

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

SandraS: Amanda, we may be a small group this evening.

SandraS: But we usually start with introductions.

SandraS: Would you like to introduce yourself?

BJB2: I'm in Pennsylvania and am a retired communications/arts teacher

BJB2: a reminder, Amanda, to go to the Actions menu in the top right of your chat and select DETACH

SandraS: I'm in Alabama and I teach writing and literature at a university

AmandaNM: I'm from Texas and I'm a student

SandraS: Are you one of Danika B's students?

AmandaNM: yes

SandraS: And what are you studying?

AmandaNM: I'm studying to be an English teacher

SandraS: Wonderful!

SandraS: I usually start WriteTalk with some discussion of the National Writing Project.

SandraS: Have you heard of it, Amanda?

AmandaNM: The page Holt uncensored was interesting because it's very helpful

SandraS: Yes, I agree.

SandraS: I'm glad some of the resources are helpful!

SandraS: The National Writing Project, or NWP, has been around since 1974.

SandraS: It started at UC Berkeley

SandraS: and it's a professional development organization.

AmandaNM: I was just reading and this will help me correct my mistakes some of it right now and there are so many things that I keep repeating in my papers

SandraS: Oh, great!

SandraS: I think the Holt uncensored resource is one that BJ found.

SandraS: And she shared it with WriteTalk.

SandraS: That's why I like Tapped In so much...great networking!

SandraS: Amanda, do you know what level English you want to teach?

AmandaNM: yes it really is. This is my second day on and it's very interesting

SandraS: Great!

AmandaNM: I'm really interested in junior high

SandraS: Great age!

AmandaNM: if not high school

SandraS: Why are you interested in junior high?

SandraS: or high school?

SandraS: I was just in a writing group with a high school English teacher who has set up a writing group with his students.

SandraS: They meet outside of class and write together. This has been a very successful program.

SandraS: I'm going to ask this teacher to come talk to WriteTalk.

AmandaNM: The kids are older

SandraS: Yes...

AmandaNM: oh really

AmandaNM: that would be great

SandraS: Yes. I think other teachers may want to hear how he set up his writing group.

SandraS: Good!

SandraS: OK, so the NWP believes the following:

SandraS: 1) that teachers are the best teachers of other teachers

SandraS: 2) that teachers teach writing more effectively when they improve their own writing

SandraS: and 3) that writing is a great way to learn across all subjects

SandraS: So the NWP has about 200 sites around the country

SandraS: located at colleges or universities

SandraS: and k-16 teachers get together

SandraS: and talk about teaching writing

SandraS: if you want to see if there's a NWP site near you, you can check the map on the website

SandraS: I'll give you the URL for the site.

SandraS: So why don't you go visit the site for a couple minutes and then come back here.

SandraS: How does that sound?

AmandaNM: there is this convention in San Antonio NCTE and I think I'm going to attend

AmandaNM: sounds great

SandraS: Oh, that's a great convention!

SandraS: Also, the National Writing Project has its annual convention right before NCTE

SandraS: it's at the same place

SandraS: and there's some overlap between the two conventions

SandraS: you'll see some NWP panels at NCTE

SandraS: OK, here's the website

SandraS: <http://nwp.org>

AmandaNM: ok

DrChristo joined the room.

DrChristo: Sorry I'm late.

BJB2 waves hi to Elisabeth

SandraS: Hello, Dr Christo.

BJB2: we're looking at www.nwp.org

DrChristo: Thanks.

SandraS: Amanda and Elizabeth, just let me know when you're back here.

SandraS: is everybody back?

DrChristo: I'm back.

DrChristo: It looks like an interesting site.

SandraS: Great!

NicholasI joined the room.

SandraS: Do you know anything about the National Writing Project?

SandraS waves to Nicholas

DrChristo: I've never heard of it.

AmandaNM: I do believe that the more interesting and related the book is to a person the more likely they are to read it.

SandraS: It's been around since 1974

SandraS: I agree, Amanda

SandraS: It's a great professional development organization

SusanR joined the room.

SandraS: and NWP believes writing is a powerful tool in all subjects

SandraS waves to Susan

SusanR: Hi Sandra

SandraS: so for instance, during the summer institute, you'll have language arts and science and math teachers all working together

SandraS: to use writing to teach their subjects

SandraS: How are you Susan?

SandraS: Let's re-introduce ourselves quickly...

NicholasI: Would you mind if I sit in on your meeting? I need to do this for a project for one of my classes.

SusanR: I am fine..preparing for a trip to China

SandraS: That's fine Nicholas

SandraS: Woohooo!

SandraS: What will you be doing in China, Susan?

NicholasI: Thank you!!!

SusanR: a holiday

AmandaNM: I also believe that journals are a very important part when doing a reading assignment. This would be because the reader can always go back to them and use them for say an essay.

SandraS: excellent!

SandraS: I agree, Amanda

SandraS: so if you wanted to find out more about using journals in the classroom, you could search the NWP website

SandraS: the search box will return lots of resources -- many of them from publications like The Quarterly, which is NWP's journal on writing

AmandaNM: yeah I'm going to do that right now

SandraS: come on back when you're done!

