

Title of Session: WriteTalk - Writing a Teaching Philosophy

Moderator: Sandra Shattuck

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Room: After School Online Room

SandraS: We'll start in a little bit.

SandraS: We usually start by introducing ourselves.

SandraS: Then I'll talk a little bit about WriteTalk.

SandraS: And then we'll talk about statements of teaching philosophy.

BJ: welcome to WriteTalk everyone

SandraS applauds BJ

BJ: two housekeeping items before we start

BJ: if you are new to tapped in, click on the Actions menu in the top right of your chat window and then click on detach

BJ: tip two: if Sandy shows a url, make sure you hold down the ctrl key on your keyboard as you click on the url to override any pop up blockers

BJ: with that out of the way, let's start with introductions so Sandy knows who her audience is

MagnoliaA: ok thanks for the info

RobynH: I'm a preservice teacher at U of H

BJ: I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania and a helpdesk volunteer for Tapped In

SandraS: I teach English in Alabama

MagnoliaA: Hi my name is Magnolia and I teach first grad bilingual in Pasadena I.S.D

CrystalCA: I am an 8th grade science teacher from Texas

MagnoliaA: Oh Pasadena, TX

JenniferCK: hi, I'm a pre-service teacher w/ UH

SandraS: wonderful...great group!

SandraS: let me tell you a bit about the National Writing Project, which is the organization that engendered WriteTalk

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

SandraS: you can look at the url later if you want

SandraS: the url will be in the transcript that you'll receive via email

SandraS: The National Writing Project (NWP) has been around over 30 years

SandraS: started at UC Berkeley

SandraS: it's a professional development organization

SandraS: federally and state funded

SandraS: there are over 185 sites nationally

SandraS: each site is housed at a university and works mostly with k-12 teachers

SandraS: there are 3 tenets behind NWP

RobynH: wow!

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

SandraS: 2) teachers teach writing better if they improve as writers

SandraS: 3) writing is a great methodology for learning in any subject matter

MagnoliaA: ok

SandraS: the main project for each NWP site is a summer institute

SandraS: these usually last 4 weeks and often offer a stipend

SandraS: if you get a chance to do a summer institute, I highly recommend it

SandraS: you can find out if there's a site near you by going to the website and checking it out

CrystalCA: can a teacher of any content area participate?

SandraS: I first did a summer institute in 2003

SandraS: it's been a fantastic experience

SandraS: so I wanted to keep that group going online at Tapped In

SandraS: the group eventually morphed into WriteTalk

SandraS: which is an online writing group focused on professional writing

SandraS: that is, writing about our profession of teaching

SandraS: NWP believes in getting teachers published...so there are a couple NWP publications filled with lots of information

SandraS: The Voice -- newsletter

SandraS: The Quarterly -- magazine

SandraS: both available online

SandraS: ok, any questions about NWP?

JenniferCK: not so far

DavidWe joined the room.

CrystalCA: none

SandraS waves to David

RobynH: I found the one in Houston. It's at the U of H clear lake. Here's the website:
http://soe.cl.uh.edu/writing_project/

SandraS: NWP sites are often housed in Education departments

DavidWe knows that this is true at Berkeley

SandraS nods to David

SandraS: ok, shall we move on to teaching philosophies?

SandraS: let's start with each of us checking in...just say if you have already written a teaching philosophy, if you're revising one, haven't considered it...basically, where are you with your teaching philosophy statement?

SandraS: I'll start.

SandraS: I've got one finished and I need to revise it, and I'm having perfectionitis...having a hard time revising cuz I want it perfect the first time.

JenniferCK: I have written a brief philosophy, but it's more of a mission statement...only a paragraph or so, and very general

RobynH: I'm in the process of writing mine for my teaching portfolio, but i'm not sure what it is supposed to entail.

CrystalCA: I wrote one years ago... 10 years...

MagnoliaA: I've written one but am considering revising it

SandraS: anyone else?

SandraS: we've got lots of juicy material here!

