

Title of Session: WriteTalk - Sharing Best Practices in Writing

Moderator: Sandra Shattuck

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Room: WriteTalk Group

BJB2 waves hi to Maria and Cortney

MariaIN waves back

CortneyG: hi

BJB2: would you like to join this group so you can get and receive messages from the discussion board?

MariaIN: sure

CortneyG: okay

BJB2: above this chat window is a welcome note: write-talk your way on in...

BJB2: scroll down to THIS IS THE GROUP ROOM FOR WRITE TALK

BJB2: and click on the green i next to the group name

BJB2: that will show you the group ID page and there is a place to JOIN THIS GROUP at the top of the page

CortneyG: I've joined

MariaIN: me too!

BJB2: once you join, the group is added to your pull down favorite places menu

BJB2: so you can come here any time

SandraS joined the room.

MariaIN: sounds cool!

BJB2 hugs Sandy

SandraS hugs BJ back

BJB2: meet the two newest members of your group, Sandy!

SandraS: Hi Maria and Cortney!

MariaIN: Hi Sandra

SandraS: Welcome!

CortneyG: Hi!

BJB2: we'll start the discussion in another two or three minutes...

CortneyG: Okay

SandraS: You're both in Houston?

MariaIN: Yes

CortneyG: yes

SandraS: cool!

BJB2: while you wait, a suggestion if you're new to Tapped In. Go to Actions in the top right of your chat window and click on DETACH

SandraS: Welcome to WriteTalk

SandraS: We usually begin by introducing ourselves and saying what & where we teach...

SandraS: I'm Sandy, teach English & lit. in Alabama

EricaLH: Hello I'm Erica and have been teaching 6th grade writing for 5 years and live in Northwestern NJ

MariaIN: Hi everyone. My name is Maria and I am a student teacher in Houston

DavidWe: I'm David Weksler. I'm a HelpDesk volunteer for Tapped In and I help teachers learn more about educational technology. I'm in New Jersey, not far from New York City

CortneyG: I'm Cortney and I am student teaching in kindergarten. Houston, TX

EricCr: My name is Eric, I teach in Alberta, Canada. I teach English (grade 9)

SandraS: everyone knows BJ? and Susan?

BJB2: I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania

MariaIN: I don't know Susan

SandraS: Susan, would you like to introduce yourself?

SusanR: I am a K to 8 Occasional Teacher from Ontario and facilitator of the K to 3+ Great Resources sessions here at TI

SandraS: WOW

MariaIN sounds exciting

SandraS: thanks, Susan!

SandraS: I usually start by discussion the National Writing Project just briefly

SandraS: and then we'll get to our writing concerns

SusanR: glad to be here

SandraS: The National Writing Project is about 30years old

SandraS: It's a professional development group

SandraS: federally funded

SandraS: housed at almost 200 universities

SandraS: which work primarily with k-12 teachers

SandraS: here's the website

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

SandraS: Why don't we take a couple seconds to check out the website...then come on back.

MariaIN: sounds good to me

EricaLH: great!

SandraS: just click on the link and another window will open up

SandraS: just close window and return here when you're done

BJB2 . o O (you also might want to hold down the ctrl key when you click on the url)

DavidWe: If some of you are using Windows and have pop-up blockers - hold down the Control key and click

SandraS: yeah, David and BJ

SandraS: thanks!

SandraS twiddles thumbs

BJB2 checks to see if everyone got the site

EricaLH: I just sped-read an article by Randy Koch about how teachers grade writing

EricaLH: basically make less red marks about grammar and focus on content

SandraS: right, Erica...there's a huge number of resources just on the NWP site

SandraS: So you've got the URL to explore when you want.

SandraS: The 3 tenets of NWP are

SandraS: 1) teachers are the best teachers of other teachers

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

SandraS: 3) writing can be used in any subject area as a method of learning

SandraS: the main program for each writing project site is the summer invitational institute

SandraS: it's usually four weeks long

SandraS: participants often get a stipend or pay for graduate credit

SandraS: you can find a writing project site near you on the website

SandraS: there's a map and you click on your state

SandraS: I started with the NWP in 2003 when I attended my first summer institute

SandraS: I've been teaching about 20 years

SandraS: and nothing else has rejuvenated my teaching like the NWP

MariaIN: WOW! that's good

SandraS: Once you attend a summer institute, you can do the other programs

SandraS: like attend a writing retreat...in Santa Fe NM

BJB2 . o O (and listening to Sandy is inspirational too!)

