

**Title of Session:** Language Arts Forum

**Moderator:** Donna Hendry

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Room: After School Online Room

**BjB:** How about if we start with introductions to give Donna a sense of who is participating in this discussion

**BjB:** I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania and a helpdesk volunteer for Tapped In

**LisaPer:** My name is Lisa Perrin. I am a Teacher Facilitator of Technology in St. Charles Parish, Louisiana. I work with teachers of all subjects in grades 4-8.

**SusanR:** K to 8 Occasional teacher from Ontario

**ValerieTe:** I'm an American Literature teacher in Monroe, LA

**DonnaH:** Donna Hendry, Educational Consultant in Connecticut and your erstwhile session leader:)

**MarieBF:** My name is Marie Evensen and I am in San Diego. I am a fourth grade teacher.

**DonnaH:** Is that everyone?

**DonnaH:** (think so)

**DonnaH:** I'll first begin by asking is there anything specific anyone would like to discuss?

**DonnaH:** (goodness its gotten quiet:!) )

**BjB:** I think you have a lot of new participants to Tapped In, Donna...

**ValerieTe:** I cannot think of anything specific.

**SusanR:** . o O ( We are all thinking )

**BjB:** you'll have to model what opportunities are available here

**ValerieTe:** I'd love to know what an Occasional teacher is, Susan.

**MarieBF:** I am a new participant. This is my first tapped in forum.

**SusanR:** glorified name for a substitute teacher, Valerie

**LisaPer:** I am interested in differentiation in Language Arts using technology.

**ValerieTe:** This is my first session, too.

**ValerieTe:** Thanks, Susan. I thought that I was really out of the loop.

**DonnaH:** That makes a rather big difference then!

**DonnaH:** (having so many new users:) )

**LisaPer:** I am new also.

**DonnaH:** How exactly do you mean, Lisa?

**ValerieTe:** Rookies in training. Sounds like a game to me.

**SusanR:** in some schools you are called Guest Teachers

**DonnaH:** \*ugh\*

**LisaPer:** I am responsible for sharing new ideas with teachers and modeling lessons. I am looking for innovative ways to have different levels of activities by using technology.

**SusanR:** . o O ( good topic )

**DonnaH:** I see. So how you can teach the same basic lesson at different levels?

**LisaPer:** Exactly!

**DonnaH:** nods then.

**DonnaH:** that I can help with \*laugh\*

**ValerieTe:** sounds like a great topic that would help with inclusion as well

**DonnaH:** Hugely.

**DonnaH:** I've used technology to help older low functioning literates to do "grade level" work.

**SusanR:** can you give an example, Donna

**DonnaH:** Sure.

**DonnaH:** Example; vocabulary, note taking, etc.

**DonnaH:** When I did this, I was working with severe SED students...

**ValerieTe:** SED?

**DonnaH:** instead of giving them the list of vocab for the week (SED=Social Emotional Dysfunction) they would get daily notes.

**DonnaH:** but they balked (okay, they would often outright refuse) to actually take notes.

**DonnaH:** or to look up the words themselves.

**DonnaH:** So I created daily note pages.

**ValerieTe:** I teach them, but they've not been tested for SED

**LisaPer:** Were they successful on the assessments after?

**DonnaH:** with boxes they could type in, and they would only get 2 words a day (well vocab...there were other notes, such as synonyms and antonyms...but I'm getting ahead of myself.)

**DonnaH:** Assessment for these students was more the fact that you could get them to work. Their behaviors needed to be modified before you could really get to the learning aspect...but yes, their grades did improve.

**DonnaH:** it seemed to help them control their behaviors more. they could focus better, and were more likely to stay on task longer.

**SusanR** understands

**ValerieTe:** In addition to their brains, their hands were busy.

**LisaPer:** How many computers did you have in the class?

**DonnaH:** When I taught this, it was actually a day treatment facility, so in that respect, we had 5 computers in the classroom, for 8 students...

**SusanR:** ..a computer for each child I hope

**DonnaH:** but considering the students, we rarely had every student in the class at the same time.

**LisaPer:** WoW!

**SusanR:** Great!

**ValerieTe:** I bet that was challenging.

**DonnaH:** (truancy was a major issue, as well as consistent ISS, etc)

**ValerieTe:** ISS?

**DonnaH:** very. I'd rather be in a classroom of 30 students, than in that class of 5.

**DonnaH:** in school suspension.

**DonnaH:** since it was a day treatment facility, they were never given out of school suspensions...after all, that is what they really wanted.

**ValerieTe:** I'll keep my 28 non-achievers and non-listeners

**DonnaH:** exactly, Valerie.

**DonnaH:** Not that everyday was bad, but the bad days could be very violent.

**DonnaH:** (bj's listened to me on those sorts of days before.)

**BjB** nods...been there myself!

**LisaPer**: Now I'm getting scared. (I feel blessed now!)

**DonnaH**: You shouldn't be, Lisa.

**DougJo** joined the room.

**DonnaH**: these were the students who couldn't handle the regular school...not even in self contained classrooms.

**BjB**: Hi, Doug. Welcome

**DonnaH**: instead of a principal, we had a psychologist.

**DonnaH**: and if they couldn't handle our school, they ended up at a mental health hospital.

**DonnaH**: (ie, these aren't the students you would usually see in a regular ed classroom)

**ValerieTe**: Donna, no offense, but I believe that saints were made to teach in those situations. Trust me, I'd be in the mental hospital if that were my teaching assignment.

