

**Title of Session:** AAMU WriteTalk

**Moderator:** Sandra Shattuck

**Title of File:** 20040513aamu

**Date:** May 13, 2004

Room: After School Online Room

**SandraS:** Are you here for WriteTalk?

**SandraS** waves to Bj

**ChristyK:** Yes

**SandraS:** excellent...let's get talking about writing!

**ChristyK:** okey dokey

**ChristyK:** Who are you

**BjB** cheers.

**SandraS** does a quick jig

**BjB:** good question, Christy...maybe we should start with intros?

**SandraS:** BJ usually asks us to introduce ourselves first

**ChristyK:** Sorry for jumping the gun

**SandraS:** no problem

**BjB:** can you each please give a short intro?

**SandraS:** I'm an English teacher in Alabama

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

**ChristyK:** Just finished my PhD at University of Oregon. Live in Las Vegas. Working on writing up dissertation papers.

**SandraS:** congrats, Christy!

**SandraS:** What dept. did you get your phd from?

**ChristyK:** Thanks - that's Dr. Mommy to my 3 and 5 year old!

**ChristyK:** Educational Leadership, but my area is online education

**SandraS:** sounds great.

**SandraS:** I've got an old grad school friend in the English dept.

**ChristyK:** Are you all familiar with Review of Educational Research

**SandraS:** no

**ChristyK:** Probably wouldn't know him/her - it's pretty big

**SandraS:** yup, a large university

**SandraS:** is Review of Educational Research a refereed journal?

**ChristyK:** Anyone able to explain the difference between lit review and meta-analysis?

**SandraS:** hmmm...

**ChristyK:** Yes. They take LONG (50-75 page) articles reviewing ed research

**SandraS:** sounds like a challenge

**SandraS:** let me take a quick stab at the lit review meta-analysis thing

**SandraS:** and then we'll talk about freewriting

**ChristyK:** I've been told I can massage my lit review from my diss and publish it, but I'm not sure how a lit review differs from a meta-analysis

**SandraS:** and pick up from the last session

**SandraS:** so you're coming to WriteTalk tonight with a specific writing concern...

**SandraS:** if I hear you correctly

**ChristyK:** I was, but freewriting is probably good for me - I loathe sitting down to write

**SandraS:** ok, excellent

**SandraS:** then here's the agenda.

**SandraS:** if it's ok with you BJ, let's start with Christy's question

**SandraS:** then look at the freewriting BJ has posted for the group

**BjB:** of course, Sandy

**SandraS:** and talk about loathing writing....

**SandraS:** and freewriting

**ChristyK:** Good!

**SandraS:** how does that sound for an agenda?

**ChristyK:** perfect

**BjB:** works for me

**SandraS:** ok, lit review

**SandraS:** my understanding of that is a detailed annotated bibliography

**SandraS:** kind of

**SandraS:** taking up the essential readings for a topic and engaging those reading

**SandraS:** a meta-analysis to me would focus more clearly on an original idea

**SandraS:** or one particular point you're trying to make with reference to the lit.

**SandraS:** does that make any sense?

**SandraS:** my PhD is in Comparative Lit. and I got it in 1988

**ChristyK:** they say they only publish critical analyses...

**SandraS:** and I know there are different disciplinary conventions

**ChristyK:** That sounds like a meta-analysis, then, doesn't it?

**SandraS:** yes, it does

**ChristyK:** ok

**SandraS:** to me, the basic difference between a lit. review and a critical analysis is that the lit. review is tied more closely to the lit.

