

# LITERACY4LIFE

SPORTS, YOUTH, COLLABORATION, & TEAMWORK

BRYAN RIPLEY CRANDALL  
CWP-FAIRFIELD  
FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY

# STARTING THINGS WITH A WRITING OPPORTUNITY

Directions: Choose a word from the right -->

1. Define it.
2. Explain why you feel it is important to success
3. Think of a story (or stories) to back up your reasoning.  
Write! Write! Write!

SENSE OF HUMOR

Self Awareness

Responsibility

Focus

Self Esteem

Empathy

Integrity

Community

We'll come back to your  
writing.

# A Little History



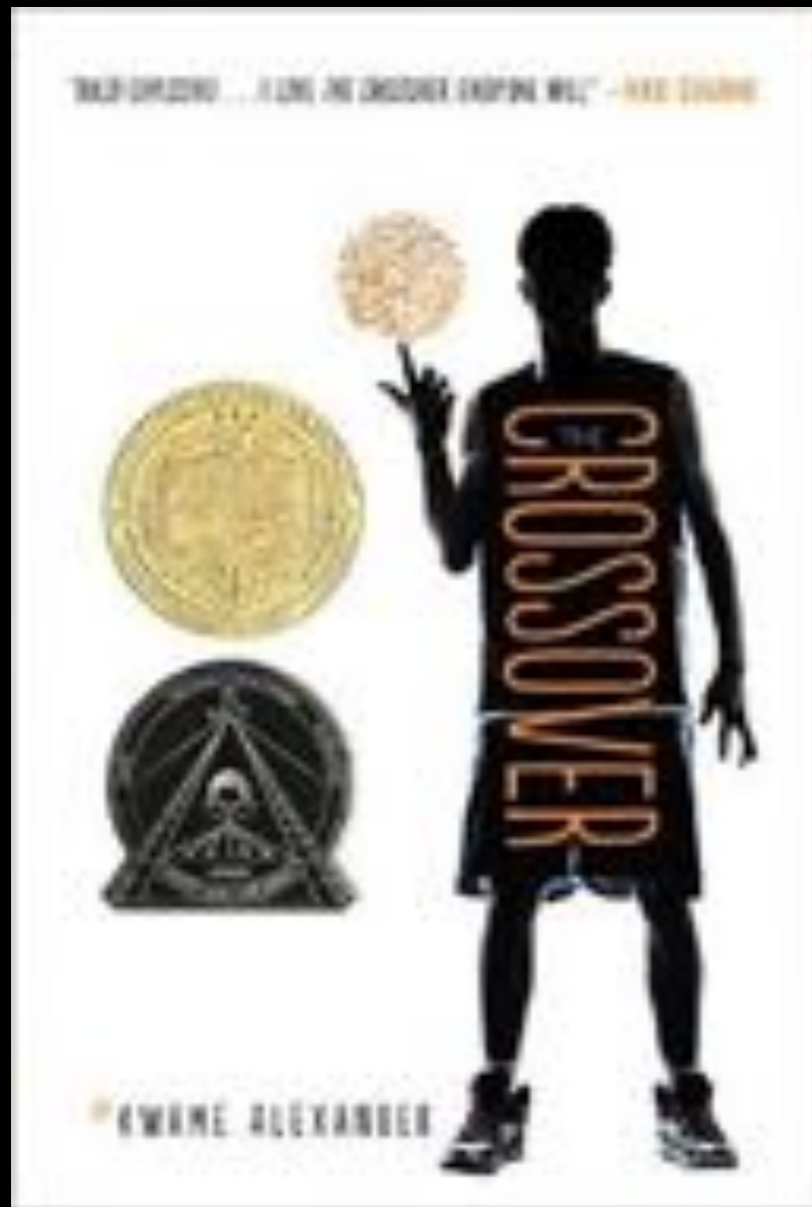
# dialogue booklets

Probst (2008)



