

Title of Session: Preservice Teacher Forum/WriteTalk- Writing a Teaching Philosophy

Moderator: Sandra Shattuck

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[Ed. Note: This session of Preservice Teachers was held in conjunction with WriteTalk]

BJB2: Sandy, looks like you have a good group here!

SandraS agrees

BJB2: we usually start all discussions in Tapped In with introductions

BJB2: can you please tell us where you are located and what you teach or hope to teach?

SandraS: I teach English in Alabama

ElizabetKI: I am located in Houston and hope to teach second to fourth grade

ChristinW2: I am Christine. A pre-service at UH in Texas. I want to teach 4-8 Math.

KhristinaH: I am a preservice teacher at the University of Houston, and I hope to teach first or second grade in Houston

RamiaF: University of Houston, math 4-8

KhristinaH: Hi Elizabeth

MichelleTJ: My name is Michelle, I am a student at the University of Houston. I hope to teach middle school math next fall.

LisaWar: My name is Lisa and I am in Houston. I want to teach middle school Lang. Arts.

SandraS: all right!

SandraS: great mix of discipline and age

SandraS: did we leave anybody out?

SusanR: K to 8 Occasional Teacher from Ontario, Canada..next teaching assignments..grade 1 and Special Education

SandraS waves to Susan

SandraS: usually I start WriteTalk with a quick explanation of the National WRiting Project

SandraS: and I'll be very quick

SandraS: because i want to get to our writing

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

SandraS: The National Writing Project started in 1973

SandraS: at UC Berkeley

SandraS: as a professional development program

SandraS: federally and state funded

SandraS: there are now over 185 sites in U.S.

SandraS: all housed at colleges but catering mostly to k-12 teachers

SandraS: there are 3 tenets to NWP

SandraS: 1) teachers are best teachers of other teachers

SandraS: 2) teachers teach writing better if they improve their own writing

SandraS: 3) writing can be used as a method of learning in all disciplines

SandraS: lots of math folks tonight, so y'all know that the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

SandraS: NCTM?

SandraS: has a writing curriculum

SandraS: very well thought out connections between learning and writing

SandraS: each of the NWP sites conducts a summer institute

SandraS: if you're interested in attending,

SandraS: you can go to the NWP website

SandraS: and find a site near you

SandraS: OK, that's my spiel on NWP

BJB2 applauds

SandraS: now, let's talk teaching philosophies

SandraS bows

SandraS: did anyone get a chance to write one?

SandraS: has anyone already written one?

KhristinaH: I have not written a formal one

RamiaF: no

ElizabetKI: no, but I want to learn about it

ChristinW2: for ourselves, or...

MichelleTJ: No, I have not written before

LisaWar: have thought about it

SandraS: Christine's question...for ourselves?

SandraS: maybe that's the best way to start

SandraS: think about how you want to define your philosophy/practice for yourself

SandraS: ok, Khristina, do you want to share what you've written

SandraS: doesn't need to be formal

SandraS: I did put up some helpful (I hope) links in the WriteTalk office

SandraS: maybe we should first talk about the purpose of a statement of teaching philosophy

KhristinaH: I believe that the children today are the key to our future. I believe on hands-on learning. It is very important to me that children feel safe and secure in my classroom. I want each child to reach their potential.

SandraS remembers Khristina's philosophy

KhristinaH: Teach to each child, not to a class

KhristinaH: That is it in a nut shell

SandraS: thanks, Khristina!

SandraS: ok, let's start with that, if you're ok being the guinea pig...

KhristinaH: that is fine with me

SandraS: great!

SandraS: first of all, why should you bother writing a teaching philosophy statement?

SandraS: what's it good for?

ElizabetKI: So you can get a job

MichelleTJ: resume

SandraS nods

ChristinW2: so that you have an objective or a reference point

SandraS: so a teaching philosophy might be requested by a prospective employer

LisaWar: for future schools to know your stance and beliefs

SandraS nods to all of the above

MichelleTJ: Maybe to keep you focused on how you want your classroom environment to be

KhristinaH: I think it is very important to give to an employer

SandraS: kind of like an ongoing teaching journal

SandraS: so it's important to think of your audience

SandraS: if you're putting a philosophy up on an electronic portfolio, maybe it needs to be more general

SandraS: if you're applying for a particular position, it needs to fit the requirements of that job

SandraS: and if the job ad says, "include 1-page philosophy"

SandraS: ya gotta write it in one page

SandraS: not an easy task!

SandraS: let's go back to Khristina's statement

JulieJH joined the room.

SandraS: Khristina has a great approach

BJB2: welcome, Julie

JulieJH: thank you. hello

SandraS: Julie, we've done introductions and are talking about teaching philosophies

SandraS: if you were someone hiring, what do you know about Khristina as a teacher?
what do you want to know?