**ChristyK:** I always thought a m-a was more in-depth.

**SandraS:** in other words, the focus of the analysis is on the literature

**ChristyK:** That's true in both cases

**SandraS:** while a critical analysis (or meta-analysis...hmmm...) focuses more on a point that you're trying to make

**ChristyK:** oh.

**SandraS:** yes, I think a meta-analysis is more in-depth

**SandraS:** you get to show off more with a meta-analysis

**SandraS:** don't know if that makes sense

**ChristyK:** it does

**SandraS:** I'm assuming you've spoken with your diss. advisor about best ways to publish?

**SandraS:** because often somebody on the faculty will be on an editorial board

**SandraS:** or will know someone on an editorial board

**ChristyK:** a bit - mostly I just attend all the journal editor sessions at conferences

**SandraS:** oh, that sounds great

**SandraS:** really good networking

**ChristyK:** The problem is wanting to sit down and write

**SandraS:** well, that sounds like a good segue into freewriting

**SandraS:** you've written a dissertation though!

**ChristyK:** You must be an English major if you know how to spell segue!

**SandraS:** Comp. Lit. degree

**SandraS:** better than English....

**SandraS:** oops, disciplinary chauvinism showing

**ChristyK:** I think the block comes before the writing - not while I'm engaged in it.

**SandraS:** last month we talked about 2 issues brought up by BJ and Doris, who signed on from Venezuela

**ChristyK:** My house is never cleaner than when I have a paper to write

**SandraS** laughs very loudly

**SandraS:** creative diversionary tactics

**ChristyK:** Absolutely

**SandraS:** Doris talked about being afraid of writing

**SandraS:** BJ talked about not having enough time

**SandraS:** you still there, BJ?

**BjB:** yep

**SandraS:** BJ also mentioned regretting not writing more in her journal

**ChristyK:** I'm with Doris

**LindaGst5** joined the room.

**BjB:** good job, Linda!

**SandraS:** so we did an impromptu freewrite together

**SandraS:** Hi, Linda!

**SandraS:** Welcome to WriteTalk

**LindaGst5:** hello

**SandraS:** would you like to introduce yourself?

**BjB** . o O ( Linda took the scenic route here...had to take a look at the hot tub )

**ChristyK:** Journaling is okay for me, my problem is academic writing

**SandraS:** hot tub sounds wonderful!

**LindaGst5:** sure, I am a special ed. teacher from Ohio

**ChristyK:** resource room?

**SandraS:** nice to have you here, Linda

**SandraS:** I'm an English teacher in Alabama

**SandraS:** Christy, you want to introduce yourself to Linda?

**ChristyK:** I'm a budding academic in online education

**BjB:** I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania

**LindaGst5:** In my school we use the formula writing method ( Jan Cosner)

**ChristyK:** What's that?

**SandraS:** what grades do you teach, Linda?

**LindaGst5:** I am currently getting my masters on line. I teach primary special ed. (K-3)

**SandraS:** ok, thanks - good to know

**ChristyK:** Good for you - there are too few people that can stick with sped. I left after just one semester

**SandraS:** Linda, we've been talking about our resistance to writing

**LindaGst5:** Formula writing is a system to organize kid

**SandraS** listens to Linda

**LindaGst5:** oops, I mean formula writing is a writing system that teaches kids to organize their writing with graphic organizers

