

own posters to advertise the book signings. Proceeds from book sales went to the school's visiting author fund. Why did these girls work so hard when there was no monetary reward in it for them? I think it relates to the notion that John Adams expressed—they wanted other people to listen to their writing, to be affected by what they wrote, and they wanted to be acknowledged for all of the work they contributed in *Deal with It!* What ten-year-old child wouldn't want that?

Regardless of our students' ages or the scope of the writing project, writers want to have their work considered and admired by others. There are many ways young writers can announce that they're writers to their peers, family members, and classmates. Here are a few ways writers can publicize their independent writing:

- **Online invitations:** An electronic invitation is an excellent way to invite others to listen to writing.
- **Twitter:** Writers can update their fan base about their writing progress. A tweet can be disseminated as an announcement once a project is published too.
- **Writing groups:** Each small group of students can get together and share their work in an open-mike format, for which they post or send out invitations.

There are endless possibilities for sharing one's writing with the world. Anything that allows students to say to others, "Hey, I'm a writer!" will empower their voices and thereby lead to a greater love for the writing process.

■ **Challenge:** Help any of your students who are engaged in independent writing to find a time to celebrate their hard work, where they can be revered and recognized in a safe environment. Sit down with them and ask them what kind of celebration would excite them. Then, work with your students to coordinate a writing celebration that invites others in to celebrate their writing.

■ **Reflective Practice:**

- How did working with your students help you plan a celebration that mattered to all of you?
- Did your students suggest something for the celebration that you thought was strange, but worked? What was it?

Submitting Writing to the Real World

If you want anything to actually change or to move ahead in your life
you actually have to do it yourself, you can't sit there and wait for somebody
or talk about what you want . . . you should actually keep dreams and desires inside
and let them burn a little bit, and then they might come true.

—*Russell Crowe*

I was probably one of the few high school seniors who didn't cringe at the idea of the college essay. I recall getting excited about the topic of my college essay when I saw an essay question that read, "Tell about a time in your life when you took the initiative." By the age of seventeen, I had taken the initiative on several things in my life, some of which were personal and some of which affected other people's lives in my school community. As an only child, who never had the ability to rope anyone else into things with me, I knew how to make changes and do things because I had one person I could truly rely on: me.

When young writers want to be heard, they have to go out and get published. As much as we'd like our students to take the initiative, oftentimes they're too young or not quite resourceful enough to know where to go to get published. Therefore, as educators, we can provide our students with a list of writing contests and venues that regularly publish student work so that we can help our students move ahead with their writing lives.

Here are some places where students can submit their work:

- **BookHooks:** <http://www.bookhooks.com> (Book reviews from students of all ages from all over the world can be published on this Web site.)
- **Cricket Contests:** <http://www.cricketmagkids.com/> (Special rules usually apply to students younger than the age fourteen.)
- **Kids Are Authors:** http://www.scholastic.com/bookfairs/contest/kaa_about.asp (The contest is open for students in kindergarten through eighth grade.)
- **Merlyn's Pen:** <http://www.merlynspen.org/> (This is a site for teenage writers.)
- **New Moon Girls:** <http://www.newmoon.com/magazine/> (This magazine is targeted to girls from ages eight through twelve.)
- **Stone Soup:** <http://www.stonesoup.com/> (This magazine accepts submissions from writers up to age thirteen.)
- **The MY HERO Project:** <http://www.myhero.com> (This Web site encourages submissions from young people about their heroes. Students can upload images and video to accompany their writing.)
- **This I Believe:** <http://thisibelieve.org/> (Students fourteen and older may submit their work without their parent's or guardian's consent. Students who are thirteen or younger must obtain their parent's consent before submitting their essay.)
- **Writers' Slate:** <http://www.writingconference.com/> (This forum is open to students of all ages.)

Regardless of the venue, the most important gift you can give your students is the desire to publish their writing in the world.

Challenge: Seek out any young authors' competitions in your state or local organizations that are sponsoring writing contests. Be sure to read your union paper,

teacher magazines, or literary Web sites to check for submission calls, which you can pass along to your students.

Reflective Practice:

- How can you match your students with appropriate real-world publishing opportunities without doing all of the legwork for them?
- What will you do to take the leap and get your own writing published so you can serve as a mentor for your students as they go down the path to publishing their own work?