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Lens #3

YALIT

Dr. Sherry

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Critical

During our literature circle we discussed the novel *True Notebooks*. My group addressed many topics between both sessions, topics that had great impact in the book. We discussed the characters, the purpose of the book and its appropriateness for young adults. A major issue that Jenn brought up dealt with the guards in the facility and their comment to Mark Salzman. In the book the guards instruct Mark not to praise the boys for their writing. They clarify that these juveniles are criminals and should be treated as ones.

When discussing this topic all four of us spoke that we were all frustrated by this act of the guards. We all agreed that these juveniles should be seen as individuals and not as criminals. On page 91 Patrick talks about his drawings and how he feels when others compliment him on them. By receiving those compliments, the encouragement makes him want to draw more. He then goes to say that when some people show no response he feels like giving up. Jenn made a good comment “By not encouraging them it doesn’t give them hope to do better in life. It doesn’t give them a reason to change.”

As teachers we four find it very difficult to not praise individuals for accomplishing a task. Especially those who have a reason to change just like these juveniles. We are aware that as future teachers or in every day society we will have individuals in our lives that will need that extra push to do better in their lives. In our future classrooms we will have students who will need a little more motivation than others to have a reason to change. It really frustrates us to see Mark express his encouragement for the boys and to then be forced to stop. Mark Salzman is at this facility for a reason, to teach them not to punish them or to judge them.

I believe that this book gives us readers a lesson on judgment towards others, which is that we shouldn’t. We as future teachers and as individuals should not pass judgment on others based on their history or past experiences. Individuals shouldn’t treat others differently; they may just need extra help in life. Everybody makes mistakes and we all have to remember that, which is what I think Salzman tries to get across. The juveniles in this text represent that judgment that many people in society place on others. We all have a story to write in life, the individuals in *True Notebooks* are no different.