# Working with *The Crossover*

by Kwame Alexander



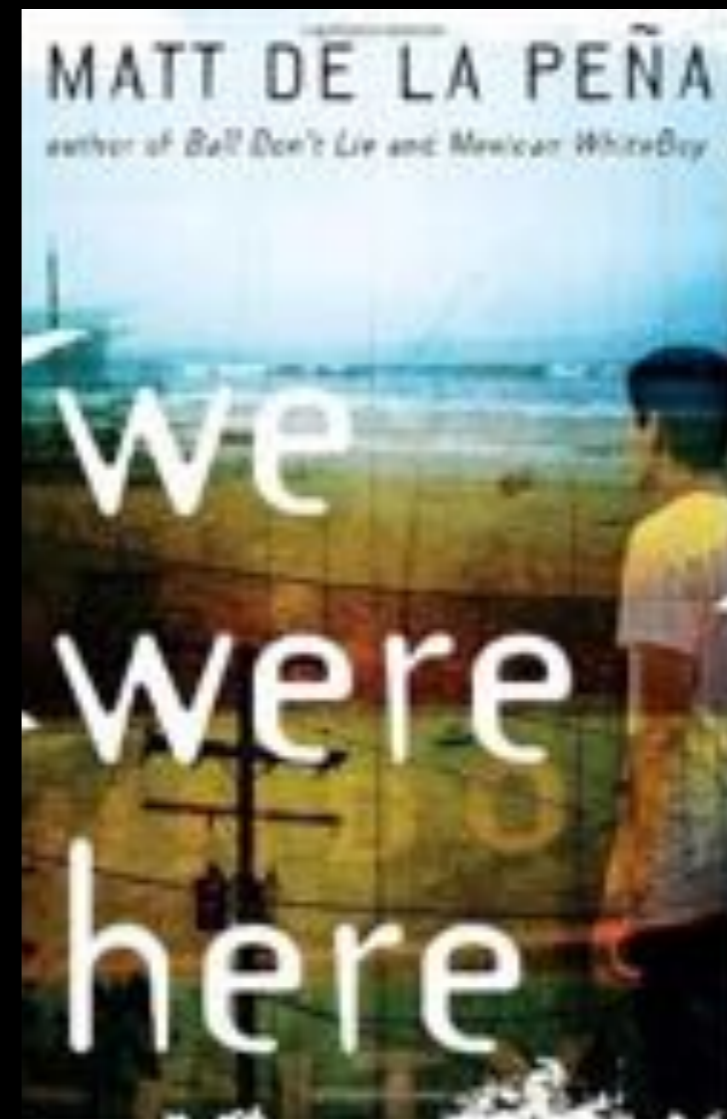
1. Read the 10 Basketball Rules.
2. Choose one that resonates the most.
3. Turn & Talk. What'd you choose? What's your interpretation?

Dr. Alan Brown, Wake Forest University - [Sports Literacy Blog](#)



# Working with *WE WERE HERE* by Matt de la Peña

- Working with 6 high schools
- Asked, “Why are you here?”
- Used *Skills4Life* as a foundation for conversation (and dialogue)
- Collected 120 TedX talks, 68 radio plays, 160 blogs, and 42 geographical web pages as a result.



