showed me how they turned student research/writing into short books. The school, student and local library each kept a copy. Great idea!

From Vicki, near Grand Rapids: "I am always using words to explain the logic behind something. Today, I have been having an e-mail conversation with an associate dean at University of Minnesota Duluth, (UMD) regarding an alternative to a thesis (I suggested the guidelines) that may be made available to some students this summer."

"UMD hires me to work with graduate students who are completing research projects. Because most of this work takes place through e-mail, my suggestions need to be very clear. Otherwise, they are not helpful to the students. I'm also helping a local woman who is writing a collection of stories about her kayaking experiences."

"I also write silly notes to my grandson who is two and cannot read."

Thanks to these and other readers for helping illustrate writing's personal and practical value.