

Dear Neeraja,

When I joined the Reflective Writing course, I was both nervous and excited. I had hoped that joining the course would help me become a more reflective teacher and librarian; I hoped it would help me with my short term and long-term goals in the library.

I was nervous and apprehensive about the writing aspect of the course, for more than one reason. For starters, I am not happy with my work ethic, especially when it comes to sticking to deadlines; it is something that I need to work on. Additionally, I have found writing to be stressful, sometimes even painful and frustrating. This has been the case for quite a few years.

Although the level of stress and anxiety I face while writing has come down, it was still an issue last year when I joined the Library Educator's Course. As a result, although I was looking forward to joining Reflective Writing, I did wonder if I was biting off more than I could chew.

Happily, joining the course has been an eye-opening experience on multiple levels. I won't claim that I don't face frustrating or difficult emotions when I write; I still find myself searching for those elusive 'perfect words'. If I'm not mistaken, it's happening right now, to a degree. What has made the difference is recognising writing to be a process, and a difficult process at that; one where 'staying with your frustration' is important. In that sense, I find that practicing mindfulness and reflection are just as important as any other aspect of writing.

This course also challenged my pre-conceived notions about what reflective writing 'looks like'. I would not have thought of poetry, for instance, as a piece of reflective writing. Similarly, I overlooked the reflective element of mind-maps, even as I used them to explore my own thoughts on different topics. Over the duration of the course, I found this to be extremely liberating; I didn't necessarily have to follow 'one kind of structure' because there is no 'one right way' of writing reflectively.



In terms of my teaching practice - as a teacher and a librarian, there are two 'things' (for lack of a better word) that continue to stay with me. One is the importance of reflection itself; recognising the importance of time, and space, recognising the importance of 'being present', I wonder how much of

my library documentation is reporting and how much is actual reflection. I feel like I need to find a practice of documentation that is more sustainable and allows for more reflection. I anticipate having to try multiple approaches before I find one that works for me.

The second 'thing' that stayed with me was a question you raised in class: "When does a teacher's agenda become a student's agenda?" This question comes up every so often for me, in different settings with different students. I find it relevant, intriguing and a little overwhelming; I'm sure further exploration will open up more nuances, more questions, etc. I hope I'm brave enough to do so.

Last but not least, I would like to thank you. Not just for your feedback, which had me literally jumping up and down, but for the entire journey. I feel so privileged to have shared this space with you and with all of my classmates. I look forward to exploring this further.

Warm regards,

Indu

3<sup>rd</sup> April

Dear Neeraja,

Thank you for your feedback - both now and during the course. I truly appreciate your words of encouragement and advice.

I do wish I had submitted more work. I feel I've missed out on a golden opportunity. On a similar note, I wonder why I did not follow up on the feedback you gave me. I wish I had. That would have been an interesting experience in itself - following the progression of a piece of writing, through multiple drafts. It's something I need to think about, as I examine my strange, frustrating relationship with time and deadlines. What motivates me to attempt, tackle and complete (or not) a task? What motivates me as I sit here writing this letter?

I don't especially look forward to this introspection, if truth be told. But I think it is necessary, and long overdue. I will say that as scary and intimidating as it seems, I somehow feel more prepared to try - that I think is thanks to you and the reflective writing course. For that, and so much more, I want to say, thank you. Thank you so much, Neeraja.

I look forward to any possible future interactions with you.

All the best.

Warmest of regards,

Indu