

Title of Session: WriteTalk
Moderator: Sandra Shattuck
Guest Speaker: Gwendolyn Holley
Title of File: 20070809writetalk
Date: August 9, 2007

Room: WriteTalk Group

SandraS . o O (my favorite kind of teachers...in training...an intrepid bunch!)

BJB2: that they are, Sandy!

SandraFI: hello everyone! I am here from Dr. Brown's class, truthfully, I am excited to be here!

SandraS: Welcome, Sandra

BJB2: Welcome, everyone, to today's WriteTalk discussion

BJB2: as always, let's start this discussion with introductions, please

BJB2: Sandy, any specific info you want?

AidaM: I live in Mission and am a student at UT Pan American.

SandraS: just where you teach/study and what

SandraS: that would be great!

BonnieHa: I teach 7th/8th grade language arts in the Chicago area.

GwendolynH: I live in Georgia and teach 10th grade English and Creative Writing.

AlexandrMB: I'm Alex from Edinburg student at utpa

DavidW: I'm David Weksler. I'm a HelpDesk volunteer. I'm in New Jersey, near New York City

GregMar: Hello, I'm from Weslaco and I also attend UTPA. I plan to teach 11th or 12th grade in the near future

AnabellR: Hi my name is Anabell and I am a student at UTPA. I teach preschool at a migrant school.

SylviaMe junior At University of Texas Pan am

SandraS: I teach writing/literature in college in northern Alabama

AlexandrMB: I'm studying to be a English teacher

MariaBa: student at UTPA

MirandaR: hi I'm a senior at utpa

SylviaMe substitute teacher

SandraS: Excellent group!

SandraFl: I am currently a junior at UTPA

DavidW wonders if Danika Brown has introduced any of her students to the National Writing Project at UTPA

SandraS: I'll have to check with Danika...I know her from Arizona!

MirandaR: no

SandraS: OK, let's get started!

AlexandrMB: I'm studying to be a English teacher

SylviaMe: I don't recall I don't thinks so

AlexandrMB: what is that?

SandraFl: I don't believe she's mentioned anything...

SandraS: I usually start with an introduction to the National Writing Project

SandraS: or NWP

DavidW thinks he has set up Sandy well

SandraS bows to David

DavidW bows humbly

SandraS: After I introduce the NWP

SandraS: we're going to play with the new website

SandraS: there are LOTS of resources

SandraS: then we'll see if you have any topics

AidaM: good

SandraS: how does that sound?

SandraFl: great!

AnabellR: great

GwendolynH: great

BonnieHa: Count me in!

SandraS: So, NWP is a professional development organization founded in 1974

SandraS: in Berkeley

SandraS: it's federally funded

AlexandrMB: terrific

DavidW cheers for Berkeley

SandraS: there are about 200 NWP sites located around the US

SandraS: and in the Virgin Islands...

SandraS: they're at universities

SandraS: but they serve primarily k-12 teachers

SandraS: every year, the NWP goes to Washington to get its 30 million dollar budget re-approved

SandraS: it's probably one of the best educational programs around

SandraS: so almost 200 sites

SandraS: and the main program at each site is the Summer Institute

SandraS: lasts usually about 4 weeks

SandraS: participants get graduate credit or a stipend

SandraS: once someone goes through a Summer Institute at a NWP site

SandraS: then that person is eligible to take advantage of all NWP resources

DavidW finds a NWP site in south Texas at UT Brownsville

SandraS: like national writing retreats.

SandraS: there are other projects at each site

SandraS: inservice

SandraS: continuity programs

SandraS: the idea is to build community

SandraS: 3 main tenets of NWP

AlexandrMB: how do we get involved?

SandraS: just a sec, Alexandra...almost to that question...

AidaM: good question

SandraS: teachers are the best teachers of other teachers...

