

## **Session II - Writing Activities and Formative Constructive Feedback**

### **Facilitator's Materials:**

- Teachers should bring samples of students' writing from their content areas and any strategies they have found successful and would like to share. (For example: short essay answers, drafts, published pieces, journals, math explanations, responses, projects, science labs, etc.)
- **"Formative Assessment Writing Activities" chart (handout for participants)** and directions for Write Around.
- **"Writing Across the Curriculum" article (PDF) – Read before seminar.**
- The Harvey Daniels slide show may be a helpful resource:  
[http://www.slideshare.net/smokeylit/written-conversations-the-best-kept-teaching-secret-by-harvey-daniels?qid=7df1a1fd-0c01-47e8-aae0-96ae713ab95b&v=default&b=&from\\_search=1](http://www.slideshare.net/smokeylit/written-conversations-the-best-kept-teaching-secret-by-harvey-daniels?qid=7df1a1fd-0c01-47e8-aae0-96ae713ab95b&v=default&b=&from_search=1)
- Constructive Feedback (outline for facilitators) and access to Internet to use slide show and online links
- Links to Carl Anderson's materials:  
<http://www.strategicwritingconferences.com/resources/swcdiagnosticguides.pdf>
- Writing Conferences from the Archdiocese Site:  
<http://schools.archmil.org/CentersofExcellence/DOCsPDFs/Learning-Support-Teams/LST-Resources-2014-15/WritingConferenceCheatSheetwithObservationalNotes.pdf>

### **Agenda for Session II - Writing Activities and Constructive Feedback:**

1. Discuss formative writing activities that can be used in various classes and introduce the "Formative Assessment Writing Activities" chart.
  - a. Practice a formative writing activity. (Write Around) See directions located in this document.
  - b. Review list of formative writing activities and short research projects. Discuss how the activities can be used in various subjects.
  - c. Also review "Writing Across the Curriculum Article."
  - d. Spend time reviewing writing and strategies to help writers. Group discussions.
2. Formative Assessment - Constructive Feedback - Use this information to guide discussion about how to coach students to improve their writing skills.
  - a) Use slide show to introduce common questions and answers about constructive feedback.
  - b) Review techniques for offering students constructive feedback. Use the following links from Carl Anderson to help guide discussions:  
<http://www.strategicwritingconferences.com/resources/swcdiagnosticguides.pdf>  
This document offers suggestions to help writers. Although the link is selling the kit called *Strategic Writing Conferences* by Carl Anderson, it is a helpful link.  
[https://www.nesacenter.org/uploaded/conferences/SEC/2010/spkr\\_handouts/AndersonCarlConferring.pdf](https://www.nesacenter.org/uploaded/conferences/SEC/2010/spkr_handouts/AndersonCarlConferring.pdf) - This is also a handout by Carl Anderson that explains strategies to help the students during various stages of the writing process.
  - c) "Writing Across the Curriculum" Article (PDF) can also be used as a resource.
  - d) Teachers can spend time reviewing the writing samples they brought and use resources to determine ways to help students.
  - e) Spend time reviewing writing and strategies to help writers. Group discussions.

## Write Around Directions:

**Questions or Prompt:** Explain how the shifts in writing impact your classroom.

- Teachers divide into groups of three or four.
- Each person writes a response to the above prompt about writing.
- There are two rules: No talking and people must write for the entire time. Today we will write for two minutes.
- Explain prompt/question, set timer...write....
- Once time is up, each person passes his/her paper to his/her right.
- Each person then reads the response written by his/her neighbor and then writes a response. Again, no talking and write for the whole time.
- Once time is up, group members switch papers again. Each person reads the other two responses and writes a response forming written conversations.
- Switch three times.
- Once all "rounds" are finished, the papers go back to their original owners. Give everyone a chance to read the responses. While reading, participants make notes about words or phrases that stick out.
- Once everyone is done, give the group a few minutes to discuss the responses.
- When using with students, keep in mind the following suggestions...
  - Encourage student use a different colored pens.
  - Students should sign their entries so the teacher knows who belongs to which response.
- Write Arounds can be completed in two minute segments and then increase time over several weeks.
- Write Arounds are a great way to give opportunity for all students to participate in the conversation, not just the kids who always answer and participate. Sometimes the students are more willing to write their thinking in this format verses talking in front of everyone.