CrystalCA: to be honest, I hadn't thought of writing another until now

SandraS: Crystal, one think I keep reading in the literature is that the statement of teaching philosophy is a life-long project

SandraS: because our teaching changes, our philosophy needs to be revised, too

SusanR: I wrote one probably 8 years ago..the last time I was evaluated

SandraS: let's start with Robyn's question about what it should entail

MagnoliaA: yes

SusanR: . o O (should be constantly revised)

RobynH: thanks...

SandraS: just so ya know, there are resources in the WriteTalk office

CrystalCA: okay

JenniferCK: my management style has already evolved and I expect my philosophy to evolve also

SandraS nods to Jennifer

SandraS: you can visit the WriteTalk group office

SandraS: and if you go to links

SandraS: you'll see a folder of resources

SandraS: several of them discuss how to approach writing a statement

SandraS: but let's try this for ourselves

RobynH: okay

SandraS: if you're sitting down about to read a statement of teaching philosophy, what would you expect to find?

JenniferCK: k

CrystalCA: ready

JenniferCK: I expect to read what is very important to that person

SandraS nods

JenniferCK: a kind of mission statement

CrystalCA: views on student achievement

RobynH: and views on how you will teach your class

SandraS: ok, so if you haven't gotten a teaching job yet, you can still write the statement, eh?

SandraS: cuz you already know what's important

SandraS: you've been a student and you have a clear idea of what works and what doesn't

RobynH: yup

CrystalCA: yes

SandraS: and if you've been teaching for a gazillion years, you can also use the philosophy to see how you've changed

CrystalCA: very true

SandraS: ok, so typically, a statement of teaching philosophy...I'm going to start saying "stp"

SandraS: it's easier!

SandraS: typically, a STP is about a page long

SandraS: there's not a lot you can do in a page

SandraS: think of trying to capture your beliefs and practices in one page

SandraS: daunting task

MagnoliaA: yes

RobynH: definitely

CrystalCA: I agree

JenniferCK sighs

SandraS: BJ, can I post something to the whiteboard?

SandraS: I want to post an example statement and see what you think

JenniferCK: sure

SandraS: we can analyze it a bit

MagnoliaA: ok

SandraS: then I'd love to look at Robyn's paragraph...or was it Jennifer

CrystalCA: what do you mean "whiteboard"?

SandraS: somebody said she had a paragraph done

SandraS: would be easy to look at it

RobynH: Jenn's paragraph

SandraS: Crystal, if you look at the Room View of this room and to the left

SandraS: you'll see a link to Whiteboard

JenniferCK: well I don't have it saved on my pc

SandraS: right now, it's got stuff written on it

SandraS: but usually we can post other things

JenniferCK: it is also old...from several semesters ago

SandraS: ok, I'm going to input this example right here

JenniferCK: where do I find the room view?

SandraS: you can then choose to go to the Actions pulldown menu at the top right of this chat box

SandraS: and choose Send to pasteboard

SandraS: let's see if I can input this

CrystalCA: Is the paste board the whiteboard?

BJ: no, Crystal

RobynH: where's the pasteboard

BJ: if you see Welcome to Tapped In you are in room view

BJ: if you've detached your chat window, you might want to attach..

MagnoliaA: its ok

BJ: if you go to the Actions menu in the top right of the CHAT window you can scroll down to SEND TO PASTEBOARD

BJ: wb, Sandy. We were trying to catch everyone up

SandraS: thanks BJ

SandraS: I just lost the stuff I copied to clipboard....

SandraS: ack!

BJ: so...does everyone see the welcome to Tapped In screen above the chat window?

RobynH: yup

MagnoliaA: I think so

CrystalCA: I see the whiteboard on my screen now

RobynH: click on the "welcome" button on the left

BJ: and you understand how to see the pasteboard and the whiteboard?

BJ: Sandy, can they just paste to the whiteboard?

RobynH: no

SandraS: I think so

BJ: Robyn, do you see a blue menu on the left above this chat window?

RobynH: yeah

SandraS: right now, there's a great message from you, BJ

BJ: click on whiteboard

RobynH: I clicked on the whiteboard link

SandraS: so I don't know if you want to save it...or write over it or not

BJ: at the top of the whiteboard is a place to WRITE

BJ: you won't overwrite, Sandy

RobynH: "refresh it"

RobynH: oh i see it

RobynH: but there's nothing there

BJ: write on it at the top

BJ: when you click on that link, a text window will open where you can enter your text

BJ . o O (either type or paste)

RobynH: what? anything? I don't have a paragraph to put on there though

SandraS: ok, I'm going to put something on whiteboard....

