

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

StephaniLN: I haven't been to one of these talks in a while. I think this is only my second time.

SandraS: Stephanie, didn't you co-lead a WriteTalk on gaggle.net?

BJB2: nice to see you back again, Stephanie!

StephaniLN: Yes I did I think in April or May.

SandraS: Yes. That was great!

StephaniLN: Thanks.

BJB2: Sandy, do you want to start with introductions?

SandraS: Sure!

SandraS: We're a small group...so we can get a lot of talking done~

BJB2 . o O (and writing ;-)

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

BJB2: I'm in Pennsylvania and am on Tapped In helpdesk.

BJB2 . o O (I retired in June as a communication and art teacher)

SandraS: BJ is also a retired teacher...too modest!

StephaniLN: I am in Southern Illinois about 20 minutes from St. Louis where I teach Literature, Social Studies, and Math to 7th and 8th grade students at a small school in the oldest African American community of Lovejoy.

WendyHo: Well, I already am finding my learning curve. I went to the actions and clicked join and NOTHING.

BJB2: Wendy, that's cause you're already in the right place!

StephaniB: I was born in St. Louis

WendyHo: Well, OK! :-)

StephaniLN: Stephani B where do you live now?

StephaniB: Kalamazoo, MI

StephaniLN: What do you teach?

BJB2: welcome, Narda. We're just doing introductions

StephaniB: Kindergarten

StephaniLN: Hi, Narda.

StephaniB: For 11 years

NardaV: Hi, I am currently a student teacher at Pharr Elementary in South Texas.

StephaniLN: This year is my 4th year teaching.

StephaniB: Our district is currently using the Lucy Calkins program

SandraS: Oh, wonderful...Lucy Calkins!

SandraS: Wendy, would you like to introduce yourself?

StephaniB: It is good, but it is a bit hard for Kindergarten

SandraS wonders if we've lost Wendy

StephaniB: We sort of have to adjust it as we go.

SandraS: Calkins is more for first grade, right?

StephaniLN: I have heard some about Lucy Calkins this year. I am working on my Master's to become a Literacy Specialist and this semester I am taking a course for Reading and Writing in the Middle Grades.

WendyHo: Sure! I am in Littleton Co. I currently teach technology for grades K-6 at my charter school. I am constantly integrating with writing elements. I have taught 14 years.

NardaV: I graduate in December 13 but I already have a job as a second grade teacher. Hi, to all.

SandraS: Wonderful -- we've got a great range of teaching experience!

StephaniB: Our district has been using it for 3 years now, but I admit...

SandraS: Congratulations, Narda!

StephaniB: this is the first year I have REALLY taught it the way it is intended.

NardaV: Thank you Sandra.

StephaniB: I also come from a "Writing Academy"

WendyHo: Congratulations Narda!

SandraS: Excellent, Stephanie.

StephaniB: Good luck Narda - 2nd grade is fun!

StephaniLN: What does it mean to be a "Writing Academy"?

NardaV: Thanks Wendy I should pick you all's brains you all seem so interesting.

StephaniB: Our focus in all of the curriculum is Writing. We were a magnet school

NardaV: Thanks Stephanie

SandraS: We should have time for picking brains this evening.

SandraS: Let's get started with WriteTalk.

WendyHo: Let's.

SandraS: I usually give a short introduction to the National Writing Project.

NardaV: OK

SandraS: And then we go from there.

SandraS: The National Writing Project is a thirty-year old professional development organization.

SandraS: It started at UC Berkeley

SandraS: and has some core beliefs

SandraS: that teachers are the best teachers of other teachers

SandraS: (no canned professional development)

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

SandraS: and that writing is a powerful learning tool across all subjects

SandraS: It's a great organization-- federally funded

SandraS: Each year, NWP has to get its budget re-funded

SandraS: It's about \$30 million, and I'll tell ya, it's worth it

SandraS: There are about 200 NWP sites around the country

SandraS: all situated at universities

SandraS: usually housed in education or English

SandraS: the main program is the Summer Institute

SandraS: participants often get graduate credit

SandraS: or a stipend

SandraS: and once you go through a Summer Institute

SandraS: you become a teacher consultant

SandraS: and can participate in any program of the NWP

SandraS: writing retreats...