XochitlP: for sure

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

SandraS: and

XochitlP: that's also for sure

SandraS: writing is an excellent learning tool across all subject disciplines

SandraS: those are the 3 main tenets

SandraS: ok, that's my spiel...now we'll get to those questions

SandraS: first of all, NWP has just done a massive website re-design

SandraS: so we're going to go check it out

SandraS: we'll do a series of scavenger hunts...sort of

SandraS: the first thing we'll do is locate a NWP site near you

SandraS: after I give you the URL

AidaM: can you please write more on one sentence please

SandraS: please just click on the map on the front page

SandraS: excuse me, Aida?

SandraS: one more sentence?

AlexandrMB: what map?

SandraS: once you find the site near you, please click on the site website, check it out for a sec, and then come back here.

SandraS: ok, here's the url

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

SandraS: Alexandra, you'll find the map there

AlexandrMB: ok so the closest one is Brownsville

XochitlP: looks like an excellent resource

SandraS: ok, Alexandra...did you check out the website?

SandraS: once you find the site, there should be a link to the site website

GregMar: the other closest center is in Laredo

SandraS: there you'll see Summer Institute...

SandraS: yeah, Texas has some vibrant NWP sites!

AlexandrMB: yeah!

SandraS: once you find the information about the Summer Institute, you can apply

AidaM: wow, that's interesting

SandraS: don't be afraid to contact the director or co-director of the writing project site to ask questions

SandraS: NWP folk are really passionate teachers

SandraS: so that's an answer to the question "How do I get involved?"

AlexandrMB: so where do we find info about the summer retreat

SandraS: any questions so far before we go explore more of the website resources?

SandraS: there should be something on the site's website about the Summer Institute

SandraS: most Summer Institutes are over for this summer

SandraS: and applications for the next summer usually start in January or some time in the spring

SandraS: other questions?

AlexandrMB: umm thanks

AidaM: Is this done online?

SandraS: ok, another thing I like about the website redesign is that the search function has improved

SandraS: I'll let you find out what I mean

SandraS: think of a topic you want help with in your teaching

SandraS: or think of something you just want to know more about

SandraS: like digital storytelling

SandraS: or writing for the ELL classroom

SandraS: whatever you're interested in

SandraS: Just go back to the website

SandraS: and type in your search word or term in the Search box on top right of screen

SandraS: see what results you get

SandraS: click on one and check it out and then come back here and let us know what you found

SandraS: everybody ready?

AlexandrMB: that is a handy website

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

SandraS: Go forth and SEARCH!

BJB2: wow...lots of stuff on digital storytelling! I need to add NWP to the group room resources

SandraS: yup...there's a lot, BJ

MariaBa: I like the one on encourage writing

SandraS: Yes, there are great resources there, Maria.

SandraS: Anybody else back yet?

GwendolynH: Hi Sandra! This is Gwen who you met in Nebraska.

MariaBa: It can even help us as student writers

AnabellR: I am back

SandraS: Yeah, Gwen!!!!

SandraS: Oh, wonderful....

SandraS: Ok, so we have another NWP person here...

AlexandrMB: yes how about some Mexican American literature

GwendolynH: Red Clay Writing Project in Athens, Georgia

SandraS: Could we each say what we searched for and what we found?

BJB2: this is cool: <http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/958>

AidaM: there is writing even for math, this is interesting!

BJB2: Of Paint and Poetry: Strengthening Literacy Through Art

SandraS: ooh, that sounds lovely, BJ

AnabellR: writing groups for 1st grade

SandraS: Aida, the National Council of Teachers of Math have a whole writing curriculum

AlexandrMB: awesome English and art what a combination and it works!

SandraS: I know, can you imagine, Anabelle? writing groups for 1st grade?

AidaM: yeah, that is true

DavidW . o O (There's a wonderful book titled, "Writing to Learn Mathematics")

AlexandrMB: they get ahead!

AlexandrMB: wow what opportunities kids have

MariaBa: yes integrating writing with math

SandraS: ok, so the great thing about the search is that you'll pull up things from The Quarterly, which is the journal

SandraS: or from other NWP site websites

SandraS: or other sources

AidaM: This is where RAFT works in Math

AlexandrMB: ekkk math

AlexandrMB: not a big fan

MariaBa: me too

SandraS: I'd like to show you one more resource, and then maybe Gwen will talk to us about her recent writing retreat with NWP....

