

Title of Session: WriteTalk
Moderator: Sandra Shattuck
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Room: After School Online Room

KennethA joined the room.

SandraS: Hi, Kenneth.

SandraS: Are you here for WriteTalk?

BJ: Kenneth is a fellow JJET student, Sandy

SandraS: I was wondering...

SandraS: how's the course going?

ClausS joined the room.

SandraS: Hi, Claus. Are you here for WriteTalk?

ClausS: Yes, but I don't know how long I can stay.

SandraS: that's fine.

SandraS: we're happy to have your company as long as you wish.

ClausS: thanks

SandraS: I'm used to seeing Claus spelled with a "K"

KennethA: I'm just seeing if there is anything new in the jjet program.

SandraS: what does jjet stand for?

ClausS: Yes, but the "C" is from southern Germany.

BJ: juvenile justice something something

SandraS: aha...sprechen Sie also Deutsch?

BJ: www.jjet.org

SandraS: thank, **BJ**

ClausS: No sorry.

SandraS: oops.

SandraS: I never get to practice enough...

SandraS: **BJ**, should we wait some more... or get started?

ClausS: that's ok. My dad is from Germany.

KennethA: Juvenile justice for educators.

SandraS: thanks, Claus & Kenneth, for your answers

BJ: Juvenile Justice Educator Training

SandraS: aha!

SandraS: powerful name

SandraS: are you doing any writing in the course?

BJ: haven't gotten far enough to tell

SandraS: ok

KennethA: Yeh a lot

BJ: basically just regurgitating information right now

ClausS: Sandra, are you a writer?

SandraS: yes, and you?

KennethA: The summer semester I wrote an enough information to fill a whole floppy disc.

SandraS: wow...that's a lot of writing.

SandraS: Why don't we go ahead and get started.

DavidWe joined the room.

DavidWe waves

DavidWe: Hiya

ClausS: No, but I think about starting someday.

DavidWe looks for the hoverboard

SandraS: hi, David

SandraS: great, Claus

DavidWe: Prof. Shattuck

DavidWe bows towards the south

SandraS points to hoverboard hiding behind picnic table

SandraS: ok, Welcome to Write Talk. let's start by introducing ourselves.

SandraS: I'm Sandy, I teach English in Alabama

BJ: I'm an art teacher in a male juvenile correctional facility in PA

DavidWe: I'm David Weksler. I'm in New Jersey and I was in New York City at 6pm east coast time

KennethA: Hi, my name is Kenneth, I teach a vocation in Maryland

ClausS: My name is Claus and I teach social studies in a continuation High school here in San Diego.

SandraS: great!

KennethA: That's vocational

SandraS: I'm glad you're all here.

SandraS: I've got about 7 quick paragraphs of information.

SandraS: I'm just going to cut and paste.

SandraS: then we'll have a discussion.

SandraS: here goes...

SandraS: The National Writing Project (NWP),

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

SandraS: a federally-funded program, has been around for 30 years as a professional development model. NWP has 3 premises: 1) teachers are the best teachers of other teachers, 2) teachers are better teachers of writing if they improve their own writing, and 3) writing is a powerful method of learning content and process across all suBJect areas.

DavidWe knows a little bit about the Bay Area Writing Project at UC Berkeley

SandraS: Currently, the NWP has 185 sites all housed at universities.

SandraS: Cool, David. That's where it all started.

SandraS: But the sites serve mostly k-12 teachers.

SandraS: the main project is a summer institute.

DavidWe: It really started at Berkeley?

SandraS: In June 2003, I attended the Summer Invitational Institute at the Alabama A&M University (AAMU) Writing Project

SandraS: <http://www.knology.net/aamuwritingproject>

SandraS: and became what is called a teacher consultant and a teacher leader -- I help with continuity programs, such as the advanced institute and our writing retreat, which we just had the last weekend of August on top of Monte Sano overlooking the Tennessee Valley. Beautiful!

SandraS: yup, David...in 1973

DavidWe: Well, I guess the 60s were over, so they had to do something else

SandraS: With the technology liaison, I also set up the AAMU WP Group Room on Tapped In ideally so that our dispersed teachers could better communicate.

SandraS: However, I noticed that Tapped In could be an ideal place for a writing group, and I changed the title of our monthly meetings from AAMU Writing Project to WriteTalk, which now functions as an online writing group supporting the professional writing of Tapped In members.

SandraS: Another basic belief of the National Writing Project is that school reform needs to come from within the schools, and that teachers can help to effect that reform by writing about their practice and publishing that writing. The NWP has two publications: _The Voice_ (newsletter for the NWP) and _The Quarterly_ (scholarly publication on the practice & teaching of writing). Both publications are available online at the NWP website. Both publications have given me ideas I've implemented in the classroom.

