

Which *you* do you prefer?

We are on dangerous ground when we assume that performance texts such as biographies, no matter how personal they seem, offer a reliable image of any given person's life. A performance text is always in some ways *invented*, a *construction*.

Write a list of all the names you are known by, and think about how you came by these names.

How do the different names make you feel, and how do they make you behave?

Which names best describe or define you?

Once we start thinking about which version of ourselves we are dealing with and which audience we might be writing for, we are already a long way towards constructing a text based around identity. Conversations about differences and overlaps between self and identity come out of this.

We also start to think about the ways in which names we are called suggest the ways we are seen. Proxemics comes into this, because we might naturally wish to be closer to certain people who have 'named' us than others, and sometimes for very different reasons.

Try writing a narrative based on a significant moment that happened to you under one of your particular names. Do so without using the letter 'e', and without getting around this by misspellings or writing phonetically.

Why do this? Concentrating on what we are being denied makes it easier to avoid feeling overly indulgent in terms of the content of our writing; the formality of the exercise allows the content to flow.

The writing and acting out can also provide an opportunity to revisit the past and, through the work, to identify power relationships and to explore how things could have been different, and so might perhaps be different in the future. At the heart of this is bringing our own agendas to the fore.

Make it count!

Imagine yourself in an elevator, where you meet someone who could make your dream career happen. Go back to your agenda (above) and decide what you would say. Use the 'elevator pitch' resource to help with the wording.

This resource was developed by John Freeman (University of St Mark and St John Plymouth) and Dawn Bennett (Curtin University).