LisaWar: she wants the students to feel safe

KhristinaH: how do i plan to teach to each student

SandraS nods

ChristinW2: the philosophy would tell you a lot about her

RamiaF: Her goals

ElizabetKI: How would she make the students feel safe?

MichelleTJ: she cares about the classroom environment in her class

ElizabetKI: I think the how's are important to explain

SandraS: ok, so we all agree with Michelle, I think, that Khristina cares

SandraS: I also agree with Elizabeth...I want to know how she teaches to each child,
provides a safe environment, provides hands-on learning

SandraS: so how do you convey that without writing a book?

LisaWar: summarize your philosophies

VanL: I think by stating your belief (?)

JulieJH: overall classroom environment

JulieJH: your "space"

ElizabetKI: You have to know your research and theories to back up your beliefs

MichelleTJ: not too much detail..short and sweet. Keep to the most important points

SandraS: great points

KhristinaH: if the employer wants more details would they ask during the interview

SandraS: I think a balance of philosophy and example (theory & practice) is usually effective

SandraS: right, an employer would ask more

KhristinaH: does theory mean quoting articles

JulieJH: writing classrooms are different

SandraS: but the teaching philosophy is an opportunity to hook the employer right then...at least get the employer to say, wow, i want to know more

JulieJH: style of teaching the art of writing

SandraS: I don't think you need to quote articles, unless you've got one that you really want to play with in your statement

SandraS: for instance, there's a Paulo Freire quote I love

KhristinaH: okay

SandraS: "to study is not to consume ideas, but to create and re-create them"

SandraS: I could imagine writing a whole teaching philosophy statement off of that one quotation

SandraS: so in other words, you're not out to prove you know the theory

SandraS: you're out to prove you know how to use it, have ideas how to use it

JulieJH: your style

KhristinaH: okay, thanks

SandraS: right, your style...your art

SandraS: I think often that teaching is a mix of science and art

ChristinW2: your philosophy is only as good as how you incorporate it into your teaching

SandraS: if one want s to separate the two...

SandraS: I agree, Christine

KhristinaH: what should you include in your phil

SandraS: that's the million dollar questions, Khristina

JulieJH: what you really believe should be your philosophy

JulieJH: nothing less

ElizabetKI: It's hard to summarize all of your beliefs

SandraS: let me get one of the links I put up in the WriteTalk office...hang on

SusanR: It should be reflective and personal.

JulieJH: absolutely... just passed my national boards .. hard to say in words

JulieJH: but it is possible

KhristinaH: congrats!!

SandraS: Julie, did you need to write some kind of statement for the boards?

SandraS applauds Julie

JulieJH: lots of statements... four portfolio entries and an onsite rest

SandraS: <http://www.oic.id.ucsb.edu/TA/port-FAQ.html>

JulieJH: it was grueling and thanks for the kudos..

SandraS: Julie, how did you prepare for writing the statements?

SandraS: the link above mentions a good point...what's your goal in writing the philosophy?

JulieJH: Well, to start my boards I got involved in assessing the boards. I then saw what it involved

SandraS listens to Julie

JulieJH: said to my significant other... should I do it and could you support me.. lots of time and stress

JulieJH: he said yes... I then I started in with a good mentor

SandraS likes idea of mentor

JulieJH: really worth it for me... and it means making "the statement" about your philosophy

JulieJH: again.. after many years of teaching

SandraS: can you explain what you mean by that a bit more..."the statement" about your philosophy?

JulieJH: we all have to target what we want for our students

SandraS agrees

JulieJH: oh boy...

JulieJH: okay

KhristinaH: should we put our goals into our phil

JulieJH: goals can be part of the philosophy...

SandraS: great thing to include, Khristina

SandraS: you mean goals for students or goals for yourself? or both?

SandraS: all of the above is valid

JulieJH: think first.. what is your overall feeling about how we learn to write well

KhristinaH: okay b/c I am not sure

JulieJH: is it in a workshop environment

JulieJH: is it with loads of worksheets... ???

JulieJH: that is your overall philosophy of the way to teach writing

SandraS: so for a math classroom, what would be some of the distinguishing methodologies?

JulieJH: hopefully not with the recipe for passing the state test

KhristinaH: I know that will not be in my phil

LisaWar: I am also curious about math

SandraS: ok, I'm willing to put up my statement

JulieJH: for math in order to teach writing, you would want to be logical and write step by step

ElizabetKI: Well, a student needs to feel safe and accepted in any type of classroom before learning can happen - is that Maslow? That goes for math, science, any subject

JulieJH: I'm not sure,,,,,

JulieJH: yes, Eliz

LisaWar: true

ElizabetKI: I like how you abbreviated my long name

SandraS: I can imagine that one might discuss how one incorporated writing into the math classroom, for instance

SandraS: if one used math stations...