SandraS: one of the things I've worked on is a national writing retreat on using technology to teach writing

SandraS: NWP also encourages teachers to write down their own experiences and publish

SandraS: any questions so far?

StephaniB: Is there a summer program at Western Michigan

WendyHo: I have heard of the Summer Writing Institute but never been

StephaniB: I think SEVERAL of my teacher friends have participated

StephaniLN: How have you worked on using technology to teach writing?

SandraS: I'm not sure if there's a site there...but we'll find out in about two seconds when we visit the website

SandraS: first the technology question --- using blogs, wikis, GoogleDocs...collaboration...one teacher used Grammar Checker to teach grammar in a really interesting way

NardaV: Is this website can it be used with my future second graders or is it more for the teachers?

SandraS: But we can go visit the site and you'll see a map at the top where you can search your state for sites.

SandraS: The website is more for teachers.

SandraS: Excellent resources.

SandraS: Let's visit the site.

StephaniB: OK

SandraS: And I recommend that you check out the search function.

StephaniLN: ok

SandraS: For instance, Wendy, you could just enter "second grade" and see what comes up.

BJB2: a reminder to hold down the ctrl or shift key on your keyboard when you click on the url Sandy is going to show us

WendyHo: Ok.

SandraS: Also, check the map to see where the closest site is to you.

SandraS: I'll give you the URL

BJB2 . o O (overrides pop up blockers)

SandraS: go visit for a bit

SandraS: and then come back and tell us what you found!

SandraS: questions?

SandraS: Here's the site

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

StephaniB: not yet

StephaniB: The Third Coast Writing Project - that is the program that all of my colleagues have done

SandraS: Ah...cool.

SandraS: So you've got contacts already!

StephaniB: In fact, a friend of mine was running it for a while

WendyHo: How long will we have to search the site. I opened another window and don't want to miss anything.

StephaniB: But I don't think she is still doing that anymore

SandraS: It's fine to come on back, Wendy.

StephaniB: A ton - I just couldn't think of the name

StephaniB: At my last school, we had the same philosophy

StephaniB: teachers teach, teachers should write, etc

SandraS: That's great. You should be able to do the summer institute....

SandraS: Yes! I agree!

StephaniB: I could, and would have, except that I had a baby 3 years ago, and just don't want to take time away from her - yet

StephaniB: Our school district pays for us to attend

SandraS: Excellent!

SandraS: Most sites do a good bit of professional development in the school district.

SandraS: Some of the professional development is embedded.

SandraS: There are some cool programs.

SandraS: Lots of teacher inquiry, research.

SandraS: Is everybody back? And ready to keep talking?

WendyHo: Here

StephaniB: yup

NardaV: Present

SandraS: Excellent! Did you find any helpful resources?

StephaniLN: yes

SandraS: It's almost overwhelming, eh?

WendyHo: I am itching to go back and since you mentioned doing writing with technology, I will be looking for that.

SandraS: One thing I wanted to talk about tonight is NWP's collaboration with Google and their web document program, Google Docs.

StephaniB: yeah, I had a resource that was dated 1986

StephaniB: I was still in high school!

NardaV: Yes, just the feature of sending the next letter to the new President seems like fun to integrate into the classroom.

StephaniLN: I searched for technology and writing and found some things on the digital storytelling and a technology toolbox with some ideas that could be used

SandraS: Yes! Isn't that a great idea!

SandraS: Excellent, Stephanie.

SandraS: Each writing project site has a technology liaison.

StephaniB: That is something I will have to check out

SandraS: So there's lots of work with technology.

WendyHo: I agree. I might just do letter writing to the President check out the digital

storytelling

StephaniLN: I have set up an account at google docs for an online class that I am in through PBS TeacherLine, but I have not done a lot with it yet.

SandraS: The letters to the president project is a great idea...perfect example of using technology to teach writing.

NardaV: Cool I'm really finding this very interesting.