SandraS: or a writing and technology retreat...at Lied Lodge in Nebraska

SusanR . o O (Santa Fe..the ideal retreat)

SandraS . o O (when ya got a good program, it's easy to inspire!)

SandraS nods to Susan

SandraS: national conference

SandraS: other programs like rural sites network

SandraS: project outreach targeting low-income schools

SandraS: OK, that's the NWP...

SandraS: any questions?

EricaLH: when you attend a summer institute are you teaching or learning?

DavidWe thanks Sandra for the short overview

SandraS: learning...from each other

SandraS: what I love is that you've got teachers from k-college

MariaIN: Do you have to pay for it?

SandraS: some of the stuff I've implemented in my college class have come from middle school and elementary teachers

SandraS: usually, you don't pay

SandraS: each site is different

SandraS: we offer \$1,000 stipend here

SandraS: but for instance, a site in Missouri offers a \$1200 stipend, but most of the money goes toward graduate credit

SandraS: just depends on the institution

SandraS: other questions?

MariaIN: nope

CortneyG: no...everything sounds good to me

EricaLH: you were very thorough

SandraS: thanks, Erica!

SandraS: I thought this evening we could just explore the resources here in this office

EricCr smiles

SandraS: WriteTalk has concentrated on lots of different topics, from pre-writing to peer review

SandraS: The easiest way to check out the resources is to click on Files and Links on the left-hand menu.

SandraS: Why don't you take two or three minutes just to check out the resources.

SandraS: Then we'll take up a writing topic on your minds.

SandraS: Everybody ok with that?

EricCr: ok

MariaIN: I am in the group information, how do I get back?

BJB2: Maria, click on ROOM VIEW

SandraS: thanks, BJ

SandraS: Room View will get you back to the left-hand menu

MariaIN: Got it

MariaIN: couldn't remember what to do, thanks

SandraS couldn't remember for a bit there, either...

MariaIN smiles

SandraS: Everybody back safe and sound?

CortneyG: yes

MariaIN: I am

EricaLH: yes

SandraS: Excellent!

EricCr: yes

SandraS: You'll notice that resources like "Teaching Philosophy" come from WriteTalk sessions where we focused on how to write one of those things...

SandraS: the wonderful thing about Tapped In is that you can access all the transcripts of every WriteTalk meeting

SandraS: there's a link here to those archived transcripts

SandraS: and many of the links here are added by group members

MariaIN: I noticed that as I logged in

SandraS: so BJ and Susan got us the fantastic link from editor Pat Holt

SandraS: collective knowledge-building

EricaLH: Ten Mistakes is great!

SandraS: it is wonderful, isn't it?

SandraS: so maybe we could start our conversation by simply answering the question...

SandraS: what resources for writing in your classrooms would you most like to have?

EricaLH: a laptop for each student?

SandraS nods

SandraS: wouldn't that be wonderful!

MariaIN: I am currently in fourth grade and my teacher has little resources

EricCr: laptop/Internet access

SandraS nods to Eric

SandraS: Maria, how would you describe what kind of writing happens in your classroom?

EricaLH: my school just got a mobile lab of 45 laptops, I have used it twice and love it, but you cannot print from them

SandraS: wow...45 laptops...

EricCr: wow

EricCr: how big of a school

EricCr: how much fighting for the laptops?

MariaIN: The students have incomplete sentences and a 4 paragraphs combined in one

SandraS smiles

EricaLH: 1000 students

EricaLH: well, not too much because there is a rule that you can only sign up one week in advance and only keep it for 2 consecutive days

MariaIN: My school has a classroom set of laptops that can be checked out

SandraS: one of the main challenges I struggle with is moving the focus on mechanics to ideas and creativity

SandraS: many students are afraid of writing...or they just don't like it..

BJB2: writing prompts?

SandraS: some of that comes from strict grammarians with heavy red pens

EricaLH: Sandra I agree but I feel like in 6th grade they need to have the basic structure and grammar down pat

MariaIN: Some are just not motivated

SandraS nods to BJ

MariaIN: They do, Erica

SandraS: I agree Erica

EricCr: we have been focusing on creativity in our school district for some years now and mechanics have suffered because of it

SandraS: exactly ...it's a difficult balance

CortneyG nods

EricCr: trying to achieve the right balance is difficult

SusanR: do you have a daily writing activity

SandraS: it's really difficult

EricaLH: I'm glad we don't have to diagram sentences anymore!

