(Re) Telling Your Story

This 45-minute exercise is designed to help you and your students find new entry points into your own personal narratives, using an already existing story.

1.) What is on your mind at this moment in time? There are probably many things, but choose one that has the majority of your focus.

2.) What is the primary feeling associated with this topic for you? Write down the word that most captures this emotional state.

3.) When was another time that you had a similar feeling? Describe it in just a sentence or two.

4.) Now, write down ten details from that story. These may include dates, people, settings, and even your internal reactions to certain occurrences.

5.) What is a work of fiction or non-fiction that resonates with this personal story in some way – intellectually, emotionally, etc.? Name it.

6.) Find five sentences from that work that you find interesting, exciting, or particularly evocative. Circle them or mark them down.

7.) Now, write your story. It should include:

a.) the ten details that you wrote down
b.) the five sentences that you chose from your story
   (These could be spoken by a character or used in your narration.)

8.) Share your story with a friend.

9.) Invite your friend to ask questions about the story. These questions might help you to understand what in the story is clear and impactful and what might be missing.

10.) Iterate! Create a second draft, incorporating changes that may speak to the questions you were asked that you feel need addressing.