AmandaNM: ok

DrChristo: I'm a chemistry teacher, not an English teacher, but communication is important in science, too.

SusanR: Can you give me the link please, Sandra

SandraS: OK, so let's try introductions again....I'm in Alabama and I teach writing and literature at a university

SandraS: <http://nwp.org>

SusanR: I am in Ottawa, Ontario

DrChristo: I'm Elizabeth. I'm a chemistry teacher in Connecticut.

NicholasI: I am in San Diego and I teach middle school math

SusanR: I am a substitute and facilitate the K to 3+ Great resources ..you can see it on he calendar

SandraS: And Amanda is an aspiring English teacher

SandraS: Nicholas, do you know that the Council of Teachers of Mathematics has a whole writing curriculum for learning math?

SandraS: I love that!

SandraS: Elizabeth, do you use any writing in your classroom?

DrChristo: Yes. Aside from lab reports, I also have the students explain their understanding of concepts.

NicholasI: I have heard about the NCTM having a writing curriculum, but I use a lot of writing in my class.

SandraS: Cool!

DrChristo: I keep telling them that the numbers don't matter (sorry, Nicholas), but the process does.

DrChristo: They need to be able to communicate what they are thinking.

SandraS: I agree... so writing helps with thinking

NicholasI: I agree. If they could explain it then they understand it.

SandraS: or...writing helps with discovery

DrChristo: Both.

SandraS: yes..writing helps to learn more deeply, more thoroughly

DrChristo: It helps clarify their thinking, so they can make new discoveries.

SandraS: and more individually

SandraS: Yes!

SandraS: So what kinds of writing do you do in your chemistry and math classrooms, Elizabeth and Nicholas?

DrChristo: Lab reports, of course. I've asked essay-type questions on tests.

DrChristo: I would like to do more.

SandraS: poems on chemical reactions?

SandraS: first-person stories as a chemical...?

NicholasI: I write my own word problems about students in the class and I have them solve the problems, explain how they solved them and write an ending to the story for an added incentive.

DrChristo: I've never thought of that.

DrChristo: I like it.

SandraS: do your students like the word problems and stories, Nicholas?

NicholasI: I think they respond well to them, especially when they see their name in the problem.

SandraS: I thought about the first-person stories because I use that in literature often...when students have read a selection, I ask them to re-tell the story in first person from one character's perspective...it helps them learn the material more thoroughly

SandraS: they get to be creative

SandraS: cool idea, Nicholas

SandraS: so the students can see themselves in the problem, relate to the math more clearly

NicholasI: Thank you.

DrChristo: First-person stories would certainly check their understanding.

DrChristo: And probably improve it, too.

SandraS: Would be interesting, eh?

AmandaNM: I believe that a student will learn more by being in a discussion group. This is because if they have a reading that is due it will give them motivation to get the reading done. If not then they will just sit there with nothing to say.

SandraS: "I am salt. Whenever I get near water, I faint."

SandraS: I agree, Amanda.

DrChristo: I always bring in Miss Frizzle (Magic School Bus)

SandraS: And discussion groups allow students to benefit from each others' reading.

SandraS: I LOVE Ms. Frizzle!

AmandaNM: it gives the students more information and maybe a clearer view of how to understand their reading

DrChristo: I say, If you could shrink yourself down and see what is happening.....

DrChristo: I could have them turn that into a story.

SandraS: ooh, that sounds really good

AmandaNM: are you all talking about the Magic School Bus

SandraS: yes.

AmandaNM: That was an awesome show

AmandaNM: what happened to it

SandraS: I don't know...

SandraS: There have to be DVDs....

SandraS: OK, so if you're interested in the National Writing Project, you should check the map

DrChristo: They ruined it. They put it on commercial tv and skipped all the producer segments.

SandraS: if there's a site near you, you can attend the summer institute

SandraS: many places give a stipend or graduate credit

DrChristo: I will certainly explore the site and pass it on to other faculty at my school.

SandraS: Great, Elizabeth!

AmandaNM: so there we have it

SandraS: if you search "science" "math" "chemistry" on the website, you should be able to find writing suggestions

DrChristo: I'll do that.

AmandaNM: Danika showed us a list of Principals in class the other day

AmandaNM: we had to respond to them

SandraS: What did you learn from that?

SandraS: I wonder what it would be like to use student blogs in math and chemistry....

SandraS: That could be interesting...

DrChristo: Now there's a thought.

AmandaNM: That in order to write you need to read and vice versa. You can't do one without the other

DrChristo: I have thought about that, but I haven't done it.

SandraS: you could post lab reports...comment on them....

SandraS: I agree, Amanda

SandraS: the two are intertwined

DrChristo: My thought was "Chemistry and You". The students could blog about where they see chemistry around them.

SandraS: absolutely!

SandraS: cooking....

AmandaNM: so am I joined to this room already?

DrChristo: Certainly. Leaves changing in the Fall, anything.

SandraS: Amanda, you can join the WriteTalk group

DrChristo: Even science in politics.

SandraS: oh, yes...there's lots there

SandraS: Do you know how to join this group, Amanda?

