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Losing the Stories

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Nathan Bieszka

Losing the Stories

The colors on my bedroom wall are a light blue and dark red. It is difficult to notice it is dark outside except for the glimpse of moonlight peering through the blinds. I smell the scent of clean clothes. Magically the smell becomes intertwined with my mother's perfume as she enters the room. As the smell strikes me, I race for my bed hoping she will read my favorite story, "Where the Wild Things Are." I beg and plead for the story. Mother gives in one more time. The way my mother became different characters by changing her voice and developing different body movements, I truly felt as if I was discovering different places with Max.

This is my first memory with literacy. At the time I had no idea what the term literacy meant. All I knew was that I got to experience my favorite book one more time. However, from those moments when I was four didn't last. For the next twenty years literacy came to mean something else, something less enjoyable. Learning to read and write wasn't easy for me. Through a lot of work I can come across as literate, being able to read and write. In subjects like Math and Physical Education I was always above my peers. In Physical Education I was always the first in my class. Whether first came through effort or athletic ability I always found great aspiration in Physical Education. Throughout my elementary years I was a unique student. I remember loving the idea of stories. Whether I was listening to stories or writing them, I was always very intrigued by them. I remember sitting and writing stories that seemed very in-depth for my age. However, my grammar was not always correct. I had problems with spelling words and sentence structure. Back then when I was writing I didn't really care even if my spelling and sentence structure was right or wrong. Reading the story after writing it was almost thrilling for me. But that didn't last.

By the time I got to middle school my attitude toward reading and writing had changed. Honestly, I cannot remember writing or reading one story in middle school. I'm sure we read and wrote stories, but I don't remember any of them. I was bored and turned off. I don't know how I became disinterested. It could have been that the girls were getting more and more interesting. But it was also probably my involvement in sports. With school and youth sports programs and workouts for different sports, I was playing sports at least six days a week. Sports

consumed my thoughts. I didn't think about stories. I wasn't interested in stories, at least the ones we were supposed to read. That didn't change when I got to high school. I thought middle school sports consumed all my time, but high school sports were even more intense. Every single moment seemed to be all about sports. I do remember reading and writing some. But it was never voluntary. I didn't read anything for pleasure. For me to do any reading it had to be assigned. The same was true for writing.

This continued in college. Football consumed a lot of time and energy. When I first began college, I approached reading and writing assignments the same way I did in middle and high school, doing just enough to get by. I quickly learned that this wasn't enough. I told myself that I would only allow football to consume me during practice and games. It would not consume every other moment beyond that. However, reading and writing still did not become interesting to me. I only did the reading and writing that was assigned. I admit, though, that most of the time even the assigned reading got tossed to the side. As I've continued through my college years, I have slowly become more and more interested in reading. However, the reading has to be something involving my interest. What I am spending most of my time reading now is how to become the most effective physical educator I can be. I love reading about teaching and the most up to date strategies and techniques.

Writing is still something that I would not do during my free time. I am still very self conscious of my writing. However, I do think I have good ideas for stories. My fiancé is quite a good writer. I have tried to convince her to write a story. She seems interested but right now time is just not on our side. We both have good ideas for stories but we will just have to wait and see.

I only did the reading and writing that was assigned. And, honestly, most of the time even the assigned reading got tossed to the side.

Nathan Bieszka is currently a senior Physical Education major at Grand Valley State University. He completes his student teaching assignment in December 2010 and is looking forward to a fulfilling career as a PE teacher.