SandraS: great question, Susan

SandraS mourns diagramming sentences...

SandraS: I tend to do regular freewriting with some kind of prompt

EricCr: when I went to school we were drilled with grammar rules and had little creativity, now students are creative but can't spell

SusanR: some classes schedule it in on a daily basis just like DEAR

SandraS wonders what the corollary is to DEAR?

MariaIN: My teacher does that

EricaLH: Eric is right, spelling has suffered, they mostly use IM language

SandraS: DEAW?

EricaLH: Drop Everything and Read?

MariaIN: As soon as the students walk in, they have to write in their journal

SandraS: that's excellent, Maria

MariaIN: Either about a prompt she has on the board or about their day

CortneyG: my kindergarteners journal everyday and love it..

EricaLH: Maria do you assess their free writing?

SandraS: and is that writing evaluated?

EricCr: how much time

EricCr: writing in their journal I mean

SusanR: how do you feel about this site

<http://www.writingfix.com/dailypromptgenerator.htm>

MariaIN: I do not assess it, but my teacher does

MariaIN: but I don't think she grades them on it

MariaIN: She usually gives them about 20 minutes

MariaIN: While the students are doing that, she walks around checking the homework

SandraS: Wow, Susan. That is a wayyyy cool site!

MariaIN: Cortney, what do your students journal about?

SandraS: not only do you get the prompt generator, but there's a lot of other stuff

CortneyG: mostly it begins with a picture....

CortneyG: and eventually they add words that describe their picture

CortneyG: we use a book called doodle loops

SandraS: lovely....I watched a high school teacher demonstrate how her students use drawing to interpret literature

SandraS: very effective

EricaLH: Sandra - great site, it would be neat to put that on a Smartboard and have a student roll the dice and press the prompt generator button

SandraS: oh, that's a cool idea, Erica

SandraS: Susan, I'll be sure to feature that site here...do you use the site in your classroom?

TamikaE joined the room.

SandraS: Hello, Tamika.

TamikaE: hi

SandraS: I notice with my own journaling that when I let myself draw, my writing then opens up also.

CortneyG nods

SandraS: Some writing teachers talk about writing and walking...talking about writing.

SandraS: There are ways to address the different learning styles with writing...

SandraS: which tends to focus just on the linguistic

SandraS: but spatial learners can use drawing much more

SandraS: music is wonderful as a prompt for writing

MariaIN I agree

TamikaE: I do to.

SandraS: And I especially like interaction...so that students see their writing as authentic

SandraS: authentic audience...

SandraS: write an A-Z autobiographical book as a 6th grader and read it to a second grader

SandraS: anyone use blogs?

MariaIN: Yes

TamikaE: I am starting to use one now during my student teaching experience this semester.

MariaIN: I just did an entry yesterday

CortneyG: yes

SandraS: excellent...student blogs?

TamikaE: I have added several entries, along with pictures too.

CortneyG: yep

SusanR: Older students often enjoy writing a picture book to be shared with K to 1 students...gives them a sense of purpose

SandraS: I agree Susan.

TamikaE: haven't used any student blogs yet

SandraS: And that purpose is linked to a clear and authentic audience.

EricaLH: I'm trying to set up student blogs but security is an issue

SusanR: works well for special ed students

SandraS: Yes, Erica, security can be a problem.

TamikaE: would blogs work well with upper level special ed students?

EricaLH: some parents don't want their kids using blogs because of the whole myspace.com blow up

TamikaE: 3 and 4th grade?

BJB2: you can use the Tapped In Student Campus as a safe and secure place...

SandraS: ???can you summarize that, Erica?

BJB2: where your kids can post to the discussion board in a group room you create

EricaLH: myspace.com?

SandraS: yes, Erica...I don't know what happened there...the blowup

EricaLH: thanks BJ I will check that out...

EricaLH: Sandra, a school in my town demanded that any student take down their myspace or be expelled

EricaLH: it was a parochial school

SandraS: wow!

SandraS: what was the rationale for that?