BJ waits to see what Sandy posts

SandraS: look below BJ's post

BJ: when she's done, then you do want to refresh

SandraS: you should see two paragraphs

RobynH: there I posted something

RobynH: it's from awhile ago thou

SandraS: the first par. starts with a definition of "public service"

CrystalCA: I see it

JenniferCK: ok, I'm at a whiteboard, just not sure if it's the same one you're at???

RobynH: refresh

RobynH: then scroll down till you see "my teaching philosophy"

JenniferCK: ok that didn't work well

SandraS: Robyn, can you see your own teaching philosophy?

RobynH: yup

BJ: just start again...click on whiteboard on the blue menu

RobynH: it's underneath yours

RobynH: (Sandra's)

SandraS: Thanks, BJ!

BJ: then you should see the latest version of what has been added

SandraS: cool!

SandraS: Does everyone see Robyn's teaching philosophy?

MagnoliaA: yes

CrystalCA: yes

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Whiteboard posts from the WriteTalk discussion on 04/14/2005

pub-lic ser-vice; noun A service performed for the benefit of the public, especially by a nonprofit organization.

I have always enjoyed helping other people Throughout my life, I have always been very active in doing so In high school it was with the Boy Scouts and various scouting related service organizations; during my undergraduate years at college it was volunteering on two ambulance corps and helping handicapped people learn to swim One way or another, I have always wanted to make the world a better place Through these activities I have grown a lot as well When helping handicapped children, many of whom are disabled for life, I really learned to appreciate the gift of health that I normally took for granted I took a long look at life when I had my first ambulance call where the patient did not survive I thought about that ambulance run for a long time afterwards The friendships that I have gained through these activities, both with the people I have helped and others who were helping as well, will last a lifetime I sought to aid others, and my life was enriched in the process.

en-thu-si-asm noun Great excitement for or interest in a subject or cause.

Ever since elementary school, I have known that I wanted to spend my life in the computer field. I have always had a tremendous interest in the computer sciences I consider myself lucky for this; few people know, especially so early in life, exactly what field they want to enter into as a life career This has aided me in the last few years Academically, it enabled me to excel in my computer science courses I enjoyed the work so greatly that I would strive for perfection, and often do more than was required Outside the classroom, I learned aspects of computing that are not always taught in a course I have been involved in a number of research projects that allowed me to use the theory that I learned in class in a more practical manner In addition to the results of the research, I increased my research skills and learned how research projects work, which is aiding me as I pursue my Ph.D Through my computer related employment, I learned many aspects of the computer field that only come from being in the workforce The work habits and experience I gained there will help me in whatever I pursue in life.

-SandraS

My Teaching Philosophy

Some characteristics that are important to me as a teacher are good listening, patience, and a positive attitude. I need to listen to what my students are telling me, and in return, they will learn good listening skills. It is also very important to be patient. When I have a whole lesson planned out, I might not get through it. I need to remember to be patient. The important thing is that they are learning while having fun.

Another characteristic that is important is having a positive attitude. I need to remember to keep a smile on my face so the kids can feel more welcomed into the classroom and open to talking to me. I believe the purposes of education are for children to learn in a safe and fun environment. We need to teach kids about the real world and better prepare them for it, not shelter them from it. We need a classroom where it is okay to make

mistakes, so that they may learn and discover new things. I want my students to know that they can achieve anything and that an education is a huge part of achieving that goal. I think the most important attributes of teachers are being open minded and nurturing. Every child, no matter where they are from or how smart they are, should be nurtured and encouraged to grow mentally, emotionally, and intellectually. Teachers really need to keep an open mind to all children's backgrounds and upbringings, and teach the children about our wonderful multicultural society. I can apply all of this information in my classroom.

I can make a poster for my classroom with big positive words on it in different colors to remind me and my students that we need to live and abide by these words of confidence. I can also make a poster with all the students' names on it. Then every time a student does an action having to do with one of the words, they get a star of that color next to their name. The important thing to remember is that all the students are included, and even the littlest things can count for a star.

