Title of Session: Using Waypoint Online: Responding to Student Writing
Moderator: Andrew McCann
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Room: After School Online Room

AndrewJM: Welcome and thank you for attending this After School Online session.

AndrewJM: My name is Andrew McCann and I teach English at Drexel University in Philadelphia.

AndrewJM: I am also the developer of waypoint, a tool for assessing and responding to student writing.

AndrewJM: Please ask any questions you might have as we go along – I am interested in any and all feedback.

AndrewJM: Also, please let me know if I move too quickly (or slowly).

AndrewJM: Could we do introductions to get an idea of who is here? If you would, give your discipline, grade, and location.

AndrewJM: Perhaps Marie could start?

MarieCW: My name is Marie, and I teach English at Westside Junior High in Walker, LA.   I am a slow typer.

AndrewJM: Hi Marie! Scott....

ScottJ: I teach 8th grade self contained in Atwater, CA

AndrewJM: What does 'self contained' mean, exactly?

ScottJ: All subjects and I have the same kids all day, like elementary.

AndrewJM: Wow...that is powerful.

AndrewJM: George...?

ScottJ: All of my students also have their own laptop computers 24/7.

GeorgeGGst48: I am a Health Science/Math teacher for a middle school in Granada Hills

AndrewJM: It is really nice to meet you all.

AndrewJM: Scott brings up a good point and one that will inform our discussion: how 'tech' are your schools?

AndrewJM: Internet access? Wireless? Laptops?

ScottJ: Yes. Yes. Yes.

ScottJ: Laptops only in our 4 junior high classes.

MarieCW: We have one computer lab that teachers can share, and teachers have one computer in their classroom, it is horrible. We do have the internet.

AndrewJM: The one computer is horrible? You mean slow?

MarieCW: very slow and the printer has to be fed one sheet of paper at a time.

AndrewJM: Yikes!

ScottJ: That's too bad, Marie.

AndrewJM: I get envious reading about the technology in some schools...Drexel is wireless everywhere, but computer labs are hard to come by and the equipment is in rough shape.

AndrewJM: I'd like to organize our session in two parts:

AndrewJM: 1. An overview of waypoint using static webpages.

ScottJ: I spend a lot of time in my summer writing grants.

AndrewJM: 2. A 'live' demo

AndrewJM: First let me try to sum up what waypoint is and is not.

AndrewJM: Waypoint began as a productivity tool.

AndrewJM: I teach 100 college freshmen per term and felt the standard process of responding to their writing – margin notes and "end comments" was inefficient and ineffective.

AndrewJM: I felt I was writing the same comments over and over again…both from student to student and to the same student on subsequent assignments.

AndrewJM: I worried about consistency issues – whether the paper I graded at 3pm on a Saturday received the same focus as one I graded at 9am that morning.

AndrewJM: I didn't like that I had little idea of the feedback had received on earlier work – I couldn't hold my students accountable for becoming active learners.

AndrewJM: Waypoint is designed to deal with these issues – not through artificial intelligence, but through automating some of the work a teacher does...

AndrewJM: ...whether the course is AP English, 6th grade social studies, or legal writing in law schools.

MarieCW: I so agree, I try to give them so much feedback but I want to be consistent and fair and offer solutions but with 125 kids it is hard.

ScottJ: I hear ya.

AndrewJM: This is very true...and most college professors (the ones who write the theory books) just don't 'get' this simple fact.

AndrewJM: They have 25 upperclassmen and some grad students (and, granted, a lot of meetings to attend).

AndrewJM: The goals, then, are improved feedback that takes less time to create, easy access to the history of comments for a student, and the ability to do longitudinal assessment of student writing.

ScottJ: I love that!

MarieCW: wow!

AndrewJM: Clicking on the URL I will give you in a minute will open a window and display an overview of waypoint. After the page loads, placing your mouse over the numbers at the bottom of the page will change the screenshot.

AndrewJM: The page is small, so you should be able to resize it and still see our chat session. After I display the URL I will give you a minute or two to read the first 4 steps in the overview.

AndrewJM: The URL is:

MarieCW: Even if their writing is horrible all year you can evaluate their progress.