**SandraS:** thanks, Linda

**ChristyK:** Using Inspiration!?

**SandraS:** last month in WriteTalk we talked about freewriting as a way to keep in writing shape

**ChristyK:** Kidspiration?

**SandraS:** I like that term...kidspiration...

**ChristyK:** It's the name of a program - not my idea

**SandraS:** we talked about timed writing practices

**SandraS:** sitting down for 5 minutes and writing using a prompt

**SandraS:** I have a file in my office and under my profile

**ChristyK:** What type of prompt?

**SandraS:** Christy, if you highlight my name

**SandraS:** then click on the green info icon

**SandraS:** you'll see my profile

**SandraS:** scroll down and you'll find a shared file called wrtpract.doc

**SandraS:** that will give you the guidelines for a timed writing practice

**ChristyK:** Who's that cutie?

**SandraS:** or freewrite

**SandraS:** my now 12 yr old son!

**ChristyK:** Afraid to post your picture now that you're 12 years older?

**ChristyK:** Me, too

**SandraS:** yup

**ChristyK:** Can this method be used for academic writing?

**SandraS:** absolutely

**SandraS:** that is, if you're feeling blocked

**ChristyK:** I get hung up in thinking there are certain conventions I must follow

**SandraS:** or bored

**SandraS:** or uninspired

**SandraS:** you can take any topic

**SandraS:** you can take a line from your diss

**SandraS:** just sit and write for 5 minutes using the guidelines

**SandraS:** you may end up using none of it

**SandraS:** you may end up with a completely new idea

**SandraS:** the guidelines are meant to invite that lovely internal editor in our minds to take a rest

**SandraS:** because the freewriting says You're free to write the worst junk in America...for instance

**SandraS:** then, well, I feel free to do that

**SandraS:** the timed writing practice can jumpstart you

**SandraS:** or it can help you refine idea

**ChristyK:** I find that if I work on sections at a time, though, then the whole manuscript lacks continuity

**SandraS:** ah...

**SandraS:** you could use freewriting to find ways to link sections, for instance

**BjB** . o O ( try inspiration )

**SandraS**: yeah, inspiration!

**ChristyK**: Organizing manuscripts isn't my problem - it's the first draft

**SandraS**: freewriting is great for the first draft

**SandraS**: I'm going to quote from Anne Lamott

**ChristyK**: I think free writing is the best way to go - in a set time frame - don't let my keyboard stop

**SandraS**: in Bird by Bird

**SandraS**: there's a swear word in here, so cover your ears

**ChristyK**: my eyes

**SandraS**: Anne Lamott says "All writers write shitty first drafts."

**ChristyK**: hence, the writing PROCESS

**SandraS**: She just starts from that premise.

**SandraS**: Ta-daaaa!

**SandraS**: and if one is a perfectionist

**ChristyK**: I am

**SandraS**: or if one has a vociferous internal editor

**ChristyK**: I do

**SandraS**: it is exceedingly difficult to write "shitty" first drafts

**SandraS**: hence the problem with getting the bloody thing done

**ChristyK**: Soooo????

**SandraS**: just write

**ChristyK**: YES! Exactly

**SandraS**: so BJ has done this wonderful thing

**ChristyK**: I think if I had more confidence in my ability as a writer, I would be more motivated to start

**SandraS**: if you write, you are a writer

**ChristyK**: what wonderful thing?

**SandraS**: the more you write, the more confidence you get

**SandraS**: that sounds simplistic and a bit snippish -- and I don't mean it to be

**SandraS**: but it's a maxim I've found to be true

**ChristyK**: That's exactly what the editors say at AERA

**SandraS**: no question there are days when i wonder how i ever thought i could write anything!

**ChristyK**: I'm willing to do just about anything before I write

**SandraS**: but that's just the way it is

**SandraS**: that's one reason the timed writing practice is so great

**SandraS**: because most of us can commit to five minutes

**SandraS**: you say, ok, I'm writing for five minutes

**ChristyK**: I know there are profs who write between certain times each week

**SandraS**: set an egg timer, your palm pilot, an alarm clock

**SandraS**: then follow the guidelines

**SandraS**: don't lift up your hand, don't stop writing, don't worry about punctuation, spelling, grammar, go for the jugular, be specific, you're free to write the worst junk in America, lose control, don't think

**ChristyK**: Are most PhD's decent writers?

**SandraS:** you'll be amazed at how much you can write in 5 minutes  
**SandraS:** my opinion???? not really  
**ChristyK:** So, they just practice?  
**SandraS:** yup  
**SandraS:** and get feedback  
**SandraS:** and revise  
**SandraS:** and talk  
**ChristyK:** There's no miracle drug but practice?  
**ChristyK:** and talk?  
**SandraS:** you got it in one  
**SandraS:** I really believe in the power of talking about writing  
**SandraS:** hence the name WriteTalk....  
**BjB** smiles  
**ChristyK:** about the content you're going to write about?  
**BjB** hands Christy a gold star  
**SandraS** applauds Christy and the gold star  
**SandraS:** yeah, or about form, or style  
**ChristyK:** Give me the gold star when I finish my freewrite tomorrow morning  
**SandraS:** or the beginning or the ending  
**SandraS:** you can do one tonight with us!  
**ChristyK:** How?  
**SandraS:** well, lemme tell ya....  
**BjB:** I think of freewrite as doodles that turn into pictures.....  
**SandraS:** oh, that's a cool image  
**BjB:** I start with a list of words  
**SandraS:** like what you posted in the group room?  
**BjB** nods  
**SandraS:** Christy, BJ uploaded a file of her freewriting  
**SandraS:** if you join the AAMU Writing Group, you can go to the office  
**SandraS:** check the Files  
**SandraS:** and you can see BJ's writing  
**SandraS:** now, I was not nearly as diligent  
**SandraS:** I did one freewrite using the prompts, um, this evening, and then posted it  
**SandraS:** so my freewrite is under the files too...it's called physicalendurance  
**SandraS:** cuz that was the prompt I used  
**BjB:** can you paste it here?  
**SandraS:** the prompt file is also accessible in the AAMU WP office  
**SandraS:** well, what I did...  
**SandraS:** was to take my favorite lines from your writing  
**SandraS:** and put them on the whiteboard

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Whiteboard:

I may run out of words, but I will not run out of color.  
Do they listen in shades of grey? In flashes of light like Morse code?  
Grey skies remove all shadows and flatten the landscape.  
Squirrels spread their tails over their backs like furry umbrellas.