SandraS: everyone still with me?

DavidWe nods and reads at the same time

ClausS: Yes.

KennethA: Yes

SandraS: great

SandraS: OK, just a little bit more...we've met for the last year on Tapped In and focused on topics such as the following: creating authentic audiences, reading each other's writing, the practice of freewriting, our writing challenges and possible solutions, and how we get feedback. We've discussed specific pieces of writing: an early draft of the text for a digital story, an article on online learning, freewriting we've done over the month. And we've done spontaneous collective online freewrites.

DavidWe thinks Sandra is on to something GOOD

SandraS: one hopes....

SandraS: When we first started, I thought things would go this way: people would come flocking with all kinds of drafts that they would post in the group office; we'd all read the drafts, meet and discuss them; writers would get fantastic feedback, skip off to finish their drafts, and sing all the way to publication. That hasn't happened. What has happened is that we've had fantastic talks about the processes of writing and the teaching of writing. What are the challenges and joys of our own writing? of our students' writing? I was surprised at how thirsty people were to simply talk about writing...even though I named the group "WriteTalk" because I believe so strongly in the power of talking about writing.

SandraS: ok, last bit of text, then we talk!

SandraS: So here we are, one year later. And I'm hoping for a collective discussion about how this group can best serve the Tapped In population. Let's talk! Here are some questions to get us going: What did you expect when you came to WriteTalk? Were you pleased, disappointed, surprised at what happened? What helped? What didn't help? What do you want? What's your vision of an ideal online writing group?

SandraS: feel free to jump in with any of those questions...or anything that comes to mind

DavidWe wanted to see Sandra do a handstand on the hoverboard

SandraS: maybe I can do that later.....

ClausS: I think it is an interesting format.

SandraS: **BJ** suggested the idea of an open house, which I think is great.

SandraS: and I really wanted to find out what folks would like to have for a monthly writing group.

SandraS: Claus, do you mean the format for writing, or talking about writing?

DavidWe guesses having the discussion in Tapped In

SandraS nods

SandraS: well, let's talk about our writing.

SandraS: is anyone working on any writing now?

SandraS: thinking about a piece?

ClausS: For talking about writing. People can connect and share ideas from all over!

BJ hangs her head in shame. I'm using the excuse that I'm too busy, but I know better

SandraS nods

SandraS bandages **BJ**'s head

SandraS: well, let's follow up with **BJ**

SandraS: one thing I admire about **BJ** is her willingness to try different things

SandraS: she took off with freewriting

DavidWe doodles well

BJ: I like freewriting

SandraS: I'm assuming you're banging your head because you haven't been writing as much as you'd like to

BJ . o O (it's like doodling with words, **David**)

BJ nods to **Sandy**

DavidWe agrees and likes to doodle with words

SandraS loves that analogy

DavidWe smiles

DavidWe: **BJ** is an artist - with words, yes?

SandraS: absolutely!

SandraS: **BJ**, how much would you have to write to feel as if you were doing enough?

BJ: just 10 or 15 minutes a day worked well

SandraS: what if you wrote that amount maybe every other day, or twice a week?

ClausS: I would like to write, for fun, everyday.

DavidWe . o O (like exercise 10 or 15 minutes per day?)

SandraS: cool, **Claus**

SandraS: do you do any writing for fun?

ClausS: Not for a long time.

SandraS: just like exercise , **David**

DavidWe writes a fair number of postcards

SandraS: what did you used to write for fun?

SandraS: postcards are cool

ClausS: Short stories and some songs/poetry.

DavidWe agrees

DavidWe . o O (and stamps are only 23 cents)

SandraS: that sounds wonderful, **Claus**

SandraS: ok, so should we talk about freewriting? timed writing practice?

KennethA: I'm not sure what the purpose of writing is when it's on a keypad. I write a lot better with a pen and paper when it comes to free writing. Hate to sound so techno challenged.

SandraS: nothing techno challenged about it

SandraS: plenty of writers still insist on hand on paper writing, especially for first draft

SandraS: something about connection to material

SandraS: other writers have to keyboard

BJ: I think that's a tactile kinesthetic thing, Kenneth...the feel of the pen and paper working together

SandraS: it's an individual choice

ClausS: Sometimes it's easier for me to hand write first and then go to the keyboard.