SandraS: lots of physical demonstrations

ElizabetKI: The students can write their own word problems

SandraS: collaborative work...and how?

JulieJH: then have someone write out the steps of their demonstrations....

SandraS: cool

JulieJH: on power point

SandraS: extra cool

JulieJH: and present to the class

MichelleTJ: We have used writing in our math classes in order to put into words our thought process. It has helped us to better understand why and how we are doing various tasks

VanL: have the students write about their process in solving a problem

SandraS: more coolness

JulieJH: YAY!

ElizabetKI: Those are some very good ideas!

SandraS: so does writing about the process help with any math phobia?

LisaWar: that is really neat

RamiaF: problem solving strategies, and explaining how they arrived at the answer

KhristinaH: it would be great for each student to put into their own words the steps. this would benefit each student

JulieJH: Love it!!!

ElizabetKI: If someone is bad at math, but good at writing, perhaps that will ease some stress - you know clear and organize the brain

LisaWar: or to show how they arrived at an answer or got it wrong

SandraS: so part of Ramia's teaching philosophy, for instance, would be to discuss problem solving strategies as collaborative work...maybe...

KhristinaH: great idea

MichelleTJ: I believe writing does help..It helps a student really grasp a concept instead of flying by and not really getting it.

SandraS: helps student to internalize knowledge

SandraS: play with it

JulieJH: own it

SandraS: practice process

ElizabetKI: It is also a good way to evaluate the student and assess his/her learning and thinking strategies

VanL: but a lot of people think that it is very hard to incorporate writing into math

MichelleTJ: absolutely!

KhristinaH: also we remember things much longer by writing rather than just memorizing

ChinChiC joined the room.

SandraS: math blogs....

JulieJH: journals in math are excellent

BJB2: welcome, ChinChi

MichelleTJ: I love the idea of a math Journal!

ChinChiC waves to everybody. sorry for being late

JulieJH: my team mate does this

MichelleTJ: I have never thought about that before

JulieJH: excellent

RamiaF: writing also allows for the teacher to see where the student went wrong in their process

SandraS: Van, I think incorporating writing probably takes more time, but I think it's probably also worth it

ChristinW2: I had journals in math in high school

JulieJH smiles

ElizabetKI: how did the journals go?

ChristinW2: it helped me to understand what I didn't understand

LisaWar: how was the exp.?

KhristinaH: how does she/he use the journal. the only way I have seen them is by doing jump start problems

ChristinW2: it also helped the teacher know where I didn't understand

ElizabetKI: did the students like them?

ChristinW2: She would ask a question of the day

ElizabetKI: Good for tutoring, then

ChristinW2: to explain a math problem

JulieJH: yes... warm up activities and students loved them... she commented briefly

JulieJH: not a big grading prob

MichelleTJ: I think journals would be good as reflections on the days work

KhristinaH: would they write or just solve the problem

ChristinW2: she would know real quick by your vocabulary whether or not you really understood the concept

RamiaF: I agree Michelle

SandraS knows she's in a room full of teachers, cuz the conversation gets energizing when everyone talks teaching practice

JulieJH: great as reflections

KhristinaH: a math word wall would be great for students to use as a resource for their writing

SandraS: great idea!

ChristinW2: usually our journals were over material from the night before

MichelleTJ: As teacher's we could see how the students are reacting to our teaching methods and make changes if necessary

MichelleTJ: Good assessment for ourselves

JulieJH: great

KhristinaH: this is such a better way than using worksheets

SandraS: if you used math blogs, then students could read each other's writing

SandraS: learn from each other

KhristinaH: what is a math blog

SandraS: blog=weblog

VanL: but then not all students have access to a blog though

MichelleTJ: on-line collaboration

LisaWar: online journal

SandraS: online journal

ChristinW2: is it within the blog website or a different one

KhristinaH: thanks

JulieJH: oh! very cool!

MichelleTJ: create your own

LisaWar: it is really easy

ElizabetKI: the blog can be created with Tapped In?

SandraS: national writing project uses Manila

ChristinW2: no the math blog....it is its own section. Separate from the blog journal?

MichelleTJ: there are blog sites

SandraS: Tapped In doesn't have a blog program...yet....

SandraS: but you can use free services like Blogger

JulieJH: sounds cool.... I don't know about this

SandraS: would be cool to find out if NCTM has any blog programs ...

MichelleTJ: We blog for our technology class and it has been a neat experience to learn

SandraS: are we still talking about teaching philosophies?

SandraS: Yes!