If there is no light, does time stop?  
Today is Monday grey. Day off grey. Take the new puppy to the vet's grey. Send hubby to the doctor's for bronchitis grey.  
Sounds trigger memories I am not ready to examine. I am afraid. Almost 40 years and I'm still hiding.  
Spring mornings have brought sounds back to the landscape.  
Too many thoughts conflicting with the birdsong and blossom.  
The measurement of time, the colors of time, the light of time.  
A forsythia hedge that was transplanted from a friend's yard has erupted into a 10 foot high wall spewing lemon yellow blossoms skyward, snaking yellow vines among the pine tree boughs.

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**SandraS:** I thought we could use one of the lines as a prompt for freewriting this evening

**SandraS:** Christy,

**ChristyK:** yes

**SandraS:** if you go to the left of the room view above

**SandraS:** then click on whiteboard

**ChristyK:** I'm not following a lot of this

**SandraS:** you can see the lines that BJ wrote

**BjB:** oh, that sounds like fun

**ChristyK** left the room (signed off).

**BjB:** oops

**SandraS:** she might be joining the group

**SandraS:** don't see her online

**BjB:** . o O ( she went too far left )

**SandraS** chuckles

**ChristyK** joined the room.

**ChristyK:** oops

**BjB:** wb, Christy

**SandraS:** Hey Christy!

**ChristyK:** wb?

**SandraS:** welcome back

**ChristyK:** Where was I supposed to go?

**SandraS:** Christy, do you see the whiteboard?

**BjB:** Christy, click on whiteboard on the blue menu on the left above this chat window

**ChristyK:** got it above

**SandraS:** ok, so we've all got the same text above?

**ChristyK:** yes about run out of words

**SandraS:** BJ started by listing a lot of words associate with light

**SandraS:** then she just wrote

**SandraS:** I've taken lines I like from several days' worth of free writing

**SandraS:** I typed them fast....so there are typos

**ChristyK:** is that what's above?

**SandraS:** yes, Christy

**ChristyK:** I don't get it? There's no apparent running theme

**SandraS:** that's because these are lines excerpted from a piece

**SandraS:** from several freewriting pieces

**SandraS:** BJ, can Christy get into the AAMU WP office if she's not a member?

**BjB:** no, but I can paste the text here

**SandraS:** ok, great

**SandraS:** Christy, BJ is going to copy all the text from her freewriting

**SandraS:** then you can see the entire piece

**BjB:** this was the first line I wrote...the topic was color

**BjB:** All words gather color as they travel to the magic decoding chambers of your brain. The journey tumbles the words like gems and polishes the surfaces till they shimmer with a hundred different tints and hues.

**ChristyK:** in the whiteboard section?

**SandraS:** I don't remember that line...it's lovely

**ChristyK:** what nice metaphors!

**BjB:** Light enters my body through the skin, soaking into the pores, connecting the raw edges of the tears in the fabric of my soul. Light heals. It is a beginning and an ending. Light is an awakening, as soft as the stars and as harsh as a desert sun, both warming and blinding. Light is as tender as a kiss and as startling as a sudden vision. Light is life. Without light my soul would die.

**SandraS:** What I saw happening with BJ's writing over the last month was that she began connecting threads in her freewriting.

**BjB:** I enter the room and turn on the light. Words become visible on the printed page...passageways to unknown lands, undiscovered identities, new meaning to relationships. Words appear in color. Light is color - a rainbow. The spectrum is the alphabet, the dictionary, the encyclopedia. Words take on the hue of the colors of light adding depth to their meaning, subtle variations in shades and tints. I may run out of words, but I will not run out of color