AndrewJM: http://docs.subjectivemetrics.com/home/k-12/demo/k12_demo_home.htm

AndrewJM: If you have questions, perhaps you could refer to the number of the screenshot you are looking at.

BJB2: want to give everyone a couple minutes to look, Andrew?

AndrewJM: Sure...and then we'll look in detail at "Evaluate"...

AndrewJM: Remember we'll try and do this 'live' as well, so we'll go back over some of these issues.

AndrewJM: Was everyone able to see the different screenshots and text?

ScottJ: Yes.

MarieCW: I like the way you created a bar graph at the end.

AndrewJM: The data really starts to build up...and can tell some counterintuitive stories...

AndrewJM: Let's look at evaluate in a little more detail.

AndrewJM: In the window, click on 'evaluate' in the menu at the top. You should get a window with 10 buttons.

AndrewJM: And again you can walk through the numbers...and see how comments are modified and the history can be invoked to see previous comments.

AndrewJM: I'll give everyone a minute or two...

SusanR joined the room.

SusanR waves

AndrewJM: Hi Susan.

SusanR: Hi Andrew

BJB2: we're at http://docs.subjectivemetrics.com/home/k-12/demo/k12_demo_home.htm Sue

AndrewJM: And then choose 'evaluate' from the main menu. The numbers at the bottom will show you different stages in the process when you move your mouse over them.

SusanR: Thanks

MarieCW: is functions much like a rubric, which I use, but I noticed you added reference points and rules that pertain to errors.

AndrewJM: Yes, waypoint is basically an interactive rubric.

MarieCW: do the students actually go back and use these points

AndrewJM: And because you aren't limited to an 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper, there can be a lot more content.

AndrewJM: Great question...

AndrewJM: I teach engineering majors...many are surprised to be in an English class.

MarieCW: my kids do not even look at why they received a certain score on the rubric

AndrewJM: So they aren't the most motivated English students...perhaps similar to yours.

AndrewJM: Once they know I can easily check previous comments they pay more attention. Plus, they are impressed at the typed format...

AndrewJM: There is a pedagogical question there, too. Waypoint actually does NOT show the students 'the numbers.'

AndrewJM: The feedback is all subjective - i.e. text.

AndrewJM: Teachers can include numbers or performance descriptors if they want...

MarieCW: students are so accustomed to numbers, do you find that taking them away frightens them

ScottJ: This could be really helpful in a standards-based report card.

AndrewJM: Heh heh.

AndrewJM: My students are definitely reading for the grade...and little else.

AndrewJM: We can come back to standards...we will log in as a Pennsylvania teacher...with metrics and performance descriptors that match PA standards.

ScottJ: I'm intrigued.

AndrewJM: One additional point to emphasize (changing the subject a little) is that waypoint is providing the structure to create these rubrics...not providing content.

ScottJ: Understood.

AndrewJM: However, there is an ever growing library of 'Assignments' and teams of teachers can share them instantly.

ScottJ: Exactly. Why reinvent the wheel?

AndrewJM: So if Scott creates a really cool rubric for an assignment other teachers in his district might like to use, he can share the rubric.

SusanR: Wonderful

AndrewJM: So TRUE!

MarieCW: that is so helpful

AndrewJM: You see that in #10 on the webpage...

ScottJ: Very slick!

MarieCW: we, as teachers, do like to BORROW

AndrewJM: High school English teachers ooh and ahh when they see a detailed grammar checklist. They say, "it must have taken so long to create that."

AndrewJM: And I say, yes it took a while...a year and a half ago!

JasonDe joined the room.

AndrewJM: And I have just tweaked it every now and again since.

AndrewJM: Hi Jason...

BJB2: http://docs.subjectivemetrics.com/home/k-12/demo/k12_demo_home.htm

AndrewJM: We're just about to move to a live demo and log in to the waypoint website.

JasonDe: hello

JasonDe: great

AndrewJM: Waypoint is basically a way to create interactive rubrics.

SusanR: not only borrow but modify as well

AndrewJM: The modification is key...you can 'copy' an Assignment and then modify all you want.