ChristinW2: great for me to collect and reflect

KhristinaH: it sounds cool

SandraS: because you might want to discuss your use of technology

SandraS: what you already do,

SandraS: what you'd like to do

LisaWar: I agree, the blogs are a great way to reflect

SandraS: so let's say you use blogs in your classroom...that's one specific practice that you can discuss and tie to your philosophy

JulieJH: okay with me.. I'm learning

SandraS: for instance, I use blogs because they put the focus on the students

SandraS: on the classroom as a writing workshop

SandraS: students read each other's ideas

SandraS: and mine

SandraS: I read theirs

SandraS: and we can comment on each other's writing

SandraS: so blogs help me to implement my teaching philosophy

KhristinaH: I bet the students love this

JulieJH: respond to responses

SandraS: right

RamiaF: that is what is so great about blogs

JulieJH: yes, they love it

SandraS: yes, most students do

SandraS: blogs also encourage play, creativity

VanL: I'm not sure if they will all like it though

SandraS: and, if one had a teaching blog (teaching journal), one would already have a great amount of material for a statement of teaching philosophy

VanL: in my case, I do not like showing my thoughts to others

JulieJH: interactive journaling is very successful

SandraS: not all students take to blogging

LisaWar: I have used blogs for other course at school. I really like the interaction

SandraS: but if you get one enthusiastic blogger, others tend to follow

LisaWar: that is true

SandraS: Van, I tend to keep the blogs focused on class material

ElizabetKI: it is just a school journal. It is not like the students use it like a diary or anything. Maybe you can explain that to students who have trouble with the word "Journal"

SandraS: for instance, I might have students summarize a story by re-telling it through another character's perspective

VanL: but there are those who do not want others to know that they are not understanding something, especially in middle school

SandraS: read each other's, comment

ElizabetKI: middle school is a tough age group

JulieJH: yes... a chance to tell your feelings

JulieJH: and react

SandraS: ok, how do you all feel about writing statements of teaching philosophy?

JulieJH: I do middle school van and the journaling is very successful

SandraS: I'd like to stress that it's a process in itself

KhristinaH: I feel so much better, much more confident

SandraS: revise, revise, revise

ElizabetKI: it isn't as hard as I thought at first

SandraS: feedback...

ElizabetKI: I feel more confident, too

MichelleTJ: I feel like I can at least get started with one

SandraS: great!

JulieJH: ongoing process

LisaWar: need to get started

KhristinaH: as long as we are teaching our phil should always be in revision

RamiaF: the website was helpful

JulieJH: I have taught a long time... still writing

SandraS: well said, Khristina!

SandraS: me too, Julie

ElizabetKI: you have to focus your teaching philosophy on your most important goals and beliefs

SandraS: if you want to use WriteTalk for feedback, you can always post your philosophy in the group room

KhristinaH: thanks for all of the help and ideas

SandraS: send it out through discussion

SandraS: or just bring it to a WriteTalk session

SandraS: I love talking about writing...one of the best ways to learn...and write!

SandraS: thank you for all your great ideas!

JulieJH: I'm sorry. I think I got into the wrong room for discussion. You are all taking a class, but guess what? From Florida here.. after 22 years of writing and teaming instruction... I have learned a lot.. Please send me your philosophies

ElizabetKI: thanks so much!

RamiaF: thank you

MichelleTJ: Thank You!!

SusanR: and if you want to start blogging 3 easy steps get you started
<http://www.blogger.com/start>

ElizabetKI: I have learned a lot...want to learn more about blogs now

SandraS: I'm going to go rewrite my philosophy some more....

ElizabetKI: cool

LisaWar: thanks

ElizabetKI: gracias

BJB2 wonders if Sandy wants everyone to join the writetalk group...

SandraS: just thinking about that...

BJB2: and then post their philosophy to the discussion board

SandraS: could you explain, BJ?

BJB2: to join a group click on SEARCH in the top right of your screen

BJB2 . o O (if you detached your chat, reattach)

BJB2: then click on GROUPS

BJB2: Enter WRITETALK and find it

BJB2: when you get a match, click on the link

BJB2: that will take you to the group ID page where you can JOIN THIS GROUP

SandraS: as a member of the group, you can post your teaching philosophy to the DISCUSSION

SandraS: and every member of the group will be emailed a copy

SandraS: I promise to do this, even though I really don't like my current statement....

SandraS: We're at the end of our time.

SandraS: Thank you all for participating

KhristinaH: thanks to you

SandraS: Thanks BJ, for your gracious hosting!

SandraS waves goodnight to all

BJB2: should teaching philosophies be in flux?

JulieJH: thanks for being such a good host

BJB2 . o O (just as our values change as we get older)

SandraS: I think so, BJ

JulieJH: I enjoyed Sandra

SusanR: Thanks Sandra. I am motivated to add a teaching statement to my blog..which is my resume

SandraS: thanks, Julie!

SandraS: ooh, can't wait to see it, Susan

SandraS: please let me know when you get it up

SusanR: needs revision

JulieJH: nite

BJB2 waves goodnight

SandraS jumps on hoverboard and whooshes off