Another way to introduce my philosophy into the classroom would be by having them study about all the different cultures and traditions. Maybe right before winter break, we can study about how some celebrate Christmas or Hanukkah or even Kwanza. This way they can see that everyone is special even through our different cultures, and it doesn't matter what you look like, we are all important.

-RobynH

SandraS: What I'd like to do is just take a minute or two to read.

RobynH: ahh, don't make fun of it too much, it's old!

RobynH is embarrassed

SandraS: Then we can discuss, if that's ok.

RobynH: okay...

SandraS: And big thanks to Robyn

JenniferCK: yeah I found it!!!

SandraS: it's not easy to offer writing to a bunch of strangers...or friends...or anyone

RobynH: go Jenn!

SandraS applauds Jennifer

CrystalCA: excellent Robyn

MagnoliaA: really great!

JenniferCK smiles

RobynH: bring on the criticism

SandraS: Crystal and Magnolia, is there any part of the statement that caught you, impressed you?

BJ: I like that Robyn starts out with good listening.

SandraS: I agree

CrystalCA: I agree that teachers need to be open minded and nurturing

JenniferCK: I love that it does not throw out a bunch of 'terms', it's not trying to lose you, but it's honest

SandraS: I also like that she starts out with the general and then gives practical examples

RobynH: I'm going to take out the last part, where I include how I'm going to do this in my room

SandraS: I love that part!

RobynH: I don't think that part fits

CrystalCA: I like the informality and honesty of it

MagnoliaA: I liked how you included that everyone is special even though of different cultures

RobynH: that's important to me?

SandraS: I agree Magnolia

MagnoliaA: I think multiculturalism is very important and you definitely addressed it

SandraS: if multiculturalism is important to you then it's important to include

SandraS: Robyn, why don't you think the last part fits?

RobynH: I don't know, maybe I'll just redo it

RobynH: it feels like it doesn't fit, like flow well.

JenniferCK: it sounds passive

SandraS: Jennifer, you mean the last part?

RobynH: how could I change it?

JenniferCK: maybe you want to make it end stronger? I like where you're going with it

SandraS: I think I know what Jennifer means...

SandraS: if you change the verbs, you will sound more assertive

SandraS: for instance,

RobynH: okay...

SandraS: last paragraph

JenniferCK: instead of saying 'maybe' you could say I ENVISION MY CLASS...

SandraS: you say "would be by having them."

RobynH: true, true

SandraS: and "Maybe right before..."

SandraS: ooh, I agree Jennifer

JenniferCK nods

RobynH: but I should keep the examples?

SandraS: "A classroom practice I've designed involves a poster with positive words on it..."

RobynH giggles at Jenn

JenniferCK laughing at herself

RobynH: got it

RobynH: sounds a lot better

SandraS: What do y'all think about Robyn's question on examples?

CrystalCA: what about saying that you will incorporate different cultures throughout the year

JenniferCK: examples rock!

CrystalCA: rather than before the holiday?

RobynH: got it

JenniferCK: I think parents respond well to them and I think philosophies are important for parents (?)

RobynH: that's just a biggie for me, because not everyone celebrates Christmas, and I don't want anyone left out

JenniferCK: who are they for exactly?

SandraS: teaching philosophies?

CrystalCA: true

JenniferCK: yes

SandraS: prospective employers

SandraS: one's self

SandraS: peers

CrystalCA: both

SandraS: you could be really innovative and make them available to students....

CrystalCA: correct, all

SandraS: current employers

JenniferCK: gotcha

CrystalCA: everyone, on your own website

SandraS: a teaching portfolio usually includes an STP in the front

RobynH: yeah, good question

SandraS: I really like reading examples in STP's

SandraS: otherwise I'm not sure the teacher has connected theory and practice

RobynH: me too, wish we could read others

SandraS: there are lots of examples on the web

MagnoliaA: cool

SandraS: if you go to the TIPPs site (that's one of the resources in the WriteTalk office

SandraS: you can see a bunch

SandraS: let's see if I can get that url

SandraS: hang on

CrystalCA: great

BJ wonders if everyone is a member of the WriteTalk group?

