

Title of Session: AAMU Writing Project – WriteTalk

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Room: After School Online Room

SandraS joined the room.

SandraS: ooh, my favorite people!

MerileneM: Happy New Year, Sandy

BJ hugs warmly

SandraS: hugs and Happy New Year to all

MerileneM winks "ditto"

MerileneM hugs Sandy

SandraS loves cyberhugs

SandraS: How are you both?

MerileneM: things are hectic, but I am spiritually well. and you, Sandy

BJ: I'm hanging in there. And you? I was impressed with your timely reminder of this meeting.

SandraS: I like the hectic but spiritually well

MerileneM agrees

SandraS: that fits me

SandraS: almost forgot that "timely" reminder....

MerileneM: stay strong & kind

SandraS: always!

SandraS: what a wonderful way to be, eh?

SandraS: started back teaching today

MerileneM: yeah

MerileneM: how did it go, Sandy?

SandraS: it went well

SandraS: saw a lot of familiar faces

SandraS: from classes last semester

SandraS: BJ, have you started back?

MerileneM: bj, are you back at work

BJ: I was supposed to start back last Monday...but was a little weak spiritually

SandraS: how so?

BJ: had to take the week off...will try again on Monday

MerileneM: ahh, bj

SandraS: how are you feeling today, bj?

BJ: just too many emotional burdens...I'm doing much better now, thanks

SandraS: do you have the support you need?

MerileneM is sending a wave of healing to you, sister

BJ: yes, thanks, Sandy. Thanks for the wave of healing, Merilene.

SandraS: life can be quite rough at times

SandraS: know that's a cliché

MerileneM: for sure

BJ nods.

SandraS: but it's truer and truer as I age

SandraS: get wisdom

SandraS: go over more bumps

SandraS: well, we can do this writing thing....

SandraS: or we could just sit and support **BJ**.)

BJ: I also have some writing I would like to run by you both

SandraS: way cool...

MerileneM: ok

BJ: are you familiar with digital storytelling?

SandraS: BJ, ya wanna just start

SandraS: and we can dispense with formalities

SandraS: you mentioned the digital storytelling before

SandraS: but I'm not familiar with it

MerileneM: digital storytelling? no

BJ: yes, Sandy. Merilene, are you familiar with the webpage Silence Speaks?

SandraS: nope

MerileneM: only through you

BJ: <http://www.silencespeaks.org/>

SandraS: wow

SandraS: powerful index page

MerileneM: ditto

BJ: I'm involved with the planning for the NGA Digital Storytelling Institute for this summer

SandraS: NGA?

BJ . o O (don't ask how a nobody like me got invited to something like this)

BJ: NGA = National Gallery of Art

SandraS . o O (because BJ is so skilled and expert and creative)

SandraS: ok, my poor old mind is remembering this, BJ, I know you mentioned this before and I asked the same question about NGA....ack

BJ: so, I'm taking a crash course in digital storytelling....the master of Digital Storytelling is Joe Lambert

BJ . o O (so many letters, so many words! np, Sandy)

BJ: let me see if I can get the url to Joe's site

BJ: <http://www.storycenter.org/index.html>

MerileneM looks

SandraS: got it...will be happy to explore this

MerileneM: what should be looking for, bj

BJ: there is also info about the NGA institute at

<http://www.nga.gov/education/storyworkshop.htm>

BJ: those are just background resources to look at for information about digital storytelling

BJ . o O (and what the NGA Institute will be doing)

MerileneM: tres cool - thanks, bj - tres cool sites

SandraS: wow, looks great

SandraS: so you're helping to organize summer institute?
SandraS: and you have some writing you'd like us to look at?
BJ nods. What I'm really doing is helping the organizers to create a space in Tapped In for the Institute participants and alumni
SandraS: cool
MerileneM: that's awesome
SandraS: Tapped In is perfect for that
MerileneM: your writing is on which site?
BJ: I figure I really won't understand what the participants are going through unless I try to create a digital story myself...
SandraS: good idea
BJ: what I've written is really short...which it is supposed to be
BJ: now I need to connect digital images to the writing
BJ: but I thought it would be good for you to look at what I wrote...I'll try to paste it here
SandraS: ok
SandraS: bj, would it be worth a try to paste on whiteboard?
SandraS: then we could look at writing in window above?
BJ: that's a good idea, Sandy
MerileneM applauds
BJ . o O (all I have to do is get the program opened where it's saved first...some days, tech is a pain)
SandraS bows
SandraS nods
MerileneM: sure it is
MerileneM: and other's it's a dream
SandraS: also, Merilene, would you still like to discuss the bnv website this evening?
MerileneM: oh, yeah, sure
SandraS: great, then that's our agenda
SandraS: we can do that after we look at bj's stuff
BJ: got it on the whiteboard:

Magic wands have been a part of my life since I was a young child in the 1950's and my father made me a fairy princess costume with a magic wand that lit up. This was perhaps my first introduction to the magic that technology would bring to my life: I was whisked away to the ball in a gleaming coach. What a magical safe and secure traditional life I led in my castle in the Enchanted Forest with my very own Prince Charming.

