

**Title of Session:** WriteTalk - Sharing Best Practices in Writing

**Moderator:** Sandra Shattuck

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Room: WriteTalk Group

**SandraS:** Jessica, we usually start with introductions.

**JessicaMa:** Oh that's nice.

**SandraS:** Usually we each say where we are...which we've already done!

**SandraS:** And what we teach.

**SandraS:** I'm in Alabama, teach writing and lit. at college level

**BJB2:** I teach remedial communication in Pennsylvania

**JessicaMa:** Well, I am in Westlake, Louisiana, and I am a 5th Grade Language Teacher.

**SandraS:** great age to work with

**JessicaMa:** It's wonderful!

**SandraS:** I usually talk briefly about the National Writing Project or NWP

**SandraS:** do you know anything about NWP, Jessica?

**JessicaMa:** No I do not. Tell me about it!

**SandraS** loves Jessica's enthusiasm

**SandraS:** ok, it's a professional development organization that's been around about 30 years

**SandraS:** started at Berkeley

**SandraS:** the founder, Jim Gray, just passed away last year

**SandraS:** there are about 190 writing project sites around the nation

**SandraS:** housed at universities and colleges usually in education schools or English departments

**SandraS:** and these sites work mainly with k-12 teachers

**SandraS:** there are 3 main tenets at NWP

**SandraS:** teachers are the best teachers of other teachers (no canned inservice)

**SandraS:** teachers teach writing more effectively if they improve their own writing

**SandraS:** and writing is a powerful pedagogical tool across all subject areas

**SandraS:** the main program at each writing project site is the summer institute

**SandraS:** these usually last about 4 weeks and often provide participants with graduate credit

**SandraS:** or some kind of stipend

**SandraS:** if you're interested, you can check out the map on the NWP site that lets you know if there's a project near you...

**SandraS:** here's the site

**SandraS:** you can go check the map and then come back here

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

**JessicaMa:** That sounds really interesting. I will DEFINENTLY check into that!

**SandraS:** so, I'd like to show you one or two resources on the website

**SandraS:** and then we'll get into this evening's topic

**JessicaMa:** ok

**SandraS:** first of all, just check out the main page and look at the publications and reports for a minute

**SandraS:** Then, if you go to the main page, and then pull down the menu under Publications at the top, and then choose Other Publications, you'll see the second one is 30 Ideas for Teaching Writing

**SandraS:** I like this pamphlet a lot

**SandraS:** it links online to all the longer articles

**DarylP** joined the room.

**SandraS:** Hi, Daryl.

**JessicaMa:** Wow that is really neat.

**DarylP:** Hello

**SandraS:** Are you here for WriteTalk?

**DarylP:** Well. I just quickly registered with Tapped In and now I'm checking it out.

**SandraS:** Wonderful.

**SandraS:** You're welcome to stay or to go explore.

DavidWe: Welcome to the Tapped In community, Daryl

**SandraS:** We're talking about writing, teaching writing

**SandraS:** Jessica is a 5th grade teacher

**JessicaMa:** Hello!

**SandraS:** and the rest of us are Tapped In folks

**DarylP:** I'm a Grade 6 teacher in Canada.

**SandraS:** Welcome!

**JessicaMa:** Welcome Daryl!

**SandraS:** We were just talking about the National Writing Project and the resources on its webpage

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

**DarylP:** I'll check it out.

**SandraS:** Any questions about NWP before we move on?

**JessicaMa:** Don't think so. I'm searching around as we speak. Seems really interesting.

**SandraS:** OK. I've got a topic for this evening, but I'd like to ask you first....do you have any concerns about writing?

**SandraS:** Your own writing, your teaching of writing?

**JessicaMa:** Just would like to get children more excited about writing.

**SandraS:** Aha!

**SandraS:** The 30 Ideas Book is a great place to start for ideas.

**SandraS:** Another thing is to come up with authentic audiences.

**DarylP:** Getting excited about writing is challenge and real audiences is part of getting your students to be engaged in writing.

