

Editorial:  
"English Teacher? or Dream-Crusher?"  
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Imagination. Creativity. Hopes and Dreams. Essential aspects of life that everyone should aspire to have and encourage, especially in today's students. What a better way to express these traits than in writing? And what a better place to learn how to incorporate these attributes in writing than in the everyday, mandatory English class? However, in this day and time those cherished ideals are squandered and squashed by those self-proclaimed literary enthusiasts we call English "teachers" by limiting students' opportunity to express themselves, their hopes, their dreams, their creativity, their imagination by setting constraints and restraints on writing topics, for example, confining a topic for an editorial piece to the school or community. Do English teachers really want to hear about how bad the school lunch is? Are they actually eager to read how the town they reside in is boring? These qualifications not only hinder the afore mentioned vital virtues but turn a student off and push them away from writing.

"Think out of the box," a common, frequently heard slogan used to encourage imagination and creativity, features needed greatly to inspire the unmotivated universe in exciting and interesting ways. Limitations on topic choice thwart an individual student from being... well... just that, an individual. Quirks and peculiarities are what give a grey, lifeless world color, what makes words written on a page breathe and come to LIFE. So what if a student wants to write about the grievance of fruit punch flavored Kool-Aid being dressed in a blue package, when actually being red? The anomaly would set the student apart. Who knows it could be the best editorial ever written on the face of the planet? Who is the teacher to discriminate and deem the issue unworthy? God? I think not! This issue could hold great personal and emotional value to the student and you just took that away.

Dr. Martin Luther King Junior's "I Have a Dream" speech is the most moving and meaningful address ever spoken. It has invigorated and instilled a desire to aspire in the hearts of millions. Children today are told to "reach for the stars." They are told they can be anything they want to be. They are told the possibilities are endless. They are told the possibilities in writing are endless. Why do people lie?! Why not "man-up" and tell the cold, hard truth? You can't write about that. It's not worthy enough, not honorable enough. It's not normal, not boring. It's not like the 55,555,555,552 other editorials formulated in the schools across the world. Did you hear that? I did. It was the severely sharp, painfully agonizing, extremely excruciating, dreadfully grievous, piercing, raw sound of a young dreamer's hope of becoming the next Thomas Hardy or Jane Austen. You tell me. Do topic restraints help or hurt? Uplift or put down? Is it English teacher or dream crusher?

Do English teachers enjoy reading bland, stale, mundane writing about tiresome and trite topics, such as despondent school lunches, the pushed scurry between classes or the town's lack of allurements to the youth of today? Sounds monotonous. If teachers don't like reading it, why do they force students to write about it? Is writing about a tiring topic essential to English education? This tactic does exact opposite one would like to believe was an important goal in an English teacher's career, to infuse a love of writing in the hearts of the future. Topic constraints don't impress the joy of communicating through

the written word upon the potential authors of tomorrow. They push, they shove, they thrust the student into the dark, depressing void of graphophobia. Is this what English teachers want? What they desire? What they long for? To have their students cower and tremble at the thought of picking up a pen or pencil along with some scraps of paper and writing? It must be with all the confinements placed on a simple paper. One would think someone “committed” to enlightening students in the English language would want to encourage writing, not turn them away from the idea completely.

Are English teachers today doing their job well? Yes, but there is always room for improvement. I understand the purpose of some restrictions placed on a student’s writing and topic choice, to prevent profane and foul works, but these limits must not cross the boundary so as to step on a student’s ability to do their best. Students need to see how interesting and fun writing can be. If confined too much, students lose the passion and enthusiasm to write, resulting in bleak essays and dreary editorials that teachers don’t want to read and students don’t want to write. So let’s all “think outside the box.” Let’s all “reach for the stars” and have a dream. Let’s all write!