SandraS: Here's the resource

SandraS: It's a NWP publication called 30 Ideas for Teaching Writing

SandraS: it costs one dollar

SandraS: but everything's online

SandraS: and what I love about it is that all the ideas are communicated on one page

AlexandrMB: where do we find it?

SandraS: but you've got a link to a longer article that goes into more detail

SandraS: so let's check it out

SandraS: I'd like you to go to the part of the site I'll indicate in a sec

SandraS: then click on the 30 Ideas booklet

SandraS: scroll down to the table of contents

SandraS: and click on one idea you like

SandraS: come back and tell us about it

SandraS: so go back to the site and then click on Resources at the top

SandraS: then click on Bookstore on the left

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

SandraS: then Resources

SandraS: Then Bookstore

SandraS: 30 Ideas is at the very bottom

SandraS: here's the url directly to pamphlet

SandraS: <http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/books/30ideas>

BJB2 likes Ground writing in social issues important to students.

SandraS: LOL...I clicked on that one, too

SandraS: I love the post it ideas

SandraS: anybody else back yet?

SandraS: go ahead and share what you found out...

AnabellR: In the classroom we use the vocabulary everyday. I think is the same idea for "work with words relevant to students' lives to help them build vocabulary"

SusanR: Spotlight language and use group brainstorming to help students create poetry.

SandraS: very cool!

SandraS: anybody else find anything they like?

SusanR: for K to 3 I would use the idea of pairing students with adult reading/writing buddies.

SandraS: great idea...

DavidW likes active grammar - the "preposition walk"

SandraS: cool!

SylviaMe: I like #23 persuasive written argument in support of a final grade

SandraFl: #10 seems interesting since we just read an article in Dr. Brown's class that spoke about holding off on so much grading...

SandraS: there are other ideas about family writing on the website somewhere

BonnieHa: I'm checking out how to make a grammar lesson interesting. :>)

SandraS: excellent!

SandraS: you'll see that there are links to the full article from which the excerpt comes

SandraFl: I also thought the idea of pairing up students with an adult buddy for writing sounds neat...

SandraS: so you can get more information

MirandaR: I liked #11

AidaM: everything is wonderful

FredGst2: I love a lot of these ideas and even have used a handful w/out having seen the list, but I always find that a lot of these great ideas get chunked due to content requirements. Any ideas on how to wrestle with that?

SandraS: wow, thorny question, Fred...

SandraS: I think many of the ideas can be adapted to the content...

SandraS: I'm always looking for ways of energizing the classroom

SandraS: whether I'm teaching world lit

SandraS: or Brit lit

FredGst2: sorry but this is what plagues me. Satisfying the bosses while still trying to engage the kids. They don't always mix well.

SandraS: so an idea like discussing the reading by passing notes is something I can apply in every class

SandraS: even at the graduate level

GwendolynH: I allow two days a week for writers' workshop.

SandraS: any other thoughts about the content question Fred posed?

SandraS: yeah, writers' workshop, Gwen!

GwendolynH: That way we can also explore writing we like to do.

SandraS: So that's one way of dealing with the content issue, right Gwen?

GwendolynH: Yes. I can even help the kids with other content during this time.

SandraS: OK, you've got some of the resources...there's a lot more on the website

SandraS: But I'd like to ask Gwen to talk about her recent experience at a NWP writing retreat

MariaBa: I like the writing on real world examples where they get to learn logics

SandraS: there are national writing retreats

SandraS: which help teachers get their ideas published

GwendolynH: It was an amazing time and very productive

SandraS: WAT - Writing and Technology Professional Writing retreat

SandraS: I'm one of the co--facilitators

SandraS: and we ask teachers to come write about how they use technology to teach writing

GwendolynH: We went on an apple crawl (marathon), worked in support groups

SandraS: can you tell us what you were working on, Gwen?