**SandraS:** So the writing is a way of discovering what you think and feel

**SandraS:** which is why it works well with any kind of writing project, including academic work

**BjB:** it was definitely a journey for me, Christy

**SandraS:** oh, good

**SandraS:** that's what I wanted to hear

**SandraS:** BJ really wrote regularly the last month

**BjB:** and I found that it worked in both my worlds...

**BjB:** it freed me to be more comfortable with words

**SandraS:** so how did doing the freewriting affect you this last month?

**ChristyK:** The above sounds more like poetry

**BjB:** and it freed me to be more comfortable with images

**BjB:** so I've gone back to journal sketching at school...

**SandraS:** oh, way cool

**ChristyK:** What's that?

**BjB:** which has had a positive impact on my kids

**BjB:** turn the words into pictures

**BjB:** o O ( instead of the pictures into words )

**ChristyK:** So, you wrote in the AAMU

**BjB:** my writing for freewrite was turning mind pictures into words



**ChristyK:** I'm going to have to leave soon - Bible study is at my house tonight.

**ChristyK:** So, this is something you participated in throughout the month?

**SandraS:** thanks so much for joining us tonight

**ChristyK:** How do I join the AAUW?

**BjB:** nods...it certainly does take practice, as Sandy has said

**SandraS:** AAMU WP is Alabama A&M Writing Project

**ChristyK:** It's in Tapped in?

**SandraS:** you can click on the Search tab at the top of the screen

**BjB:** Christy, single click on Sandra's name under the here tab

**SandraS:** listens to BJ

**BjB:** then click on the green i at the bottom of the frame

**BjB:** that gives you Sandy's ID

**ChristyK:** got it - I see AAMU

**SandraS:** great

**SandraS:** click on that

**BjB:** under her picture is aamu

**ChristyK:** do I click on it?

**SandraS:** and you'll see a link inviting you to join

**ChristyK:** I joined - now , how do I participate?

**SandraS:** once you join, you can go directly to the office

**SandraS:** you should see a link to the office

**BjB:** once you've been approved, a link to the AAMU will be added to your favorite places menu, Christy

**ChristyK:** left the room.

**SandraS:** oops

**SandraS:** hope she finds everything

**BjB:** guess she joined

**SandraS:** so you found that the freewriting affected all sides of the brain?

**SandraS:** so to speak

**SandraS:** I love how that works

**BjB:** yes, I did!

**ChristyK:** joined the room.

**SandraS:** I think you and I should do an art/writing prompt book

**ChristyK:** It worked - I found it

**SandraS:** Hi, Christy!

**BjB:** once you've been approved, a link to the AAMU will be added to your favorite places menu, Christy

**ChristyK:** it was

**SandraS:** great!

**ChristyK:** So, I will receive a writing assignment in the MOO?

**BjB:** no MOO here, Christy

**SandraS:** you can download the file writingprompts

**ChristyK:** am I dating myself?

**SandraS:** it's a featured file

**SandraS:** nope

**SandraS:** there are about 15 ideas for timed writing practice

**SandraS:** just commit to 5 minutes a day or every other day

**SandraS:** and write on one of the prompts

**ChristyK:** I have to log off- the guys are arriving. I'll have to check out AAMU tomorrow.

**SandraS:** bye, Christy.

**SandraS:** take care

**BjB** waves goodnight

**ChristyK:** Thanks so much for your help tonight - I look forward to participating in the group

**ChristyK** left the room (signed off).

**BjB:** cool

**SandraS:** yeah

**SandraS:** I loved the stuff you wrote

**BjB** smiles happily

**SandraS:** what i had hoped was that we could do a collective freewrite

**SandraS:** but we're at the end of time

**SandraS:** still, you could use a line from one of your freewrites as a prompt

**SandraS:** if you wanted

**BjB:** thanks!

**SandraS:** or you could choose a line from my freewrite

**SandraS:** I'm promising to freewrite every week using the prompts

**BjB:** I'll check that out

**SandraS:** now that grades are handed in, I've got a writing schedule!

**BjB:** lucky you!

**SandraS:** which I tend to not protect as much as I'd like...

**SandraS:** too many other projects requiring attention

**BjB:** I'll have to copy a journal entry one of my kids did

**SandraS:** I'd love to see that

**SandraS:** "Sounds trigger memories I am not ready to examine."

**SandraS:** that line and the next couple sentences after caught my attention

**SandraS:** that sounded like a place to "go for the jugular"

**SandraS:** but all writing has its time

**SandraS:** forcing the stuff doesn't help much

**SandraS:** and can be destructive

**BjB:** journal assignment for my kids this week was to write/draw about a musician or song that was a favorite

**SandraS:** shall we commit to using the prompts again this month? commit to regular timed writing practice? I promise I will....promise

**SandraS:** that sounds like a great assignment

**BjB:** I'll copy what this kid wrote and send it to you...it's so moving

**SandraS:** thank you...I'd very much like to see it

**BjB:** yes, I'd like to do that

**SandraS:** ok. me too.

**BjB** . o O ( commit to the prompts. )

**SandraS:** great!

**SandraS:** I gotta jet and take care of my boy

**SandraS:** thanks so much for all the writing you did and for sharing it

**BjB:** I gotta jet and get some sleep

**SandraS:** not always easy to share freewriting

**SandraS:** sleep well!

**SandraS:** see ya soon ----

**BjB** hugs. Thanks for giving me the opportunity

**SandraS:** my pleasure!

**SandraS** hugs bye

**SandraS** left the room (signed off).

**BjB** left the room (signed off).