

Title of Session: WriteTalk - SpeakEasy

Moderator: Sandra Shattuck

Title of File: 20070510writetalk

Date: May 10, 2007

Room: WriteTalk Group

SandraS: Shall we get started?

FredK: I am a tutor for literacy in SE Oklahome

SandraS: Fred knows exactly what to do!

FredK lives in Snow all year round

SandraS: We usually start with introductions

SandraS: just say what you teach, where you are...

SandraS: I teach college writing & literature in northern Alabama

CindyMcc: I am a certified elementary and middle school teacher currently working for the public library. I am also working on my master's degree in workforce development education.

SusanR: I am tutoring grade 3 and 6 students in preparation for formal testing in two weeks in Ontario, Canada

SusanR: along with subbing

BJB2: I teach remedial communication in Pennsylvania and am on Tapped In helpdesk

SusanR: and I facilitate the K to 3+ Great Resources sessions here at TI

SandraS applauds BJ and Susan

SandraS: Amanda, would you like to introduce yourself? (what you teach, where you are)

DavidWe: I'm a HelpDesk volunteer and I lead a math education and technology discussion. I'm in New Jersey, close to New York City

SandraS applauds David

AmandaOL: I am not a teacher yet I am a junior at University of Texas Pan American and my major is English

DavidWe bows humbly

AmandaOL: I am from McAllen Texas

SandraS: Wonderful!

SandraS: For the newcomers, y'all just need to know you've got many powerhouse Tapped In folks right here....

SandraS: BJ, Susan, David

SandraS: All fantastic resources and leaders in TI

DavidWe flexes his biceps

SandraS: And Fred is a wonderful regular in TI

BJB2 grins. Good job, David

DavidWe bows humbly and takes a deep breath

SusanR :nods graciously

SandraS: OK, everybody here except Cindy and Amanda has heard my National Writing Project spiel

CindyMcc: It's nice to meet everyone.

SandraS: so let me give a quick quick version

BJB2: it's an important spiel, Sandy...we don't mind you repeating it

SusanR: The stage is yours, Sandra

SandraS: The National Writing Project is a professional development program

SandraS bows to BJ and Susan

SandraS: it's been around since 1973

SandraS: founded at Berkeley

DavidWe cheers for Berkeley

SandraS: there are about 190 Writing Project sites in the nation

SandraS: all housed at universities

SandraS: mostly serving k-12 teachers

SandraS: NWP has a tenant building here at Tapped In

SandraS: it's federally funded

SandraS: each site has a summer institute

SandraS: once you go through a summer institute, you can do anything with NWP

SandraS: writing retreats

SandraS: conferences

SandraS: advanced institutes

SandraS: there are 3 main tenets

SandraS: teachers are the best teachers of other teachers

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

SandraS: and

SandraS: writing is a fantastic method for learning in all subject areas

SandraS: the website has lots of great resources

SandraS: and you can see if there's a site near you

SandraS: here's the url

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

SandraS: Cindy and Amanda, if you want to go check out the site for a minute or two, go ahead

SandraS: then come back here and we'll get talking

AmandaOL: ok sounds good

SandraS: ok, is everybody back?

SandraS: any questions about NWP or the website?

FredK sees lots of resources.

SandraS nods to Fred

SandraS: I love that 30 Ideas for Teaching Writing

SandraS: also love searching The Quarterly

CindyMcC: I found the institute nearest me is in Central Arkansas at Conway. Very interesting site!

SandraS: oh, excellent

SandraS: That's a good point, too, Cindy

SandraS: each of the sites has its own personality

SusanR checks the calendar of events

SandraS: and some of them have really resource-rich websites

SandraS nods to Susan

CamilleL joined the room.

SandraS: yeah!

SandraS: here's Camille!

CamilleL: oh thank you so much.

SandraS: you're welcome, Camille

SandraS: we've done introductions

SandraS: I've given a quick spiel on the National Writing Project

SandraS: and we're about to get to our Speakeasy

SandraS: any other questions about NWP?

CamilleL: oh, sounds great!

SusanR hugs Camille

CamilleL: hi Sue.

SandraS: OK, I took the term "speakeasy" from the students in the poetry club at Alabama A&M University where I used to teach...I was also poetry club advisor

SandraS: every once in a while, students just wanted to hang out and talk about what was on their minds

SandraS: so they called that a speakeasy...where everybody got to speak...easy....

SandraS: WriteTalk is here to talk about our writing

SandraS: any writing we do

SandraS: and about teaching writing

SandraS: so

SandraS: any ideas

SandraS: concerns

SandraS: thoughts

SandraS: revelations

SandraS: challenges

SandraS will now be quiet...

CamilleL: does your writing also include poetry?

SandraS: yup

SandraS: how many poets in the room? Raise your hands?

CamilleL: have you ever tried to teach third graders the "Pyramid"?

SandraS sees all hands raised

FredK: Is it anything like "The Dead Poets Society" with Robin Williams?