GwendolynH: I'm working on an article that discusses collaboration and using PowerPoint

GwendolynH: to explore character traits not directly revealed by the author

SandraS: NWP believes that school reform comes from teachers...and one way to get that reform going is by having teachers write their experiences

SandraS: how does using powerpoint help your students write, Gwen?

GwendolynH: My students and some of the parents are excited about my writing about this experience

SandraS: oh, that is soooo cool, Gwen!

GwendolynH: They've told me to just send them release form when I'm ready.

SandraS: excellent!

AlexandrMB: cool!

GwendolynH: The retreat was very rewarding and I was really sorry to have to leave.

SandraS: teachers wrote about how they use technology to teach writing

SandraS: anyone have any questions for Gwen?

AlexandrMB: umm I bet it was beneficial

GwendolynH: It was. We've already started school here, but I'm still grounded in the writing.

SandraS: excellent!

SandraFl: Gwen, will we be able to see what you are writing?

AlexandrMB: umm if u don't mind how old are and what is ur classification

MirandaR: around what month are retreats offered?

DavidW smiles

SandraS: retreats are also in summer

SandraS: there's one that just finished in Santa Fe

GwendolynH: I spoke with Grant Faulkner who expressed an interest in looking at the piece for NWP publication

SandraS: ours was end of July

SandraS: another one in June

MariaBa: Is there a fee

SandraFl: Can anyone come to the retreats?

SandraS: no fee!

AlexandrMB: cool!! better!

AnabellR: cool

SandraS: Grant Faulkner is an editor at the Quarterly, NWP journal

MirandaR: thanks. wow no fee that's cool

SandraS: and he was at retreat to talk to writers

AlexandrMB: I would love to attend one!

SandraS: just go to a Summer Institute near you...then you can go to retreats!

GwendolynH: The facilitators, especially Sandra, were so giving and helpful.

SandraS bows to Gwendolyn

SandraS: The teachers write like fiends!

SandraS: It's wonderful to be part of that process.

AlexandrMB: love to see that!

GwendolynH: We do. We get so little free time. I wrote with my students today on a Where I'm From poem and it was a beautiful experience.

SandraS: Another writer in Gwen's response group was writing about using grammar checker to teach grammar and improve writing....

SandraS: oh, that's lovely Gwen

SandraS: does everyone know about "where I'm from" poems?

AlexandrMB: I would love that!

SandraFl: no???

MirandaR: no

BJB2: please tell us more!

SandraS: Gwen, would you please explain the "Where I'm From" poem?

GwendolynH: Where I'm From poems explores the whole person

GwendolynH: not just place, but person

GwendolynH: experiences, feelings

SandraS: that's beautifully put

GwendolynH: you can find some student written poems like these on the internet.

AnabellR: were?

SandraS: I think there might be something at the ReadWriteThink website?

GwendolynH: use a search engine.

AnabellR: sorry, where?

GwendolynH: probably so. They have wonderful writing ideas

SandraS: <http://www.swva.net/fred1st/wif.htm>

SandraS: try that website...

AlexandrMB: I am so going to do that

SandraS: if you just google "where I'm from" you'll find lots

SandraS: it's a great format

AlexandrMB: and pass on to my students

MariaBa: that is such a neat site

FredGst2: This is very similar to the I Am... poem format.

SandraS: right, Fred...

AlexandrMB: umm they already did that

GwendolynH: We're going to work on the poem and place them with pictures into Photostory software

AidaM: nice poem

SandraS: <http://readwritethink.org>

SandraS: the read write think website is affiliated with NCTE

SandraS: fantastic resource if you don't know it

SandraS: lots of excellent lesson plans

SandraS: easy searching

SandraS: ok, we need to wrap up!

AlexandrMB: cool!!

SandraS: I've got to go pick up my son from football practice....

AnabellR: nice site

AlexandrMB: it was nice talking to u both