ComAlt: Processes and Alternatives

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Mid-Quarter Self Eval Assignment

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Questions and Education: Author's Note

What were my goals this quarter?

What is my quarter's work been, and what will it be for the rest of the quarter?

How does my work relate to the world beyond education?

How is education important in a world that needs action?

How does my education get me into the world differently because of the type of education it is? Thinking versus physical versus practical?

My goals for this quarter were to be physically and mentally present and learn about how identity spaces function, as well as to research connections between comprehensive sex education and social justice movements. I also had the goal of working on and thinking about how to include the political and social justice elements of what I was studying into the fiction writing I do.

So far my quarter's time has been focused on starting to be present in the identity based space where my internship is, and listen to conversations, talk with the people, and think about implications and what happens, what helps, what hurts, the students who frequent the center and the center itself. There's been some traveling to a couple conferences to learn more, and thinking about how that learning happens, the politics around it, the content itself, and why things go wrong and how people respond when they do. Attached to this author's note is a series of three fictionalized communications from a character to different people, highlighting how experiences, perspective, and circumstance change experiences and change how people recount those experiences. Some of it comes from my the feeling I have myself that I can talk a lot about what happened and how it happened and why it happened and how it connects to all the other things that happen, but I can't create, in a sense, a unified theory that can be used to formulate what actions should be taken to address what happens.

I have also spent time reading fiction that includes elements or is based on the principles that my study goal was created from – a goal which I have taken as the permission to notice and pay attention to. I will be doing more of my own fiction, which may or may not include elements in an obvious way, over the rest of the quarter.

In preparation for my research I have been in a phase of primarily thinking, on subject, type, research areas. I have written an outline to help formulate my research, and I have read articles that have helped shape what areas I want to research and given me an idea on what topics the popular media conversations, or less formal conversations, are around. I'll be putting together significant research and putting together the paper itself hopefully over the next couple of weeks.

The work that I'm doing this quarter gives me the opportunity to learn some practical skills around organization and coordination and leadership with the work that I'm doing with the TQC, as well as learn practical skills that apply to my hopeful career path as a novelist. I'm learning further how to research and put together my thinking through the research and writing I'm doing, and I'm learning more about the current events and social movements that are happening currently, and have happened before. Even if the specific subjects and details of the things I'm studying don't come up again, I am learning skills and I am learning how to formulate thought and find new knowledge itself.

Additional Reflections on Education:

For me, that ability to find new information and knowledge when you don't already know it, is essentially what education should be aiming to do, because if you have the capability to find information, learn new knowledge, and think critically, you can apply those skills to any particular subject or job you will ever have. So Education is the process of learning how to learn.

Education can cover many different methods and circumstances, it can be thinking based education such as what many colleges and universities primarily teach, it can be physical based learning around things like welding or dance, or it can be practical learning around organization and leadership. Butall of these different elements if they are properly doing education will be a process of teaching you how to learn.

So education is still really important in the world right now, and it's important to have it in as many forms as possible, because there is a need for people to take action against oppression and injustice, and there is a need for knowledge that can be practically applied. That might mean we should be calling for a broader range of educational types, but not that we should throw out education altogether.

However we also have to be aware of how the different types of education allow different people to move differently through the world based on the preconceived notions and stereotypes around what different kinds of education, especially when considered in connection with personal circumstance.

I am a very privileged person, and the type of education I am receiving right now is allowing me to move in very different ways and in very different spaces than other's might. I am doing work in the TQC primarily because I have set a contract to focus on learning through being there, not because I particularly need the services or would be brave enough to utilize them without the excuse of being there to learn. It's a very different way to move through that space than most of the other students utilizing or working in that space, and that's what we have to be aware of.

Education doesn't happen in a vacuum, and I believe that what is learned through various means can be turned into actions or theory, because everything is touched by action and everything is touched by theory, and information is shared in many different ways outside of classrooms and lectures halls, and it's very fluid. It's not static or unchanging.

There is a lot to be considered, and a lot that needs taken action on, especially by people who have privilege in various ways and should be working to even to the field, but I don't think any answers lie in a clean sweep removing just theory, or a clean sweep removing just action, or just discussion. We need to negotiate a new balance, and we need to make sure the right people are present and have voices during that negotiate.