SandraS nods to BJ

BJ: I used to feel the same way. Now I can barely write a legible sentence

SandraS nods to Claus

SandraS: Alice Walker only writes longhand for first draft

SandraS: I'm like BJ...can barely write legibly by hand

SandraS: one cool thing I can do with keyboard...I can close my eyes and compose

KennethA: My flow is more consistent this way for me, first draft as you stated.

BJ: and I like being able to move words to different locations

SandraS: so Claus, one way you might get back to writing for fun each day is through the timed writing practice

SandraS nods to Kenneth and BJ

ClausS: How does that work?

SandraS: you can commit to a certain amount of time

SandraS: 5 minutes, 10 or 20 or 30

SandraS: but once you've decided on the time, you stick with it and follow these guidelines

SandraS: 1) keep your hand moving

KennethA: I guess I need some more Mavis beacon lessons.

SandraS: this helps to override that internal editor that says we can't write

SandraS: 2) lose control

DavidWe: sdkgsdfkgsdkfgslfkg'sdkgsdlg

DavidWe: Oh, sorry!

SandraS: don't worry about etiquette or propriety

DavidWe grins sheepishly

SandraS: 3) be specific

SandraS: instead of "car" -- "a '57 Buick with a dented front fender"

DavidWe smiles

SandraS: but don't worry if you can't get too specific, just keep writing

BJ: close, David....with experience it's amazing what comes out. The exercise becomes a magical experience

SandraS: 4) don't worry about spelling, punctuation, grammar, capitalization

DavidWe thinks of a 1970 Volvo with 120,000 miles on it that only cost \$500

SandraS: I love the freedom of that

SandraS: cool image, David

ClausS: this sounds good.

SandraS: 5) don't think

DavidWe: real car, Sandra

SandraS: this doesn't mean to park your brain at the door

SandraS: just take the first thought that comes to you

SandraS: those are often the most powerful

SandraS: 6) you're free to write the worst junk in the galaxy

ClausS: That's the hard part, thinking and self editing as I go.

SandraS: another liberating guideline

SandraS: absolutely, Claus. that's what the guidelines are for... to help you just write

SandraS: and not edit as you write

SandraS: and 7) go for the jugular

BJ: one benefit I had with doing the free writing is that it made me less tense and more creative with my other thinking...including classroom lessons

SandraS: this means if some kind of feeling comes up, pursue it, write about it

SandraS: so cool, BJ

SandraS: I guess that's why the NWP says writing is good for every suBJect

SandraS: it's a method of learning, experiencing

SandraS: so those are the guidelines

BJ agrees

SandraS: we could do a 5 minute timed writing right now and share it...

SandraS: or maybe 3 minutes...

SandraS: we could each open up a text editor and type there...then copy and paste what we have and share it

SandraS: anybody up for that?

ClausS: Thank you so much! These are all great ideas. I have to say good bye.

DavidWe: Sure

SandraS: bye, Claus.

SandraS: thank you for coming!

ClausS: bye

SandraS: BJ and Kenneth, you want to a timed writing practice?

DavidWe waves to Claus

DavidWe looks at his watch

ClausS left the room.

SandraS: or we can do a collective one...

SandraS: start with a prompt

SandraS: and everyone simply writes whatever comes up

BJ: since it's just the three of us, let's start with a prompt

SandraS: ok, BJ

SandraS: Let's see if I can come up with something.

SandraS: I turned on the light and saw...

BJ: Pam Berger was saying during her webtools discussion that there were ducks swimming on the parkway because of the flooding from the hurricane

DavidWe: a mouse crawling across the keyboard of my laptop

SandraS: wow....

SandraS: let's use that...

SandraS: ducks swimming on the parkway

SandraS: I dove beneath to trace the yellow lines

DavidWe: which were slipping off the road surface because of heavy rains

SandraS: purple guppies slurped up the yellow lines

SandraS: . o O (we lost Kenneth)

DavidWe: . o O (guppies!)

BJ: some of the yellow lines floated up and formed a rainbow over the water

DavidWe likes guppies

SandraS: three ducks jumped up and tap danced across the rainbow

BJ: the guppies beat a Latin rhythm with their flippers

DavidWe isn't sure that guppies had flippers but goes with it

SandraS: a shark driving a police car careened past the guppies

BJ: fins!!!....

DavidWe smiles

DavidWe: Hey, it's just the three of us, WE'VE SCARED EVERYONE ELSE AWAY

SandraS: . o O (writing can be scary....heh!)

BJ: the police car had a motorboat motor in the trunk that sputtered and chugged, adding to the music

DavidWe nods and knows that his cousin, Tom, the novelist, probably feels that way

SandraS: the ducks quacked in syncopated rhythm, the shark revved the engine, the guppies played congos

BJ laughs...I love it!