AndrewJM: A couple of words about browsers...

AndrewJM: waypoint works best with Internet Explorer, FireFox, and Netscape on the PC, and FireFox and Netscape on the Mac. Internet Explorer on the Mac is not an up-to-date product.

AndrewJM: Safari, the Apple browser is not supported but will allow you to see enough of waypoint to get the idea. We highly recommend FireFox.

AndrewJM: For demo purposes you'll probably be okay with just about any browser...

SusanR: Just starting using Firefox

ScottJ: IE6 here.

AndrewJM: Great...we'll be just fine.

AndrewJM: The demo site URL is:

AndrewJM: www.gowaypoint.com/wpdemo

JasonDe: firefox here

AndrewJM: You'll notice that the login info appears above the login area...submetguest and guest2003

AndrewJM: You can return to the URL any time you like to experiment with waypoint.

AndrewJM: So lets get everyone logged in and we can explore.

AndrewJM: You should see "Welcome to waypoint" and a menu of 'radio' buttons along the top of the screen.

BJB2 . o O (and that there is a part 2 discussion on February 23)

AndrewJM: If you were able to login, lets have a look at the assignment library...

AndrewJM: Select "Assignments" from the main menu...

ScottJ: OK

AndrewJM: You should see a list of titles with various information...

MarieCW: following

AndrewJM: Scroll down to see the extent...this is one user's "MyList"

AndrewJM: There is also a "Public" library that contains assignments created by others.

AndrewJM: The library is searchable.

AndrewJM: We have assignments from middle school through 1st year law school...

AndrewJM: In case Marie wants to throw some legal argumentation at her students:)

MarieCW: ha ha

AndrewJM: To copy an assignment you click the "+" button to the left of the assignment name.

AndrewJM: An assignment in waypoint lingo is the description you give to students PLUS the rubric.

AndrewJM: Feel free to stay on this page or bounce around.

AndrewJM: Let's head over to evaluate...by selecting "Evaluate" in the main menu.

AndrewJM: This is the screen teachers use the most.

AndrewJM: Imagine you have your students' paper next to your computer...

AndrewJM: We'll first choose an assignment.... "05/14/04 (11) Short Story Assignment"

AndrewJM: And then choose a student name that does NOT have a "(1)" in front of it...

AndrewJM: Your screen will update after a second or two...

AndrewJM: The numbers in parentheses tell you how many evaluations have been completed.

AndrewJM: Some of the names are a little funny...they are randomly generated in some cases. What you are seeing is mock data and mock students.

AndrewJM: Let me know if I have lost you...

MarieCW: what if we chose a student without a number, should I rechoose

AndrewJM: No...that is correct...that way you'll get a 'blank' evaluation.

AndrewJM: If you choose one with a number, a completed evaluation will pop up.

MarieCW: I love the elements in the grammar checklist

AndrewJM: Let me ask you to uncheck the "Element Editing" box just above the first criteria ("Thesis")

AndrewJM: Heh heh.

AndrewJM: And if you uncheck the box you can choose as many as you want.

AndrewJM: There are something like 50 teachers across several different institutions using my little ol' grammar checklist.

AndrewJM: Unchecking the "element editing" box allows you to make choices without an edit window popping up.

AndrewJM: If you want to edit text, click the 'Edit' button to the left of a chosen option.

MarieCW: wow

AndrewJM: Notice that when you make a choice, a "Performance x/n" is updated in the same row as the Element name.

AndrewJM: This is the quantification going on in the background.

MarieCW: you lost me

AndrewJM: The first choice is 'ideal' and the last choice 'least desirable'

AndrewJM: Ooo...sorry. At what point?

MarieCW: what is performance x/n

AndrewJM: If you look across the highlighted row (that contains the Element name) you'll see "Performance" - the numbers reflect the choice you made.

AndrewJM: Checklist Elements have a word rather than a number...like "Advanced" or "Proficient" in PA's case.

MarieCW: oh okay I got it now, sorry

AndrewJM: No problem...you were probably at the bottom of the list where there are only checklist Elements.