EricaLH: it had quite a ripple effect across NJ

EricaLH: provocative pics, inappropriate comments about teachers and administrators

SandraS: ah yes...

LewisA joined the room.

BJB2 . o O (myspace has been on the news)

SandraS: I use blogs with my world literature students

SandraS: <http://sdshattuck.blogspot.com>

BJB2: Hi, Lewis

SandraS: I've found it's affected my teaching

SandraS: I see myself and the students as writers...I am a writer among writers

SandraS: Hello, Lewis. Welcome to WriteTalk.

SandraS: I don't grade blogs, but students need to do them in a timely manner to get credit.

EricaLH: Sandra your students must think its cool to read your writing

SandraS: you know, I keep complaining I don't get enough comments...

EricaLH: I wish I could write more for my students to read but I am so busy grading papers!

SandraS: but that's really the point, Erica....my writing is right there for all to see

EricCr: how do you motivate students that perceive writing as a chore?

SandraS: ah...that's the question, eh?

SandraS: I think having writing that doesn't get graded

SandraS: balance that with evaluation

SandraS: get them talking to each other

LewisA: On Web Based Resources, <http://ejw.i8.com> there are three pages that may interest you. One is English Websites, then Literature websites and Kids Stuff: Educational Resources where you will find a section of sites for Language Arts. Enjoy.

SusanR . o O (have Writing Fair or Poetry Fair)

TamikaE: thanks

EricCr: as soon as it's not graded some do not put the effort

EricaLH: One idea, Eric, is to have a career day where professionals talk about their careers and tell or show students that writing is important in any job

SandraS: Thanks, Lewis.

EricCr: good idea

SandraS: Ah, but if it's fun...like blogs...they often do the writing

EricCr: I will give that a try as well

SandraS: Also, here's a clever way to incorporate writing...

SandraS: this is something I got out of a literature circles book

EricaLH: I agree with Sandra, any student would rather type than write on paper so blogs would be great

SandraS: note passing..

SandraS: students write notes to each other about a piece of text they're reading...

SandraS: it's got that illegal edge to it...

SandraS: you're not supposed to pass notes in class and now the teacher is asking you to do just that

SandraS: but the notes are all about the text

TamikaE: that's a very good idea.

SandraS: and a written conversation develops

SandraS: when I make myself vulnerable as a teacher, I find my students more willing to write

SandraS: that is, if I ask them to freewrite, I freewrite also

SandraS: and if I ask them to read, I read mine also

EricCr: do as you teach

SandraS: modeling writing...

SandraS nods to Eric

LewisA: I do substitute teaching and Friday I have a class for remedial reading. Any ideas.

SandraS: big question, Lewis.

EricaLH: how remedial?

MariaIN: I agree with Sandra

EricaLH: what grade?

LewisA: Should I have some write something and them read it?

LewisA: Middle school

MariaIN: Today, the students were reading and so was I

EricaLH: why don't you start by reading something you wrote to the class?

SandraS: cool, Maria

CortneyG: good idea

SandraS: I'm using a double-entry reading journal...

LewisA: good idea. I don't have to be there until 10:00 am, so I can work something up.

SandraS: the reading/writing/thinking connection is so important

EricaLH: www.readwritethink.org is a great site for resources - before I forget

SandraS: huge amounts of young adult lit.

SandraS: ooh, nice site, Erica...thanks!

MariaIN: I've enjoyed the many sites everyone has provided

SandraS: ok, we should wind down...do y'all know how to join this group?

LewisA: I will check out the site and add it to the resources on Web Based Resources

EricaLH: Goodnight everyone thanks for the ideas and sites

SandraS: if you join any group, you can then receive emails about upcoming events

TamikaE: thanks so much for the resources.

SusanR quietly excuses herself..to prepare for tomorrow

SandraS: post to the room

SusanR: Thanks Sandra

SandraS waves to Susan

CortneyG: thanks for the many ideas

LewisA: Good nite!

SandraS: Thanks so much Susan!

MariaIN: thanks everyone

EricCr: here is one more: <http://www.wisc.edu/writing/index.html>

SandraS: And thanks to all for all the wonderful resources.

TamikaE goodbye

BJB2: Thanks, Sandy.

SandraS: that's a great resource, Eric.

SandraS: OWL at Purdue is also wonderful.

BJB2 waves goodnight