# Skills4Life - Literacy4Hope



# HUMAN



Collectively, we belong to a larger community of human beings. The more we know of others the better we are able to understand and to comprehend our own humanity. To be human is to belong to a larger community. It is discovering the networks of people (or materials, philosophies, teams, etc.) that help us to grow. This is **Ubuntu** - *I am, because we are*. We should seek others who will support us when we fall and who will love us for who we truly are, even when we're not at our personal best. We are more able to work through conflict when participating with others. When we are in these spaces and places, we are in locations of being more human. We can have deep, intellectual thoughts and emotions, when we have empathy for others. We need to feel for others, to understand them and to be able to conceptualize alternative perspectives and emotions. We provide a listening ear and a kind heart, so they can do the same for us. It is an act of putting oneself in another's shoes; it is the magical art of caring. Being human means being on a journey for building **Self-Esteem**, growing more comfortable and confident within our own minds, spirit, and hearts. Life sometimes brings painful (physical/emotional) experiences caused by involuntary factors out of our individual control. Yet, with confidence and self-assuredness, we can triumph over such adversity. Being human requires a mixture of head and heart to decide how to act. It is to recognize the significant moments in life...the monumental moments...that make us stronger. This includes having confidence, recognizing talent, accepting our strengths and weaknesses, and building a respect for personal dignity. We are a socialized creature, and those who find strength from facing obstacles before them are the ones who take **Responsibility** for who they are meant to be. To be human is to ask, "Why are we here? How can we get through this together?" It is the quest for understanding what it means to laugh and cry, to think and dream, to act on environments around us, to feel love and hate, and to be both rational and irrational. It is the ongoing act of suffering. We struggle and strive to become who we're meant to be, yet there's a balance between loving ourselves and being humble. We must recognize that we have the capacity to feel emotion, to share experiences, and to create a personal relationship with life and death. Tears fall from our eyes in extreme circumstances: when we are emotionally distraught and when we are emotionally overjoyed. All life has an ending, and during times of trauma our humanity comes out more. This is why a **Sense of Humor**, the ability to laugh at ourselves, is important. Finding a way to laugh helps to keep everything in perspective and to pace ourselves. We must have moral standards to become the person we claim ourselves to be (even when no one is watching). This requires **Integrity**, an ability to be honest and to tell the truth about our individual realities even at our most difficult times. It means taking action to make the world a better place and to find ways for helping others to have a better chance in life. It is the golden rule. We must give respect not only to ourselves, but to everyone on the journey with us. Such respect requires our ability to **Focus**, to tune our attention toward what matters most. We must set goals, work to achieve our dreams, tap our instincts while controlling our impulses, and harness the personal gifts and interests we are born with. We must quest to reach our greatest potential. We must stay socially connected. And when we make mistakes, we must pick ourselves back up. We must be ready for our next move, as we pay attention to our histories, so tomorrow can be a better day. Each day we should take time to reflect on our lived experiences and use them to enhance the human experience. **Self-Awareness** is a secret to success. It begins with us.