### Works Cited

Daniels, Harvey, Steven Zemelman, and Nancy Steineke, *Content-Area Writing Every Teacher's Guide*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2007.

**Slide Show**  
**Constructive Feedback**  
**Facilitator's Outline**

**“We are teaching the writer and not the writing. Our decisions must be guided by ‘what might help this writer’ rather than ‘what might help this writing.’” (Lucy Calkins)**

- **When does a teacher offer feedback to students?**
  - As the students are writing, the teacher discusses writing with individual students.
  - This can happen during prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing.
- **What are the goals of giving writing feedback?**
  - Constructive feedback is not about fixing or editing every error in a student's writing. The goal is to teach a student strategies and techniques he/she can use on a current piece and future writing projects.
- **What does offering feedback look like in a classroom?**
  - The teacher can move from desk to desk, or the teacher can sit at a writing conference table and develop a procedure for students to visit with the teacher.
  - The discussion works well when it is a conversation between the student and teacher.
  - The teacher can collect student writing in the draft stage and offer feedback through post-it notes (compliment students on what is being done well; offer 1-2 suggestions for how to make improvements)
- **What is the teacher's role?**
  - Identify needs of each student
    - Ask an open-ended question and encourage the student to self-assess.
      - How is your writing going? What do you like about your writing? What area is your concern? How can I help you today? Where are you in the writing process? What strategies are you using in this stage?
  - Look at the student's writing and determine the stage of the writing process. (Prewriting, drafting, revising, or editing)
  - Read a portion of the piece and notice the qualities of writing that are appropriate for the piece. What are the strengths and weaknesses?
    - Determine one or two areas of need.
    - Determine strategies that can help the student.
  - Diagnostic Suggestions - Great list by Carl Anderson
    - <http://www.strategicwritingconferences.com/resources/swcdiagnosticguides.pdf>
  - Teach student a particular writing strategy and at the end of the session have the student restate how he/she is going to use the strategy.
    - Give feedback by explaining the positive aspects of the writing and naming one or two areas of improvement.

- Teach a strategy that help the writer and explain why the strategy is helpful.
- Show an example from an exemplar text or show how you use the strategy. Have the student try it.
- The student can then begin to apply the strategy to his/her writing.
- A feedback session often last five to seven minutes. Most teachers can confer with four to five students during a class period.

#### **What are topics that can be taught in a writing conference?**

- Strategies that help improve the writing process
- Prewriting strategies, drafting, revising, editing
- Qualities of good writing
- 6 + 1 Traits
- Characteristics of specific types of writing (narrative, persuasive, or expository, summarizing, responses, mathematical explanations, science labs, etc.)

#### **How can a teacher keep track of constructive feedback?**

- Use a clipboard with a classroom name chart, conferring grid of boxes, seating chart, or sticky notes. After visiting with each student, the teacher can record notes on the chart that explain the proficient skills, areas of confusion, goals, and/or reviewed strategies. Keep the lists or file notes in students' files.
- Use a classroom name chart with skills, strategies, or writing characteristics listed in each column. Then use a system to keep track of each student's progress. (plus/check/minus; 4/3/2/1; or another system that explains proficiency)
- Use a conferring app to record information. (Confer, Daily Notes, Evernote, Notability, CCPensieve)

#### **Resources**

One to One - The Arts of Conferring with Young Writers - Lucy Calkins

Carl Anderson: <http://www.strategicwritingconferences.com/resources/swcdiagnosticguides.pdf>

Writing Conferences from the Archdiocese Website:

<http://schools.archmil.org/CentersofExcellence/DOCsPDFs/Learning-Support-Teams/LST-Resources-2014-15/WritingConferenceCheatSheetwithObservationalNotes.pdf>

#### **Works Cited**

<http://www.strategicwritingconferences.com/resources/swcdiagnosticguides.pdf>

[https://www.nesacenter.org/uploaded/conferences/SEC/2010/spkr\\_handouts/AndesonCarlConferring.pdf](https://www.nesacenter.org/uploaded/conferences/SEC/2010/spkr_handouts/AndesonCarlConferring.pdf)