

**Title of Session:** WriteTalk - Sharing Best Practices in Writing  
**Moderator:** Sandra Shattuck  
**Title of File:** 20060713writetalk  
**Date:** July 13, 2006

Room: WriteTalk Group

**SharonTr:** This is my first time here, so I appreciate your helpfulness. I am new at Tapped In

**SandraS:** Welcome, Sharon!

**SandraS:** I'm so glad you could come here.

**SharonTr:** thank u

**BjB:** Welcome to tonight's WriteTalk discussion, everyone.

**ElizabetAC:** I'm new, too

**BjB:** we usually start all the discussions with introductions.

**SandraS:** Welcome, Elizabeth!

**SandraS** apologizes to BJ for interrupting...

**BjB:** please tell Sandy where you are located, what you teach, and what you hope to get from the discussion

**BjB:** no apologies necessary, Sandy

**MaureenB** joined the room.

**ElizabetAC:** So just anybody start?

**SandraS:** go for it, Elizabeth

**FredK:** I tutor for the Push County Literacy Council in SE Oklahoma

**SandraS** waves to Maureen

**JeffC:** Jeff Cooper, in Oregon, on Helpdesk here and along for the virtual ride as usual... enjoying my free edumacation here.

**BjB:** I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania and am interested in introducing more writing into my curriculum

**LisaC** joined the room.

**SharonTr:** I live in sunny San Diego. I teach K-8 for a virtual academy (homeschooling) and I always need help/tips for writing

**MaureenB** waves back

**ElizabetAC:** K...I'm in Las Vegas, I'm don't teach at this point, and I'm here to get responses to my writing

**HeatherBu:** I'm a middle school Technology teacher in Texas, and I would like to incorporate more writing in my classes.