AmandaNM: no

SandraS: here's an easy way...I hope

BJB2: Amanda, the easiest way to join the group is to attach your chat first if you detached

AmandaNM: ok I did that

BJB2: at the top of the screen above the chat (web window) is a note, writetalk your way on in...

BJB2: the next to the last sentence is This is the group room for writetalk

BJB2: click on the green i next to the group name in that sentence

BJB2: and select join this group

DavidW joined the room.

BJB2: when you've successfully joined, click on room View at the top of your screen to bring you back to the welcome window

AmandaNM: ok thank you..I will see you next time thank you

SandraS: Thanks for sharing your expertise, Amanda.

BJB2: good job, Amanda!

BJB2 hugs David

SandraS: So another thing NWP supports is teacher research.

DavidW hugs BJ

SandraS: And writing about our practice, our profession.

AmandaNM left the room (signed off).

SandraS: Hey, David!

DavidW: Hi, Sandra

DavidW . o O (apologies for my tardiness)

SandraS: So, Elizabeth, do you write about your teaching?

SandraS: No problem, David

DrChristo: Not often.

DavidW bows humbly and takes out his good pen

SandraS: Woohooo!

SandraS: Any questions about the National Writing Project?

DrChristo: Not yet.

DrChristo: I'm still exploring the site.

SandraS: I was thinking, too, Elizabeth, that good non-fiction essays about chemistry could be a way to talk about writing, too.

NicholasI: For some reason I can't get on the nwp site.

NicholasI: I'll try again later.

DrChristo: Yes, I do have the students do those.

SandraS: Nicholas, do you hold down the control button when you click on the url?

BJB2: open a new browser and type in www.nwp.org

SandraS: Where is Hamden CT anyway? I grew up in Wilton CT -- southwestern part of CT....

DrChristo: It's near New Haven, toward the shore.

NicholasI: thank you, I am on the site.

SandraS: OK, thanks

SandraS: Great, Nicholas

SandraS bows to BJ

BJB2: Nicholas, you are welcome to join this group, too.

BJB2 . o O (writing across the curriculum)

SandraS nods to BJ

NicholasI: I know it will be a good idea, but I could not guarantee my attendance because of conflicts with my masters program.

SandraS: Not to worry Nicholas

DavidW . o O (Writing to Learn Mathematics - very interesting book)

SandraS: you can attend any time

DrChristo: Hey, Nicholas, are you a Walden student?

SandraS: cool, David

DavidW: <http://books.heinemann.com/products/08329.aspx>

SandraS: Thanks, David.

NicholasI: No, I am going to San Diego State

SandraS: Nicholas, WriteTalk meets once a month.

SandraS: You can always drop in whenever you want to.

BJB2: the next WriteTalk is October 9

SandraS: Thanks, BJ.

SandraS: Are there any subjects y'all would like covered?

NicholasI: Will do! I am always looking for new ideas and ways to get my students to write about their processes.

SusanR: web 2.0 and the writing process

SandraS: Any final questions or comments?

SandraS: Great topic, Susan.

DrChristo: Thanks for all the ideas!

SandraS: Thanks for your participation!

SusanR: web 2.0 tools to encourage writing

DavidW: Lots of places where that fits in - web 2.0 tools

SandraS wonders if Susan would be a guest speaker....

NicholasI: Is Write Talk about writing in the classroom in general, or is it about teacher's reflecting on their teaching?

SandraS: both

DavidW: We had an interesting discussion about encouraging teenagers who aren't able to vote to write to candidates about politics

SandraS: It's also about our own writing as teachers

SandraS: Oh, that's a great idea, David

DavidW: <http://www.mytwocentsforchange.org/> [Ed. Note: See Social Studies Forum transcript from 2008/09/10]

NicholasI: One of my weaknesses is my writing.

SandraS: great website, David

SandraS: How do you see your writing as a weakness, Nicholas?

SandraS: And it's great you encourage it in your classroom!

SusanR: great site David ..we too are having an election in Canada

NicholasI: I feel like I have issues with punctuation and sometimes I tend to write like I speak.

SandraS: I know what you mean, Nicholas.

SandraS: I think many of us are taught that we're much worse writers than we really are...

SandraS: and often, too much focus on mechanics makes it hard to focus on ideas...

NicholasI: I also need to focus on having my students write summaries of the day's lessons.

SandraS: to me, writing is about thinking... feeling....

SandraS: That's a great way to incorporate writing into the learning process...

NicholasI: Yes, I love making up stories.

SandraS: Summaries would give students a chance to review, rethink...

SandraS: Like the word problems....

NicholasI: Also a good assessment tool

SandraS: Absolutely

SandraS: .OK, we're at the end of our time.

SandraS: Thanks to all for wonderful participation!

DrChristo: Goodnight.

SandraS waves goodbye

SandraS: Thanks, BJ!

SusanR: Thanks Sandra

SandraS: Thanks, David, for resources.

SusanR: always inspiring

SandraS: Great to see you, Susan.

NicholasI: Good night and thank you. I hope to join you next time and I am going to recommend this group to my principal.

SandraS: Hope you have a WONDERFUL trip!

SandraS: Thanks, Nicholas!