

Title of Session: WriteTalk
Moderator: Sandra Shattuck
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Room: WriteTalk Group

BJB2: Welcome to this month's WriteTalk discussion, Matthew and Brittany

MatthewL: Hi I am Matthew I am a student teacher in Katy ISD I am currently in Pre-K

BrittanyBr: I am a student teacher in Houston. EC-4 in the Cy-Fair district.

KiaundraR joined the room.

BJB2: welcome, Kiaundra

BJB2: we're just doing introductions

SandraS waves to Kiaundra

BJB2: I teach remedial communication and am located in Pennsylvania

KiaundraR: hello

BrittanyBr: Hi

KiaundraR wave

BrittanyBr waves

SandraS: I teach literature and writing at University of Alabama in Huntsville and Calhoun Community College in Huntsville AL

SandraS: Thank you all for those introductions

SandraS: and for coming to WriteTalk

SandraS: I usually start out with an introduction to the National Writing Project (NWP)

SandraS: and then we'll get to our discussion

SandraS: which is an open one tonight

JodyAC joined the room.

SandraS: the National Writing Project is a federally funded professional development project

SandraS: Hi, Jody!

SandraS: Come on in.

SandraS: We're just starting. Would you like to introduce yourself?

JodyAC: HI! Thanks. I am a Computer Resource Specialist who is investigating Tapped In for a Capstone Course. I am very new to Tapped in

SandraS: You can see that we have a small and dedicated group here tonight!

SandraS: I was just starting to talk about the National Writing Project

SandraS: or NWP

SandraS: which has been around since 1973

SandraS: started at UC Berkeley

SandraS: and now has almost 200 sites nationally

SandraS: federally funded at an annual budge of about 30 million

SandraS: the NWP does some amazing work

BrittanyBr: I bet

SandraS: the 200 sites are located at colleges and serve mostly k-12 folk

MatthewL: wow

SandraS: each site conducts a summer institute

SandraS: and that's where teachers begin their NWP experience

SandraS: the summer institute usually lasts about 4 weeks and is intensive

SandraS: once you've done an institute, you become a teacher consultant

SandraS: you can then participate in things like national writing retreats

SandraS: the NWP has 3 central tenets

SandraS: teachers are the best teachers of other teachers

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

SandraS: and writing is a great learning tool across disciplines

SandraS: let's take a look at the website

BrittanyBr: okay

SandraS: you can click on the map and see where the closest site is to you

SandraS: visit the website for a couple minutes and then come on back

SandraS: any questions so far?

MatthewL: No

BrittanyBr: No.. got it

JodyAC: Got it. thanks

SandraS: great!

SandraS: here's the site

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

SandraS: is everybody back?

SandraS whistles a few times

DavidW waves

BrittanyBr: yes

SandraS does three backflips off the ceiling

MatthewL: Yes

SandraS: welcome back!

DavidW . o O (impressively acrobatic)

SandraS bows to David

JodyAC: I'm back!

SandraS: What did y'all find?

BJB2 hopes Sandy doesn't hurt her back

SandraS believes her back is quite limber in cyberspace

SandraS: Any thoughts on the website?

SandraS: There's a great search function

SandraS: if you're interested in using journals in class, for instance

BrittanyBr: I read about the NWP and it's history as well as part of a study.

JodyAC: I found a branch at Old Dominion. It looks like they are getting started because they refer to possible lesson plans being posted, but none yet.

BrittanyBr: sounds great

SandraS: cool, Brittany

MatthewL: It is very informative about the history and sounds exciting

SandraS: Jody, could also be that their tech person is not working on the website...or the site could be changing personnel...

SandraS: but the search engine will return hits from all the resources, including articles from The Quarterly, which is a great journal. It's now only online.

SandraS: So let's try one more visit to the website.

