

# HOW "SHITTY FIRST DRAFTS" ENCOURAGE & ENABLE STUDENT COMPOSITION

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# QUICK SHOW OF HANDS

1. Have you read “Shitty First Drafts”?
2. Do you ask your students to read “Shitty First Drafts”?

# COMING UP

1. The “Shitty First Draft” Reading and Assignment
2. What Happens When FYC Students Write “Shitty First Drafts”
3. UHWO FYC Students’ Reflections on Composing “Shitty First Drafts”
4. Your Thoughts and Questions

# "SHITTY FIRST DRAFTS"

(You Know Them)

"All good  
writers write  
them."

-Anne Lamott

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# ANNE LAMOTT

writer, writing instructor,  
mother, daughter of writer  
Kenneth Church Lamott



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THE ASSIGNMENT:

READ, DISCUSS, & WRITE "SHITTY FIRST DRAFTS"

# WHY READ “SHITTY FIRST DRAFTS”?

- **Most writers write them.**
- The initial “child’s draft” is **necessary and productive.**
- It reminds students that they are writers!

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN FYC STUDENTS  
WRITE "SHITTY FIRST DRAFTS"?



# WHEN FYC STUDENTS COMPOSE "SHITTY FIRST DRAFTS"

They...

1. Begin a writing process
2. Compose with less fear, shame, and anxiety
3. Can explore ideas
4. Write to the assignment's length in complete sentences

# IDEA DUMP



“Just get it all down on paper, because there may be something great in those six crazy pages that you would never have gotten to by more rational, grown-up means.”

-Anne Lamott

# EVEN PROFESSIONAL WRITERS DO IT

(Students can, too.)

“For me and...other  
writers I know,  
writing is not  
rapturous...the only  
way I can get  
anything written at  
all is to write  
really, really shitty  
first drafts.”

-Anne Lamott

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# CONQUER THE BLANK PAGE

(Yes, you!)

“Almost all good writing begins with terrible first efforts. You need to start somewhere. Start by getting something--anything--down on paper.”

-Anne Lamott

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MY FYC STUDENTS' REFLECTIONS ON  
WRITING "SHITTY FIRST DRAFTS"

“I learned that starting off with a shitty draft really isn’t that bad if you really plan on revising your work.”

--Rayna

“I think learning about ‘the shitty first drafts’ made writing a paper much easier and less stressful. From there it was easier to organize my thoughts.”

--Jewels

“The things that I learned...its okay to write that first shitty draft because your in the same boat as everyone else so don't feel ashamed of your writing.”

--Carlee



“Before I would write by paragraphs day by day until the due date, but what I realized was that my paragraphs did not flow that smoothly...when I...wrote this essay, **I took the time to sit down and write the whole essay, my shitty first draft. But as I had more time to revise it, I became more glad about the outcome and flow of it.**”

--Rodel

"SHITTY FIRST DRAFTS" AREN'T FOR  
EVERY WRITER

“While writing my draft, I kept cutting out and revising things. I know I was supposed to let myself write that “shitty” first draft, but that’s **that critical part of my brain that won’t let me do it.**”

--Naomi

# BUT WHY ENCOURAGE "SHITTY FIRST DRAFTS"?

1. Encourages and enables composition
2. Motivates substantial revisions
3. Increases the writer's confidence and trust in their writing process
4. Engages rhetorical awareness

THANK YOU!  
THOUGHTS AND QUESTIONS?

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