

Title of Session: K-3+ Resources-Balanced Literacy/4 Blocks

Moderator: Susan Roseman

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Room: Comfy Conference Room

SusanR joined the room.

DeborahLS joined the room.

SusanR: Welcome Deborah and Shirley

ShirleyHe: Hello

DeborahLS: Hi. Is a session starting now?

SusanR: I gather you are here for Part 3 of Balanced Literacy

BJ: Hi, Deborah. Welcome

DeborahLS: Hi, and yes.

SusanR: Welcome Shirley.

ShirleyHe: Thanks. This is my first session.

SusanR: It will be casual tonight, Shirley

ShirleyHe: That's good, because I'm very nervous. It's like the first day of school.

DeborahLS: Looks like it'll be a lot less "crowded" tonight, too.

SusanR: slightly different than last month, Deborah

BJ: o O (still working on getting Gretchen here)

DeborahLS: college terms have finished.

SusanR: teachers are winding down

ShirleyHe: Not for all, my course work just started.

GretchenJ joined the room.

DeborahLS: Ironically, I'm going to start online courses next month.

BJ: good job, Gretchen!

SusanR: ah welcome Gretchen

GretchenJ: hi everyone

ShirleyHe: hello

SusanR: What are you taking, Deborah

GretchenJ: thanks BJ

DeborahLS: I'm starting work on a M.S. in Instructional Technology.

SusanR: I have been contemplating the same

SusanR: Should we start with intros

DeborahLS: Doing an entire degree from the comfort of home appeals to me.

KyteriaR joined the room.

ShirleyHe: That's how I'm doing my course work. It's great

SusanR: in your pajamas if you wish..no fighting traffic and snowstorms

DeborahLS: Intros. -- I'm an Instructional Technologist in Texas. (No snowstorms to fight in my area, just traffic.)

ShirleyHe: I'm a reading specialist, working on a Master Technology Teacher Certification - online through Our Lady of the Lake, Texas

GretchenJ: I am a history instructor in Houston, we have just bad traffic

KyteriaR: I am a preservice student teacher at the University of Houston

SusanR: K to 8 Occasional teacher from Canada..former Tech Integrator and 1/2 teacher

SusanR: I spent last week in an ESL/Spec Ed class

DeborahLS: Bet you got your "fill" of modifications.

ShirleyHe: Susan, what is an occasional teacher?

SusanR: It's a fancy term for substitute teacher

DeborahLS: It's "Canada speak", isn't it?

SusanR: yes..along with "eh"

KyteriaR: that is a new name for substitute teacher

SusanR: yes

SusanR: Tonight's topic is on Balanced Literacy: 4 Blocks Approach

SusanR: We will be dealing with web resources that enhance and support the Writing Block

SusanR: Anyone care to define Balanced Literacy?

DeborahLS: It's a test --- let's see -- reading, vocabulary work, spelling, writing??

DeborahLS: It's been a while

SusanR: You got it!

KyteriaR: Literacy that consists of reading, writing, listening, and speaking????

ShirleyHe: My definition is an equal amount of reading, writing, working with words.

DeborahLS: The general idea is that all 4 Blocks work together and are important.

SusanR: Right on!

SusanR: I am going to paste this selection into the chat window..see if you can read it

SusanR: I cdnuolt blveiee taht I cluod aulacly uesdnatnrd waht I was rdgnieg. THE PAOMNNEHAL PWEOR OF THE HMUAN MNID. Aoccdrnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mtttaer in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are. The olny iprmoatnt thng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can still raed it wouthit porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Amzanig huh?

KyteriaR: thats so interesting

SusanR: Neat eh

DeborahLS: I got it. It probably explains how people can understand what is typed in chat rooms, too.

KyteriaR: yes!

SusanR: That's why whole language was such a success

SusanR: The Writing block is a very busy time. Students write daily in Four Block classrooms. Teachers use the writing workshop format and begin the block with a minilesson.

ShirleyHe: I was a kinder teacher and you have to learn to read that way.

KyteriaR: I [think] that that the whole language approach to teaching literacy is better

SusanR: I taught whole language in grade one..I found I produced great readers by January

ShirleyHe: I agree - most of my kinders read by March or April. Some were reading by Jan.

KyteriaR: Whole language is more like focusing on the whole word rather than the parts of the word like phonetics correct???

SusanR: Here's a description of the writing block as it exists today in the K to 3 classroom.

SusanR: Correct!

DeborahLS: Whole language got a bad rap in this area of Texas -- but I believe it was because it wasn't approached as balanced literacy. The spelling and vocabulary blocks were left out.

SusanR: <http://www.readinglady.com/wr/> take a look at this site

ShirleyHe: I like this website. I just discovered it.

DeborahLS: the Craft Lessons book pictured there is great.

SusanR: Scroll down to the bottom of the site..there are some mini lessons

GretchenJ: you mean the book descriptions?

SusanR: ..a checklist..and writing block procedures

SusanR: the blue links at the bottom of the screen, Gretchen

GretchenJ: ok

SusanR: Click on "outline for grade 2

BeachgiGst3 joined the room.

