




LAURA B. GINSBERG

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

On a daily basis, I work with high school students who have no idea how to convey their perspectives in writing. Most of those students have been directed to avoid writing in first person, and very few of them have any idea how to construct a stunning sentence or even a poetic phrase. But so many students have wonderful things to say and no idea how to say them.





Stories matter

"I HELP THEM TAKE THEIR THOUGHTS AND THEIR CRITIQUES CLOSER TO A COLLEGIATE LEVEL SO THEY CAN FEEL MORE CONFIDENT..."

Their teachers avoid marking up their pages and fixing their grammar mistakes. I often get asked by students why their teachers aren't teaching them how to correctly use em dashes and how to strengthen the precision of their written images, but all I can respond with is conjecture. Perhaps there are too many students in the classroom. Perhaps the teacher doesn't want to be boring. Perhaps the teacher is worried about getting grammar questions he or she can't answer. I'm not sure why the core principles of writing and editing sentences are not widely taught in schools, but I would love to change that.

Beyond that, my students stare at blank computer pages and fear putting words on those pages because they haven't been instructed how to write freely and how to edit those rough drafts into something polished and thoughtful.

And with the Advanced Placement curriculum the way it is, most of the students struggling their way through these classes have been given some basic analysis and argumentative techniques, but I help them take their thoughts and their critiques closer to a collegiate level so

Authors & Books That Have Changed My Writing

Annie Dillard
John Steinbeck
Wallace Stegner
Colum McCann
Italo Calvino

The Anatomy of a Story
by John Truby

The Craft of Writing
by William Sloane

Telling True Stories
Story Structure Architect

they can feel more confident as they work through beautifully written scientific articles, historically relevant nonfiction books, and thought-provoking literary essays.

I help them dig into their own feelings and memories to find creative and educational ways to relate to what they are reading and writing. I get the wonderful opportunity to meet with them, often in one-on-one settings, and have great conversations about writing down their own experiences, including journaling and poetry. I've even helped a student finish her first fantasy YA novel before she ventured to MIT to study chemical engineering.





TEACHING WRITING GOALS

I want to construct and disseminate educational modules to a greater audience — such as rural high schools across the country — because I believe students should be able to more effectively process their emotions through writing and better understand their place in the world by sharing and publishing their stories. We may even be able to add a new genre to the book world: Teen Nonfiction.

A dream goal would be to stir together more technology with writing and help develop virtual reality or augmented reality writing games and platforms so that students might feel a closer connection and deeper understanding of texts that can otherwise fall flat in their minds. Imagine, for example, if students could point their phones at the text of *Beowulf* and have three-dimensional holographic monsters and heroes rise up out of the printed book and fight the battle depicted on the page thanks to embedded coding. Or, imagine that a group of students from across the country could meet in a virtual reality workshop and construct poems and stories together in real time by throwing virtual words at a wall — or at each other!



PERSONAL WRITING GOALS

I am working on a four-book series of 366 short-shorts that hop around in time and space from kitchen to kitchen of a family of women who pass along recipes and family secrets from one generation to the next. I have the first draft written for three out of the four books — Winter, Spring, and Summer — about 50,000 words. I need to get a better grasp on my over-arching structure and editing shears to bring this

autobiographical undertaking to something beyond the random mess it currently seems to be.

I have finished a poetic prompts book because the world needs more poetry. I juxtaposed phrases and snippets of my own poetry with images and crafty page designs to create a visual fixed-

format ebook that is meant to spark creativity. I will likely self-publish this in print during 2020. I write poetic observations daily, so I would love to edit those scribblings into a quarterly (or monthly) series of full-color poetic prompt magazines, books, or full-color ebooks.