SandraS: nope

SusanR listens to Camille

SandraS: tell us about it, Camille

CamilleL: Today we read The Kapok Tree

SandraS listens

CamilleL: We brainstormed, then read, then I demonstrated how to put these thoughts into the Pyramid format

SusanR teaches reluctant writers

CamilleL: However, it was difficult for these third graders to get the 2, 3, 4, words a line format of information

AmandaOL: that sounds interesting

CamilleL: it could be, but I needed to do a bit more modeling.

SusanR: did you give them a template

SandraS: what words did they usually put for the 1-word a line?

CamilleL: We started with Kapok Tree, for example, and described it from there

SandraS: <http://www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/score/kapok/kapoktg.htm>

CindyMcC: I like that format because it teaches students to describe things in a concise manner.

SandraS: yes, helps students use concrete description

SandraS: something writers tend to struggle with

CamilleL: yes, that's the point, it's difficult to be that concise and still follow the format

CindyMcC: It also stresses the use of very descriptive adjectives.

SandraS: Camille, do you know the ReadWriteThink website?

CamilleL: yes, I've been there.

CamilleL: what in particular did you mean?

SandraS: ok...I didn't know if they might have something on teaching the Pyramid

CamilleL: oh, I think I found it by just googling the word

SandraS: would freewriting about the story help generate more text for the exercise?

CamilleL: yes, actually the brainstorming web helped them a bit also

SandraS: cool

SandraS: could you describe how the pyramid exercise works?

CamilleL: yes, first line has two words, then 3 words, then 4 words, up to as many lines and words as you want

SandraS: you could also have students write about the story in first person as the tree...

SandraS: or as another character in the story

CamilleL: the goal is to briefly describe what you talked and read about within that format

SandraS: ok, got it

SandraS: so the goal is to help students summarize

CamilleL: that would have been a better idea thanks I'll try it that way next time

SandraS: and condense

SandraS: there's another exercise I love

SandraS: it's called note passing

CindyMcc: It is a good assessment to check their understanding of the story.

SusanR: did they work in collaborative teams

SandraS: this is from a book that has exercises for literature circles

SusanR: often that helps

CamilleL: no, the teacher I'm coaching had them work alone

SandraS: yes, like the note passing exercise...that's done in pairs

CamilleL: I know it does -- I'll point that out to her next time

CamilleL: I prefer the collaboration method

SandraS: students love this exercise because it's taking something considered taboo and using it in the classroom

AmandaOL: yes group work eases a lot of anxiety that kids might have

CamilleL: yes, and they piggy back on each others thoughts and ideas to come up with greater things

SandraS agrees

CindyMcC: also helps them gain confidence through sharing the ir ideas

SandraS: another way to tap into multiple intelligences is to use drawing

SandraS: music

SandraS: draw tree

SandraS: make a tree song

SandraS: or dance

SandraS: and write

CamilleL: ooooh, and the teacher was playing classical before i came in...

SusanR: I presented this idea at one of my poetry sessions...could be tailored or modified, Camille

SusanR: <http://teachers.net/lessons/posts/71.html>

CamilleL: seems like i should have collaborated more with the teacher =)

SandraS: cool exercise, Susan

SandraS: thank you for that resource!

CamilleL: yes, thanks Sue

SusanR: glad to share

CindyMcC: thanks for sharing

SandraS: other concerns?

SandraS: challenges?

SandraS: let's look at our own writing...I'm curious. What is everyone writing these days?

SandraS: How do we get to practice our own writing?

SusanR . o O (lots of email)

SandraS nods to Susan

SandraS: probably a couple novels-full of emails!

AmandaOL: and text messages

CindyMcC: I have been writing during a Seeing Math pbsteacherline course. We had to describe our problem-solving processes to understand how students solve problems.

BJB2: might be a good format for a novel

BJB2 . o O (like the diary format)

BJB2: cool, Cindy

SandraS: oooh....all these genres....text messages, emails, problem-solving, email novels...

SandraS: writing to learn math is a fantastic thing!

CamilleL: that's soooo very important to be able to reflect and describe the process

SandraS: I just taught a graduate course in writing pedagogy

SandraS: a student there who has taught several years

SandraS: put together lesson plans for social studies

SandraS: math

SandraS: science

CindyMcC: yes, we took the toothpick puzzle and found the algebra in it. A few of the teachers practiced on their classes and had them do the same thing.

SandraS: incorporating writing

SandraS: oh, cool idea, Cindy

CindyMcc: It was fascinating at seeing the different ways of approaching the problem.

SandraS: I think most non-English teachers would incorporate writing if they could see how to do it easily

SandraS: and if they could see how much it helped students learn the content

SusanR: children love illustrating or sharing their problem solving strategies ..I notice that in the small group that I tutor

SandraS: cool, Susan

SandraS: problem solving is fun!

SandraS: lots of creativity

CamilleL: actually getting the kids to work well together in the group is the first form of problem solving

SandraS nods

CindyMcc: very true

AmandaOL: that's true

CamilleL: once they get past that though, they learn to negotiate, share, and then represent their findings.

SandraS thinks most adults could use those skills...working together...

CindyMcc: a focus that came out of that course was creating a "community within the classroom" where everyone's opinion is important.