**DonnaH**: I did it for a year (my first year, no less) i learned some valuable lessons, and I'm very glad I did it. I'm also very glad I resigned after that first year:)

**SusanR**: What's the maximum number of students you worked with at any one time, Donna

**ValerieTe**: I also resigned after my first year of teaching (junior high).

**DonnaH**: in that situation, Susan?

**DonnaH**: (these were 6th-12th graders, in 3 multi age classrooms...)

**SusanR**: yes

**DonnaH**: Academically? 8. they couldn't have more than that in a classroom.

**LisaPer**: Did you have an assistant?

**DonnaH**: but there were non academic classes that the whole school would be in.

**ValerieTe**: Lisa, as an English teacher, I have an idea as well, but this takes a multi-tasking teacher and students who are able to multi-task (work in more than one window).

**DonnaH**: absolutely. you could not be in a class without 2 staff members, unless it was to bring a student down to ISS.

**LisaPer**: Please share, Valerie.

**ValerieTe**: Word processors have a tool that gives the grade level of the composition being typed along with word count.

**ValerieTe**: I have my students check this every time they type a paper for me to see if they could make any improvements that would put them closer to their actual grade level.

**LisaPer**: I like that idea. Did it work for the students?

**ValerieTe**: I take off points if I see them use the mouse rather than the ALT+TAB feature.

**DonnaH**: You know, Valerie, that could also be used to have them check and make it simpler, depending on the students who are writing.

**ValerieTe**: I have them look up some of their words in an online thesaurus and/or dictionary

**MarieBF**: Is this a Mac or PC?

**ValerieTe**: You're right about making it simpler.

**DonnaH**: I mean, after all, National Geographic is said to be written at a third grade reading level.

**ValerieTe**: It's PC

**DonnaH**: (word has it)

**DonnaH:** They can check their writing and see where they could make things simpler (oh, like avoiding passive tense...my personal bad)

**ValerieTe:** My goal is to make them write better, multi-task, and be more tech savvy.

**ValerieTe:** That's grammar check Donna, and we use that as well.

**ValerieTe:** My students this year seemed to be lower on the "tech savvy" chain than previous classes. Many of them could not send me an email with an attachment or open attachments from me (their assignment was in an attachment).

**DonnaH:** yep...but it does give the reading level.

**DonnaH:** Really? that is interesting.

**DonnaH:** (surprising, but interesting)

**DonnaH:** (and passive tense makes the reading level higher than it strictly needs to be.)

**ValerieTe:** Yes, it does. I also teach them to use the ALT+Print Screen feature to capture that reading level screen to print with their paper

**LisaPer:** I really like that idea.

**DonnaH:** Okay. I'm going to pop personal question here. (one my husband and I have been trying to decide)

**ValerieTe:** If grammar check says it's passive, they have to redo it for me

**MarieBF:** What grade is this, Valerie?

**ValerieTe:** There is a lot of technology involved with the lesson, Lisa.

**DonnaH:** Deals with Encyclopedias.

**DougJo:** I did not know that using passive tense helps to make for a higher reading level.

**DonnaH:** (however, will wait)

**DonnaH:** yep.

**ValerieTe:** I teach 11th English -- Am. Lit

**DonnaH:** Think about it from a ESL standpoint.

**DonnaH:** passive is harder to learn, harder to read.

**ValerieTe:** and a weaker writing form

**DonnaH:** (granted, that isn't WHY it's higher...but it illustrates it nicely)

**ValerieTe:** I'm ready for your Encyclopedia question, Donna

**DonnaH:** I slightly disagree with that...there are times when it can convey other points that another tense can't...but it IS over used and misused:)

**LisaPer:** We have new Russian students in our elementary schools. Is Russian part of the Word translation list?

**DonnaH:** okay. family wise, we have been discussing getting a print form encyclopedia set. and we've been trying to decide...is it really important, when we can get it on disc.

**ValerieTe:** it's okay to disagree....my students do that all the time

**DonnaH:** \*laughs\*

**DougJo:** How can I incorporate some of these ideas in a Political Science class?

**ValerieTe:** Donna, I have a set of World Book encyclopedias that you may have

**DonnaH:** but it does work over into the classroom. how important is it to have the print version (to LEARN the print version) when you can have it on disc?

