

Title of Session: Language Arts Forum

Moderator: Donna Hendry

Title of File: 20040908langarts

Date: September 8, 2004

Room: After School Online Room

DonnaH: Guess we should start:)

DonnaH: First, introductions.

DonnaH: My name is Donna Hendry, and I'm an educational consultant in CT, and your session leader tonight.

DonnaH: (and just to be safe, this is the LA forum; and we're covering Student centered classroom decor tonight)

AnnE: My name is Ann Egan. I'm an ABE educator in an all male correctional institution.

BJ: we're just starting introductions

SusanHan joined the room.

EuniceH: my name is Eunice and I'm a student

DonnaH: Also, you may wish to click the actions tab at the top right hand corner and click on detach, as it will give you a bigger chat screen, which makes it easier to follow.

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

LauraLT: hi. I am a preservice teacher and have actually never used this chat option before, but am really excited! I have taught environmental science for a year in NC, but am back in school to get my Masters.

DonnaH: (is that everyone?)

SusanHan: I am a tech coordinator. I am checking this out because I am going to help a middle school la teacher to use Tapped in tomorrow

DonnaH: *ah* great way to get used to it then:)

SusanHan: The teacher I will work with tomorrow likes to keep couches in her room.

DonnaH: Tonight I was going to share some ideas; plenty of different age groups:)

DonnaH: *chuckles*

DonnaH: worked at a school like that.:)

AnnE: Sounds great

SusanHan: Good I will share the transcript with my fellow teacher.

EuniceH: that's good

DonnaH: One of the first ideas...How many of you are completely and utterly tired of seeing the words "good", "nice", "bad", "said" etc?

SusanHan: me /hands up

AnnE: works for me

DonnaH: Well, I don't know about you, but the students I had were invariably too lazy to use thesaurus' on a regular basis.

AnnE: Many of mine can't even pronounce the one or two syllable words

DonnaH: so I created tired words...played it up; "My name is good. And you work me too hard, so I'm really really tired. Please call my relatives to cover for me today."

AnnE: very creative

DonnaH: Using the thesaurus, they had to pick out 10 words that they could use instead.

DonnaH: each student was given a poster sized sheet of paper...and (after checking words) were to put them large enough to be read on the poster...they could decorate (hot was a word...they colored it to look like fire, for example)

SusanHan: like that idea would use it immediately with the word(s), allot, a lot, alot

DonnaH: Once they're up on the wall, the kids could look up without too much effort (and lets face it, embarrassment) and their word usage became significantly greater.

EuniceH: that idea could be used with word walls and other ideas.

DonnaH: I would have a coffee can with index cards with "overworked words" on them; so I could choose what words they needed to look up.

LakishaGst9: I assume you are talking about enhancing vocabulary skills

DonnaH: indirectly *laugh* actually about room dressing:)

LauraLT: I would think the visual of fire, etc would also help remember the "new" words by visual association

DonnaH: I like things that can be useful...and cheap...and student centered.

DonnaH: *laugh* and did I mention cheap?

AnnE: I have Hispanic students in class that would benefit from the visuals

LakishaGst9: I use decorations that can't help but grab their attention

DonnaH: I've done it with middle schoolers, Ann (lots of Hispanics as well) with terms like onomonopaea (sp?)

LakishaGst9: right now I have middle school also, and I have their vocabulary on frogs to catch their attention

AnnE: It probably would work with poetry as well

DonnaH: Another thing to consider...(yep, did it with that as well *laugh*) is maps.

DonnaH: books that cover a lot of ground, it helps students to visualize it better.

EuniceH: but then you don't want your walls to be covered with too much things because it's gonna be too much for the students to see

DonnaH: Examples; I've had students create poster sized maps of Narnia (we did the lion the witch and the wardrobe); and the island from "Lord of the Flies".

DonnaH: It sounds simple, but depending on the age, there is actually a lot of work that goes into it.

EuniceH: and we should put up the students work on the walls and the students get to see their peers work and also they can enjoy what they did

LauraLT: I was thinking about clutter also. such great ideas, but feel like too much on the walls, no matter how creative, takes away from it all and nothing is really seen out of the mess

DonnaH: when we did the Lord of the Flies, they were constantly looking up things in the book to decide where to place what...and when the map was finished, we labeled each important point...and each student then had to write a paragraph as to its importance, and find and include the passage (s) that were relevant.

AnnE: That is a great idea. It could work in with teaching sequencing and main idea. Also character traits

DonnaH: Well, with the posters, because they aren't just notebook paper, you really CAN'T overload, because since they're bigger, there isn't room for lots and lots.

DonnaH: (we did that too...actually the final project for the 8th graders who did lots was to create a study guide...)

DonnaH: and not that I'm disagreeing about clutter; but at least in relation to the overworked words? I saw the students work completely jump. It made a HUGE difference in their writing.

AnnE: They could be used over again for teaching students that concept and also as an example of the process

DonnaH: *nods*

AnnE: I have great difficulty motivating my students to write

DonnaH: when we did the maps too, it was a huge collaborative process...and they had to really discuss with each other their whys and whynots of placement.

AnnE: Actually, I have them dictate the story because they are so concerned about spelling

JeffC: how about setting up an epal account with them... have them write to kids around the world... or a blog at livejournal. <http://www.epals.com> or <http://www.livejournal.com>

AnnE: If I could get webwacker, it would really work. Security is an issue

DonnaH: Ann, would you say your students are fairly...illiterate?