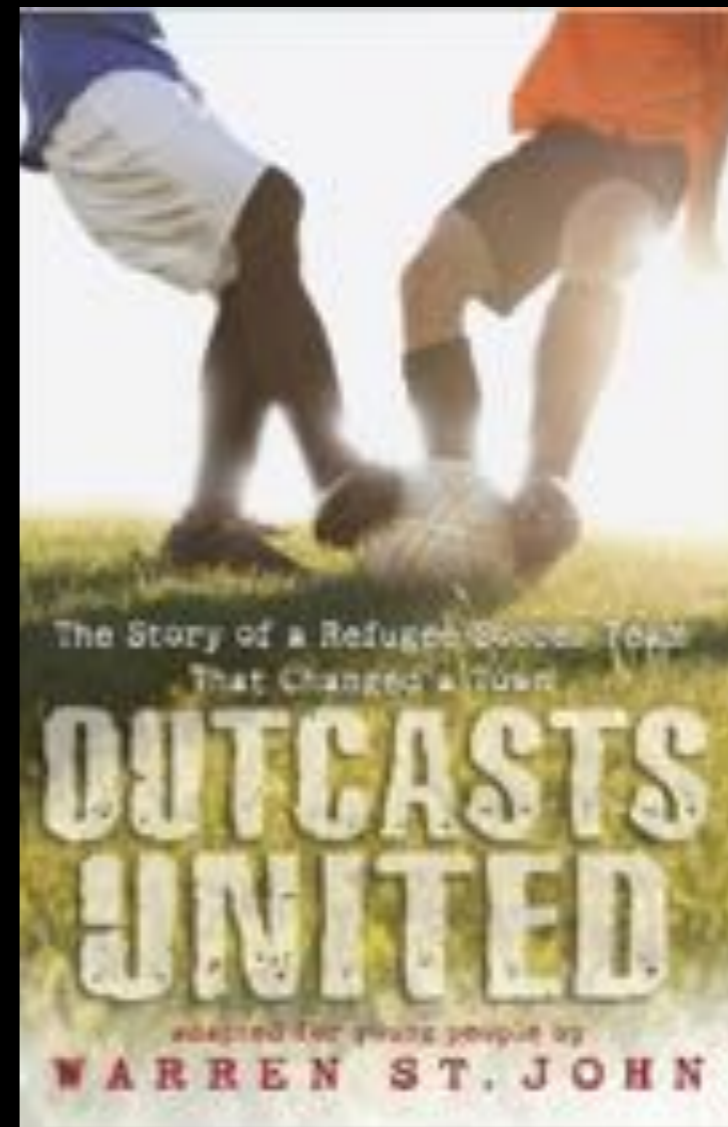


## Brainstormed Questions for *We Were Here* by Matt de la Peña

| Enduring, Perennial, Essential, Big Questions for Life  | Specific Questions For the Text   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ What does it mean to be human?</li> <li>◆ What about empathy and its relationship to learning?</li> <li>◆ Why stories? Why share our lives with others?</li> <li>◆ What does it really mean to be seen?</li> <li>◆ What does it mean to be forgotten? To be marginalized?</li> <li>◆ Why do humans grieve? Why sadness and pain?</li> <li>◆ What does it mean to have a chance at life? Is it always equitable?</li> <li>◆ Why do human relationships matter?</li> <li>◆ What does it mean to make a difference? To make a mark?</li> <li>◆ What role do choices play in the stories of our lives?</li> <li>◆ Why act? Is there a better time to do so?</li> <li>◆ What is morality? What does it mean to 'do what is right'?</li> <li>◆ What is change?</li> <li>◆ What about first impressions?</li> <li>◆ Why forgiveness?</li> <li>◆ Why do our pasts matter? Our histories?</li> <li>◆ How do we know when we're adults? When we're mature?</li> <li>◆ Nature or Nurture? People are born either good or bad?</li> <li>◆ Why literacy?</li> <li>◆ Why journal? Why write our lives?</li> <li>◆ What creates friendship? Are they always healthy?</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ What does <i>We Were Here</i> teach us about our own humanity?</li> <li>◆ How do characters: Miguel, Rondell, &amp; Mong show empathy?</li> <li>◆ When do Miguel, Rondell, &amp; Mong share stories? Why?</li> <li>◆ Why the title? Why the etchings in rock? Why claim existence?</li> <li>◆ How are characters 'forgotten' and 'marginalized' in the text?</li> <li>◆ How does Miguel grieve throughout the novel? How does he heal?</li> <li>◆ In what ways are Miguel, Rondell, &amp; Mong marginalized?</li> <li>◆ What relationships are most important to Miguel in the story?</li> <li>◆ How do characters mark one another? Do they make a difference?</li> <li>◆ What are the major choices characters made in the story?</li> <li>◆ What are the major acts of <i>We Were Here</i>? Who acted?</li> <li>◆ Who acts moral in the text? Do characters sometimes act wrong?</li> <li>◆ Who changes the most in <i>We Were Here</i>? How so?</li> <li>◆ How do characters move beyond first impressions?</li> <li>◆ How does forgiveness work for Miguel? for Mong? for Rondell?</li> <li>◆ What about personal histories affected characters most?</li> <li>◆ How is <i>We Were Here</i> a coming of age story for Miguel?</li> <li>◆ How does nature and nurture impact characters in the novel?</li> <li>◆ How do books and writing play a role in Miguel's life?</li> <li>◆ What effect does writing have on Miguel? On us, as readers?</li> <li>◆ How does friendship work between characters in <i>We Were Here</i>?</li> </ul> |

# Working with *Outcasts United* by Warren St. John

- working with 10 teachers in summer invitational,
- working with 12 athletes from Men's Basketball team and 8 coaches,
- working with 12 graduate students enrolled in YA literature,
- working with 82 students in Upward Bound,
- working with 8 students in a journalism lab
- working with 12 students in Project Citizen - a political writing lab
- working with 26 relocated and immigrant youth.