**SandraS** waves to Lisa

**BjB:** hi, Lisa and Maureen. We're just starting introductions

**BjB:** a reminder that if you are new to Tapped In, go to ACTIONS in the top right of your screen and click on DETACH

**MaureenB:** Hi all I teach 4th grade in Putnam Valley, NY

**SandraS:** college lit. and writing in Huntsville AL

**FredK:** Elizabeth, I grew up in Boulder City

**SandraS:** is that everybody?

**ElizabetAC:** Fred..I'm pretty new here..I'm a San Diego native

**CathleenCW** joined the room.

**HeatherBu:** Hi, Cathy. We're just starting with introductions

**SandraS:** Hi, Cathleen.

**CathleenCW:** Hello

**FredK:** Elizabeth, talk with you later.

**HeatherBu:** Please say where you are from, and what you teach

**LisaC:** Hi 7th and 8th grade English, Louisiana

**SandraS:** We have a wonderful group here!

**CathleenCW:** HS English, Tarkington, Texas

**SandraS:** I usually describe the National Writing Project for about 5 minutes and then we get to it.

**SandraS:** So here's my spiel .... National Writing Project is a professional development group

**SandraS:** that's been around for about 30 years

**SandraS:** 3 main tenets are that teachers are the best teachers of other teachers

**SandraS:** (no canned or packaged inservice)

**SandraS:** that teachers who improve their own writing are more effective teachers of writing

**SandraS:** that writing can be used to learn across all subject matters

**SandraS:** the NWP has about 190 sites housed at colleges

**SandraS:** serving mostly k-12 teachers

**SandraS:** great university-k12 collaborations

**SandraS:** main program is the summer institute

**SandraS:** which is a great experience

**SandraS:** you can see if there's a writing project site near you by checking out the map on the website

**SandraS:** let's take a look at the website for a couple seconds, then come back here

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

**ElizabetAC:** I tried to click on the link and nothing happened

**SandraS:** did that link work?

**SandraS:** yeah, hang on

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

**SandraS:** hm..still not working

**BjB:** worked for me

**ElizabetAC:** not for me...sorry

**HeatherBu:** I've got it

**BjB:** make sure you don't have a minimized window

**SandraS:** I'm using Firefox

**BjB:** and you hold down the ctrl key on your keyboard

**BjB:** . o O ( to override pop ups )

**MaureenB:** I got it and one of the sites is at my daughter's college

**SandraS:** great, Maureen

**SandraS:** if you can't reach the site, you'll have a transcript with the URL to check it out later

**SharonTr:** so, if you're near a site, you can attend workshops they put on?

**SandraS:** yes, that is..

**SandraS:** you need to attend a Summer Institute first

**FredK:** Worked for me; I'm loading the map.

**MichelleHe:** Do you just check the web site to see when they are held?

**SandraS:** then you are an official Teacher Consultant

**SandraS:** and you can participate in any NWP activity...like writing retreats

**SandraS:** Michelle, you need to go to a Summer Institute first...

**MichelleHe:** Thanks

**SharonTr:** how do you find out about the summer institutes?

**SandraS:** some activities are inservices with teachers who have not been to an Summer Institute

**ElizabetAC:** got it

**SandraS:** Sharon, you can click on the link to the writing project site near you, and they should have information on summer institute

**SandraS:** each Writing Project site has a summer institute

**SandraS:** many of them offer college credit

**SandraS:** others give stipends

**SandraS:** each site does things differently to take advantage of their particular circumstances

**SandraS:** any other questions about NWP before we go on?

**SandraS:** NWP is federally funded with a 30 million dollar budget...every year NWP lobbies to get that budget renewed

**SandraS:** ok, this is what I'd like to do this evening

**SandraS:** the NWP website has tons of resources and we're going to check one of them out tonight

**BjB:** a reminder that all urls will be in the transcript that is sent to you when you log out

**SandraS:** there's a small publication called "30 Ideas for Teaching Writing"

**SandraS:** you can order it online

**SandraS:** but it's also in PDF version

**SandraS:** there's a link to each section of the pamphlet...

**SandraS:** so I'm going to give you the URL

**SandraS:** when you go there, you can look at the table of contents of the pamphlet

**SandraS:** each of the 30 ideas takes about 2 paragraphs to describe

**SandraS:** at the bottom of the description, there's a link to The Quarterly article the idea comes from

**SandraS:** The Quarterly is the journal produced by NWP

**SandraS:** right now it's making the transition from print to online

**SandraS:** but all the print versions are available online

**SandraS:** what I'd like each of you to do is to pick one of the 30 ideas...just click on the one from the table of contents that interests you... read the 2 paragraphs...and come back here

