

Book Discussion

True Notebooks by Mark Salzman

1. Share the excerpt that you brought to class: a passage that you found interesting and explain what it means to you.
2. How did the teen's creative writing contribute to their development of identity and their outlook on their future?
3. Mark Salzman didn't think that he had the qualities required to be a teacher for incarcerated teens, but he was quite effective. What qualities of teaching and mentoring does Salzman bring into the writing workshops?
4. What were some of the positive and negative attitudes and behaviors of the different adults who worked in the juvenile hall?
5. What insights did you gain about the boys' and girls' perceptions of gender and race that emerged from the joint writing retreat?
6. How did the family, school, and community fail the incarcerated youths? What suggestions do you have for ways that teens can be better supported in our society?
7. Optional: How did the boys interact during the writing class? What seemed to be the norms of their peer group? How did Mark participate in and gain access to their group?