



Introduction

## **Change Writers e.V. - Your story, your future**

Everyone needs relationships! Expand your possibilities regarding your methods and discover a way to identify your student's individual personality. Our program helps you to get in contact with your students despite initial distance and refusal. - Based on experiences, effective and immediately ready to be put into practice.

A benefit for everyone involved.

### **About Change Writers e.V.**

The association "Change Writers - Your story, your future e.V." connects teachers and students on a new level. Our lively seminars provide relieve for educators as well as security for students. Introducing new experiences into the classroom they increase the odds in the educational lives of underprivileged students.

The framework for our Method is depicted in the book "Das Wunder bleibt aus – Tagebuch eines erfolgreichen Hauptschulprojektes" by Jörg Knüfken, one of the founding members of the association.

Employees and volunteers, supporters and former students work on achieving the association's goals and continuously improving its contents such as seminars and networks. The association is based in Dorsten, Germany and currently operates all over Germany.

*“From my perspective a small wonder has occurred:  
We were able to get a glance at the souls of students who  
have already had to live through so much in their lives.  
Today they believe in themselves and we trust each other.”*

*Annette, Teacher*

### What is it that motivates us?

It's the future of young people that is at stake. If aggressive and rejective behavior in school is their only way to act, they need our attention. We want to give them something to hold onto and we trust them. This is what connects us - and it's worth it!

Once we manage to create safe spaces, listen to them and treat them with respect, we can observe our students getting involved in the process of change themselves. It provides them with a feeling of self-efficacy, which eventually results in a more successful teaching inside the classroom and a positive relationship between students and their teachers.

It is truly moving to be a part of this development and to see how young people can adapt their behavior, how they manage to graduate from secondary school and to confound the worst expectations.

All in all, they learn to accept self-responsibility for their life. This is what drives us. We cordially invite teachers and other multipliers to get to know the variety of our methods, to try them out and refine them with us.

**“Change Writers brings us teachers back to the ground. It made me realize that we must not teach over their heads, but that we should give our students a stable grounding first.”** *Heike, teacher, seminar participant*



## **The Change Writers method**

### **Seminar module 1:**

"Writing a diary and more - The "Freedom Writers Method from the USA"

#### **Our experiences:**

The story of the American group of students, the "Freedom Writers" also affects our students: 150 vulnerable and disadvantaged young people from the ghettos of Los Angeles exchange their weapons for pens and write down their life stories. The Hollywood adaption of this incredible, yet true story serves as an ideal door opener also to our students and the example from America can serve as a model. It allows us to build relationships with young people who initially refused to cooperate with us at all.

#### **Expectation for the seminar:**

Learn about the extraordinary story of the "Freedom Writers" and experience how they managed to approach their students with a message, convincing educators and new insights. You will get an overview of the most important exercises and try them. You will experience why the autobiographical approach has an impact on your students and what needs to be considered in the implementation. You will meet the founder of the "Freedom Writers" or one of the "Freedom Writers" students from the US via Skype.

#### **This is what you can look forward to:**

Immerse yourself into the history of the "Freedom Writers". Look forward to exciting stories, emotional encounters and many innovative ideas for the classroom.

*"Today I saw the movie "Freedom Writers". Although I am fairly new to the group, I already have clearer goals in mind."*

Melissa, 16 years, project participant

## **Seminar module 2:**

"With head, heart and hand - activating exercises for vitality and appreciation"

### **Our experiences:**

It's so simple: When students play, they get active. In the game, they realize how important it is to talk to each other, to discuss, to cope with conflicts, to listen to each other and to appreciate one another. They experience themselves as part of a team and they realize that it is worthwhile to exert themselves in order to be successful. In their diaries, many students report how helpful team exercises are for them in order to handle their lives successfully. That makes an impression on us.

### **Expectations for the seminar:**

You will experience the games from the player's perspective, as well as from the educator's point of view. All exercises we show you can only be solved in a group effort. You will try out games that help to overcome conflicts and train communication skills. As a facilitator, you will learn to motivate and support the players through different options to use the rules of the game. Eventually, your students will experience the value of trust, cooperation and self-efficacy in a playful manner.

### **This is what you can look forward to:**

Enter the thrilling world of gaming! Have a new learning experience and get to know many practical exercises both for yourself, and the work with your students.

*"At Freischreiber, I learned what it is like to work in a team - together we succeed, you can't do it alone."*

Can, 14 years, project participant

### **Seminar module 3:**

Living Tolerance and Accepting Responsibility - Reading and Writing with Anne Frank

#### **Our experiences:**

Anne Frank's live impresses students all over the world. The "Freedom Writers" as well are connected to "The diary of Anne Frank" since they themselves have been confronted with racism and hostility. A connection between the "Freedom Writers" and the diaries of Anne Frank and the autobiographical writings of students can be established easily. A lot of our students have experienced intolerance and exclusion, too. In order to deal with traumatic experiences of their life in school, in their families or other surroundings the writings of the "Freedom Writers" and Anne Frank present a background for motivating conversations.

#### **Expectations for the seminar:**

In the seminar you will get to know the touring exhibition "Reading and Writing with Anne Frank". At the same time you will find out about a variety of approaches for using it in your lessons: You will learn how to train your students to be exhibition guides in order to call for them to take up an active role. You will discover the rear house in Amsterdam digitally, the hideout as a 3D-Model and other activating materials in connection with the topic of "Reading and Writing with Anne Frank". At the same time you will practice using them. Additionally you will get a better insight into Anne Frank's authorial ambitions.

#### **What you can look forward to:**

Discover how to transfer responsibilities to your students. Enjoy the exhibition "Reading and writing with Anne Frank" and all the varieties of using it at your school.

*"I have so much respect for Anne Frank, because she showed courage and she had to live through so much. You can learn that we should be glad to have a life like the one we are living."*

Medina, 14 years, Project participant

## **Seminar module 4:**

Recognizing strengths and using them

### **Our Experiences:**

The students write about their daily life in their diaries: They describe how they are taking care of younger siblings, how they are working, how they take care of the household or how they manage to organize their lives completely on their own. Behind everything there do lie abilities such as discipline, being responsible, being ready to take charge and many more. These strengths become visible through the diaries. The students are happy about us seeing their strengths and telling them about it. They feel recognized and appreciated.

### **Expectations for the seminar:**

With the help of a task you will find out how to discover new strengths and how they are perceived by others. You will learn about a new Method that helps you to detect other people's strengths even if they are not recognizable at first sight. You will design portraits of your students and you will practice a resource-based approach on looking at them. Additionally you will get an overview about important competences and you will get practical advice on how to support your students into cultivating them.

### **What you can look forward to:**

Experience a seminar which focuses on your strengths and those of your students. You can look forward to exciting activities and unusual insights regarding the skills, abilities and qualities of people.

*"It simply is motivating when someone tells us: You're good at something!"*

Damir, 17 years, Project participant

## Contact us



Although we currently focus on Germany with our work and seminars we are internationally connected and are always looking for new ways to improve our work. If our ideas have sparked an interest we are more than happy to find a way to provide you with the information you may need in order to participate or becoming a ChangeWriter.

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Deine Geschichte, deine Zukunft.**

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