CrystalCA: just joined

RobynH: no what's that

BJ: if you are not, click on the SEARCH tab, then click on GROUPS

JenniferCK: not yet

BJ: enter WRITETALK

RobynH: oh, for this discussion group, you mean?

BJ: when you get a match click on the name of the group to view the group ID page

BJ: the group room is where you can view resources...

JenniferCK: to add to fave places?

BJ: and can post to the threaded discussion board between real time chats

JenniferCK: cool!

BJ: when you join a group it is automatically added to your favorite places

JenniferCK: o, that's right

SandraS: here's the TIPPs site

SandraS: <http://www.lll.hawaii.edu/sltcc/tipps/philosophy.html>

SandraS: excellent resources

SandraS: and you can find examples

RobynH: thanks for the link

JenniferCK: my teaching philosophy mentioned that I value interpersonal relationships....that I believe learning should be fun and that I strive to motivate my students to be learners...

RobynH: sounds good

JenniferCK: thanks

SandraS: do you have examples, Jennifer?

RobynH: she said it didn't have to be long, about a page

JenniferCK: no, sorry

JenniferCK: I will begin writing one for my portfolio though

SandraS: cool!

SandraS: you can bring it back here, Jennifer, if you want to talk about it

SandraS: let's take another look at the whiteboard

SandraS: if you'll check the two paragraphs I mentioned

JenniferCK: the short one I created is in a box somewhere and it was for art education....it featured a gigantic pic of my head w. teeny tiny legs and arms

RobynH laughs

SandraS: that sounds intriguing, Jennifer

JenniferCK: more pics than words...I will have to be more serious next time (?)

JenniferCK shrugs

RobynH: yeah

SandraS: the example on the whiteboard uses a more creative approach

SandraS: just so you can see that there are different approaches

SandraS: you'll notice that this writer uses a definition of a word

RobynH: so you should include prior non-teaching experience?

SandraS: and then writes a paragraph related to that term

RobynH: different, never seen that

SandraS: I don't think so, Robyn

SandraS: you want your reader to be completely focused on your ideas about teaching

RobynH: got it

SandraS: some writers use a quotation from a favorite author or teacher

SandraS: and bounce off that

JenniferCK: I like that...quotes

SandraS: it's easy to get caught up in some of the catchwords, like "student-centered classroom"

SandraS: I love that term

SandraS: but how do I make that term particular to my practice?

RobynH: so I'm still a little confused about whether or not i should include specific examples of what I'm planning on doing in my classroom, or not, because it breaks the flow of my statement

SandraS: well, there's another way to include examples

JenniferCK: that's what I was thinking...catchwords...Robyn's is good because it is not a bunch of verbiage

SandraS: you could include an example right next to a more general point

RobynH: thanks!

JenniferCK smiles

RobynH: okay...

SandraS: For instance, "I need to listen to what my students are telling me..." and somewhere near there, you could give an example of how you practice listening.

RobynH: ah got it

JenniferCK: general is good

RobynH: ok

SandraS: I actually like the way you've written it...I don't see a break in flow because it moves naturally from the general to the specific

RobynH: thanks

SandraS: anybody else have comments about the flow of Robyn's statement?

SandraS: Hi, Ezra!

JenniferCK: it does have a flow

RobynH: well, thanks for all the feedback guys

SandraS: Thanks for sharing your statement Robyn!

RobynH: no prob

SandraS: We are at the end of our session.

SandraS: Remember that you can use WriteTalk at any stage of your thinking/writing.

RobynH: ok. thanks!

JenniferCK: THANK YOU

SandraS: And you can always post something to the group if you want...if you're a member of WriteTalk

BJ: I recommend that if you haven't joined the group room that you do so...

RobynH waves

SandraS: Thanks, BJ.

BJ: so you can keep in touch by using the discussion board

JenniferCK WAVES

SandraS: Yes, posting to the discussion board is a great way to communicate.

BJ: thanks, Sandy. The next WriteTalk discussion is May 12

RobynH: k, bye

BJ . o O (another advantage to joining the group...Sandy will post a reminder)

SandraS: Thank you, BJ! As always, a gracious and helpful host!

SandraS: Have a good evening, everyone.

BJ waves goodnight