

Teaching Chapter Three – Odes - Transcript

This chapter is about caring out loud. It's about having the courage of your convictions to say I really like this one thing. I know that being cool means that you can't care about anything because if you openly care about something then that gives someone else the ammunition to make fun of you for caring about that thing. However, with the first of the best practices for the programme, it's about building safety, building trust and building community. Hopefully by now that will have been demonstrated enough to know that sharing will not be met with mockery it will be met with applause. Um so capitalising on that we want to encourage the students to think about things that they care enough about to talk about and to write an ode about it. 'Dear Hermione' is a crowd-pleaser - I perform it quite often - and I love doing so. Um, but it's also a great poem to teach because it is a mix of a list poem and a letter poem and if I know anything about teaching poetry, is that sometimes you have to trick people into writing poetry because saying 'write a poem' is a really, really scary thing so, um, I will constantly, constantly teach lists and letters, er, instead of trying to teach poems and - by the way - if you go through this whole programme and only teach lists and letters for any of the exercises - that is fine. So, 'Dear Hermione' was important to me and the Harry Potter series was important to me, not just because of the characters but also I learned a lot about racism and classism and feminism. Um, I also learned, um, that adults, er, are flawed and they just try their hardest as well. And it was a long lesson because I followed the books as I was growing up so they had such a profound impact on me. Um, but 'Dear Hermione' means I got to pay tribute to a character that I loved and related with and I found really powerful and a great role model growing up. But I also got to pay tribute to the things that were in the books that were great lessons for me. I think what students in secondary school sometimes don't understand is that a lot of their friendship groups come from circumstance and necessity. Whereas, when they leave the school environment, they will be attracting friends towards them that, er, share their interests they don't have to be around certain people so they can, like, meet people of of similar interests so that's something that they can have now if they are open about what they like because if they talk about things that they care about they will attract to them others who care about that thing as well. They can start building that community for themselves whenever they open up.