**SandraS:** and talk about what you learned, what you thought about the idea

**SandraS:** How does that sound?

**CathleenCW:** Great!

**BjB:** sounds good

**MaureenB:** I'm ready

**SharonTr:** =)

**SandraS:** what an intrepid group of explorers!

**SandraS:** I've got 8.20 central time, Sprint time

**SandraS:** so let's just say we'll convene back here in 5 minutes and start our discussion

**HeatherBu** nods

**SandraS:** here's the URL

**SandraS:** <http://www.writingproject.org/cs/nwpp/print/nwpr/922>

**SandraS:** if you have any problems, just yell!

**SharonTr:** oh, I'm having trouble linking

**SusanR** joined the room.

**SharonTr:** what were the shortcuts from before?

**MichelleHe:** me too

**SandraS:** hold down control key

**SandraS:** then click on URL

**SharonTr:** not working, tried that

**SandraS:** ok, hang on...

**SharonTr:** that's weird b/c I didn't have trouble with nwp

**SandraS:** can you get back to the NWP site?

**SharonTr:** yes, still have that window open

**SandraS:** if you can get back there, look at top menu and click on Publications

**SharonTr:** okay

**SandraS:** then click on Other Publications

**SandraS:** should be first item

**SharonTr:** ok

**SandraS:** Sorry ... third item

**SharonTr:** awesome, got it! thanks

**SandraS:** Yeah!!!

**SandraS:** ok, it's 8.25 central time...anyone ready to share what s/he read?

**BjB** nods

**MaureenB:** hint 4Help student writers draw rich chunks of writing from endless sprawl.

**BjB:** I read the same one, Maureen!

**MaureenB:** this is always the hardest things for my students to do is focus

**SandraS:** Oh, cool!

**BjB** listens to Maureen's comments

**SharonTr:** =)

**MaureenB:** I like the idea of a cartoon box

**HeatherBu:** I like # 16..encourage descriptive writing by focusing on the sounds of words...Words should "taste good"

**SandraS:** cool, heather

**AndreaDN:** I liked that one too.

**SandraS:** let's take #4 for a bit...

**SandraS:** BJ read that one too

**SandraS:** What drew you and Maureen to the sprawl one?

**SharonTr:** I read about using individuals' home language to learn standard English

**SusanR:** #5 appeals to me ..Work with words relevant to students' lives to help them build vocabulary.

**SandraS:** great, Sharon

**SandraS** waves to Susan

**BjB:** I also have trouble with students focusing on one topic

**MaureenB:** my students always tend to write sprawl stories in the beginning of the year

**BjB:** I liked the visual aid of a frame to focus

**SandraS:** I agree, BJ

**MaureenB:** I like the frame too

**FredK:** #11 gives an interesting approach

**SandraS:** hint #4 is a great example of using visual to help focus writing

**SandraS** listens to Fred

**SusanR:** I like the students to play with words

**AndreaDN:** I like the idea of the frame to keep them focused, but I worry sometimes that it limits creativity.

**SharonTr:** I had trouble choosing one of the 30 b/c they all sound good~

**SandraS** agrees with Sharon

**FredK:** #11 uses the students gab to form headlines for the days writing project

**CathleenCW:** I chose #3 because I believe students are quite involved with relationships at the HS level and writing about something they understand/live with encourages writing.

**SandraS:** well, the really cool thing with the publication is you can go right to the longer article and read more

**SandraS:** I like that one, too, Fred

**SandraS:** cool, Cathleen

**SandraS:** ok the creativity concern about frames...what about the comic book programs that are out there?

**SandraS:** there's one only for macs that is great

**SharonTr:** to get the article, you click on the link below the description?

**SandraS:** right, Sharon

**SharonTr:** wow, what a super resource!

**SandraS:** <http://www.comiclife.com>

**MaureenB:** the other thing is that if they frame the story they may end of with tons of story ideas

**SandraS:** I think that's the right url for Macs

**AndreaDN:** Never heard of the comic book programs, thanks for the link

**SandraS:** there's another one...hang on

**AndreaDN:** I teach at a school that follows the Noyce Foundation for writing.

**SusanR:** excellent articles/resources to support the topic in #4 "Visualizing Vocabulary

**SandraS:** <http://www.pimpampum.net/bubblr/>

**SandraS:** these are lots of fun

**CathleenCW:** I have used the term 'freeze frame the moment' so the students will be guided into going into detail and

**SandraS:** and they help the writer to cut the words down to what's necessary

**CathleenCW:** show not tell..

**AndreaDN:** thanks, I'll check those out.

**SandraS:** oh, that's a great idea Cathleen

**SandraS:** Fred, can you explain the one you read?

**FredK:** =ok

**FredK:** The teacher listens to the student talk and then puts a headline on the blackboard for the students to write about.

**FredK:** The students are familiar, so the writing is easier

**SandraS:** right...so 5th grade students come in Monday gabbing about their weekend

**CathleenCW:** I also think that would be a great kick-off for poetry.

**FredK:** right

**SandraS:** they post personal headlines to bulletin board

**SandraS:** other students try to guess the story...

**SandraS:** "Fifth-grader stranded at movie theater"

**SandraS:** for instance

**SandraS:** then writers tell their stories

**SandraS:** they learn to create suspense

**SandraS:** on Tuesday, they write the stories

**SandraS:** after giving the story a headline and telling story

**SandraS:** so it's a layered writing assignment

**SandraS:** relying on students' experiences

**SharonTr:** oh, that sounds so fun and interesting. most students see writing as boring, I can see this enticing them

**SandraS:** and a couple genres

**SandraS:** absolutely, Sharon

**SandraS:** gets the whole class involved

**SharonTr:** does everyone write about the same topic?

**SandraS:** writers have clear audience in front of them

**SandraS:** the way I understand it, each writer writes about something they experienced that weekend

**SandraS:** I haven't read the whole article

**SharonTr:** oh, so everyone's headline goes on the board?

**SandraS:** Yes

**SharonTr:** not just one..

**SharonTr:** okay

**SandraS:** like great teaching ideas, this one sounds as if it came out of the teacher's desire to make the Monday morning gabfest stimulate writing

