

Title of Session: WriteTalk - Blitz Prompts

Moderator: Sandra Shattuck

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Room: WriteTalk Group

JenniferL2: I'm looking for the location of the best practice in writing discussion. Is this the right place?

SandraS joined the room.

BJB2: yes, this be the place, Jennifer...

SandraS waves to all

BJB2: and here's the discussion leader!

SandraS hugs BJ

BJB2 hugs Sandy

BJB2: I liked your suggestion for tonight's discussion, Sandy

BJB2: and am looking forward to you explaining it a bit more

SandraS: I'm curious to see how it works...

BJB2: Welcome to this month's WriteTalk session.

BJB2: we usually start the Tapped In discussions with introductions

BJB2: please tell Sandy where you are located, what you teach, and what interested you about the topic.

SandraS cautiously begins...

BJB2: I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania

SandraS: I'm in AL, teach literature/writing

SandraS: just want to write!

FredK: I am looking for help with adult literacy in SE Oklahoma

BJB2: and I enjoy Sandy's discussions. They are always stimulating.

JenniferL2: I'm in Utah, and I teach English and other stuff to high schoolers in a treatment center. I like teaching writing but don't feel like I'm a very good writer, and I'd love to hear others ideas.

SandraS blushes and bows to BJ

SandraS: oh, wonderful...we're good to go

SandraS thanks BJ for elegant introductions

BJB2 bows deeply

SandraS: usually I start with a bit of information on the National Writing Project

SandraS: so let me take a couple minutes with that

SandraS: then we'll get writing

KathySB joined the room.

SandraS waves to Kathy

KathySB: Hello to Sandy

DavidWe joined the room.

DavidWe waves

BJB2: welcome, Kathy. We just did introductions

KathySB: OOps sorry to be late. I am from Sandy's writing project group. I teach kindergarten and I love to write

DavidWe smiles

BJB2: great, Kay. Please tell us where you are located and what you teach

KayP: I am in Central Texas and I am a Special Education Facilitator....It is a fancy term for someone who does the paperwork, and sits in an office most of the time. I have five teaching fields. BUT, I am always Special Ed.....!

SandraS: ok, so my spiel on the national writing project

SandraS: which is the premier professional development organization

SandraS: for teaching writing

SandraS: NWP believes that teachers are the best teachers of other teachers

DavidWe is pleased Sandra qualified that first line

SandraS: that teachers who improve their writing teach writing more effectively

SandraS: and that writing is a powerful learning tool across all subject areas

SandraS: there are currently 195 writing project sites

SandraS: all housed at universities

SandraS: all serving primarily k-12 teachers

SandraS: NWP has been around for about 30 years

SandraS: and if you'd like to find a site near you

SandraS: you can check the map at the website

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

KathySB: I love for Sandy to get fired up about NWP You go girl

SandraS: why don't y'all take just a second to look at the site and then come on back

BJB2 grins. I'll second that!

SandraS: yeah, Kathy!!!!

SandraS: all right...we've got a special participant tonight!

BJB2: take a minute to look at the NWP site and then come back to the chat window so Sandy can continue

SandraS: my colleague Kathy Barclift

SandraS: Let's get a head count...is everybody back and ready to continue?

KayP: Kay is back

BJB2 nods

FredK: I'm here. Map is loading.

KathySB: Kathy Smiles Nothing special here. I've been trying to get here so long, but something always seems to crop up at WriteTalk time. I'm thrilled to be with you. Thanks anyway Sandy

SandraS: all right!

SandraS: just to let y'all know, I'm at the Alabama A&M University Writing Project and Kathy is our co-director, a wonderful colleague and teacher and writer

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

SandraS: if you attend one of these, you usually can get a stipend

SandraS: it's a great experience and you become part of the National Writing Project

KathySB: I think I read something about some of your prompts tonight.

SandraS: ok, any questions about NWP?

SandraS: yup, we're going to try some writing together

FredK . o O (oh boy!)

SandraS loves Fred's enthusiasm!

BJB2 smiles

SandraS: ok, here's how this is supposed to work....theoretically...