DavidWe: And the rest of the animals samba-ed into the Ark at Noah's direction

SandraS: me too!

SandraS: the dancing part has to happen!

DavidWe smiles

BJ: and the music

SandraS: yup

SandraS: interesting that I immediately took a scary situation

SandraS: Florida hurricanes and flooding

DavidWe nods

BJ: David, I really recommend that you keep a journal of freewriting

SandraS: and used that one image of ducks on the parkway

SandraS: to play with what is usually scary

DavidWe wonders why BJ encourages that

DavidWe: Do you do that, BJ?

BJ: it is a great way to focus thoughts

DavidWe: . o O (I'm not disagreeing with you)

DavidWe nods

DavidWe wonders if BJ practices what she

SandraS: I like the way you explain that, BJ

SandraS: it's weird, cuz freewriting seems like an eminently non-focusing thing

SandraS: but by just writing what comes, you end up focusing

SandraS: learning

SandraS: discovering

SandraS: I did a freewrite in order to prepare for tonight

DavidWe: Rorschach image?

SandraS: dunno...whaddy think, BJ?

DavidWe: **BJ**, may I ask you the question - do you do free writing?

DavidWe wonders what Sandra freewrote in her preparation

SandraS: um, I was trying to figure out what I wanted to accomplish with this open house

BJ: yes, I did it for quite a while when Sandy introduced me to it, David

DavidWe thinks BJ is busy in Reception with her other alter ego

SandraS: I thought I didn't have enough to write for 5 minutes

SandraS: but I did

DavidWe nods to BJ

SandraS: mostly I was trying to gather my thoughts about what WriteTalk has meant to me the last year

DavidWe: I would be interested in knowing what you wrote, Sandra

DavidWe nods

DavidWe: Sounds good

BJ: I am trying to visualize or verbalize...it's like combing cotton to get the threads going in the same direction...

DavidWe: I often find walking around a hardware store or a supermarket helps me focus my thoughts

DavidWe likes combed cotton

BJ: and that allows more thoughts to flow through

DavidWe likes washing dishes

SandraS: some of it came out in the last paragraph i posted about the history of WriteTalk

DavidWe: Likes FLOW!!!

SandraS: totally, cool, David

DavidWe likes flow - you both know about the concept of "flow"

SandraS: you can wash dishes and compose

DavidWe smiles and nods

DavidWe: Yes

SandraS listens to David

BJ: talk into a tape recorder, David

SandraS: explanation of flow?

BJ . o O (don't let it fall into the water, though)

SandraS: lol!

DavidWe: Someone with a long Slavic name, I can find it on the web, has written a book about flow, feeling in the flow of things - when things are going well.

SandraS: BJ, do you have any ideas about how WriteTalk can better serve the needs of TI members?

SandraS: sounds Buddhist a bit, David

DavidWe: Excuse me I'm helping my Dad learn more about using Powerpoint...sorry, just a minute

DavidWe is challenged by THIS multi-tasking

DavidWe grins

DavidWe taps his feet

SandraS: go for it David

BJ: Perhaps you should focus on writing across the curriculum...and how educators can model writing

DavidWe wonders what he should go for, according to Sandra

DavidWe likes BJ's suggestion

SandraS: multi-tasking...

DavidWe nods

BJ: through journaling and other classroom exercises

DavidWe: You got that right, Prof. Shattuck

SandraS: ok, so focus more on ways one can introduce writing in any classroom?

BJ nods.

SandraS: when you say "educators model writing"...do you mean that teachers need to do the writing, too?

BJ nods...absolutely!

BJ: how can you teach something if you don't do it yourself

SandraS: cool...so WriteTalk could focus on how to teach the writing but also on the teacher's own blocks/gifts with the writing

SandraS: ok, that sounded totally confusing

DavidWe: sounds good to me

SandraS: cool.

SandraS: we're at that time....

SandraS: this has given me lots to think about...

DavidWe looks at his watch and notices it is NOT on his wrist

SandraS: thanks so much for playing with the writing!

BJ: it's basically just taking what you're doing and extending it...

DavidWe thanks Sandra and BJ

DavidWe thinks Sandra and BJ are buddies

BJ: making the teachers pay it forward

SandraS: we are all buddies!

BJ agrees with David

SandraS: pay it forward?

DavidWe smiles broadly

BJ: someone does something for you...so you do something for someone else

SandraS: got it...

SandraS: well, folks...I'm going to go do some class prep. for tomorrow

SandraS: hope y'all have a great evening, and thanks so much for talking!

BJ hugs. Take care. Thanks for doing the session

SandraS jumps on hoverboard and whooshes off