

**Title of Session:** Language Arts - Writing Skills

**Moderator:** BJ Berquist

**Title of File:** 20041117langarts

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Room: After School Online Room

**BillGst1:** We are here to discuss lang arts, right?

**StevenSh:** That's my understanding

**LynnMD:** yes, language arts

**BillGst1:** I teach 2nd grade in Minnesota, what grades do you teach?

**LynnMD:** I am a preservice teacher in third grade

**StevenSh:** I teach Social Studies in Houston, however we are in the process of doing interdisciplinary teaching

**JamiseL:** Hello everyone I teach 8th grade in Louisiana

**AnneKW:** I am a preservice teacher

**KellySh:** I teach 10th grade in Texas

**LynnMD:** I am in Texas also, Houston

**AnneKW:** Houston too!

**KellySh:** Me too

**BJ:** Donna still isn't logged in...

**BJ:** we'll give her a few more minutes and then start without her, ok?

**BJ:** a reminder if you are new to Tapped In, go to ACTIONS in the top right of your chat window and click on DETACH

**BillGst1:** Cool, thanks BJ.

**LynnMD:** Thanks, did not know that

**BJ:** we usually start the discussions with introductions, but most of you are so good you already did that!

**AnneKW** smiles at BJB

**BJ:** it looks like we range from primary to highschool grades...

**BJ:** I'm assuming that Donna probably had a holiday topic...

**BJ:** but I'm happy to discuss your concerns about language arts

**BJ:** any suggestions?

**LynnMD:** maybe some good activities?

**AnneKW** left the room (signed off).

**BillGst1:** I'm interested in finding good online resources on the Internet

**StevenSh:** I teach 10-12 Social Studies and have my students do essays...however...I noticed that their writing skills are really bad...how can I improve this at such a late point in their education?

**LynnMD:** I'd be interested in online recourses also

**AdmiranGst10:** that is exactly what I'm concerned with

**JenniferDG:** I will be taking over a 4th grade language arts classroom in the spring and would like to know some good ideas of things I should be doing

**AdmiranGst10:** (writing skills)

**KellySh:** I'm concerned about the same thing Steven

**BJ:** cool...let's go with writing skills

**BJ:** and what I'm going to suggest is using the Tapped In K-12 student campus...

**BJ:** I'll tell you what can be done there and let's see what brilliant ideas you all have

**StevenSh:** I'm up for anything at this point...it just seems like we are promoting kids who really can't write

**JamiseL:** my kids can not write at all

**BJ:** the K-12 student campus is a safe and secure place for teachers to bring their students...

**AdmiranGst10:** and I'd really hate to blame the kids...somewhere somehow something didn't register

**LynnMD:** Being in elementary school, I see how kids move up grades and cannot write

**BJ . o O** ( listen for a couple minutes and let's see if we can head for a solution of the problem, ok? )

**StevenSh:** sorry

**AdmiranGst10** smiles

**BJ:** let me first tell you about the K-12 student campus

**JamiseL:** ok

**JenniferDG:** OK

**BJ:** it's a safe and secure place for teachers to bring their K-12 students

**BJ:** the teacher creates the group room and assigns usernames and passwords for their students...

**BJ:** when the students log in they land in the group room

**BJ:** each room has the live chat feature, a threaded discussion board, a whiteboard, and you can upload files and documents and store links

**BJ . o O** ( are your brains cranking? )

**BJ:** we have one teacher who is bringing in her class for playwriting

**JenniferDG:** Can the students in your class email each other

**BJ:** they can post their rough drafts and use the threaded discussion

**BJ:** thanks for the reminder, Jennifer...

**LynnMD:** what is a whiteboard

**BJ:** when the students log out, their transcript is emailed to the teacher

**JamiseL:** that sounds good so far

**BJ:** Lynn, the whiteboard is a text board where you could post assignments or the topics for a discussion

**JenniferDG:** That is a good feature so you have proof of their work

**LynnMD:** thanks

**BJ:** one first grade teacher is planning on turning off the chat feature and having her students use the asynch discussion board ...