SandraS: let's see if we can put it into practice

SandraS: if there are any chess players out there, I got this idea from blitz chess

SandraS: "blitz" in German means lightning

SandraS: in blitz chess each player has one or two minutes to make a move

SandraS: it's pretty crazy

SandraS: but what it does is to free the players up from long labored analysis of next move

FredK . o O (brainstorming?)

SandraS: I thought if we applied this principle to writing prompts, we might get some interesting writing

DavidWe smiles

SandraS: yes, it would be a kind of brainstorming or freewriting

SandraS: this is great, because Fred, you're already seeing applications i hadn't thought of

SandraS: but the "blitz" part should take away some of that critical editor we all carry around in our heads

SandraS: we'll see!

FredK: I like associative thinking.

SandraS: great, Fred!

SandraS: let's try it this way

SandraS: I'll start

SandraS: I'll call out a word, or phrase...any kind of prompt

SandraS: everyone writes for one minute

SandraS: just type in the chat box but don't hit enter until i call time

SandraS: then we can all enter our text, take a second to read...no commenting just yet

SandraS: then I'll call the name of one of you and you'll call out a prompt

SandraS: don't agonize about prompt

SandraS: just say the first word that pops into your mind

DavidWe nods

SandraS: then we write for a minute, I call time, we enter our writing.

SandraS: last person calls on next person to say prompt

SandraS: after we're done with our round-robin blitz prompts, we'll talk about the whole process

SandraS: what do you think?

JenniferL2: I'm intimidated already!

BJB2 is ready to rock and roll!

KayP: I think I need a Xanax!

KathySB: Sounds interesting.

SandraS: does this make sense and is everybody ready?

SandraS: LOL, Kay

KathySB: Ready

DavidWe hands Kay some chocolate

FredK: I hope

SandraS: ok, intimidation can be escorted to the door and booted out

DavidWe: Good substitute for Xanxa

SandraS: we're all intimidated writers! yeah us!

SandraS: ok, here we go....

SandraS: first prompt

SandraS: PURPLE

SandraS: TIME

BJB2: royalty sits high in the throne. purple robes flowing in long runners to blend in with the brown dirt that circles the throne.

KathySB: Purple is grape koolaid in my mind. I remember grape koolaid and peanut butter sandwiches in the summer time when we were children. Now grape may be typos in my mind

BJB2 . o O (wow, that was a fast minute!)

KayP: The color purple is the color of royalty. It the the color of richness and honor. It is the color of the Knights of the Round Table. It is the color of Islut's dress when she died.

DavidWe: The Color Purple is now running on Broadway. The Theatre is actually just down the block from David Letterman's place (The Ed Sullivan Theatre). I've walked past it a couple of times recently and a video seems to play on a loop with Sen Schumer (D-NY) giving his very positive reaction, over and over...

SandraS: pansy violet sends royal brooches of yellow stems somewhere, maybe to a de-throned frog? this makes no sense. which is good in purple's world. tralalalalalalalal

JenniferL2: My mother-in-law loves purple. The walls of her counseling office is pale violet, the carpet a deeper shade, modern leather chairs in eggplant.

FredK: Purple is a royal color to show richness in lifestyle. Purple people eaters was a weird song.

SandraS: LOL....OK.....um, Kathy!

KathySB: Monkeys

SandraS: TIME

BJB2: chatter chatter chatter swinging from limb to limb never stopping always looking everywhere beware of danger protect the young nurture with warm embraces chatter chatter

KathySB: I watched a movie with lots of monkeys and I was fascinated by how much like humans they were acting. It was the first time I had been struck that way, and I feel rather funny about that.

KayP: Monkey pie is what they eat in darkest Africa. At least that is what I was told as a child. I have never really liked monkeys because of that story. It has stayed with me through adulthood. Isn't that funny? What we remember.....

FredK: Monkeys bounce around with the freedom of no thought. Aren't we glad we are not monkeys. I haven't been to the zoo lately to check them out.

