

SAWP Log for June 5, 2007



I. Journaling

II. Reading Essays of Introduction: After writing and sharing journals, we read our *Name Essays* aloud (interrupted briefly by a reading of yesterday's log). We debriefed the writing assignment and considered it from the perspective of a teacher, a writer, and a student.

Comments included the following:

- I searched for stories to shape her personality.
- Other people used better words, but I have to concentrate on my strengths and finding my own voice.
- I write in a way people find hard to believe because they think I look like a bouncer in a bar or a big dumb coach.
- I have a voice that's struggling to come out, just like the kids. They have that struggle, to find their voice and get it out.
- As I hear everyone's anxieties about writing, I am reminded of how kids feel.
- Make your writing like a mini-skirt: long enough to cover the topic and short enough to be interesting
- People took the assignment in different directions – expanded on it.
- I tried to choose the details that tell a bigger story about the person.
- The length of the writing is irrelevant.
- We had to understand each other's culture before we could write.
- I was thinking about how I would adjust the assignment, use small groups and carefully pair the students.
- Should we be in the same response group with the person we interviewed? Maybe a different response group would be better.
- There is a lot of good stuff to do with a name. (see article in *Voices from the Middle*)

III. Drawing Our Writing Process: In reflecting upon our own writing process, we tried to capture it in visual representations. We then explained the visuals.

- When I start writing, I don't know where I'm going; I just let the writing take me.
- I begin in chaos, then try to shape the chaos.
- I didn't plan the ending; it just came.
- I look for a story. And when I start writing, I write the middle first.
- My picture has lots of empty boxes because ideas emerge slowly.
- When I write, I'm possessed! Ah ha! I go crazy! Words cannot be harnessed. I write; therefore I am.
- When writing, I shut out the world.
- My writing process is like a volcano. Things erupt! "Wordgasmic"

- When I think about teaching the writing process, I have TAKS prep in the back of my mind.
- The writing process, for me is revising, reading, revising again, editing, revising and reading again.
- When I am finished, I am never satisfied. I am always revising. It's never quite right. It's a work in progress to be revised again.
- I begin with notes. And more notes.
- It's a cauldron of ideas to be shaped.
- My writing is like a tree to be shaped. I look at it and ask myself, "Where do I prune it." It takes root, but is still small and fragile.
- When I am writing, I move back and forth, from prewriting to drafting, then back to prewriting again. When I revise, I revise again and again. Even when I'm editing, I am revising.

IV. Creating a Model of the Writing Process to Share with Students: We created models of the writing process and discussed how we would use them to explain to students the thinking/creating processes they are engaged in when writing.

V. Analyzing the TEKS: We read ELA TEKS for elementary, middle, and high school and discussed the correlation between the TEKS/Student Expectations and the writing process.

Some of the questions that emerged:

- Do the TEKS reflect what we know about good writing instruction?
- Are teachers offering rich lessons with embedded TEKS, or are they narrowing the curriculum by teaching to the test?
- Is grammar being taught in isolation?
- Do administrators who evaluate ELA teachers even know what good writing instruction looks like?

VI. Examining Research of James Britton and Writing Workshop Model: Roxanne offered a brief overview of Britton's research on writing (information on Britton's research is in our binder) and on writing workshop:

- Core of all writing is expressive
- Goes in two directions: transactional (the "language of the world," buying and selling) and poetic (detached, evaluation, witness)
- Goal of writing instruction: to teach writing as a tool for learning and thinking; to offer real subjects, experiences, and audiences, and writing assignments/tasks that draw in the personal voice.
- Writing workshop: mini-lesson; status of class (what are students working on? where are they in the writing process?); writing (silent, sustained writing) and conferencing; sharing.

VII. Exploring SAWP and NWP sites: We ended the day in the computer lab, where Lennie showed us the resources available on both sites.