BrittanyBr: okay

SandraS: Think of some issue on writing that concerns you

SandraS: ESL, or ELL

SandraS: prewriting

SandraS: authentic audience

SandraS: grading

SandraS: evaluating

SandraS: free writing

SandraS: any topic that interests you

SandraS: and just input that topic into the Search box at top right of website

SandraS: see what you find, and then come back here and share your research...

SandraS: how does that sound?

JodyAC: OK

SandraS: great! here's the url again: <http://www.nwp.org>

SandraS: I'll see you back here in about 3 minutes

SandraS: ok, who's ready to share?

BJB2: <http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/2376>

BJB2: why do we have to write like every day?!

SandraS: LOL

SandraS: I've got to read that one!

DavidW smiles

BrittanyBr: I read "Where Does Spite Fit Into the Rubric?" I have always had to ask about how to grade things.. and what was fair and such

JodyAC: This one is interesting about portfolios-

SandraS: I searched for "literature circles" and got 47 hits.

JodyAC: <http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/quarterly/2001no4/ruhana.html>

MatthewL: I read "TEACHING WRITING PROCESSES

MatthewL: AND DETERMINING GRADES"

SandraS: wow...those all sound like great resources.

BJB2: Brittany, did you get a url?

SandraS: I just increased the items on my reading list...

BJB2: and did you, Matthew?

MatthewL:

http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/download/nwp_file/1848/Teaching_Writing_Processes_and_Determining_Grades.doc?x-r=pcfile_d

JodyAC: I think most teachers would be interested in the assessment of writing. Rubrics, portfolios, etc.

SandraS: I agree, Jody

BrittanyBr: <http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/446>

SandraS: thanks, Brittany

BrittanyBr: sure

SandraS: since we each get a transcript of this session emailed to us, we'll have these URLs handy...just in case we forget them...

JodyAC: That's pretty cool. Does it automatically do that?

SandraS: So, if you get stuck for ideas about writing, or need research for papers, don't forget this site.

SandraS: Yes, Jody. If you're a member of Tapped In. As a guest, you don't get a transcript.

SandraS: It's a great feature.

SandraS: And the transcripts are archived.

SandraS: If you look at the Room View of WriteTalk, you can see a box on WriteTalk transcripts

SandraS: that tells you how to access transcripts from past WriteTalk sessions

SandraS: Tapped In is a HUGE treasure chest of years of teachers working together

SandraS: amazing resource!

JodyAC: I see it. Cool

SandraS: another excellent writing resource is ReadWriteThink, which has fantastic lesson plans

SandraS: Does everyone know that resource?

BJB2 nods

BrittanyBr: yes

JodyAC: I love that site!

MatthewL: Yes

SandraS: Me, too, Jody...

BrittanyBr: It is a great site

SandraS: OK, so now y'all know about NWP...any questions before we move on?

BrittanyBr: not at the moment.

JodyAC: Nope

MatthewL: Not that I can think of.

SandraS: Great. Well, then...what are your writing concerns, either in your teaching or in your own writing?

SandraS: Another aspect of NWP is that the organization believes teachers need to write about their practice and share that expertise

SandraS: What is everybody writing these days?

MatthewL: Lesson Plans

SandraS nods

BrittanyBr: I reflect about my day of teaching.

JodyAC: I find it difficult to find time to do any personal writing. Mostly grants etc.

BrittanyBr: I also write lesson plans

SandraS: great example of the variety of writing we do as teachers... lesson plans, grants, reflective

SandraS: Brittany, where do you do your reflective writing?

SandraS: journal? blog?

BrittanyBr: journal- either paper or electronic

SandraS: cool

BrittanyBr: not on the web though..

SandraS: ah...

SandraS: lesson plans offer their own peculiar writing challenges, eh?

SandraS: if you had to say what your greatest strength in writing is, what would you say?

BrittanyBr: yes.. there are many different types and then you have to think about modifications and how the administration wants you to set it up.

SandraS nods to Brittany

MatthewL: I agree with Brittany

SandraS: That's why I like the ReadWriteThink site so much, because I can see so many different styles of writing lesson plans.