DavidWe: Flying Monkeys were a strange addition to the Wizard of Oz. Who would have thought of flying monkeys, but then who would have thought of the yellow brick road and a cowardly lion, etc. Monkeys are our neighbors in evolution

SandraS: one little monkey jumping on a bed, first the other monkey said, why are you jumping on the bed, then the doctor came and said...and i so totally forget this rhyme that used to be on Barney, which i'm really glad i don't have to watch anymore and my son would kill me if i said he used tolove barney

SandraS: yeah! Kathy you get to call the next prompt person

KathySB: Next prompt, Fred

FredK: And the little one said, Roll over"

JenniferL2: sorry I missed the monkey prompt - my little monkey was wailing!

DavidWe smiles

SandraS: LOL, Jennifer

DavidWe . o O ("Roll over"?)

FredK: Its part of a kids song

DavidWe: That's the prompt, though, right?

FredK: good enough

DavidWe writes

SandraS: TIME

BJB2: and they all rolled over and one fell out and the little one said roll over, roll over, so they all rolled over there were six in the bed and the little one said roll over, roll over, so they all rolled over and one fell out there were 5 in the bed and the little one said there were five little monkeys sitting in a tree...k i s s i n g

JenniferL2: There were four in the bed...Poor little one. Always has to fight for his fair share. Or gets everything they want by crying, one way or another. Are youngest kids spoiled, or fighters? My little sister has enough clothes to clothe Africa.

KathySB: Roll over the 401K roll over the lawn, roll over the edge, roll over. They all rolled over and one fell off . They all rolled over and the little one said Good night. Roll yards.

DavidWe: "I'm gonna right a little letter, gonna send it to my local DJ...it's about a little record that I want my jockey to play...Roll Over Beethoven...

FredK: One rolled over and one fell out. and the rest sang roll over. In a way it's like ten little indians.

KayP: When I want to see the sky, I just roll over. I like to be on the grass, smelling the good earth. When I roll over, and see the deep blue sky, life doesn't get any better than that. Sometimes, when I am at school, in the clean halls, and I come home to my computer, I forget about the sky.

SandraS: And the little one said, "Roll over, Jack Be Nimble." Because this little one always wanted a Russell terrier name Jack Be Nimble because the dog would be. Nimble. But since this child lived on the 13th floor and mostly with a babysitter, there was no dog. No chance of a Jack Be Nimble or any other kind of Jack.

SandraS I'm so loving writing...

DavidWe smiles

SandraS: ok Fred, you get to pick the next one to give us a prompt

FredK: Kay

KayP: Chihuahua

SandraS: Mexico city that does not necessarily mean a dog but that was the one used for Taco Bell and i keep onremembering those chihuahua dogs on dashboards and rear seats with their heads bobbing and singing for Taco Bell which has horrible labor practices for the workers who pick tomatoes by the way and i'm stopping right there

SandraS: oops TIME

FredK: The little chihuahua barked and barked and barked. So much sound for such a little animal.

DavidWe: Finally, the invented a dog that had no coat, no legs, just a short nude body and a inquisitive, big-eyed head that people would carry around in small bag...

KathySB: Chihuahuas remind me of rats, I have a really hard time understanding what someone sees in them. Soo sorry if I have offended a chihuahua lover.

BJB2: chi who a who a how can such a tiny dog have such a long name my grandson loves the books where the siamese can thinks he's a chihuahua he drew a picture of the character that was great.

KayP: My best friend is a chihuahua. I call him my little chi-hooa-hooa. He is my best friend because no one else likes him. It is their lot in life

JenniferL2: Stupid rat dogs. My best friend is buying a dog because she's "Baby Hungry" - kind of like most of the toothpick set in Hollywood. She'll probably dress it in cute little outfits and carry it around in a bag, too

DavidWe smiles

SandraS: I'm laughing a lot over here in Alabama!

SandraS: OK, Kay, you get to choose someone...

KayP: Jennifer

JenniferL2: I've been wanting to tell you...

DavidWe listens

JenniferL2: no, that's the prompt!

KathySB: Is that the prompt

SandraS: that's the prompt, David!