And then the computer arrived.

Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of them all? The fairy princess with the magic wand became Cyberwoman and the journey of magical new experiences unfolded? new people, new places, new ideas all twinkling with fairy dust.

MerileneM: Sandy, thanks for your feedback on it
SandraS: if we didn't have any writing to look at, I was just going to have a conversation on prewriting strategies

SandraS: cool

BJ: I could have used prewriting strategies for this piece...

MerileneM: . o O (we may get to it later, then)

SandraS reads bj's work

BJ . o O (kind of brainstormed by writing down stream of consciousness type stuff)

SandraS: I'm done reading

MerileneM: ok, me, too

SandraS: initial responses?

SandraS: I love the magic wand image

BJ: my thoughts on adding digital images would start out slowly with a picture of a child in a fairy princess costume

SandraS: and how it transforms kinda into a computer

BJ: and some photos of suburban neighborhoods

MerileneM: I'd like more continuity in the opening p with the transformation to high tech

MerileneM: or perhaps vice versa

SandraS: I guess I need to back up and ask the question I usually ask

SandraS: what kind of feedback are you looking for, bj?

MerileneM: good question

SandraS: any particular questions, concerns?

BJ: I think if I explain the photo image sequence perhaps it will make more sense

SandraS listens

MerileneM . o O (it's very clear)

BJ: the start would be 1950's type childhood/suburbia...then morph to...

BJ: getting the computer and the initial sites that I was involved in

BJ: then speed up rapidly to sites/experiences that being on the computer and being involved in Tapped In have led to

BJ . o O (a far cry from suburbia 1950)

MerileneM: cyburbia

SandraS nods at Merilene's translation...

BJ: smiles...I like that, Merilene

MerileneM: use it, kiddo

SandraS: how do you mean "a far cry from suburbia 1950"? in what ways?

BJ: I think of suburbia 1950s to be black and white images, small neighborhoods, intimate community

SandraS: what is the shift/contrast to experiences on Tapped In?

BJ: international community, bright colors, faster paced

SandraS: so will you show this visually with b/w-color contrast?

MerileneM: good question

BJ: yes, I have a photo I found that I changed to sepia/newspaper

BJ . o O (as my starter pic)

SandraS: cool

MerileneM: also, you mentioned showing speed & that's great

SandraS: I agree, Merilene

BJ nods.

SandraS: so pace of images makes a difference

BJ: I would think so...didn't your childhood seem to last forever?
BJ . o O (when you were in it)
SandraS: the summer institute focuses on producing a movie, from what I can tell
SandraS: yup...
SandraS: so are you making a movie?
MerileneM: yes & twilight did too last forever
BJ: yes, it can be a movie or a series of still images, I think.
SandraS: or does digital storytelling require words along with images?
BJ: If I have to learn how to use imovie, so be it
MerileneM: wow, I envy you. it's supposed to be neat & easy
BJ: you have to compose the storyboard first...there is a whole "cookbook" on how to do the digital story
SandraS: also, seems that it's easy to add text with imovie?
BJ . o O (written by Joe)
SandraS: I was wondering about that
MerileneM: is what you asked us to look at your story
BJ: I asked you to look at the words to see if they triggered any visual images for you
MerileneM: oh, ok
MerileneM: they really do
BJ . o O (some people are more visually oriented than others)
SandraS: ah!
SandraS: could you morph a wand into a computer?
SandraS: and how did your dad make a wand that lit up in the 1950s?
SandraS: he could have marketed it....
MerileneM: true
SandraS: I see lots of sparkles
SandraS: the fairy dust
BJ smiles...it had a battery and a flashlight bulb. He was a wonderful person
SandraS: very cool
MerileneM: magical man
BJ nods
MerileneM: listen, bj
SandraS: technology=magic=transformation
BJ listens
MerileneM: you played a trick by giving me your storyboard & I thought I was missing hearing your voice, say like in the six degrees of separation story
MerileneM: I love your voice
MerileneM: hearing it in what you write
BJ: are you saying you don't hear my voice in this story?
BJ . o O (or do you hear pictures instead of words?)
MerileneM: I really don't. I hear you pointing me somewhere but I don't feel you
BJ: hmmm. Good feedback. Thanks
MerileneM: you're telling me to look at things. I get what you want me to see. but I don't know how you feel & I am lost
SandraS: maybe you were thinking of the images as you were writing?
BJ: probably, Sandy. Perhaps the images will make the story have more feeling

SandraS: Merilene's comment indicates that you're successful with getting the pictures there

BJ . o O (or maybe I need to go back to square one)

MerileneM: no way, bj!!!

MerileneM: can you tell the story

SandraS: and maybe Merilene's comment prompts the question, what kind of emotion do you want the viewer to feel with your images?

BJ: The biggest problem I had was on deciding what story I wanted to tell...and I think I buried the feeling because it's too painful for me.