**SandraS:** so the teacher was already doing something that looked as if it could be revised into something else

**MichelleHe:** I thought that the persuasive writing for a grade was excellent and could be used across the curriculum

**MaureenB:** I can see how it can work better now thanks

**SandraS:** I'm talking off the top of my head, Maureen...now I've gotta go read the whole article...

**SandraS:** I agree, Michelle

**SandraS:** a lot of these ideas can be easily adapted

**MaureenB:** but what you say makes a lot of sense

**SandraS:** which is why the Summer institute is so great

**SharonTr:** Michelle, that is good!

**SandraS:** because you've got teachers from kindergarten through college sharing ideas

**MaureenB:** I wish I knew about the Summer Institute sooner

**SharonTr:** wow...how long is the summer institute?

**MichelleHe:** I am health and PE- We don't always get a great deal of help

**SandraS:** usually 4 weeks

**SharonTr:** me too Maureen!

**SandraS:** we just had a PE person in our summer institute

**SandraS:** and she really developed some good writing assignments

**MaureenB:** I had tried to get into Columbia Teacher's College Writer's Workshop class but didn't get in

**MichelleHe:** I should get her e-mail from you

**SandraS:** and it really helped those of us who tend to ignore the physical when we write

**HeatherBu:** From #16: students working as partners, one is writing a detailed description of a photograph she has been given, the other (not looking at the photo) is writing a list of active verbs, the kind that might provide unexpected energy if they were suddenly dropped into a piece of writing...

**SandraS:** oh, wow....that sounds great

**SharonTr:** and then they combine their ideas?

**HeatherBu:** Right

**HeatherBu:** Some of the verbs work, some don't

**HeatherBu:** but the writing grows for both students

**SandraS:** can you see yourself adapting that in your classroom?

**ElizabetAC** joined the room.

**HeatherBu:** Yes, using Flickr and letting them work together.

**SharonTr:** With my 3rd grade students, I had them each draw a detailed picture of an alien creature, secretly. then they had to use their picture (without showing a partner) to

describe what they had on the paper and get their partner to draw the same alien creature. it was all about communicating using details

**HeatherBu:** I can incorporate all the word processing stuff they need, and yet they are doing some authentic writing

**SharonTr:** what is flickr?

**AndreaDN:** Heather, what is Flickr?

**SandraS:** aha....so excellent example of using technology

**SandraS:** Flickr is yahoo's photo organizing program

**MaureenB:** sorry just have to crow a little both of my student teacher got positions in my district for Sept

**HeatherBu:** <http://flickr.com/>

**MaureenB:** just found out

**HeatherBu** cheers for Maureen's colleagues!

**MaureenB** thanks Heather

**SandraS:** yeah!

**SusanR:** Congratulations!

**SandraS:** any other thoughts about the 30 ideas?

**SusanR:** the ideas on visualizing vocabulary can be used across the curriculum and at any grade level ..#4

**SusanR:** practical ideas you can implement quickly

**HeatherBu** . o O ( many of the photos have a "Creative Commons" license, so you can use the photos as long as you give the proper attribution...FREE )

**SandraS:** how do you see using them in your classroom, Sue?

**SusanR:** I am a sub or occasional teacher so I need a grab bag of goodies to use at all times

**AndreaDN:** I have to get going, but I thank you for letting me join my fist Tapped In discussion. I learned about a few good urls and new idea. Thanks...

**SandraS:** a big TOOLBOX of teaching ideas, eh, Susan?

**SandraS:** Thanks, Andrea!

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

**FredK:** One reason I chose #11 is that it is like a literacy "Life Experience" exercise where the student tells about a life experience, sometimes with prompting. The tutor writes it down exactly as the student tells it and goes over it with the student to learn how to read his/her own words.

