

## The Real World, MWP Style

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Summer is over and the real world has hit me hard. If my students heard me say this they'd probably respond in shock, "You watch MTV! What city was your favorite?"

And then, I'd think back to 11 years ago with the first season of MTV's *The Real World* set in New York City. In my opinion it is the only real world of them all. There was no protocol to follow, no one to upstage. It came before the myriad of reality TV shows that bombard us on a daily and nightly basis.

There are no cameras on me as I find myself frozen before the blank pages of my lesson plan book. No private video confessional to share my anxiety. The countless decisions about time management, standards, and priorities have left me with a teacher/writer's block. This can't be a good thing to face before the year has

begun. Valerie, Cheryl and Nina told us that these feelings and roadblocks are common. In the moment I knew that they didn't mean me. Why don't I ever listen?

This is the time for me to apply all that I learned in STI. My mind runs through the gamut of questions and doubts. I wonder what happened to all of the motivation and ideas that I felt at the end of July. I long for the community of teachers, fellows and friends who I relied on for inspiration, encouragement and feedback. Though we only knew each other for a few short weeks, the impact of our time together was much greater than anticipated. Journaling in our daybooks was by far the most meaningful part of STI for me. I would feel comfortable saying that the same is true for many of my fellow T-Cs. The morning writing circle allowed us the freedom

and security to experiment with words and to

test the waters of our audience. Daniel's camera might have been recording, but I can't remember now.

My classroom is a box: three cinder block walls, the fourth broken with a large window. Call it a quadrilateral or a cube; it is still a formidable force. I cannot allow it to limit my creativity. I have to muster the confidence necessary to bring this experience to my students *in the real world*. I will be bold and brave in my domain where my students will write. All I have to do is employ the techniques and strategies modeled by our fearless leaders. I may not have Nina's Tibetan bells or Cheryl's timer, but I'll improvise.



*Bridget Patton*