

Title of Session: WriteTalk - Writing Challenges

Moderator: Sandra Shattuck

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Room: After School Online Room

SandraS: Yes, this is WriteTalk.

SandraS: Welcome!

BJ: Welcome, everyone to the WriteTalk discussion with Sandra Shattuck.

BJ: We usually start the discussions in Tapped In with introductions.

BJ: I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania

NatalieCH: I am Natalie, and I am a preservice teacher

SusanPy: I teach 4th in VA

AudraW: I am a preservice teacher at the University of Houston

DianeLC: I am a preservice teacher

BrandiR: I am a preservice teacher from UofH

AllisonEB: I am a preservice teacher at the University of Houston

MarthaJ: I am a technology resource teacher in Alexandria, Virginia

CandiceZ: I am a preservice teacher also at the University of Houston

SandraS: I teach English at Alabama A&M University

SusanR: K to 8 Occasional Teacher(substitute) in Canada

LindaNV: I am a preservice teacher from University of Houston

DavidWe: I help teachers learn more about technology often for math and science and I was walking through Times Square this afternoon in New York City

MandyMa: I am Mandy a preservice teacher at University of Houston

ShalondraM: I am Shalondra pre-service teacher University of Houston

SandraS: Anybody else want to introduce ?

SandraS: A big thanks to all of you who ventured over here after Pre-Service meeting was cancelled.

DianeLC: you are welcome

NatalieCH: Thank you for having us

SandraS: Great group!

ShannonMA: Hello everyone!

MandyMa: thanks for having us

DianeLC: we are happy to be here also

SandraS: I usually start by explaining a little bit about the National Writing Project

SandraS: <http://www.writingproject.org>

SandraS: which is a professional development project started in 1973

SandraS: at UC Berkely

SandraS: the NWP is federally and state funded

SandraS: has about 185 sites nationally

SandraS: housed at universities and the projects cater mostly to k-12 teachers

SandraS: there are 3 basic tenets behind the NWP

SandraS: 1) teachers are the best teachers of other teachers

SandraS: 2) teachers who improve their own writing then improve their teaching of writing

SandraS: 3) writing is a fantastic learning process in any subject matter

SandraS: anyone who is a member of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

SandraS: knows that math folks treasure writing as a way of learning

DavidWe agrees most assuredly

AudraW: I agree

DavidWe . o O (as a card carrying NCTM member)

SandraS: so while the NWP has a lot of English teachers, there are also plenty math, social studies, esl teachers..

SandraS applauds David

SandraS: the cornerstone of the NWP is the Summer Invitational Institute

SandraS: which takes place at each site each summer for about 4 weeks.

SandraS: I went to one summer 2003 and have become enamored of NWP

SandraS: I've been teaching over 20 years but involvement in NWP has really rejuvenated my teaching.

SandraS: The NWP also believes that reform inthe schools needs to come from within...from teachers.

SandraS: And so NWP encourages teachers to write about their practice and publish.

SandraS: OK, that's my spiel about NWP

SandraS: WriteTalk is a spin-off of my involvement

SandraS: I thought Tapped In was a perfect place for an online writing group

SandraS: one that talked about professional writing (how we write about teaching) and about the teaching of writing

SandraS: so here we are....

ShalondraM: what does nwp stand for

SandraS: I'm thinkin' that plenty of you have writing assignments, writing ideas

SandraS: National Writing Project

SandraS: so let's talk about writing!

ShalondraM: Thanks:)

CandiceZ: sounds great

ShannonMA: thanks

SandraS: is anyone currently writing something where they're stuck?

LindaNV: what about writing do you want to talk about?

SandraS: how about challenges you face?

AudraW: yes I am writing my teaching philosophy

SusanPy: professionally?

LindaNV: I just think that I am not a good writer

SandraS: aha!!!!

ShalondraM: writing 20 page papers

AudraW: I cannot get started

SandraS: wow. lots of yummy stuff.

BrandiR: Teaching philosophy stumps me as well

SandraS: we have Audra's teaching philosophy...something most of us need to write at some time

DianeLC: How do you get low level learner interested in writing

NatalieCH: I have that problem to getting started, and once I get started. I cannot end

CandiceZ: I just have a hard time starting

AudraW: I can get the juicy parts but not the beginning and end

AllisonEB: I have the hardest time getting started then once I get in the swing of things I am on a roll

SandraS: writing...kind of like exercise...hard to start, but once you start....