**SandraS:** One example: a 7th and a 9th grade teacher used ABC books for the students to write their own autobiographies and illustrate them

**SandraS:** then they took those books, went to an elementary school and read the books to the kids

**SandraS:** There's a great idea I learned from a 4th grade teacher

**SandraS:** Classroom books...

**SandraS:** each student contributes a page

**SandraS:** it gets laminated and bound very simply

**SandraS:** and is kept in classroom and/or school library

**JessicaMa:** I know a teacher that did that, and ended up getting them published!

**SandraS:** kids read them all the time

**SandraS:** oh, wonderful

**JessicaMa:** I teach with her actually!

**SandraS:** did she find that her students were more enthusiastic about writing?

**JessicaMa:** Yes, they showed their book to the entire school. Possibly even the whole city!

**SandraS:** wonderful

**DarylP:** I have started blogging with my class and it is quite exciting. I find that it allows student's work to become published for a larger audience.

**SandraS:** totally, Daryl....actually blogging was part of my topic for tonight

**BJB2:** we had a very interesting talk about wikis yesterday

**SandraS:** ooh, I'm sorry I missed that BJ

**DarylP:** great. sorry I missed it.

**BJB2:** and how they are very good for student publishing and editing and collaboration

**SandraS:** Jessica, are you with us on the blogs and wikis?

**SandraS:** I agree, BJ

**JessicaMa:** I know all about blogs, and I have Google open telling me about Wikis!

**SandraS:** yeah!

**SandraS:** here's one that I'm working with...

**SandraS:** <http://wordweaver.pbwiki.com>

**SandraS:** pbwiki is a nice interface

**SandraS:** and there's a free option

**DarylP:** I agree. Very user friendly.

**SandraS:** what have you done with blogging and what have you found out, Daryl?

**DarylP:** I started a couple of weeks ago. I have been reading blogs for about a year and I decided its time to get started.

**SandraS:** cool

**DarylP:** I use Class Blogmeister which is a great tool for the classroom.

**SandraS:** don't know that one...will have to check it out

**DarylP:** Everything that the student posts or any comments that the student receives, you the teacher has to approve it before it is published.

**SandraS:** blogging is really what brought me to this teaching revelation that I wanted to talk about tonight....

**SandraS:** oh, that's excellent, Daryl

**SandraS:** that takes care of teacher/parent worries

**SandraS:** so everything goes to one blog, Daryl?

**DarylP:** <http://classblogmeister.com/index.php>

**DarylP:** That's the site homepage set up by David Warlick. The creator.

**DarylP:** I'll also submit my class blog in a moment.

**SandraS:** Wow!

**JessicaMa:** That looks really interesting too!

**SandraS:** Warlick's program makes the whole thing almost like a content management system

**SandraS:** but still more focused on writing

**DarylP:** [http://classblogmeister.com/blog.php?blogger\\_id=44150](http://classblogmeister.com/blog.php?blogger_id=44150)

**JessicaMa:** Daryl, did you make the video?

**DarylP:** How he has it set up is first with a class page which the teacher leaves posts. Each student has their own blogging page where they leave their posts. Again whatever they write has to be approved by you.

**SandraS:** this is fantastic!!!

**SandraS:** I love this!

**JessicaMa:** Very, very incredible.

**JHelenP** joined the room.

**BJB2:** welcome, Helen

**SandraS:** Hi, helen

**JHelenP:** Hello

**DarylP:** Hi Helen

**SandraS:** we're all engrossed in a blog program

**JessicaMa:** Hi, Helen!

**SandraS:** We're looking at ways to get students excited about writing

**SandraS:** And one topic that came up is blogging

**SandraS:** Daryl was showing us Class Blogmeister

**JHelenP:** Great!

**SandraS:** a wonderful program that allows more control

**SandraS:** and also student freedom!

**JHelenP:** Is it motivating the students?

**SandraS:** You'll have to ask Daryl....

**JHelenP:** Daryl?

**SandraS:** Daryl may be looking at another page

**DarylP:** The power I found with blogging was the connection with another classroom. We left comments on another class blog from Ohio and they left comments on my student's blogs. There were making comments about spelling mistakes etc. Things we try to tell kids to correct. But they're hearing from kids from another country.

**SandraS:** Daryl's in Canada

**DarylP:** Sorry about the poor sentence structure. I'm typing to fast.

**JHelenP:** What grade level?

**SandraS:** no problem!

**JHelenP:** Peer editing!

**SandraS:** Daryl is 6th grade teacher, Canada

**SandraS:** Jessica is 5th grade teacher LA

**JHelenP:** Ok

**SandraS:** I teach college level, and blogging has been great there

**JessicaMa:** What a great way to get them to be more aware of spelling.

**JHelenP:** Right!

**DarylP:** My goal is to build a community with other classrooms so my students have an audience who will view, read and comment on their writing.