SandraS: I've used Google Docs in first-year writing.

SandraS: My three sections collaborated with a high school English class

WendyHo: I have never used Google Docs. How recent is that?

SandraS: Alabama to Nebraska

StephaniB: I still don't fully understand how to use Google Docs - but that is another discussion, another time

SandraS: They all wrote essays for "This I Believe" on NPR

SandraS: and then worked in peer review groups from Alabama to Nebraska

StephaniLN: What is NPR?

StephaniB: How cool? Did any of them get read over the air?

SandraS: National Public Radio

SandraS: Google Docs is basically a way to work on any document any place you have internet

SandraS: You can store a word processing document or a spreadsheet

SandraS: online

SandraS: you can invite others to collaborate

WendyHo: I like that students can let their voice be heard.

SandraS: so the tools allow many people to work on one document

StephaniLN: So it is kind of like a flash drive or drive space through the internet

SandraS: I agree, Wendy

SandraS: Great description, Stephanie!

SandraS: But maybe more interactive.

SandraS: The nice thing too, is that all your versions are saved.

StephaniLN: Everybody who works on the documents have to have google doc accounts then?

SandraS: So it's a great way to look at revision

SandraS: or to do peer review

SandraS: I don't think so, Stephanie.

StephaniB: I have heard nothing but good comments about it

SandraS: For instance, I could invite you to share a document.

StephaniLN: When you change the document then it is saved write away in google docs after you change it?

SandraS: You would just sign in with an email address you use.

SandraS: Yes.

SandraS: There are other programs like Google Docs.

SandraS: But in this letters to the presidents, if you read some of the letters, you can tell the students have worked on their writing.

SandraS: They all write letters that are somewhat persuasive.

SandraS: The website for the letters could be a great discussion started in class.

SandraS: OK, so shall we open this discussion up?

WendyHo: Ok

SandraS: What would you like to talk about?

SandraS: What are you current teaching challenges with writing?

StephaniB: It used to be time

JeffC: well... I'm looking to tutor some underachieving students... several are ELD.

JeffC: so... sites... strategies... etc.

StephaniB: but we have moved to full day kindergarten - so that makes it much easier

StephaniB: What is ELD?

NardaV: My daughter is in fourth grade and she really does not like to write unless it is about some topic she likes. This website seems like a lot of help.

WendyHo: What are some successes with the 6 traits in reluctant writers?

StephaniLN: I have several struggling readers in my middle school classes and I have a hard time getting them motivated to write.

StephaniB: Narda - we often discussed this at my school

JeffC: English Language Development (also considered ESL... English as Second Language).

SandraS: Please don't be shy with your questions.....

StephaniB: If a student isn't writing about something that is meaningful to him/her, the writing isn't as in depth

SandraS: OK, so let's start with ELL (English Language Learners)

StephaniLN: What are some ideas for motivation for getting students to write?

SandraS: There's a whole network on NWP for ELL

StephaniB: In order to create a love of writing, you usually have to start by focusing on things that are important to them

SandraS: So if you go to the NWP website and just type in ESL or ELL in the search box, you'll get a huge number of resources.

StephaniB: I figured it was ESL, but then I thought it might stand for Learning Disabled

SandraS: I agree... Stephanie.

WendyHo: I have had struggling writers dictate their thoughts into a recorder, listen and then take down their dictation.

NardaV: ELL need to be first of all motivated with a topic that would interest them maybe doing a LEA could help them.

SandraS: Can you explain LEA, Narda?

NardaV: Language Experience Approach is where the whole class as a whole cooperate their ideas.

JeffC: so... here: <http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/programs/ell>

StephaniB: That sounds interesting

JeffC: and here:

http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource_topic/english_language_learners

StephaniB: Have you done that before Narda

NardaV: The teacher serves as a dictator and helps them connect their ideas with actual writing conventions

NardaV: Yes, it is so much fun because children are so eager to share their experiences.

SandraS: Jeff has found some good stuff

NardaV: The teacher writes them in chart paper in front of the class.

SandraS: That sounds like fun, Narda.

WendyHo: Thank you Jeff. Writing them down.