LindaNV: I have a hard time starting also, but I think that when I am finished that it doesn't sound professional to me

DianeLC: It seems that they think that they cannot write because they cannot spell good

BrandiR: I have better ideas when I am typing than writing

AllisonEB: I think it is difficult to find the perfect first sentence to grab the readers attention

SandraS: ok, Diane brought up a good point....confusing mechanics with good writing

ShalondraM: I just like to write about my own topics

SandraS: cool, Shalondra

CandiceZ: If I have a really good topic to write about, I can go on and on about it

DianeLC: it is as though they just shut down

ShannonMA: I like to come up with my own topics based on interests

SandraS: lots of students believe they can't write because they can't spell, or they don't know where the comma goes

SusanPy: I can write personally much easier

AllisonEB: I agree, it is easier to write about something you are passionate about rather than a specific topic given

SandraS: ok, so let's deal with some of these issues

SandraS: 1) getting started

SandraS: 2) teaching philosophy

SandraS: how's that for a start?

CandiceZ: That's probably why a lot of children don't like to write, because they are always given prompts

DianeLC: When they are given a free topic they then cannot think of anything to write about

NatalieCH: I agree that when students focus hard on mechanics it takes the pleasure of writing away and makes it difficult

ShannonMA: Yes students should write for pleasure

AudraW: I know in math it is hard to get the students to write

BrandiR: teachers should focus more on the student's ideas and writing, than the mechanics so much

DianeLC: did all of you like to write as children? I did not

AudraW: they do not know how to relate math to everyday life

SandraS: students should definitely write for pleasure, but how do you balance that with testing? assessment?

LindaNV: I hated to write

MandyMa: not without a prompt

LindaNV: I still do

CandiceZ: I like to write when I wanted to write

ShalondraM: The state of Texas wants writing

NatalieCH: but mechanics are important, it becomes when should they be weighted

ShalondraM: It's on the TAKS test

SandraS: if a student of mine has gorgeous ideas but those ideas make little sense because mechanics impede understanding, then I have more work to do

CandiceZ: I think that you have to make it interesting, you can still assess on something that they do themselves

ShalondraM: So, they have to practice.

SandraS: you can also build in the skill of self-assessment

SandraS: and peer review

AudraW: that is true in many subjects

NatalieCH: I agree Sandra

DianeLC: but on the test things may not interest the child. However they still have to write on topic

SandraS: I'm a firm believer that talking about writing and writing about writing teaches as much about the process as doing it

AllisonEB: as teachers shouldn't we always try to make even the most boring topics interesting?

NatalieCH: so true Diane

CandiceZ: Yes but then they will be prepared if they have practice

LindaNV: what do you do when they really don't review?

ShalondraM: Pass the test or fail

AllisonEB: that is the hardest part, finding that niche

NatalieCH: children have to understand and learn how to write to prompts for those reason

CandiceZ: Maybe the kids can come up with the prompts

SandraS: peer reviewing is a skill that also needs to be taught

ShalondraM: sometimes peers do not tell the truth

SandraS: the key is to offer structured, do-able questions about a peer's piece that guides the reviewer through the process.

AllisonEB: sometimes they just skim over to get done with

AudraW: I was never taught peer reviewing

MandyMa: and many kids enjoy peer reviewing because they can share their ideas

BrandiR: you can have a checklist

NatalieCH: so true it does need to be taught, because so many children can do no peer review accurately

SandraS: right, often students believe they're being too critical, not nice

AllisonEB: can you trust a peer review?

ShannonMA: Students need to have reviews with their peers and teachers

SusanPy: I have a self edit checklist and a peer editing conference sheet that my students follow

ShannonMA: yes, I think that you can trust a peer

ShalondraM: They do not want to hurt their friends' feelings

SandraS: I think most students see when a peer is just reviewing to get it over with

NatalieCH: students have to be taught so you can trust peer review

SandraS: or if a peer is really paying attention

CandiceZ: I think at a certain age they can peer review, but you have to go over how to do it with them first

CandiceZ: I think kids will be honest if you set the tone for that

SandraS: Susan, the self-edit checklist and peer editing conference sounds great

SandraS: how has that been working for you?