**JHelenP:** I have not tried blogging. I'm an urban literacy professor at the Univ. of Memphis.

**SandraS:** yes, exactly what we were talking about....

**SandraS:** that students get excited about writing if they have an authentic audience

**JHelenP:** My students are working on their Masters and Ed.Ds

**SandraS:** nothing more authentic than other students in another school

**DarylP:** The challenge is to find active classrooms that blog.

**JHelenP:** Yes!

**SandraS:** blogging is a great way to get a teacher portfolio going, Helen

**JHelenP:** OK

**SandraS:** and to reflect on pedagogy

**JHelenP:** Very interesting

**SandraS:** Daryl, I could maybe help with that

**SandraS:** There are a lot of NWP teachers who use blogging...

**JHelenP:** I agree and reflection is one of my themes for my courses.

**SandraS:** I can post a question on one of the lists and then get back to you...

**SandraS:** Well, let's take a look at one of my blogs...

**SandraS:** and a posting that reflects...

**SandraS:** and gets student comments.

**SandraS:** if you go to my blog,

**SandraS:** I'll give the url in a sec

**SandraS:** please scroll down to the 5th post

**SandraS:** it's called modeling peer-response groups

**BJB2:** Daryl, you could also join the K-12 Students group...over 400 members. all are K-12 teachers

**SandraS:** it's dated 20 Sept

**SandraS:** please read that post and the 2 comments under it

**SandraS:** then come back here

**SandraS:** great idea, BJ

**SandraS:** Daryl could ask if there other classes blogging there, right?

**SandraS:** ok, so....

**BJB2** nods

**SandraS:** <http://wurdz.wordpress.com>

**SandraS:** scroll down to 5th post

**SandraS:** on peer response

**SandraS:** read it and the 2 comments

**SandraS:** then come back here

**SandraS:** everybody good to go?

**JessicaMa:** I believe so.

**DarylP:** ok here.

**SandraS:** ok, see ya in a sec

**JHelenP:** I found it but couldn't remember what else to look for.

**SandraS:** just scroll down to 5th post

**JHelenP:** OK

**SandraS:** about peer-response

**DarylP:** Interesting comments. Good insight from a writer that is not feeling that confident about his/her writing.

**SandraS:** read that and the 2 comments

**SandraS:** I agree, Daryl

**DarylP:** The power of blogging is that the pragmatics of the writing, especially for kids, can always change.

**JessicaMa:** I am going to agree with Daryl also.

**SandraS:** I agree

**SandraS:** is everybody back?

**JHelenP:** Yes

**JessicaMa:** I'm here

**SandraS:** OK...here's the shift that blogging brought me to

**SandraS:** I've been teaching over 20 years

**SandraS:** blogging did something for me that I don't think anything else has done

**SandraS:** it made me a co-writer instead of a teacher of writing

**DarylP:** One post that is assigned by the teacher may require more formalized writing where other posts may be a reflection or just thoughts and the formality may not be necessary.