BrittanyBr: Yes!

SandraS: I like finding that ones that keep my interest and teach me something because they are so clear.

BrittanyBr: I have a hard time picking out my strengths.. but I like to write

JodyAC: Don't know if I get to write enough to even have a strength.

SandraS: liking to write is a huge strength!

DavidW smiles

BrittanyBr: Yay

MatthewL: I can not really think of a strength

SandraS: Jody, I'd say one of your strengths in writing is your honesty.

JodyAC smiles

SandraS: I think one of mine might be my tenacity.

SandraS: Matthew, can you think of a strength you have in your writing?

MatthewL: I can think of things to write about and come up with wonderful papers with no problem that is my greatest strength

SandraS applauds

SandraS: I'm definitely envious

SandraS: ok, so let's talk about our challenges

JodyAC: That's great! Most children struggle with topics. I don't know how many kids would say, I don't know what to write about.

SandraS nods to Jody

SandraS: huge challenge! how to help students come up with topics

BrittanyBr: My weakness is Matthew's strength!

SandraS chuckles

SandraS: right there with you, Brittany...

BrittanyBr: It is harder when you have classes with Matthew...

SandraS: I have a hard time stopping the research and getting down to writing

MatthewL: Well I tell my students who can not pick topics to continue writing I do not know what to write about until they think of something because I think that if they are writing that will force them to think

BrittanyBr nudges Matthew

SandraS: very cool, Matthew...using the writing to create possibilities

SandraS: writing as learning tool...

DavidW remembers some of Sandy's techniques for group writing

SandraS is glad David has a good memory

SandraS: blitz prompts?

DavidW: yes

SandraS: I do a lot of freewriting or timed writing practice

JodyAC: OK, what's a blitz prompt?

SandraS: you can download the handout I have on guidelines for writing practice

SandraS: it's under my profile

BrittanyBr: Okay!

JodyAC: OK

SandraS: highlight my name to the left and then click on the green i icon below

MatthewL: ok

SandraS: you should see a link to wrtpract.doc

SandraS: that's the file

SandraS: the blitz prompt goes like this...

SandraS: someone starts with a prompt, like "green"

SandraS: everyone writes for 2 minutes

SandraS: I call "time"

SandraS: then I call on someone to give the next prompt

SandraS: you keep writing with different prompts

SandraS: in the classroom, it gets lots of people engaged

JodyAC: Sounds fun!

SandraS: it's a good writing workout and fun

MatthewL: Sounds exciting

SandraS senses people might want to try the blitz prompts.....

SandraS: "might"

BrittanyBr: I have done that in my third grade classroom I just did not know that it had a different title.

SandraS: oh, cool, Brittany

SandraS: Does it work well with your third graders?

BrittanyBr: The students loved it!

BrittanyBr: yes!

SandraS: excellent!

SandraS: well, let's try it!

SandraS: I'll call out a prompt

MatthewL: When I worked in third grade we did DEW writings (Drop Everything and Write) and the children were allowed to write about whatever they want

SandraS: wonderful! did they like that?

MatthewL: Some did others were struggling with topics

SandraS nods

JodyAC: Like journal writing. Some can do with ease, others struggle.

SandraS: exactly

SandraS: one thing we do in my writing group...we have prompts on pieces of paper, and they're all in a box

SandraS: people can reach in and draw out a prompt

DavidW was also thinking about the "chain" of writing we did once - each person adding a short amount of writing

SandraS: if the prompt doesn't engage them, they just put it back and pick another one

DavidW . o O (group write)

MatthewL: I like that idea

SandraS: Yeah, David!

BrittanyBr: Me too

SandraS: the cool thing with that is that students could contribute prompts to the box

SandraS: or however you wanted to gather the prompts

BrittanyBr: That is really neat!

JodyAC: We do that activity with alphasmarts. Do you all use them? they type their story and then add on.