DianeLC: or maybe they do not really know how to write either...then what

ShannonMA: We have to help them

SandraS: I agree, Shannon

LindaNV: I just remember that I didn't put much effort in peer reviews when I was in high school or junior high

ShalondraM: that's when the parents should step in Diane

BrandiR: you just keep practicing and modeling how to write

SusanPy: it's hard because not all students have the skill to edit

LindaNV: so that's why I am skeptical

AllisonEB: modeling is key

ShannonMA: teachers must be models for their students

DianeLC: or at least that is their excuse

SandraS: so if I have a non-writer doing a peer review, I can still ask that non-writer to tell identify a favorite sentence and explain choice

BrandiR: there are lots of teachers who like writers workshop

NatalieCH: you should never be too busy for your child. I am never too busy for Kira

ShalondraM: well they do not want their children to lack in writing

SandraS: so if you follow Peter Elbow's ideas for peer reviewing

ShannonMA: yes

LindaNV: we are their parents during the day

CandiceZ: That's awesome Natalie, but not all parents are like you

SandraS: the peer reviewer's task is to tell the writer what s/he is READING

DianeLC: I agree but some parents are busy trying to survive

SandraS: Elbow calls it writing down the movies in your mind

BrandiR: maybe they can have a buddy from a higher grade level

AudraW: I like that idea about movies

DianeLC: I like that one...the movies in your mind

MandyMa: how does that work..?

SandraS: so peer reviewers have to listen to their own mind as they read

SandraS: attend to the places they get excited or dose off

BrandiR: thanks

SandraS: and then talk about those places

SandraS: I also agree that modeling is key

NatalieCH: I like that idea Sandra, do you know any sites that I could read up about it

MandyMa: that's neat

SandraS: so how many of you have peer reviewed each other's teaching philosophies?

AudraW: no one has peer reviewed mine yet

DianeLC: Sandra can you talk to us more about this movie in the mind

NatalieCH: I have not done it

CandiceZ: We have peer reviewed lot of things for each other

BrandiR: I haven't done anyone's

ShannonMA: no has peer reviewed mine either

MandyMa: yea...the movie

SandraS: Natalie, Elbow's ideas are in Community of Writers, in a book called Writing & Responding

SandraS: so if we're asking our students to peer review, shouldn't we also do the same?

AllisonEB: yes

AudraW: I am writing mine for employment at a junior high

BrandiR: it helps to have input

CandiceZ: I like doing peer reviews, because it gives you a different perspective

SandraS: Anybody have part of a philosophy they could put up here?

AudraW: I have part of my autobiography for my student teaching

NatalieCH: okay, I did not catch the whole title, but I am going to get it from the transcript that is emailed

SandraS: _Sharing and Responding_ by Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff

SandraS: it's a small book that goes along with the larger book called

SandraS: _A Community of Writers_

SandraS: I'm not sure if any of it is online

SandraS: ok, so let's try this....I've got a teaching philosophy

SandraS: and I'm a little bit scared about putting it up here

SandraS: but I'm willing to try if anyone wants to practice peer review

SandraS: actually, I've never had it peer reviewed

SandraS: let's see if I can find it!

NatalieCH: I would like to practice

LindaNV: maybe it will give me ideas

SandraS: ok, let's try this....what do you expect to read when you read someone's teaching philosophy

SandraS: and how do we make that writing come alive?

AllisonEB: honestly I have never read one before

DianeLC: their beliefs

LindaNV: what are their goals

ShannonMA: their beliefs of teaching

AudraW: their beliefs

CandiceZ: How they want to teach

LindaNV: of teaching

BrandiR: beliefs

AudraW: on teaching and on behavior and classroom management

MandyMa: their beliefs of teaching and how they want to teach

NatalieCH: I expect to read why they choose teaching, how they will organize their classroom and what philosophy or theory they will use when teaching

ShalondraM: contributions in education

SusanPy: passion

AllisonEB: I think it comes alive when you can see their passion in the writing

ShalondraM: community service with children

SandraS: ah....passion....