**SandraS:** yes, Fred...

**SandraS:** I think one of the challenges with writing

**SandraS:** is that students don't connect writing with their own lives

**HeatherBu:** I like that one also, Fred

**SharonTr:** Yes, agreed Sandra. that's why I liked #29

**SandraS:** great point, Sharon...the importance of valuing home language

**SandraS:** will just continue to grow

**SharonTr:** students experience difficulties in their community with their native language. it inspires them to write about it and learn standard English at the same time

**SandraS:** We're almost at the end of our time, and I just want to remind folks that WriteTalk is also a place to share your own writing

**SharonTr:** how so?

**SandraS:** Well, Jeff was working with Elizabeth on a short story

**SandraS:** Jeff, do you want to explain?

**BjB:** Sandy will be presenting a session at the Tapped In Festival on July 19...don't miss it!

**JeffC:** sure

**SandraS:** Thanks, BJ!

**JeffC:** Elizabeth is a friend from another site...

**JeffC:** She asked me to comment on a short story she wrote...

**JeffC:** So... I started to... and was talking about it with her \*here\*...

**JeffC:** and then all of \*you\* showed up!

**JeffC:** me... forgetting that WriteTalk was here today... so... I've uploaded it!

**BjB:** if everyone joins the group and the story is uploaded...

**JeffC:** and Elizabeth would love to have others comment on it.

**JeffC:** I have trackchanges on and inserting comments is possible.

**JeffC:** it's 4 pages

**BjB:** then you can look at the story and post a comment to the discussion board

**JeffC:** so... not a lot to read, and then yes... anyway people would like to do it... I'll start a thread on the Discussion board.

**SandraS:** exactly, and anyone who has a draft of writing about teaching or any other kind of writing can get comments/feedback

**BjB:** to join the WriteTalk group...

**SandraS** listens to BJ

**BjB:** go to the welcome screen in this room

**BjB:** scroll down on write talk your way on in...

**BjB:** to THIS IS THE GROUP ROOM FOR WRITE TALK

**BjB:** click on the green i next to the group name

**BjB:** this will take you to the group ID page

**BjB:** at the top of the screen is JOIN THIS GROUP

**BjB:** once you've joined, the group is added to your pull down favorite places menu and you can enter this room from any location in Tapped In

**BjB:** and then download the story and post to the discussion board

**BjB** . o O ( these instructions will be in your transcript if I lost you along the way )

**SharonTr**: everything was great till that last direction. how do we access the story to download it?

**SandraS**: It can be hard to get feedback on writing, so this is a great place to do it.

**SandraS**: Sharon, you go into Files

**SandraS**: the story is posted there

**BjB**: Sharon, Files is in the blue menu on the left of the screen above this chat window

**SharonTr**: where's files?

**HeatherBu** . o O ( short story1.doc )

**BjB**: Discussion is also in that blue menu

**SandraS**: If you look at the Room View, you'll see the left-hand menu for the room

**SandraS**: and you can click on Files

**SharonTr**: I can't find it, but I don't want to slow everyone else down

**BjB**: Sharon, click on ROOM VIEW at the top of your screen

**SandraS**: Not to worry Sharon.

**BjB**: that will bring you back to the welcome screen

**SharonTr**: ok, got that

**BjB**: you should now see the blue menu on the left

**SharonTr**: oh now I see files!

**SharonTr**: =)

**SharonTr**: thank you!

**BjB** cheers

**SandraS** applauds

**SandraS**: OK, that brings us to the end of this evening's WriteTalk

**BjB** waves goodnight. Thanks, Sandy!

**CathleenCW**: This was the first discussion I have ever attended, and I must say I have learned so much!

**SandraS**: huge thanks to all of you for exploring and sharing

**HeatherBu**: Thanks Sandra!!!

**BjB**: DON'T FORGET THE FESTIVAL ON JULY 19

**SandraS**: great, Cathleen

**HeatherBu**: Looking forward to seeing you on the 19th

**SandraS** jumps up and down

**LisaC**: Thanks

**BjB**: the theme is Sustaining Professional Development Online

**SandraS**: We'll be celebrating!

**SusanR**: Thanks Sandra, always inspiring

**SandraS** bows to Susan

**SharonTr**: thank you ALL for your help!

**FredK**: Thanks Sandra> hope to see you next Wednesday

**SandraS**: Take care, everyone!

**CathleenCW**: APPLAUSE!