

Please read this project as follows:

1. This page – **letters to self and dialogue** (doc 1)
2. My critical piece - **the letter explaining the dialogue**, alongside the **additional side comments** (doc 2)
3. Finally, the **reflective bibliography** and **reflective letter to Naomi** (doc 3)

“Why are they content? To fall into one category? The Pupil” (Geraint, 15 in Burke & Grosvenor, 2003:11)

A reflective piece of my educational journey

This is for the students who, like me, waste countless hours worrying about their academic success.

This is for the students who never feel quite good enough but have spent years trying to prove they are anyway.

This is for the students who feel physically ill at the thought of an exam, and even more ill at the thought of not achieving an A in one.

But this is also for anyone at all. I welcome you all to engage, to perhaps think differently, or want to ask questions after reading this piece. I would like, at very least, for this piece to encourage you to reflect on what education means to you, because I am about to share what it means to me.



Hello 4-year-old Abi,

I know you can't hear me, but oh, how I wish you could. So instead, I am going to write what I wish I could tell you, if I could go back in time, and give you a message before your first day of school.

I wanted to take this chance to remind you of a few things you are good at, and that you will start to enjoy in your early years of school: playing, dancing, singing, painting, drawing, being a good friend.

*I am telling you this because I know that someday, sooner than you think, you will stop thinking these things about yourself. At least, they will become **much less important**.*

*In 12 years, when considering which qualities you possess, you are going to think **very differently**.*

I want you to know that this is ok, and I am in the process of trying to understand why.

Good luck out there.



Hi 16-year-old Abi,

Oh, how I wish I could talk to you.

My desire to go back in time and talk to you on one of the scariest days of your life, is stronger than ever. GCSE results day is feared by many, but I know, that for you, it was more than just a nervy feeling in your gut. How you felt is difficult to explain.

So, I am going to let you explain it in your own way, in your own time.

Whenever you are ready.



Today is ~~results~~ judgement day.

Here it is, unopened

What I don't know can't hurt me

Maybe I'll keep it like this

Just for a moment

Until my fate is decided.

Everyone has been and gone

Grasping their grades happily

Many did better than they thought they would

I don't think that will be me

What I don't know won't hurt me

Why is it

That everyone was so eager to find out?

As though what lied ahead wasn't important

As though the results meant little to them

What if they didn't mean everything to you?

Why is it that they seemed ok

Whatever the outcome?

I've been stood here 5 minutes now

I'm sure I can wait a little longer

What I don't know can't hurt me

Come on, try and be rational

You've worked so incredibly hard

Which will make it so much more painful if I've done badly

What if you are allowed to be proud regardless of your academic achievement?

I am a good student, at least I have been until now

What is a good student?



From the gold stars to the grades

What if these grades turn me bad?

What is a bad student?

Take a deep breath, come on

No, I'll wait a little longer

I'll stay a good student for now at least

I've always hated maths and science

English, on the other hand

My favourite subject. I really loved it. The poetry, the stories. How language itself can /

/ Always been

my strongest one, too

But what if

What if I'm not that good after all

What if an exam didn't reveal this?

This piece of paper will reveal it all

What if this piece of paper was nothing more than a list of letters?

Come on now, everyone has left

This needs to be done at some point

Just remember what everyone's been telling you

If they go wrong, it doesn't matter

As long as you get into college, they don't really count

Oh don't be so stupid


Of course they count

They count for everything

What if they didn't?

Whether I'm truly as clever as my parents have always told me

Whether I actually am a good writer, as my teachers have repeatedly said



What if these comments didn't determine who you are?

Whether I am a good student or not

Do it

There's no time like the present

Why do I find it so difficult?

It's just a piece of paper

Ha! Good joke. You know you're lying

This paper is everything

This paper is the door that will open wide to your future, or slam in your face

Now is the time. Face your fate.

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Ok

Phew.

Wow! Well done! I was wondering if you might want to reflect on what you have learned throughout this experience of revising and sitting exams?

What I have learned?

Yes! What have you gained from this process? What do you feel you now know from all those months of dedicated work, to gain these grades?

I have gained reassurance that I am still a good student, is that what you mean?

The poetry? The stories?

Oh yeah, I got an A* for that.