LindaNV: good word Allison

SandraS: because dissertations have been written on beliefs of teaching

SandraS: and to me, that's the challenge of that piece of writing

SandraS: how to make it concise and not lose the passion

MandyMa: yep

ShannonMA: yup

NatalieCH: you are right..so many beliefs and philosophies on teaching

AllisonEB: exactly

SandraS: how to condense what takes years to study into a couple paragraphs

SandraS: how do you get that on the page?

AllisonEB: how do you do it?

MandyMa: how?

AllisonEB: it seems impossible

NatalieCH: sounds difficult

CandiceZ: Yeah it does

ShannonMA: yes that's the difficult part

SandraS: yup....

SusanPy: be concise

SandraS: let's try this.

CandiceZ: I hated the one I had to write

SandraS: everybody just write one sentence that best expresses your teaching philosophy

NatalieCH: the two I had to write made no sense, because they had to be written according to a guideline

LindaNV: I have always been taught to be concise... I can't elaborate

SandraS: ok, so take a second to write that sentence in a text program, and when we're done

CandiceZ: I can't even think of one sentence

AllisonEB: I have trouble elaborating

SusanPy: All children can learn

SandraS: we'll each paste our sentence in and go from there

CandiceZ: see it's the whole starting thing

SandraS: is everyone willing to try?

DianeLC: I believe that children learn by sharing and communicating in a community environment

SandraS: LOL, Candice

NatalieCH: Children should be allowed to explore their learning environments, however they should be discipline

SandraS: ok, Diane has one

ShannonMA: As a teacher, I want to create a comfortable classroom environment where every child feels accepted to learn.

SandraS: your teaching philosophy in one sentence....

SandraS: I like that Shannon

ShannonMA: thanks

ShalondraM: That's too short

MandyMa: As a teacher I want to create a comfortable classroom where learning is always taking place

SandraS: We just need one sentence!

SandraS: My philosophy is to get out of the way so that students can learn.

CandiceZ: I believe that every child has the same potential to learn, and I want to make sure that happens through encouragement, discipline, and a caring environment

ShalondraM: As a teacher, I want to address every learning style in my classroom on a daily basis.

LindaNV: As a teacher I want to provide an environment of safety, discipline, but also fun while we are learning.

AudraW: I want to be a teacher who believes in her students and can portray the material in many different ways so that the students can all have the chance to learn it.

AllisonEB: As a teacher, I plan to have a classroom full of constant learning and steadily modifying lessons to the needs of my students

BrandiR: believe we should believe in our children and be good role models for them.

SandraS: Mandy said that she wants to create a comfortable classroom where learning is always taking place

AllisonEB: again modeling is key

ShannonMA: Modeling is the key!

MandyMa: got it

CandiceZ: so how did we do Sandra?

SandraS: I'm finding a powerful common thread...

SandraS: sounds excellent!

SandraS: the common thread is ensuring that all students learn

SandraS: being flexible, able to adapt to individual needs

AllisonEB: isn't that the goal?

ShannonMA: I agree

DianeLC: I believe just from listening to all of us here on line that we all feel children are the most important part of our day

SandraS: the goal of teaching, Allison?

ShalondraM: yes I agree

SusanPy: word of advice to preservice - be flexible and creative

SandraS: well said, Diane

AllisonEB: just that every child is learning

LindaNV: WELL SAID Diane

BrandiR: these are all good philosophies

SandraS: yes. these are great philosophies.

SandraS: and guess what?

CandiceZ: Children are the reason we are here

SandraS: we all just started with relatively little pain, I think

SandraS: so where do you go after you've got a core sentence?

MandyMa: expand on that idea

SusanPy: details

AllisonEB: elaborate

AudraW: the juicy stuff

ShannonMA: Expand on our ideas

SandraS: absolutely.....

ShannonMA: elaborate and be creative

SandraS: what does it mean to be flexible? creative?

LindaNV: to the body to explain why you said what you did

SandraS: you've already got the terms that are important to you

DianeLC: this the part where the kids say I cannot do it

SandraS: so you can do just as you all said....elaborate

SandraS: LOL, Diane

MandyMa: great

SandraS: I'd like to point out the power of collective writing!

SandraS: just writing together seems easier for me

SandraS: and more fun

AudraW: never heard of it

DianeLC: I always tell them to tell me about their story

MandyMa: it's great...it does seem easier

ShannonMA: yes, I agree

SandraS: I like that Diane

AllisonEB: me too

CandiceZ: what is collective writing?

