

Amherst Writers & Artists Workshop practice

Ten Essentials

Affirmations

1. A writer is someone who writes.
2. Everyone has a strong, unique voice.
3. Everyone is born with creative genius.
4. Writing as an art form belongs to all people, regardless of socio-economic class or education.
5. The teaching of craft shall proceed without damage to a writer's original voice or self-esteem.

Practices

6. We give everyone's writing and commentary equal, non-hierarchical respect, while supporting disciplined group interactions to keep writers safe.
7. Confidentiality and privacy are protected; writing is assumed to be fiction; writers are free to refrain from reading aloud.
8. We read only freshly drafted work, and offer only positive, affirmative commentary. Critiques, suggestions for change, and questions are offered only when a writer requests the process, and distributes edited, typed manuscripts to the workshop.
9. The teaching of craft is conducted through examples of writing, exercises that invite experimentation and growth, the observation of other writer's process, response to manuscripts and private conferences.
10. The workshop leader writes and reads aloud on the same terms as other members, for mutual risk-taking and trust.

Adapted from *Writing Alone and with Others*, by Pat Schneider
Oxford University Press 2003 pp 186-187