SandraS: TIME

DavidWe: Secrets - we all have them, we all keep them; we tell selected people some of our secrets but do we ever really come clean, altogether, the insides of our heads shown in full light to someone else so they know us inside and outside and then some.

BJB2: that I need touch typing lessons it is taking me too long to write these prompts by hunt and peck i feel like a chicken which reminds me of the spring chicken which was my virtual pet in the old TI his name was Range Chicken he was very cool and I liked him a lot he was my alter ego

KayP: I've been wanting to tell you that I am so glad to be in this group. It is not often one finds a bunch of strangers in a chat room who shares so much humor and knowledge. I have just been wanting to tell all of you that very fact.

FredK: I've been wanting to tell you that we are planning a SCRABBLE toutneman

JenniferL2: Your fly was unzipped when you came back from the restroom, but I couldn't figure out how to without your boss hearing me. I waited for a discrete moment, but it never came up! I wasn't too worried because the table cloth was covering it, but then you asked me to dance, hoping to show off...

KathySB: Ive been..... that someone is having a good time and I think we should all be able to have some fun every day. Ive been hiding and hunting Easter eggs today, and I think my brain was hidden with the eggs

SandraS: ...how much I love you. But I never find the chance to catch your eye long enough. You rush through each moment as if the next one might miss you. How can I love a mirage? I've been wanting to tell you....

SandraS: two more folks left to give prompts...Jennifer, you get to choose

JenniferL2: OK, but who hasn't been chosen yet?

SandraS: BJ, David

DavidWe . o O (David, Bj)

JenniferL2: Alphabetical. Go BJ.

DavidWe smiles

BJB2: rainbow

DavidWe knows what's coming next

JenniferL2: Sorry, David! You were campaigning, huh?

SandraS: TIME

KayP: A rainbow carries many symbols. It is used as a symbol of peace, a symbol of life and color. I think rainbows are one of the first "little girl" drawings.

JenniferL2: The consolation prize! God leaves poor Noah in a stinky, animal filled ark for over a month as the world is covered in water, and after it all...a rainbow! Are they really beautiful enough to make up for all that trouble?

BJB2: arches in the sky dripping color oozing from the tiny drops of water to the pot of gold just out of sight but the gold is really the colors that we don't pay attention to we take too many rainbows in our lives for granted and overlook them until it is too late i need to find more rainbows

KathySB: I love rainbows because they are full of promise. No matter what your religious background, you have to enjoy the sight of all those colors bending across the sky. Real rainbows, not colored paper deals. The trans....

FredK: Many colored rainbow in the sky signaled with both its arches the beautiful day ahead after the spring rain. The earth awaits the growth

DavidWe: Somewhere over theoh, that's so cliché...but, it does make you think of Kansas - ruby slippers. I NEVER get to wear ruby slippers. Well, of course people might talk, but, who cares! I want ruby slippers. I want to click those heels and have them transport me through time and space to...well, where?

SandraS: color spectrum combined separate touching blue yellow makes green rainbows to color color rains on our bowed heads we take color we make color raining in our hair bows in our souls

BJB2: Um....David!

SandraS: ok, David, click those ruby heels and give us a last prompt

DavidWe: Me?

DavidWe laughs

DavidWe: Bananas

JenniferL2: Why David, we can practically hear you blushing. So coy!

SandraS: TIME

DavidWe: "They call me mellow yellow...(quite rightly)..."

JenniferL2: My husband wooed me with fried bananas, dripping with butter and brown sugar. Domestic and exotic at the same time, a man who can cook AND clean!

BJB2: oh, the bananas go with the monkeys we did earlier I love bananas so golden and delicious i hope the monkey's enjoy them as much as I do they have a lot of potassium which is good for you

KayP: Sometimes I think David is so funny. It makes me think of going bananas. I'll bet David is a great guy to be around. Too bad he is a Yankee, but not everybody can be from Texas. I have on my back deck, a banana tree. I will think of David everytime I see it.

KathySB: Bananas are the ultimate food. They look and smell wonderful. I love them best when they are just starting to freckle. They are so sweet and soft. I like to make them into pudding. comfort food

FredK: Tuesday is banana day. They are only nineteen cents a pound. Do we go in just for bananas or what?