**SandraS:** variety of writing on blogs...I agree, Daryl

**SandraS:** blogging had as much effect on my teaching and writing as it did on my students' writing and learning

**SandraS:** the more I find ways to make myself vulnerable as a writer in the classroom

**SandraS:** like sharing a first draft

**SandraS:** the more I find my students respecting writing

**SandraS:** seeing that an experienced teacher/writer struggles with the same issues they do

**SandraS:** so although I know I'm more experienced, I'm getting paid to teach

**SandraS:** if I can also become a co-writer, my perspective shifts in important ways

**SandraS:** if I call the students "writers" they become writers

**SandraS:** Is this making any sense?

**DarylP:** Absolutely.

**SandraS:** It's a perceptual shift in my teaching I'm trying to articulate these days.

**SandraS:** Oh, good.

**DarylP:** If we want kids to write we as teachers should be writers.

**SandraS:** That's why the topic tonight was about bridging writing inside and outside the classroom.

**DarylP:** Just as we want kids to read, we teachers also have to be readers.

**SandraS:** Exactly, Daryl.

**SandraS:** And showing students that....

**SandraS:** Students might assume that we read and write

**SandraS:** and I assume students know that

**SandraS:** but when I SHOW them how I work through those processes

**SandraS:** that's a different kind of teaching

**SandraS:** I appreciate your input

**JHelenP:** I agree because when I took writing courses for myself, I became a much better writer

**BJB2:** the next WriteTalk discussion will be on November 9

**SandraS:** Thanks, BJ!

**JHelenP:** Thanks!

**DarylP:** good to know

**SandraS:** Are there other ways that y'all bridge your writing/creativity inside and outside the classroom?

**JHelenP:** This has been very informative

**BJB2:** I recommend that you join this group

**SandraS:** Thanks so much for coming by Helen.

**JHelenP:** I work with 6 - 8 grade teachers and I plan to have this discussion with them

**BJB2:** then, when Sandy sends out reminders, you'll get the email

**SandraS:** That will be an interesting discussion, Helen.

**SandraS:** You can let us know what you find out!

**JHelenP:** Goodnight and thanks for welcoming me. This will enhance the writing of some teachers in Memphis

**JessicaMa:** Blogging is something that I think I want to look into with my students. Especially after tonight!

**SandraS:** Goodnight, Helen.

**JessicaMa:** Nighty Night Helen!

**DarylP:** Glad to hear it.

**SandraS:** One of the challenges with blogging is teacher control....and Class Blogmeister takes care of that beautifully, it looks like.

**SandraS:** I meant blogging in elementary and middle school level...

**JessicaMa:** Yea, it definitely appears that way.

**SandraS:** at college level, I wanted my students to have their own blogs

**SandraS:** so they could each have their own space to play with

**SandraS:** so I ended up linking to all of their blogs from my blog

**DarylP:** And they have the freedom of creative control

**JessicaMa:** Well in college, of course they will be more responsible.

**SandraS:** and then their assignments involved looking at each other's blogs and commenting

**SandraS** nods

**SandraS:** I didn't look at grammar, mechanics, punctuation...and looked more at ideas and creativity

**SandraS:** and how writers responded to other writers

**JessicaMa:** Do you feel that their grammar and such slacked off because of that?

**SandraS:** but as Daryl mentioned, there's a whole range of things one could do

**SandraS:** actually, no...

**SandraS:** I think they understood the genre...that it's online writing.

**SandraS:** and because they wrote more

**SandraS:** and wrote more about the literature

**SandraS:** their other writing improved

**SandraS:** I have no data for that!

**SandraS:** but just the practice of writing

**SandraS:** knowing others will read their writing...

**JessicaMa:** Interesting, so they used blogging as an extension of their own voice. Which in turn, helped with their other "proper" writing skills.

**SandraS:** Yes! exactly

**SandraS:** much better said, Jessica

**JessicaMa:** Why thank you Sandra!

**SandraS:** well, it was a lovely way of expressing it

**SandraS:** and too often, students don't get those kinds of creative venues in the classroom

**SandraS:** We're just about done...

**SandraS:** I want to thank y'all for your great input...

**JessicaMa:** This was really FUN!

**SandraS:** I can't wait to play with Class Blogmeister!

**BJB2** cheers for Sandy....thanks!

**DarylP:** This has been great.

**SandraS:** Wait until we do blitz prompts, Jessica!

**SandraS:** that's REALLY fun!

**JessicaMa** waves at everyone!

**BJB2** smiles.

**DarylP:** I didn't expect an engaging conversation such as this. Thanks a lot everyone. Great to be here.

**SandraS:** Welcome to Tapped In Daryl

**JessicaMa:** I agree Daryl, I really didn't know what to expect!

**SandraS:** it's a great community

**DarylP:** I look forward to explore it more.

**SandraS:** You're welcome to join WriteTalk

**JessicaMa:** It's definitely a great source of knowledge, and resources!

**SandraS:** and you can post anything to the discussion there...

**SandraS:** we've got some good resources in the office, too

**DarylP:** Any recommendations in getting to know Tapped In better?

**SandraS:** and you can check out past transcripts

**SandraS:** Just what you're doing, Daryl

**BJB2:** Daryl, click on the Tapped In tab at the top of your screen

**SandraS:** Check out the sessions that intrigue you.

**BJB2:** and then click on the subtab CALENDAR

**JessicaMa:** OK, time to go grade papers. Thank you once again Sandra for all your help and vast knowledge!

**SandraS:** Good luck with grading!

**SandraS:** I'm saving mine for tomorrow....

**SandraS:** Great to meet you, Jessica.

**JessicaMa** waves bye!

**SandraS:** Take care!

**JessicaMa:** Great to meet you. Nighty Night!

**BJB2** hugs Sandy goodnight

**SandraS** hugs BJ back