# A Little More History





**Sports Writing:**  
Two great things  
that go great  
together  
Page 3



Plus  
Basketball  
and more  
books!

Staghead University  
Athletic Department  
Volume 1  
January 1, 2011  
thestagazine.com

# the stagazine

## Skills, drills, practice, play, and reflection A Top Ten list for writing about sports

By Brian Dwyer, Coach  
Divisional Commissioner

The Commission Writing Team's Athletic Handbook is a manual of writing about sports. It's not a book of rules, but a book of ideas. It's a book of ideas that will help you write about sports. It's a book of ideas that will help you write about sports. It's a book of ideas that will help you write about sports.

Write a journal. Record the events of the day. Write about the things that you see and do. Write about the things that you see and do. Write about the things that you see and do.

Write about the things that you see and do.

Write your own. It's not just about the game, but about the people who play it. It's not just about the game, but about the people who play it. It's not just about the game, but about the people who play it.

Write up to date. If you're writing up to date, you're writing about the things that are happening now. You're writing about the things that are happening now. You're writing about the things that are happening now.

Write for the magazine. It's not just about the game, but about the people who play it. It's not just about the game, but about the people who play it. It's not just about the game, but about the people who play it.

"Sports writers to bring out the best in our greatest athletes. It's not exactly sure why that is, but I suspect it has something to do with the following drama in sports and the fact sports teams are treated like gods."  
—Homer Smith, *Forbes*

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The Stags huddle up before a recent game against Concord's Big Red.

## Stags play St. Peter's in a Kids' Day game at Alumni Hall

By Brian Dwyer  
Divisional Commissioner

Stags played a Kids' Day game at Alumni Hall on Saturday, January 1st, 2011. The game was a friendly match between the Stags and St. Peter's. The game was a friendly match between the Stags and St. Peter's.

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## You're part of the (first ever) K&F's Day at Alumni Hall. So cheer loudly and scream Go Stags when we need the energy!

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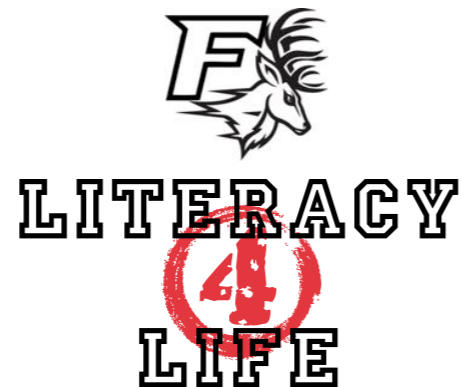
# Opportunity

**SENSE OF HUMOR**  
**Self Awareness**  
**Responsibility**  
Focus  
**Self Esteem**  
*Empathy*  
*Integrity*  
Community

# A Chance To Win Tickets

FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT & CONNECTICUT WRITING PROJECT-FAIRFIELD

present



**Fairfield University Stags want to hear from you...**

**NOMINATE a mentor and WIN tickets to a Fairfield University athletic event!**

**WHO?** any student, grades k-8

**WHAT?** an opportunity to recognize a mentor and score tickets to a Fairfield University athletic event

**WHERE?** on campus or at Webster Arena

**WHEN?** anytime during the 2014-15 academic year... in other words, now!

**WHY?** because we believe in student athletes and in athletic students

**HOW?** write us a letter telling us about your awesome teacher, coach, and/or mentor today!

Fairfield University Athletic Department and Connecticut Writing Project-Fairfield support youth who build **SKILLS FOR LIFE!** Together, we want to help youth in our community recognize their mentors on a grand scale.