AnnE: I have all age levels

AnnE: Some are beginning readers and some are ESL

EuniceH: wow, the live journal I think is a good idea for students who want to write and get to motivate students to write

JeffC: Epals has a built-in spell check... not sure about livejournal (it might)... or have them write in Word, spell check, then copy/paste into epals, livejournal, takingitglobal.org... etc... in other words... motivate them by thinking outside of the classroom... get involved internationally.

DonnaH: (not insulting at all...I used to teach at a multiage school for SED students...many were barely literate, and so they had many problems with writing)

AnnE: I have been using phonics and counting syllables. It works

DonnaH: I have to admit, Jeff, if their writing isn't up to par, epals would likely frustrate them (I tried that...they would get so angry it wasn't worth it)

DonnaH: at least with older students...because they fell they SHOULD be able to

AnnE: It is worth a try. Sometimes when you challenge them, they come through

JeffC: Donna... just have them write a letter to a friend.

DonnaH: *snicker* I would've liked to have seen you in my classroom, Jeff.)

JeffC: I had my students in Richmond write autobiographical incidents... a day in their life (best, worst, whatever... movie they saw). I typed in *over 100 stories myself* and got them published internationally.

JeffC: <http://snurl.com/netc1> to see the story of what I did.

AnnE: awesome

JeffC: The trouble is you're trying to get them to write "outside of the context of their awareness."

JeffC: Get them to write about anything from gang-banging to Britney Spears. They need to develop their own voice... so *let them*.

AnnE: They like Britney

DonnaH: Nope. I've done that. *(well, was working with remedial 4th graders on phonics)

JeffC: Don't red pencil their work... give them some ideas regarding specificity and detail. Use BAWP (Bay Area Writing Project) guidelines... they'll write... then... you can post it to Newsday at GSH or some other listserv.

DonnaH: gave 'em the lyrics to one of her songs...

JeffC: They'll be published internationally, and believe me... that will get them motivated to write more.

DonnaH: made them link all the rhyming words, underline words with long e's (or whatever vowel sound we were working on that week, etc)

AnnE: I like that idea as well

DonnaH: (I think we got way off topic...)

DonnaH: but I'm open:)

SusanHan: I hope that our experience with book clubs using Tapped in will stimulate lots of writing. I would think we could even stimulate a vocabulary exchange among the students.

LauraLT: are all your students involved with Tapped In as well? (sorry for the question...I'm new

DonnaH: I no longer have students (I work strictly online now).

LauraLT: ah

DonnaH: and my original school system had blocked all chats...so even I couldn't get to TI from school (very frustrating)

DonnaH: (wonders why everyone got so quiet all the sudden?)

AnnE: have you ever tried pictures as prompts to writing?

DonnaH: I dunno...I had my 6-7th graders write a play on the Trojan war.

JeffC: Did you bring in condoms?

DonnaH: they loved it

DonnaH: *mock glares*

JeffC: students love condoms

DonnaH: students loved the I get to die a glorious bloody death

DonnaH: and get videotaped doing it.

DonnaH: it depended on the level of kids.

DonnaH: my remedial kids? they just couldn't do it. my high level kids...they loved it.

DonnaH: (pictures as prompts that is)

AnnE: Sometimes we do a story together, round robin style

DonnaH: *nods* by line? paragraph?

AnnE: One student will write on the board and another will record. Works great for editing excessive caps

DonnaH: (I've done it verbally too...) they liked the scary stories best...sit in a circle, and each person instead of just adding their own line, had to recite what everyone before them had said...it is a great way to work on sequence.

AnnE: paragraph

EuniceH: writing from providing pictures is a good idea because they could write their feelings or what they see in the pictures

AnnE: That would make an excellent ice breaker

DonnaH: so I might start. "it was a dark and stormy night." and Jeff would go, "it was a dark and stormy night. I was bringing popcorn to my baby brother"

DonnaH: (I used to do it during summer school while we waited for buses ...turned off the lights to help it stay cool...)

AnnE: we were home alone

DonnaH: well, technically Ann, you'd have to say, "it was a dark and stormy night. I was bringing popcorn to my baby brother. We were home alone."

DonnaH: (so the last person actually says the entire story.)

LauraLT: I did a similar story sequence, and each added one motion/gesture to go with his/her sentence. (helped everyone remember what the people before said)

AnnE: Use descriptive words using similes or metaphors

DonnaH: (that's another thing I loved doing in poster form...)

DonnaH: I used to give extra credit if a student could take their simile and turn it into a metaphor...(do one on one side, and one on the other.)

AnnE: When you use different media, the inhibitions disappear

DonnaH: how do you mean, Ann?

AnnE: Some people are better at expressing themselves through art

BJ hopes Ann will join the Arts and Literacy discussion on Monday

AnnE: Then they are less intimidated by trying something scary like writing about their art

DonnaH: *nods*

AnnE: smile

DonnaH: you're right.

DonnaH: (of course)

AnnE: laugh

DonnaH: however...it *IS* time.

DonnaH: (time flies...)

BJ: Thanks, Donna.

BJ: Thanks, everyone. I was 'listening' and it looked like a good discussion

AnnE: Thanks, some great ideas

EuniceH: thank you

LauraLT: thanks

AnnE: I won't try to copy this chat and have my computer lock up again

BJ: Ann, when you log out you should get a transcript of this chat

BJ . o O (emailed to you)

AnnE: I found that out the next day. thanks

DonnaH: *chuckles* well, I'm afraid I have to head out...didn't get quite as much work done today as I should have...so now I have to play catch up:)

DonnaH: goodnight all!