BrandiR: In mine I talked about creating a positive environment, collaborating, knowing what to teach, being dedicated, etc. Each paragraph I elaborated

DianeLC: then I ask them to write what they have told me on the paper

SandraS: sounds great, Brandi

AllisonEB: good

ShannonMA: I like that Brandi

LindaNV: that's the part that I'm terrible at

SandraS: Brandi, did you use specific examples?

BrandiR: thanks

NatalieCH: I want to create an environment that promotes learning, responsibility, honest[y] and trust

DianeLC: then we start the process again and suddenly I remind them to write it on the paper so I can read it

BrandiR: what kind of examples, like real-life

ShalondraM: yes

AllisonEB: situational

DianeLC: it helps some, but not with all of them

SandraS: right... a teaching philosophy is by definition somewhat broad

SandraS: but examples are what brings writing to life

AllisonEB: right

ShannonMA: I agree Sandra

MandyMa: exactly

SandraS: so how do you balance that while writing your philosophy?

AllisonEB: me too

BrandiR: thanks for the tip Sandra

AudraW: it[']s a fine line

CandiceZ: how do you, because isn't your philosophy supposed to be pretty short.

ShalondraM: Good question

AudraW: you have to know when there is enough philosophy and when more of YOU goes into the paper

SandraS: exactly, the philosophy needs to be short and broad at the same time

MandyMa: I think that you give a broad statement in the beginning and then expand with several situational ideas after that

BrandiR: My rough copy was a full page single spaced

SandraS: really is one of the most difficult writing assignments around, I think

SandraS: that sounds good Mandy

ShalondraM: about 1 pg

AllisonEB: it sounds like it

ShannonMA: sounds good

DianeLC: okay

SandraS: has anyone looked for model teaching philosophies online?

MandyMa: no

DianeLC: no

SandraS: I haven't , but I think I will

CandiceZ: No I haven't

AllisonEB: no

NatalieCH: I have

AudraW: yes there are a lot out there

SandraS: would be cool to see what's out there

CandiceZ: Yeah I think I will now that you mentioned it

SandraS: because it's not as if there's a teaching philosophy statement police

AllisonEB: hehehe

NatalieCH: The teaching philosophies I read, where long

SandraS: that says exactly what you're supposed to write

AudraW: when I get stuck I revert back to the ones I found online

SandraS: how long Natalie?

BrandiR: there are great ideas from other teachers online

NatalieCH: they were all different, some focused on classroom environment, instruction

ShannonMA: that sounds great

NatalieCH: the longest was five pages

AllisonEB: wow

SandraS: Wow, five pages...

ShannonMA: oh

BrandiR: That is long

NatalieCH: I did not read it all, because it was too long

NatalieCH: they used a lot of examples

LindaNV: I thought they were supposed to be short

AllisonEB: they are

ShalondraM: People do not want to read that, they might get bored.

NatalieCH: I thought so too, that was the longest I read

ShannonMA: we have to find a short one

CandiceZ: I probably wouldn't have read the whole thing

SandraS: So....if anyone wants to post a teaching philosophy to the group...the WriteTalk group...we could all read for each other

ShalondraM: You are not writing a Master's Thesis

ShannonMA: okay

BrandiR: I am sure there are lots out there

SandraS: I'd be willing to go find that philosophy I wrote and post it

AudraW: good

SandraS: because I would like some feedback

NatalieCH: I will

CandiceZ: I would like to read it

DianeLC: I would like to read it Sandra

MandyMa: that sounds good...I would love to receive some feedback

AllisonEB: me too

ShannonMA: I would like to read it also

BrandiR: me too

LindaNV: me too

AudraW: feedback is always welcome

SandraS: cool....do you all know how to become members of WriteTalk?

DianeLC: go ahead and post it so we can read it please

NatalieCH: I think you go to groups and search then join

DianeLC: no I do not

SandraS: right, Natalie

AudraW: that's how

SandraS: just go to the top of the screen and click on Search

SandraS: then click on Groups

ShalondraM: Great Job TRIAD

SandraS: then just input WriteTalk

SandraS: and you should get a group description with a link to join

LindaNV: are we doing that now?