**LisaPer:** I know we are required to incorporate the writing process in all of our classes. Maybe with your essays.

**DonnaH:** (how about learning how to NOT plagiarize? that seems to be becoming a huge problem with the ease of information online now)

**ValerieTe:** Donna, for younger students, I believe that learning the way a reference work is set up (any reference work) is the key to learning to do research

**LisaPer:** It is so easy for the kids to copy and paste.

**DonnaH:** (my own daughters are 5 and 7...so that input is actually valuable, Valerie:))

**ValerieTe:** I copied and pasted long before we had computers and my teachers never said a word about it.

**DonnaH:** but I bet you knew how to rephrase it, or give credit.

**ValerieTe:** Since I teach research papers (no,

**DonnaH:** most kids now figure anything online is a free-for-all.

**ValerieTe:** Donna, in junior high, I never knew it was wrong, we had an old set of grocery store encyclopedias that were on my reading level, and I copied

**LisaPer:** And kids don't know how to take notes anymore. They all want to print and highlight.

**ValerieTe:** ok, back to the research papers and learning to find information online

**DonnaH:** (maybe I was just always this anal then... \*grin\*)

**DonnaH:** highlighting though is an excellent way to START teaching notes.

**ValerieTe:** most of my students are African American, but that's the only term they understand. I use the Reader's Guide to Periodical literature to teach them how indexes relate terms and concepts and what to use when they go to the online DB (Gale Group)

**DonnaH:** (used to drive my teachers nuts, I went at research papers all bass ackwards...I'd get all my quotes first, arrange them, and then write the connections between.)

**MarieBF:** Highlighting seems to work extremely well for my students. I teach them to highlight key words and then put them in their own words. It took some time, but it seems to work.

**ValerieTe:** They are young and remember that African Americans have been known by several different names throughout our history

**DonnaH:** a lot of students try to write the paper, and find they can't find the exact quotes they need to support their arguments and get frustrated.

**DonnaH:** (in my area, the minority group (and I use that term loosely, since they're practically the majority now) is Hispanic...mainly Mexican and Puerto Rican...so we also deal a lot with ESL difficulties)

**DonnaH:** (where did everyone go? \*chuckle\*)

**DougJo:** A lot of teachers teach their students how to write research papers by arranging quotes....That's the way I learned, and I'm sure many kids today are being taught the same way.

**ValerieTe:** Anyway, the print version of reference books teaches my students to cross reference and that makes them perform better searches for almost every paper they write

**DonnaH:** when I grew up, we weren't really taught how. we were taught to outline, but not HOW to go about it.

**ValerieTe:** I don't go about it that way, Doug, maybe I should change my methods

**DonnaH:** Well, i found it REALLY helped those who have difficulty with organization.

**SusanR.** o O ( sorry I was called away from the computer to supply teach )

**DonnaH:** (students with add/adhd sorts)

**LisaPer:** Inspiration is great for organizing your thoughts & generating an outline.

**ValerieTe:** I like that software too, Lisa

**SusanR:** or kidspiration for younger students

**DonnaH:** I had actually created a sheet to help them...the class created the outline, but under each area, they were to supply a quote, and explain why it was pertinent.

**DonnaH:** then from that they could write their paper.

**DonnaH:** I had a few papers that could've rivaled honors students.

**DougJo:** I find that my papers are organized better by using a combination of outline and quotes

**DonnaH:** (exactly, Doug )

**DonnaH:** I don't have a problem with inspiration, but I think it's important for students to learn how to outline first, before they begin to use it.

**DonnaH:** I find quite often they can get confused because they're actually trying to learn two different things at the same time.

**DougJo:** I have never used inspiration. Is it a program created for helping students organize papers?

**LisaPer:** That is true. My background is in social studies, and I feel the same about the Timeliner software.

**ValerieTe:** Doug, it's a graphic organizer software

**SusanR:** Inspiration is great for brainstorming a topic..sort of like webbing

**LisaPer:** It has templates or you can create your own organizer.

**DougJo:** Thanks, I'll have to try it out sometime

**DonnaH:** I WILL say though. I don't like kidspiration.

**DougJo:** Being from a Social Studies background as well, what is timeliner?

**DonnaH:** I think in actuality that its more complicated than it needs to be

**DonnaH:** (I've only heard of it...but what I have heard was good...please do share:)

**ValerieTe:** I have really enjoyed meeting and talking to all of you. Thanks so much for hosting this session, Donna.

**ValerieTe:** bye y'all (my best Southern)

**LisaPer:** Timeliner is a software that allows students to create a timeline, but it puts it in order with the correct scaled measurement for them.

**SusanR:** You could do the same thing in Word

**DougJo:** This was my first experience with a Tapped In discussion, I enjoyed it and look forward to more in the future.

**MarieBF:** Can timeliner be used for a Mac as well?

**MarieBF:** It sounds really neat. I would like to check it out.

**DonnaH:** \*smiles\* I'm glad you enjoyed it:)

**LisaPer:** I am not sure. Thanks. It was a great experience for a rookie.

**SusanR:** Great talking to you again, Donna

**DonnaH:** (normally we're a BIT more organized than this seemed to be...) but it's always a learning experience:)

**DonnaH:** you too, Sue:)

**MarieBF:** Thank you everyone. It was really neat.

**SusanR:** Night all