StephaniB: What age groups have you done that with

StephaniB: I am thinking I could do that with Kindergarten easily

JeffC: no need to write them, Wendy... you'll get all of this in your transcript.

SandraS: Wendy, you'll also get a transcript of this meeting....so you'll have all the URLs

WendyHo: Sweet!

NardaV: I've done this LEA from K-4 it was interesting.

StephaniB: What topics did you use

NardaV: The topics are from them.

NardaV: The teacher can make mistakes on the writing so the students can read together the writing and correct it.

StephaniB: So it's a writing program

NardaV: I would think it is more like helping ELL make a connection of their own thoughts and writing. I guess it does help in writing.

SandraS: So, we've had several questions on motivating writers

SandraS: I think connecting reading and writing is one way to do that.

SandraS: Here's a great site:

SandraS: <http://notrequiredreading.com>

SandraS: high school students reviewing books

SandraS: So the students are motivated to write

SandraS: because they're writing for peers

StephaniLN: What level are the books that the high school students are reviewing?

SandraS: and they're writing about books they love

SandraS: about 10th grade

SandraS: it's a 10th grade English teacher who started it

StephaniLN: Oh, so students are reading books that they choose and then writing a review on it.

SandraS: so the students review young adult books

SandraS: yes...all books they don't read in class...thus... not required reading

SandraS: The reviews are great!

SandraS: I get my ideas for reading from there.

SandraS: So reluctant writers/readers might find a book they like and then review it for friends, family.

NardaV: Sandra do you have any for elementary levels?

SandraS: You could do the book review at elementary levels and rely more on drawing.

StephaniLN: This way other students might become interested in the book. So not only will writing begin to get better, but the independent reading might go up with students.

SandraS: With some writing mixed in.

SandraS: I agree, Stephanie.

NardaV: Good because I was planning on applying this in my future classroom.

SandraS: For elementary levels, students can also write their own picture books.

StephaniLN: Maybe you could even have students write letters to the authors about why they liked the books that they chose.

SandraS: Bind them and put them in the class or school library.

JeffC: There are probably a lot of resources for elementary in the K to 3+ Resources room here.

NardaV: Yes that is good.

SandraS: I know several teachers who do this successfully.

SandraS: Ooh, I like that idea, Stephanie.

SandraS: Most authors have websites.

WendyHo: I had a great reaction last year to Diary of a Fly and read aloud first to 6th graders, which they loved. Then I had them do a take of diary assignment and change it up! They loved it and they typed up a storm!

NardaV: Good because I really want my students to make the connection of how writing is correlated with reading.

SandraS: Great idea!

SandraS: I agree, Narda.

JeffC just added a Passageway to the K-3+ Resources room here... suggests elementary teachers check it out after this session is over.

NardaV: A book that my students in third and fourth grade really enjoyed is Esperanza Rising.

SandraS: Thanks, Jeff.

WendyHo: Thanks

SandraS: I love Esperanza Rising

NardaV: Thank you Jeff

SandraS: Beautiful book

StephaniLN: Students definitely need to see the correlation between reading and writing. Also how the writing is different from author to author that is studied

StephaniB: Mo Willems is a favorite author in my room.

SandraS: Another great writer!

StephaniB: When we do an author study, I am guessing he is who we will pick

StephaniB: That pigeon is hilarious

SandraS: One thing I do with my students to engage them with literature they may not want to read, is to have them take on the role of one character.

SandraS: They might summarize their reading assignment by writing in first person as the character they choose.

SandraS: I think this could be done at elementary through high school level.

StephaniB: We had a teacher that had students turn the books into a play

SandraS: Oh, cool.

StephaniB: After reading a certain story in class, rather than turn in a book report, they wrote out a skit

NardaV: Yes, Sandra that is awesome and maybe even change the ending of the story.

SandraS: Yes! I love doing the ending thing....

StephaniB: This got them writing about it, and they were helping each other edit, revise, etc

SandraS: they write a different ending.

SandraS: Yes, I've done a skit once with a novel -- it was really successful.