BeachgiGst3: hello

ShirleyHe: Susan, I like this outline for grade 2.

SusanR: Here the outline for grade 2..can be adapted to other grade levels

http://www.readinglady.com/wr/Outline_2nd_Grade/outline_2nd_grade.html

SusanR: Let's look at an article from teachers.net..

SusanR: The focus is on aspects of the writing block that may help to make implementation smoother.

SusanR: <http://www.teachers.net/4blocks/article2.html>

SusanR: All these links will be in your transcripts and I will give you an online listing of 15 Great Web sites related to the writing block

ShirleyHe: I like the idea of thinking out loud as you write, I do that as we read, but not write.

DeborahLS: I find it interesting that the article suggests writing/modeling at the overhead -- I started using the computer-TV hook-up. It's faster.

SusanR: I agree, Deborah. Teachers may also using smartboards or digital projectors.

SusanR: most use chart paper

ShirleyHe: Integrating technology - that's what we are trying to do.

SusanR: I was using an overhead in a grade 3 class a week ago.

SusanR: whatever works

ShirleyHe: I like the smartboards idea.

DeborahLS: Pretty expensive.

SusanR: Some schools have floating digital projectors.Cheryl has some useful handouts to support the writing block!

KyteriaR: I think that is very important to model to students that writing should be about things they are interested in. writing should be personal.

ShirleyHe: Yes, but a good way to use it, if you have one.

SusanR: <http://www.cherylsigmon.com/handouts.asp>

SusanR: I agree. It is more meaningful to the child, Kyteria, if it is personal

SusanR: But sometimes students need a journal prompt ..

KyteriaR: I like the idea of brainstorming out loud. I have worked with students who seemed to have a hard time deciding what to write about. If we model how to do this,

then when they write independently, they won't get in the first stage of the writing process which is choosing a topic.

DeborahLS: Make sure you scroll down and check out the bookmarks for the upper grades.

ShirleyHe: Could you show the website again, I got bumped off the computer.

SusanR: I sometimes use journal prompts

<http://www.canteach.ca/elementary/prompts.html>

SusanR: <http://www.cherylsigmon.com/handouts.asp>

KyteriaR: The article said not to assign students topics. would a journal prompt be kind of like assigning a topic?

DeborahLS: I used prompts like these before. Do you have any sites of picture prompts, Susan?

DeborahLS: some prompts are very open and allow for "personalization"

SusanR: Get around it by having students choose from a list of prompts!

ShirleyHe: I think prompts are ok sometimes, especially if they have writers block

SusanR: o O (picture prompts ..one moment)

KyteriaR: yes I think pictures and giving students a list to choose from gives them more freedom of choice.

SusanR: Young Writers Workshop story starters...

<http://www.meddybemps.com/9.730.html>

SusanR: This site has a picture with a story starter.

DeborahLS: Here's a site -- history related-- with picture "prompts"

DeborahLS: <http://www.cyberbee.com/portraits/kids.html>

SusanR: Thanks Deborah.

BeachgiGst3: neat sites guys!!

SusanR: <http://www.meddybemps.com/9.700.html> this is the lead page

KyteriaR: oh cool. I love these writing prompts!!!

KyteriaR: these prompts are good because the students are still able to be creative.

DeborahLS: It'd be so easy to go through clip art galleries for ideas and produce pages like these.

KyteriaR: yes we can also make up our own prompts

SusanR: I am going to use those in an esl class

ShirleyHe: Or you could take digital photos (up close flowers) as a prompt

KyteriaR: yes that's a great idea. Music could also be a prompt.

DeborahLS: Or, kids spend so much time in drawing programs -- have a kid do a picture for a prompt choice for the class

DeborahLS: Prompts aren't "evil."

KyteriaR: yes most children love to draw

ShirleyHe: Thanks guys - those are some really good ideas

BeachgiGst3: I agree - good ideas!

SusanR: For the last few minutes peruse these links

SusanR: <http://snipurl.com/BLwriting>

SusanR: kidpub ..for publishing stories on the web

SusanR: ..wacky web tales..and the Alphabet Organizer, an interactive student site

ShirleyHe: My students love wacky web tales.

BeachgiGst3: are these websites?

SusanR: anything from Read*Write*Think is impressive

http://www.readwritethink.org/student_mat/index.asp

SusanR: Alphabet Organizer has numerous applications for classroom instruction. Students can use the tool to print an alphabet chart or pages for an alphabet book.

KyteriaR: all of these websites are so great

SusanR: any of these interactive student sites can be integrated into the writing/reading block

ShirleyHe: Thanks Susan! Great job and ideas

SusanR: Thanks for coming..next session ..The Word Block

DeborahLS: Thanks Susan.

ShirleyHe: Can't wait Susan. Sounds great.

BeachgiGst3: thanks for the websites

SusanR: and do drop into the K to 3 Resource Room and snoop around

SusanR: share an idea or so

KyteriaR: Thank you for the useful websites

ShirleyHe: Thanks again Susan. Plan to share with teachers tomorrow.

SusanR: Goodnight all!