**BJ:** this will give her children more time to compose their messages

**AdmiranGst10:** so basically in relation to writing skills...they are proofreading each others works when they post their comments to the drafts

**BJ** nods to Admiran...that is one thing that can be done

**BillGst1:** Are these activities with one classroom or are they with students from all over?

**BJ:** another option is that a couple classes could log in to their group rooms and then move to the studios for project based learning

**BJ . o O** ( the studios also have the real time chat, threaded discussion board, etc. )

**BJ:** to answer your question, Bill, yes, the students can be from anywhere in the world

**BJ:** one teacher had an Iditarod group

**StevenSh:** I like the idea of multiple classes from anywhere, however can you make the room private?

**BJ:** your turn...give me some ideas on how you could use the student campus

**BJ:** Steven, only the group members can enter the group room...

**AdmiranGst10:** the kids could have a book discussion maybe?

**BJ:** and the teacher can restrict the students to just the group room or allow the students to enter the other rooms in the student campus

**StevenSh:** thanks!

**BJ** nods to Admiran...other ideas, questions?

**BJ** . o O ( btw, the students are not able to leave the student campus and enter any other TI buildings )

**StevenSh:** I know for one of my master's courses, we have to do postings...can the Student Campus be used where I post a topic and then have them write on it?

**BJ:** there is a K-12 Students in TI group for teachers interested in bringing in their classes....it's a wonderful resource and support group

**BJ:** yes, that's a good idea, Steven

**BJ:** you can also create folders for the different threads of the discussion board

**AdmiranGst10:** so back to the writing skills...how do we as, say, high school teachers reteach writing skills which probably haven't been officially taught for a few years?

**StevenSh:** As teachers though, what can we do to help these kids learn to write properly before it is too late?

**StevenSh:** sorry admiran...didn't see you asked the same question

**AdmiranGst10:** haha same wavelength its ok

**LynnMD** left the room (signed off).

**BillGst1:** Sounds great for upper levels, but chatting and discussion boards are a little to advanced for my 2nd graders who are still learning how to use the back button.

**BJ:** Steven, the best way to improve writing is to write. Another discussion that you all might really appreciate is WriteTalk which is offered by Sandra Shattuck from the National Writing Project

**StevenSh:** I'll check that out...sounds like something I need!

**BJ:** Bill, don't underestimate your kids...let them use invented spelling

**JamiseL:** I do not think that you should have to go back and teach skills that were not mastered in earlier grades it is now fair to you now as their teacher

**AdmiranGst10** left the room (signed off).

**BillGst1:** It would at least be an interesting experience, and maybe I will be surprised.

**BJ:** another great resource...

**BJ:** does anyone get the magazine Educational Leadership?

**StevenSh:** no...but want to

**BJ:** [www.ascd.org](http://www.ascd.org)

**JamiseL:** not me

**BJ:** check out the October archives at that url

**BJ** . o O ( click on the url to open a new page )

**JamiseL:** will have to check that url

**StevenSh:** BJ, can we suggest a product in this chat room that is education based?

**BJ:** try this <http://www.ascd.org/cms/index.cfm?TheViewID=630>

**BJ:** Sure, Steven, as long as you don't give us a sales pitch  
**StevenSh:** I just learned of Kidspiration, which is available for a 30-day trial for you to download...has great 'graphics' for various subjects...even primary levels  
**LynnMD:** Kidspiration is great - I have used it  
**BJ** smiles...I have to join with you in praising Kidspiration and Inspiration, Steven  
**BillGst1:** Kidspiration is great. Nice web making tool.  
**BJ:** Inspiration is good for older kids...  
**JenniferDG:** We have used Kidspiration and it is great for making webs  
**BJ:** turns an outline into a powerpoint presentation  
**StevenSh:** I especially like the 'new word' tool  
**JamiseL:** inspiration is great for older kids  
**BillGst1:** Then the webs can be transformed into "paragraphs".  
**BJ** agrees with Jamise  
**StevenSh:** Exactly!  
**BJ:** right, Bill.  
**StevenSh:** Okay, I have another question...  
**StevenSh:** how do you get kids to read?  
**BJ** listens  
**KellySh:** Give them books that appeal to their interests  
**JenniferDG:** Find out what they like and bring in anything you can find about that topic  
**LynnMD:** Let them choose  
**BJ:** compare a book and a movie made from the book  
**KellySh:** I agree, choice is huge  
**AnneKW:** i have used kidspiration for Pre-K.  
**BillGst1:** Read to them and show how great it can be.  
**BJ** . o O ( write a screenplay for a movie )  
**JamiseL:** I was just about to say use a movie  
**LynnMD:** We have done that, the kids love it  
**StevenSh:** thanks for the ideas! I'm going to try some of them  
**BJ:** have them draw a picture and then write a story to go with it  
**BJ** . o O ( and then make their own picture books )  
**KellySh:** young adult books are ideal for middle/high school students  
**JenniferDG:** You can also read just a part of a book that will catch their attention and they will want to finish it  
**BJ:** good idea, Jennifer. Booktalks can be fun  
**JamiseL:** kids normally like it when they have to compare a story to a movie  
**BillGst1:** Great idea Jennifer.  
**JenniferDG:** thanks  
**BJ:** You're all coming up with great suggestions...  
**BJ:** this is the power of Tapped In...collaboration with peers  
**StevenSh:** and I appreciate them  
**BillGst1:** We compare stories to real life experiences, to other books, to movies, etc.  
**AnneKW:** many times I have had the kids pretend they are one of the characters and write a letter  
**StevenSh** . o O ( you can tell I am a first year teacher )  
**JamiseL:** What is a great writing prompt for