We're asking students to nominate the teachers, coaches, and/or mentors who help them **focus**, work with **integrity**, take **responsibility**, become **self-aware**, build **self-esteem**, and keep a **sense of humor**, in and out of the classroom, and on and off of the court, course, or field.

Winning submissions will be awarded 4 tickets for themselves and 4 tickets for their mentor to a Fairfield University athletic event, where both individuals will receive recognition during the breaks in action.

Applications are available at [cwpfairfield.org](http://cwpfairfield.org).



Let's Read Together, Shall We?

# Now, Let's Brainstorm

- Who is someone who pushed you to be successful in and/or out of school?
- Is it a friend? A parent? A teacher? A coach?
- Who worked to make you a better person?



# P.O.W. - Power of Words

What do you value most?

"If you have one, then you're..."

"She + ... also"

The legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. asks us to be daring with our dreams for a better world.

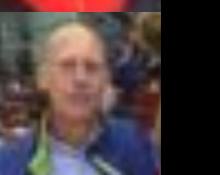
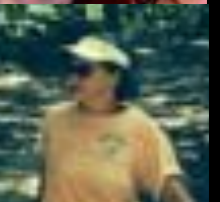
Every step to success, however, requires the mentorship, guidance, coaching, parenting, friendship, teaching, and support of others.

We can be who we are only because of others we surround ourselves with and who helps us to be successful.

"Be... dle- J."

"Find... and do"

"He taught me about... states, 'I can be me because of who we are together... brought me the universe.'"





# Your Turn

- You listed a person who has been an influence in your life.
- Think about him or her.
- Write two or three sentences that might intrigue a reader to want to know more.



# Let's Read Together

- An essay written by twins from Liberia - a personal essay that mattered to them.



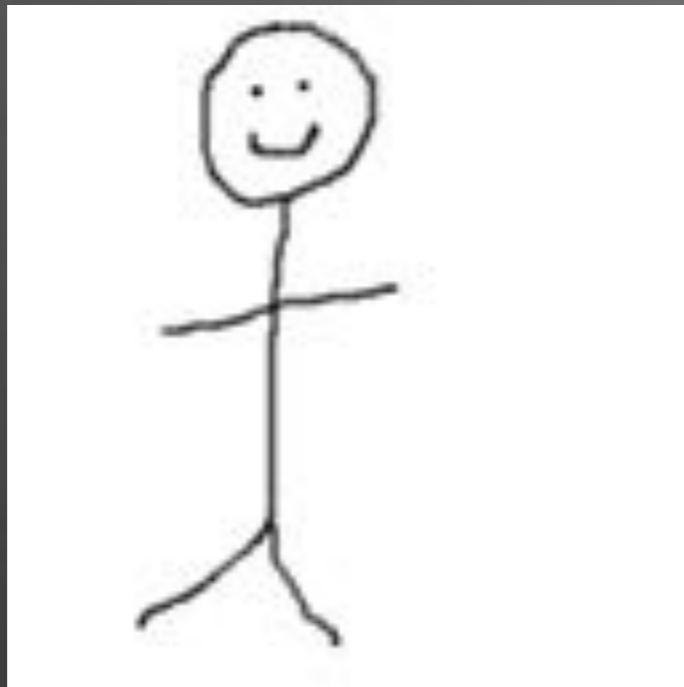
# SENSE OF HUMOR

Writing is a 2nd language to all of us - we have to laugh at how hard it sometimes is.



Find a few comics to help you to laugh at the world.

# Self Awareness



What is your relationship to this person? How did you meet them?