MerileneM . o O (hmmm)

SandraS: wow...that's a powerful insight

BJ: I homogenized the story to be about the journey from suburbia to cyberbia

BJ: I still think it's a viable story, but you're right that it loses emotion

SandraS: so maybe some free writing about the painful stuff will help you write that out

SandraS: not that you need to have it in the story

SandraS: but if there's something there waiting to be written

SandraS: it usually makes itself known

SandraS: whether you want it to or not

BJ nods...same thing with art

SandraS: yup

SandraS: art is funny that way...

MerileneM: agree

BJ: I see it all the time in what my students do...even if they trace a picture, they have a way of inserting a part of themselves into the artwork

SandraS: BJ, if you're ok with this, I'll give a quick idea about prewriting. then I'd like to respond to your story more after I've seen the digital storytelling website more

BJ . o O (in spite of themselves)

SandraS: then we can go on to Merilene's website

BJ nods to Sandy...sounds good.

SandraS: amazing, isn't it?

SandraS: so here's this technique called nutshelling

SandraS: you can take what you've written

SandraS: take the first paragraph

SandraS: re-read it

SandraS: write one sentence in a nutshell what that paragraph says to you

SandraS: then use that one nutshell sentence to freewrite some more

SandraS: don't look back at your original first paragraph

SandraS: go from there

SandraS: you could do this with the whole piece

SandraS: or break the piece up into its 3 paragraphs as you've written it

SandraS: you can also do some mapping

SandraS: especially since you're visual

SandraS: put the one image in the center

SandraS: wand

SandraS: and/or computer

SandraS: and start writing anything that comes to mind

SandraS: draw circles

SandraS: connect

SandraS: then write about connections you find

SandraS: what's missing

SandraS: you can also just write lists

SandraS: see what comes up

MerileneM: nutshelling, mapping, lists - thanks

SandraS: sure

SandraS: I've got a bunch of links

SandraS: mebbe I can put them in the AAMU Writing Project room

SandraS: BJ, you ok to move on?

MerileneM: I'd like that

MerileneM: I'd like to keep on with where we are/were. no need to stop

BJ: Yj zo

BJ . o O (I'm ok to move on)

SandraS: um, ok, um

MerileneM: ahhhh

SandraS fumbles

MerileneM: well, ok

BJ . o O (up to you two ladies)

MerileneM: ok, then, I vote to stay on digital storytelling

SandraS: keydoke

MerileneM: where were we, ladies

SandraS: Merilene, you could post specific questions...what kind of feedback do you want on the website

SandraS: and BJ and I could then send you our comments

SandraS: I like the FAQ you've put up

MerileneM: keydoke

SandraS: free writing is one of the invention strategies

MerileneM: thanks for that suggestion. there has just been a lot of ugly politics going on with youth speaks

SandraS: oh, that's yucky

MerileneM: which makes talking about that project very painful

SandraS: I'm so sorry to hear that

MerileneM: you? me, three

BJ: life is too short to waste on political bickering

MerileneM: of course it is. & what a downer when it comes to poetry & art

SandraS: power struggles too often get in the way, unfortunately

SandraS: so mebbe, Merilene, you can freewrite about the struggles???

MerileneM: so true without concern for the target group - teens

SandraS: totally

MerileneM: ok

SandraS: here's a guideline I have for freewriting

SandraS: you can download it from my profile

SandraS: it's a file linked in my office and on my profile

SandraS: but it's also on web

SandraS: but did you both find the .doc file?
SandraS: if you go to my profile
SandraS: it's under shared files
SandraS: it's called wrtpract.doc
SandraS: Guidelines for Timed Writing Practice
MerileneM: got it
SandraS: it's something I've adopted from Nathalie Goldberg's work
SandraS: there's one guideline there that says to go for the jugular
SandraS: that means, when you notice you're feeling something
SandraS: pursue the feeling
SandraS: cuz that's where creative power hangs out
MerileneM: Nat's cool. met her in Taos
SandraS: way cool, M
SandraS: so let's see if I can wrap up
SandraS: we've got bj's story
SandraS: and I'm going to look at the digital storytelling site more
SandraS: then comment more on bj's story and images
SandraS: ask questions
MerileneM: struggles
MerileneM: trying not to be involved in the unnecessary. don't want to overwhelm or be overwhelmed except in making love. how do I do this?
SandraS: wow.....amazing question!
SandraS: and bj and I will give Merilene feedback on brave new voices website
SandraS: Merilene, will you email us your questions?
MerileneM: bj, hone, I love your work
MerileneM: yes, I will
MerileneM: Sandy, I love this session
SandraS: I have noooooo answer for your question, Merilene
BJ: thanks, Merilene
SandraS: bows to co-conspirator artists
BJ: sometimes no answer is ok
MerileneM: that's right
SandraS: yup
MerileneM: bows - peace & blessings
SandraS: same to you both
SandraS: thank you so much for showing up and sharing
BJ hugs. Thanks for leading the discussion, Sandy
SandraS: my pleasure and honor
MerileneM: applauds
BJ: Sweet dreams
MerileneM: it was great as usual
SandraS: Merilene, if you want to vent about politics, just hollah!
MerileneM: will do
SandraS: same to you, bj, with emotional support stuff
MerileneM: bj, take care
BJ: thanks, Sandy

SandraS: take care all...peace