SandraS nods

SusanR: community sharing

CamilleL: yeah, adults need to be more open to suggestions

SandraS: usually works well in classes where teacher knows s/he is always a student, always learning

SandraS: and that students are effective teachers

CindyMcC: I agree

AmandaOL: yes a teacher needs to always be learning to be effective in the classroom

CamilleL: I know I run a noisy classroom, because I do not want to stifle their ideas as they come up with them

SandraS loves noisy classrooms

CindyMcC: noisy isn't a bad thing, as long as it is productive noise

CamilleL: on topic

SandraS: How can we use writing to help us to enrich our profession of teaching?

SandraS: I sometimes write through a problem in the classroom

CamilleL: I would strongly suggest submitting your suggestions to ERIC

SandraS: can you expand on that, Camille?

CamilleL: I've written three papers of success stories and submitted these to The U.S. Department of Education (ERIC), a resource for teachers.

CindyMcC: I use ERIC a lot in my research for my master's degree. It is a great resource

SandraS: excellent...so you use writing to document classroom success and then share that with other teachers

CamilleL: absolutely

CindyMcC: that's a great idea

CamilleL: go for it!

SandraS: there are also many lesson plan databanks

SandraS: liked ReadWriteThink

SusanR: you can submit to MERLOT as well

SusanR: <http://www.merlot.org/merlot/index.htm>

CindyMcC: I will definitely keep that in mind.

CamilleL: yes, I forgot that one, Susan, thanks again

SandraS: a teaching portfolio is also a way to incorporate writing

CindyMcC: I think I have visited that site before

SandraS: great resources!

CamilleL: where do you keep your portfolio?

SandraS: writing a teaching philosophy is an amazing exercise

SandraS: one could keep a portfolio on a blog

SandraS: if you don't have a website

SandraS: some schools of education have their own portfolio interfaces for their education students

CamilleL: Susan, would that "delicious" site you use be considered a portfolio?

BJB2 . o O (ePortfolios meets on Wednesday, May 16 in Tapped in)

SandraS: Thanks, BJ!

SandraS: Delicious just keeps bookmarks organized....

CamilleL: oh, gotta go to that one to now, thanks b.j.

SusanR: it could be used in conjunction with your portfolio

SandraS nods to Susan

SandraS: interesting application of Delicious

SusanR: you can annotate up to a certain point

SandraS: ooh, you could use YouTube to post a teaching demo

SusanR: they are working on a lot of improvements for del.icio.us

SandraS: a teaching portfolio is really a whole genre in itself

SandraS: good ones I've seen include wonderful teaching philosophies

CamilleL: why not get a digital video camera and put that on your site!

SandraS: and some representative lessons

SandraS: with student work

SandraS: and commentary

SandraS: as well as resume

CindyMcc: that's another great idea

SandraS: Another excellent resource on the NWP website

SandraS: is The Quarterly

SandraS: that's the NWP journal on teaching writing

SandraS: it's searchable

SandraS: you can get some excellent articles

SandraS: OK, any last-minute thoughts?

SandraS: wishlist for future WriteTalks?

CamilleL: glad I made it -- are you always on on Thursdays?

SandraS: every second Thursday of the month

FredK: I want to share a site for writing and reading

CindyMcc: this was a great hour of sharing information

SandraS: 8-9 central

SandraS: ooh, please do, Fred

AmandaOL: I really enjoyed this listening to all of your ideas and suggestions

FredK: <http://www.literacyaccessonline.com/>

BJB2: Next WriteTalk is Thursday, June 14

CamilleL: thanks bj

SandraS: ooh, that Story Builder looks good, Fred

SandraS: yes, and if you join WriteTalk

CindyMcC: I will probably have to miss that one, it is my birthday

FredK: I have used it

SandraS: you can always send a message through the Discussion

SandraS: or ask for help or input

SandraS: or send writing

SandraS: Happy Birthday in advance, Cindy!

BJB2: does everyone know how to join this group so you can post to the discussion board?

CindyMcC: thanks

CindyMcC: I haven't looked into that yet

CamilleL: I joined today, I think

SandraS: yes, you did, Camille...I got the notice

AmandaOL: not sure

BJB2 . o O (93 members in the group)

SandraS: wow!

BJB2: if you attach your chat window, you will see a welcome note above this chat window

BJB2: scroll down on the welcome note to the sentence This is the Group room for WriteTalk

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

BJB2: that will show you the group ID page above this chat window

BJB2: click on join this group

SandraS: the welcome note is titled "write-talk your way on in..."

BJB2: once you've successfully joined, the group is added to your pull down favorite places menu

BJB2: and you are subscribed to the discussion board

CamilleL: nite everyone -- can't wait to check out your website suggestions.

SandraS: thanks for sharing, Camille

SusanR: nite all

SandraS waves bye to Susan

AmandaOL: good night thanks again

SandraS: Thanks to everyone for attending and sharing.

FredK: Keep dry everyone

BJB2: Thanks, Sandy, for leading this discussion

SandraS: you too, Fred!

SandraS bows to BJ

BJB2 waves goodnight.

FredK: bye

SandraS: Goodnight everyone!

CindyMcc: goodnight, I had fun