Attached Fictionalized Letters (In Response to Assignment)

Hannah Baby,

How is your wrist? I heard from Mackie that you hurt it, was it really from playing Go Whistle? How did you manage that?

I've got a lot to tell you this week, a lot's happened here. A lot to go over. There's been so many events they seem to blend together, and it's only been a week. I know I must've said that every week these past two months, but it always seems true.

They grabbed the mic from their hands. They were told it was assault. They said it wasn't the right time that it wasn't their place they told them to go away. Their words weren't welcome here. They were accused of having a knife. They were told the mic wasn't on later, that it couldn't be used, but it probably just meant no one wanted to take the chance it would happen again. Only a few people stayed, only a few people listened, and out of those who listened, only few talked about their meaning. Most talked about the way they said what they wanted.

Should they have taken the mic? Should they have been so aggressive? They should've followed procedure, of course, protests must follow procedure.

All of that happened, or it didn't. It depends on who you ask, now.

It's really frustrating. Even if I haven't been to all the events, I could tell you everything that happened, or nothing that happened at the same time. Each time, the same words go around. The same words, the same rhetoric. It's always around the politics of who has the microphone, and it's little wonder, the microphone is a source of power. It physically gives peoples' voices the volume to carry to many people. Who has the mic, who has the power to turn it off, or on, the dynamics of that relationship is incredibly important and pivotal in so many of the things that have happened this week.

The protest will be dismissed because of it's methods, but when the correct methods are used, the protest is ignored.

I wish they talked about the content. It's so hard, to figure out how to deal with what methods to take, what outcomes to hold out for and what increments to take. I wish we could discuss things, and have conversations that didn't dissolve into name calling and arguing over semantics or definitions or blaming each other person and rehashing every mistake anyone has ever made, instead of trying to find progress and what forward is.

It's so frustrating to be around, but even when there's so much doubt and hurriedness, pain and triggering retrauma, there is some generative aspects. With the first pieces of doubt, pain and trauma, it's hard to find the generative parts, or be able to take advantage of it when it happens.

I am lucky and I am distanced.

I am grateful and I wish I could more fully understand at the same time.

I am very glad you are not here. I'm glad that your place hasn't been touched by the upheaval, that your community already joined together to support and drive away the disconnect between its people. I'm so glad. I hope I can join you as soon as I'm done here.

You are so good to me, for letting me rant to you and tell you these things. I appreciate you and your presence.

I hope your wrist heals soon, and tell Juno I saw one of their artworks in the museum a few days ago.

With love,

F.

Devlin,

We need to have a discussion about how we're responding to the experiences we've had over the last week.

You said that you were putting together a time to meet and discuss and decompress. Do you have an idea when that's happening? I can start disseminating info whenever you need.

If we decide to do a teach back or take an official stance, I think a good format might be a panel or a discussion time. Maybe some pre-determined questions we can answer, and then some audience questions.

If we want to take an official stance, it's going to have to be very carefully phrased. We need to make sure we have a distinct difference between what we're saying from our personal experience and position, and what we've decided to state as a group that represents as many of our true opinions and experiences and universal agreement as possible. And that's gonna be a real long discussion to figure everything out and make sure everyone can agree with what we have, and get as much feedback and as much validation of everyone's experiences as possible.

It needs to be a good chunk of time, maybe it should be two sessions to figure it out if we wanted to take an official stance.

Let me know what you want to happen, and feel free to bounce any ideas at all off me.

– Farah.

Hello,

I hope your week is going well, and hasn't been too busy.

I'm sorry it's taken a few days to get back to you about some of the incidents, it's been a really busy scramble to put together all the pieces and really reflect in a constructive way.

Devlin and I have been in discussion about what we want to do in terms of a teach back or a discussion panel. We have set up a meeting with everyone and we're going to discuss what kind of program in response we want to have, and what kind of discussions we'll have, but of course whatever we do, we want to take as many people into consideration as possible.

We'll come to you when we have a plan, and then you can have some feedback, but I still want this to be primarily driven by the people affected, the people who saw the incidents and events.

It needs to be driven by those people.

We will do our best to work with your feedback and contributions.

I hope these terms are acceptable. If needed, we can set up a time for our group to discuss with your office, if further compromise is necessary. I am hoping it will not be.

Thank you for your time,

Farah Emilo.