**LynnMD:** Acting out stories is also a lot of fun  
**AnneKW:** they talk about things that happened in the story...  
**BJ:** join some of the groups and participate in the discussions...you'll get lots of ideas  
**StevenSh:** has anyone tried audio books  
**BJ:** Jamise, a google search for writing prompts will give you oodles  
**KellySh:** Yes, they are great for ESL students  
**BillGst1:** I use audio books for lower level readers.  
**JamiseL:** thanks BJ  
**BillGst1:** The kids like it.  
**BJ:** audio books are also good for developing listening skills...which our students also need desperately  
**StevenSh:** I agree BJ  
**JenniferDG:** I love audio books. It is nice to have someone else read and you can just listen and imagine  
**JamiseL:** they use audio books in my school with some of the students  
**LynnMD:** That is great for auditory learners - we give students that option in class  
**BillGst1:** Then they can focus on comprehension.  
**JamiseL:** it helps them improve on listening as well as comprehension  
**WandaJP:** they're really attentive with audio books  
**JamiseL:** I agree Wanda  
**BillGst1:** I had a teacher when I was going to school who used reading as a punishment. That didn't work too well  
**KellySh:** That is awful!  
**StevenSh:** I agree...reading should never be used as a punishment  
**JamiseL:** not at all  
**LynnMD:** That is probably one of the worst things you could do  
**StevenSh:** we should encourage kids to read...not punishing them  
**SuzyqGst5:** I love using audiobook, but a lot of my students zone out. I teach at an alternative school. any suggestions  
**JenniferDG:** Yea You have to show students that you love to read if you expect them to love to read  
**BillGst1:** Writing too.  
**LynnMD:** Make the ones who zone out read it on their own - not listen to it with the rest of the class  
**JenniferDG:** Stop the tape and recap with students to make sure they are tuning in!  
**StevenSh:** that's what one of our teachers does...has them listen to a portion, stops the tape, then has them write a reflective summary on what they just heard  
**StevenSh:** works very well for her  
**SuzyqGst5:** good idea.  
**SuzyqGst5:** thanks  
**BillGst1:** I wish I had more books on tape.  
**SuzyqGst5:** me too  
**StevenSh:** . o O ( and ones that didn't cost so much )  
**LynnMD:** Are there very many available?  
**AnneKW:** there are tons of books on tape at the library  
**BillGst1:** I buy all my own for class.

**BJ:** ohhh....there you go: MAKE YOUR OWN BOOKS ON TAPE!

**BillGst1:** Even the students could do that.

**LynnMD:** That is a really good idea - I have heard of people doing that

**BJ:** have the high school kids make them for the elementary grades

**BillGst1:** Wow great idea

**StevenSh:** that would be a great way for our high school kids to get the 100 hours of community service in order to graduate!

**LynnMD:** You could even have kids in elementary school do them for each other - the more advanced students could help the other students - it would make them feel important

**JenniferDG:** Try the public library near you if your school does not have a lot. Also you can read them and tape yourself.

**LynnMD:** We have buddy reading days where the older students read to the younger students - they love it

**StevenSh:** thanks for the great ideas everyone...hope to chat with all of you again soon.

**LynnMD:** Bye!

**BJ:** this was a great group!

**JamiseL:** everyone did have wonderful ideas and it has been great

**BJ:** thanks everyone for being such active participants

**BJ:** any questions?

**StevenSh:** nope...thanks BJ!

**BJ:** Bill, I suggest you get a membership to Tapped In

**LynnMD:** Thank you/. I learned a lot and got a lot of really great and creative ideas

**BillGst1:** Thanks everyone

**BJ:** o O ( guests can 't do too much )

**KellySh:** Thank you!

**JamiseL:** I enjoyed and I can not wait to try out some of the things, have a great night everyone

**LynnMD:** Bye everyone