SandraS: back to monkeys, eh? potassium lovely yellow. bananas are usually the destination my mind steers toward and monkeys never seem to meditate. i need quiet bananas, meditating monkeys, and a dancing brain.

DavidWe . o O (Hey, I'm not the subject - it was BANANAS!)

SandraS sends huge applause and raucous whistles to all the great writers here!

SandraS: Wow, that was fun!

SandraS: ok....comments...

BJB2 cheers.

SandraS: how did this affect your writing? how can you see using this in classroom...or not?

JenniferL2: I like this activity. It does encourage me to get rid of the inner critic because I have to get something out. I think I'd give my students a little more time...maybe five minutes.

KathySB: What a great way to peek at folks you can't see. I feel your vibes

FredK: Phone call. Where are we?

BJB2: each entry was unique...some stream of consciousness writing and some sentences and constructions of ideas

KayP: Cheers. One of the best situation comedies ever!

JenniferL2: I'd also need some pretty strict guidelines about what prompts are appropriate. High school treatment center kids...

SandraS: I like that...situation comedy

SandraS: ah, good point, Jennifer

DavidWe . o O (improvisation)

SandraS: how would you do that and still leave creativity to kids?

KayP: I used it to do something like this. I would let the kids use different colored chalk and keep adding to a story. They loved it

SandraS: ooh, that's a great idea, Kay

KayP: I really enjoyed this exercise and I didn't even get my Xanax

SandraS: for us as writers....we each have a transcript of this session...each of us could go over it and pick a piece we wrote and expand it

SandraS: yeah, Kay

KathySB: Do bigger students today understand parameters of "nothing rude"?

FredK: The reason I suggested Campfire was the round robin stories there

JenniferL2: Well, like with other writing assignments, I'd probably just say nothing drug, alcohol, sex, or issue related.

SandraS: another way this could be used is to work off someone else's prompt writing

SandraS: oh, cool, Fred

JenniferL2: Or you can say 'PG rated'

SandraS: cool - nothing rude = PG rated

KayP: Okay, when I am with the kids, I will leave out the Xanax remark...)

SandraS: would you do the writing with the students also, Jennifer?

JenniferL2: I think I should. I really don't feel like I'm a writer, and it's the one area where I want to improve as a teacher. I'm trying to force myself to do it more because I feel like I can't teach my students to do something I can't do. Also, I can't expect them to share if I'm not willing to.

BJB2: Jennifer, I work with juveniles in a correctional facility and I can relate to your concerns

SandraS: great insights, Jennifer...my experience writing with students is that I feel more like a writer

SandraS: and I see the students more as writers

FredK: Would you believe some adult literacy students are also SE

BJB2 nods to Fred

JenniferL2: SE?

JenniferL2: special ed?

KayP: I would like to be more creative in my writing. I feel as if I do nothing but write IEP's or measurable objectives.

FredK: Special ED

SandraS nods to Kay

SandraS: I noticed that we exhibit some of the same fears our students do...initial intimidation

SandraS: so do you think the blitz prompts do cut down on that intimidation?

KayP: Absolutely!

BJB2: yes, if you make sure that the writers don't get hung up on spelling

DavidWe: There's a wonderful ad for a gym with a very attractive woman pulling her hair back and the text says, "Life is ...dismantling inhibition"

SandraS: would this be something that students/writers could read over and then do some self-reflection...

KathySB: The very idea of prompts drives me crazy. I don't think I could do very well on the kinds of writing tests our students face these days.

BJB2 winks at Kay

SandraS: love that ad, David

DavidWe nods

SandraS nods to Kay

SandraS: I really liked the way the prompts shifted from single word to phrase

JenniferL2: On Kathy's comment - I agree, but this type of activity might help them to be less intimidated by them.