SandraS: Because as you said, Stephanie, students work together to write it.

StephaniB: It was a great way to incorporate the writing process into the whole lesson

WendyHo: Plays and drama always hit a great chord with kids. It brings the connection to thinking and real action to writing.

SandraS: They have to decide what from the book to include or get rid of.

StephaniLN: One of our high school teachers had students write an extra chapter to the ending of one of the books they read in class.

SandraS: Very cool!

WendyHo: Great idea!

SandraS: Plays or skits are also great for kinesthetic learners...move around!

WendyHo: Definitely!

StephaniB: That sounds great for some less motivated

StephaniB: Especially if the child enjoys clowning around and getting attention from other people

SandraS: One teacher had students write picture books and then take them home and have a parent or someone write a review of the book. Then the review was included on the back of the book.

WendyHo: Especially for boys! Acting out and going beyond the story by moving is powerful.

StephaniLN: Thanks for the ideas

SandraS: I agree, Wendy.

StephaniB: I have done the picture book review

SandraS: Was it effective, Stephanie?

StephaniB: We had actual published books and it was cute to see all the reviews by family members

SandraS: Very cool way to make literacy a family affair...

StephaniB: Well, it was big project, and I teach K so it was challenging

WendyHo: Stephanie thanks for sharing about reviews. A great next step.

StephaniB: Not to mention that we had little parent involvement, but we improvised

SandraS: But it's a great project!

SandraS: You could get your writers to read their books at a pre-school....

SandraS: OK, we're about at the end of the hour.

SandraS: Any last questions or comments?

WendyHo: Have you had Author Tea with parents coming to hear students read their stories or books? Lots of fun and important stuff with elementary writers.

StephaniB: We did that, too.

SandraS: Great idea!

BJB2: The next WriteTalk discussion will be on December 11.

StephaniB: It was SOOOOO awesome - we held it at a Ladies Library.

WendyHo: Thanks all. I have had a great time

NardaV: Thank you very informative.

StephaniB: Our students and Moms were served by these little old ladies and it was so cute

BJB2 hopes everyone will come back in December.

StephaniB: Poetry Slam was another thing we did with students

SandraS: Great experience, Stephanie.

SandraS: Excellent!

BJB2 hugs Sandy. Thanks for leading the discussion!

StephaniB: They could always write a poem to review a book

SandraS: Thanks to BJ for fantastic facilitation!

BJB2: thank you, everyone, for contributing to the discussion.

StephaniLN: That's a good idea Stephanie

SandraS: Thanks to all for sharing great ideas!

NardaV: thank you all.

SandraS: If you have topics you'd like covered in WriteTalk, just email the group!

WendyHo: Thank you and happy weekend!

StephaniB: This was the best chat I have had on this site.

BJB2: join the group and post to the threaded discussion board

StephaniB: Right amount of people and all offered useful advice

SandraS: It takes great collaboration!

BJB2: that's what a community is for, Stephanie :-)

StephaniB: thanks

SandraS: Does everyone know how to join WriteTalk?

JeffC: to join the group... click the little "i" in the green circle in the Welcome note in the top frame (close your chat if it's detached).

StephaniB: yes, I don't know if you remember BJ, but I was in that group for C3 when there were 30 people in the room

JeffC: then click the link to "join this group"

StephaniB: that was tough to follow

BJB2 nods solemnly to Stephanie

SandraS: It is hard when there are so many people.

SandraS: I hope everyone has a good evening.

BJB2 . o O (not as much fun when it's a big group that is required to participate in X number of discussions and the deadline is approaching)

StephaniB: It was, plus most were taking a college class and had ideas, but weren't in a

classroom, so it was hard to tell what would really work and such

SandraS: ah...difficult situations

StephaniB: It was, but this has changed my mind about the whole tapped in thing

BJB2 smiles happily

SandraS: Thanks so much for all your ideas, Stephanie.

StephaniB: Hopefully see you next month

StephaniB: thanks again

BJB2 waves goodnight

NardaV: Waves good night

SandraS: I hope you'll come back and talk about Poetry Slam!

SandraS: Good night all!