J. Dracos-Tice

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**Elements of Powerful Writing**

The two categories below represent the “standards” by which I will evaluate the craft portion of your creative writing. These elements are also applicable to your analytical writing. You will always have a chance to receive feedback on your work in terms of these standards (either from me or from a peer) prior to receiving a grade. You will then have the option to revise one more time. For each creative writing assignment, I will give you a sheet that clearly defines the process for generating and revising writing, as well as when and how you will be graded along the way. Remember that all of this information is on the wiki for your class.

***“Show, don’t tell”***

This cliché essentially means that you need to make room for your readers. Give them spaces to make connections, experience with their senses, and to access their own memories and stories. The readers’ involvement will help them discover meaning by marrying their interpretation of your actual language with the significance of their own stories.

How do you do this?

1. Use strong nouns and verbs instead of weak adjectives and adverbs.

Example:

Telling with weak modifiers: It got up noisily.

Showing with strong nouns and verbs: “The dog’s chain clinked as he

lumbered for a drink of water.”

1. Use specific imagery that evokes the senses.
2. Use figurative language, as it invites the reader to make connections:

Metaphor

Simile

Personification

Hyperbole

Paradox (contradiction that is ultimately true)

***Create patterns of emphasis and music***

Propel your reader, push and stop your reader, to help them experience the journey and the revelations of your piece.

How do you do this?

1. In poetry, particularly, make sure that every line holds independent significance, even if the statement is incomplete.
2. Make sure that lines break with a word that carries weight.
3. Speed up writing with shorter lines (shorter meter); slow things down with longer lines.
4. Repeat words and phrases; repeat sounds (assonance, alliteration, and consonance).

Alliteration: repetition of initial sounds (“furious finals”)

Assonance: repetition of internal vowel sounds (“the old pig rolled over”)

Consonance: repetition of consonant sounds (“truck ran out of luck”)

1. Create a music that will echo in the readers’ ear (internal and end rhyme, repetition of sound [see above], and repetition of lines in a formal pattern [e.g., villanelle or simply the same opening and closing line]).