SandraS: and one could talk about genre...(ever the lit. teacher)

SandraS: single words tended to elicit poetry like stuff from me...phrases encouraged me to slip into fiction, narrative

KayP: I just tried to write a complete sentence...:)

KathySB: It's freeing to be able to write even nonsense and know the consequences are that someone will laugh

SandraS agrees with Kathy

SandraS: just finding stuff to show students that writing is FUN

JenniferL2: This seems like a good way to get several ideas going, then you could go back and pick one that you really felt was going somewhere and expand it. Often students just begin writing with their first idea, and it's often not the best.

SandraS: many students come to writing with huge blocks

SandraS: absolutely, Jennifer

KathySB: And it's not about writing, but I'm glad to know there are some other 'typing challenged' folks out there

SandraS: which shows we're back to

SandraS: Fred's brainstorming

FredK: . o O (oops)

SandraS: I also liked seeing the really different directions we all went

SandraS: shows the huge range of creativity present in any group of people

FredK: Literacy tutoring often uses life experiences.

SandraS: then one could also incorporate drawing, some kind of visualization....for one of the pieces of writing....

SandraS: anything else you can see doing with this exercise?

KayP: I will need to catch up. I was away changing a bulb because I am the only one in the house who knows how to do that!

SandraS: yeah, Kay!

BJB2: what about a word wall of the writing prompts generated by the students?

SandraS: ooh, love that...

KayP: I love word walls.

BJB2: you could also use vocabulary words as writing prompts

SandraS: oh, cool...blitz vocab prompts..would certainly take vocabulary out of the drill arena and into the play arena

SandraS: one could slow it down, deepen it...

SandraS: instead of a new prompt each time, at each time, writer chooses word from previous writing

SandraS: and uses that word for her/his own next section of writing...

SandraS: did that make any sense at all?

BJB2: or develop the writing into a poem or rap

SandraS: yes

FredK: . o O (could this be used with email?)

KayP: Kids really do love new words. I could teach a class every morning just using the word off the Starbucks cup protector. I bring a Starbucks every morning and the usual suspects come to my office to see the new word for the day. Isn't that funny?

SandraS: what are you thinking of, Fred?

SandraS: that's cool Kay

SandraS: I think dictionary.com generates a new word each day

FredK: My students are tutored separately

KayP: But the dictionary doesn't have coffee in it!

SandraS: nope

SandraS: so you would send a prompt via email, Fred?

BJB2: only problem with email, Fred, is that the spontaneity is removed

FredK: I am thinking we might use a round robin

BJB2: can your students log in to Tapped in?

SandraS: oh, that would be cool, Fred

FredK: I am working towards that, tutors too.

BJB2: nods. I think the time limit had a very important impact on our writing

SandraS: We've got about 3 more minutes. I'd like to urge all of us to take a look at this transcript

SandraS: and just check out your own writing, and others'

FredK: We all have to get to the same place at the same time.

SandraS: you may find something you want to develop...

BJB2: I also urge all of you to join the WriteTalk group

SandraS: yeah, BJ!

BJB2: that way when Sandy posts her monthly reminders, you'll get them

SandraS: yup, if you join, you can post messages

SandraS: upload writing if you want comments or any kind of feedback

SandraS: and we've got some great resources in this office

SandraS: you can add to those!

BJB2: Thanks for a great discussion, Sandy

FredK: Do you have discussions going?

SandraS: Thanks to all for sharing such great writing!

BJB2: . o O (now you've got us all fired up and I won't be able to fall asleep again)

KathySB: I'd like to say how much I have enjoyed writing with you all, Great Ideas.

DavidWe smiles

SandraS: oops, sorry, BJ!

BJB2: Fred, feel free to start a discussion

JenniferL2: Thanks for leading the group, and the great activity!

DavidWe gives Bj some soothing hot chocolate

DavidWe: Thanks, Sandra

FredK: Thanks It was a prompting promising session

SandraS: good night, all...and happy writing!

DavidWe waves bye

SandraS: thanks, Fred!

KayP joined the room.

BJB2 waves goodnight.

SandraS: see ya at work Kathy!

FredK: bye

DavidWe hugs BJ

DavidWe: Ciao, folks

SandraS: thanks, BJ!

KathySB: Kathy waves goodbye

SandraS whooshes off on hoverboard

SandraS left the room (signed off).