AndrewJM: As a counterpoint to this elaborate, college or high school assignment, I'll give you the following example:

MarieCW: I was choosing and reading the comments

AndrewJM: My students do quite a bit of in-class essays. I create ONE Element with a long checklist of possible responses...then blow through my papers choosing the appropriate comments. Students get WAY more feedback than before...

AndrewJM: Let's save the Evaluation we are working on...at the top or bottom you will find a row of buttons.

AndrewJM: "Save" appears at the right side.

AndrewJM: Waypoint is an internet application...you have to be connected to the internet. There are some drawbacks to this, but the benefits outweigh them.

AndrewJM: For instance, you can work at home, come to school and have all your comments available.

AndrewJM: And your evaluations are backed up on a server...

AndrewJM: If you were able to save the evaluation, click the View/Print/Email button just to the left of "Save" (which is now "Update").

SusanR: This is the wave of the future. I know our report card system is going to be placed on the internet

AndrewJM: You will see the evaluation that would be returned to the student.

MarieCW: it sounds like it takes a little time to set up but then it is smooth sailing, kinda like the grading software

AndrewJM: There is definitely some 'up front' time...but if you have 100+ students it is well worth it. Plus, if you get one year's worth of rubrics done you can reuse them the following year.

AndrewJM: Let me close by showing you 'Manage'

AndrewJM: Close the popup window with the feedback to the student and select "Manage" from the main menu.

AndrewJM: This is where teachers can see all of the evaluations for a particular assignment...

AndrewJM: Or all of the evaluations for a particular student.

AndrewJM: You can sort by grade OR score...score is the internal quantification.

AndrewJM: You can print all of the evaluations in one shot or email them out.

AndrewJM: If you click "View data" you will get histograms that represent the choices you made as you worked through your stack of papers.

AndrewJM: I think I should stop here...hopefully you've got enough to come back and play around if you are interested.

AndrewJM: We didn't cover 'history' and some other things...

MarieCW: thank you so much I enjoyed this chat

AndrewJM: Do you have any more questions? I want to let you know how waypoint is priced...the most important thing for most!

ScottJ: Very cool! I will continue to explore and ask more questions at a later date.

AndrewJM: Great...

BJB2: A reminder that Andrew will present more of Waypoint on Wednesday, February 23 at 9pm EST

AndrewJM: You can sign up for a free trial at our 'live' site: www.gowaypoint.com.

AndrewJM: Individual teachers can get all of waypoint's features for $50 per year.

SusanR continues to explore and sees the possibilities

AndrewJM: Schools can license waypoint for $3000 plus $2.50/student.

AndrewJM: On the 23rd I'll be talking about peer review...which is one of the coolest aspects to waypoint. You can give your students limited access to review each others' papers with the rubrics you design.

ScottJ: I like the sound of that.

AndrewJM: Especially if your students are so connected...

AndrewJM: Do they have official email addresses?

ScottJ: Exactly!

ScottJ: No, unfortunately.

AndrewJM: I know that is a major step for a school...all that spam to manage.

ScottJ: And extra accounts and liability and...

AndrewJM: My contact info is at the bottom of every waypoint page. Don't hesitate to contact us...

AndrewJM: Yes...but do most students have email...that you use?

ScottJ: Thanks for the lesson and demo. I can see this as a big part of my future.

AndrewJM: Are you CA, Scott? We're about to publish the CA standards to the live site...scoring from 0 to 4 etc.

ScottJ: Will you [be] in the vender area at the CUE conference in Palm Springs next month?

AndrewJM: I don't know of that conference...

AndrewJM: Palm Springs sounds nice...:)

SusanR: Any application for Ontario, Canada standards?

ScottJ: Yes, I inquired about the CA standards and heard that they were coming. cool!

AndrewJM: You know, we get a lot of visitors from ON and would love to build them in. I'll do it in week if you can point me at the right materials.

ScottJ: Thanks Andrew!

AndrewJM: Susan, if you sign up for a trial we can continue to talk.

BJB2: thanks, Andrew

AndrewJM: Goodnight all.

AndrewJM: Thanks BJ...you are tireless!