SandraS: they could spur each other on to come up with cool prompts

MatthewL: Cool

BrittanyBr: I was just introduced to alphasmarts and we used them on a field trip

SandraS: ok, I don't know alphasmarts...

SandraS: explanation?

MatthewL: No I am currently in Pre-K

DavidW: keyboards with storage - not really a computer but allows for students to store text

SandraS: thanks, David

SandraS: interesting

BrittanyBr: they are keyboards that act as a saving device.. you type in them and save a file-- when you get back to school you hook them up to the computer and you can transfer what you have written.

JodyAC: They are like word processors that students can type into, store, and dump into the computer or printout.

BrittanyBr smiles

JodyAC: <http://alphasmart.com/index.html>

SandraS: so the advantage is that you don't have to have a computer right there to get the text going?

BrittanyBr: yes

SandraS: thanks for URL, Jody

MatthewL: Yes that is the idea

SandraS: thanks, Brittany

SandraS: ok, cool

BrittanyBr: and many files can be stored (so more than one student is able to use it) and they do not weigh a bunch!

JodyAC: Yes, exactly. It allows more kids to be typing their stories at the same time and they are much cheaper than laptops.

SandraS: cool

SandraS: very interesting

SandraS: probably easier to use, too

JodyAC: Definitely, Automatically saves

BrittanyBr: I agree!

SandraS: cool

SandraS: ok, we've got about 6 minutes left

SandraS: we can talk about more challenges, ideas

SandraS: or we can blitz prompt

BrittanyBr: Either is fine with me

SandraS: let's write together!

MatthewL: ok

SandraS: ok, so I'll yell out a prompt

SandraS: just write whatever you want in the text box and then when i say TIME, you can enter the text

SandraS: ready?

BrittanyBr: I think

BJB2 nods

JodyAC: as I'll ever be

SandraS: ok, here's the prompt:

SandraS: dusk

SandraS: TIME

BrittanyBr: Dusk is gloomy and dark.. I think of night time and shadows.

MatthewL: Today at around dusk I left school and started on my way home. I began to work on my lesson plans for next week which are due tomorrow. Then I received a call from Brittany to remind me that we needed to do a Tapped In session

JodyAC: The sun is going down, temperatures cooling. Children are inside eating and all is quiet before the night noises begin.

BJB2: the transition between day and night

SandraS: dusk invites magic. one moment between light and less light. one flower flies.

SandraS: one more round.....Jody, can you give us a prompt?

JodyAC: Yikes! Umm. How about . . .Laughter

SandraS: great!

SandraS: TIME

MatthewL: I love to laugh. I love jokes and am very funny person. I love to make people laugh. There is no greater joy than to make people laugh especially when they are depressed.

BrittanyBr: Laughter is the best thing in life. It helps you get through the bad times. Laughter is what you want your students to do all day long. I have not laughed in a while. I wish I could laugh as much as I worry! Laughing is healthy and fun.

BJB2 immediately smiles. Laughter breeds more laughter and triggers happy thoughts. The act of smiling creates more happy thoughts as muscles send messages to the brain filling it with joyful images

JodyAC: My children telling jokes in the back of the car, giggling. Sharing a joke with your best friend.

SandraS: chuckle guffaw giggle snort milk flying out the nose

SandraS: oh, lovely images...thank you so much for sharing those!

SandraS: Brittany, come back again, and we'll get you laughing!

BJB2: Thanks, Sandy, for leading the discussion

SandraS bows to BJ

BrittanyBr: Sounds like a great idea!

SandraS: Thanks to everyone for participating!

BJB2: Thanks, everyone, for your enthusiastic participation

JodyAC: Yes, thanks! It was very interesting!

BrittanyBr: Thank you for hosting!

MatthewL: Thank you this was very cool.

BJB2 waves goodnight. See you next month, Sandy

BJB2 . o O (December 13)

BrittanyBr smiles and even giggles a little!

SandraS: Thanks BJ!

DavidW: Thanks, Sandy. Good discussion

SandraS giggles with Brittany