CandiceZ: cool thanks Sandra

SandraS: sure, Linda, let's do that

SandraS: anyone who needs to join, go ahead

AllisonEB: hehehe

SandraS: I think what I'll do is post my teaching philosophy to the discussion...that way it will go to everyone by email and you don't need to log into Tapped In to download it from the files

ShalondraM: Where is groups?

AllisonEB: great thanks!

SandraS: but if you're not comfortable emailing to everyone, you can just upload your file to the office and let people know it's there

ShannonMA: thanks

BrandiR: I joined, I think

CandiceZ: yah! I joined

NatalieCH: I have joined

AllisonEB: go to tapped in tab

NatalieCH: go to the tapped in tab at the top of the screen

ShannonMA: wait I am confused

AllisonEB: then click on it when it pops up then hit join group

LindaNV: TADA... IM IN!!!

DianeLC: I think I found it there is one match

SandraS: What's your question, Shannon?

ShannonMA: what do I do?

DianeLC: now what

CandiceZ: Shannon, go to search

BrandiR: where are you Shannon

MarthaJ left the room (signed off).

ShannonMA: okay

CandiceZ: and groups

DianeLC: I got it

ShannonMA: then what

CandiceZ: then type in writetalk and one match should come up

AllisonEB: then hit join

ShannonMA: okay

SandraS applauds collective teaching skills!

LindaNV: great team work

ShannonMA: I did it!

SandraS: what kind of feedback do we want?

NatalieCH: positive, and constructive criticism

MandyMa: honest

SandraS: and do you want to give feedback through email or in another WriteTalk meeting?

ShannonMA: honest and positive

AudraW: constructive

SandraS: great, Natalie and Mandy

AudraW: concise criticism

ShalondraM: ANOTHER TALK MEETING

CandiceZ: we can do another meeting

AllisonEB: meeting

MandyMa: meeting

ShannonMA: another meeting

NatalieCH: meeting

BrandiR: meetings fine

LindaNV: CONSTRUCTIVE...

AllisonEB: exactly

SandraS: ok, WriteTalk meets second Thursday of the month....but I think you've got pre-service at the same time....

DavidWe . o O (de-CONSTRUCTIVE?)

LindaNV: another meeting would be fine

SandraS: do you want do meet in two weeks?

ShalondraM: Helpful tools and info about writing

BrandiR: what time

AllisonEB: sure

ShannonMA: sure

MandyMa: sure

NatalieCH: sure. I will be here

CandiceZ: sounds good

AudraW: sure we do

LindaNV: sure

SandraS: ok, so this will be a special WriteTalk meeting just for this group!

ShalondraM: will it be in the calendar?

AllisonEB: yeah!

CandiceZ: Diane we are meeting again in 2 weeks

SandraS: I'll talk to BJ about it...

AllisonEB: ok great

DianeLC: thank you Candice

BrandiR: thanks Sandra

BJ: I can put it on the calendar if you want. February 24? Same time?

MandyMa: calendar?

NatalieCH: that is fine..two weeks

CandiceZ: yeah write talk group

AllisonEB: thanks Sandra

SandraS: That would be great BJ

NatalieCH: I will put it on the cluster calendar

LindaNV: sounds fabulous

SandraS: and we could meet in the WriteTalk office

BrandiR: sounds good

DianeLC: diddo

CandiceZ: thanks Natalie

BrandiR: thanks Natalie

ShalondraM: what about the pre-service teacher forum?

ShannonMA: okay

AllisonEB: same time. same place.

AllisonEB: thanks

BJ: PreService doesn't meet again until March

AllisonEB: can we go between the two?

SandraS: because I don't want to conflict

ShalondraM smiles

ShannonMA: I guess I will be here also

MandyMa: cool

AllisonEB: oh ok

ShalondraM: okay

SandraS: Feb. 24, 8pm central, WriteTalk office...we'll talk about teaching philosophy statements

NatalieCH: I will be here must definitely

ShannonMA: me too

AllisonEB: me too

SandraS: which we all will have uploaded to the office or sent through the discussion...

AllisonEB: thanks again, Sandra

BrandiR: I will be here

SandraS: Thanks to all of you for sharing your philosophies!

SandraS: I look forward to reading...and talking

CandiceZ: Thanks Sandra, you are awesome

SandraS: y'all are awesome!

SandraS: goodnight all!