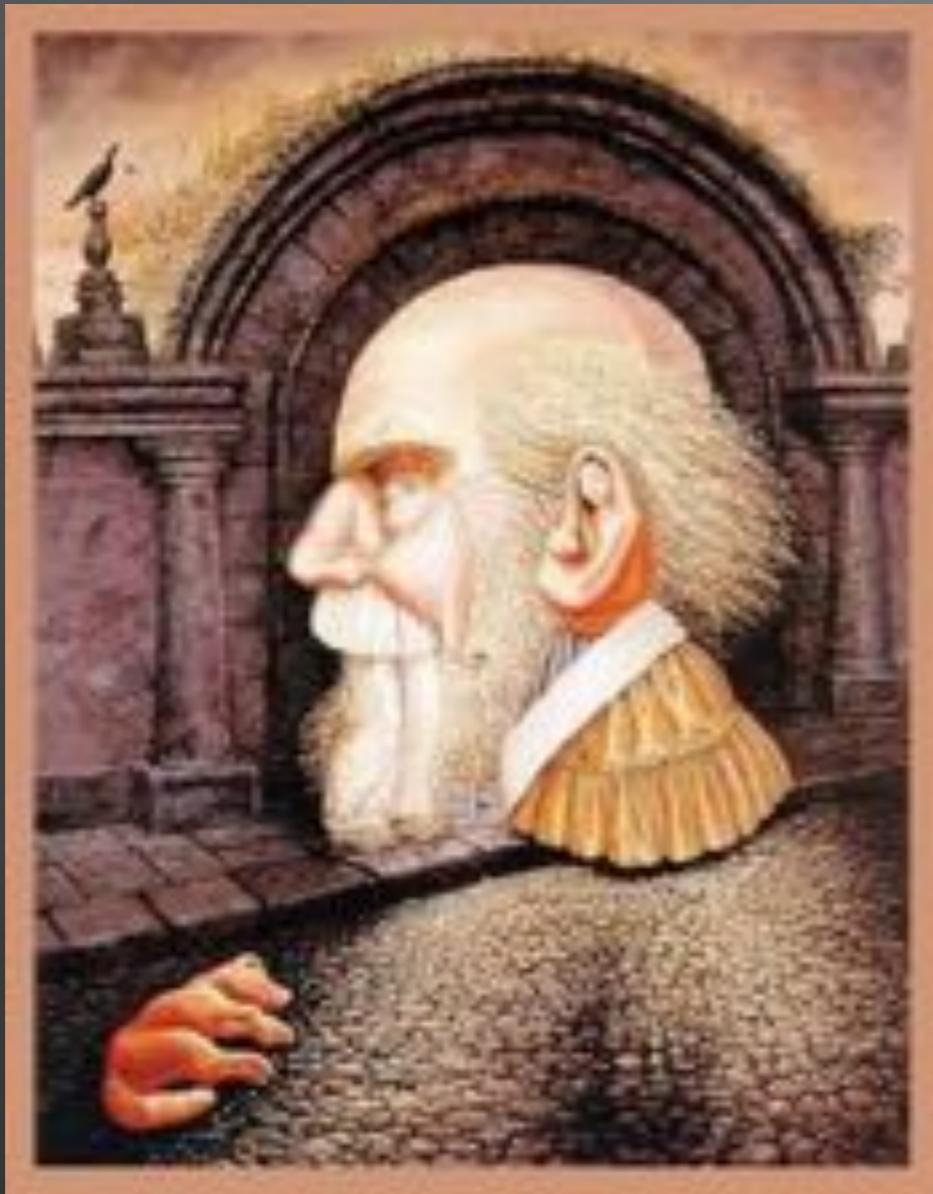
How have they helped you to know more about yourself?

# Responsibility



How has this individual helped you to become more responsible? How have they helped you to grow up?

# Focus



How has this person helped you to see your world in a new way?

# Self Esteem



**Be confident.  
You've got this!**

**How has this  
person helped you  
to feel better about  
yourself?**

# Empathy



How has this person assisted you in having compassion and understanding for others around you? How have they helped you to be more caring of your world?



# Integrity



How has this person helped you to live a good life and to stand up for what you believe in? How have they made you a better person?

# Take Away(s)

What are you thinking about? Does any of this have relevancy to your work and your schools? How so?



[bcrandall@fairfield.edu](mailto:bcrandall@fairfield.edu)

 @brcrandall