Writing With Kids!

“Inside each of us is a natural-born storyteller, waiting to be released.”

- Robin Moore
Jo Schaffer: This is me.
Do kids care about writing?
Teen Author Boot Camp (TABC)
Why creative writing?

- A spoon full of sugar… Life and school are tough and stressful.
- Critical thinking
- Sense of empowerment
- Prepares them to be effective communicators
- Mental health

“Expressive writing has also been linked to improved mood, well-being, and reduced stress levels for those who do it regularly.” - Adam Grant
How is writing different for kids?

- Kids don’t have their voice yet.
- They are afraid of “doing it wrong” or looking stupid.
- Need to please you or mirror you to get the “A”.
- Aversion to being bored.
- They are flooded with media in a way in a way we never were.

“Social media has colonized what was once a sacred space occupied by emptiness: the space reserved for thought and creativity.” - Mahershala Ali
Encourage creative expression
If they don’t think you care you’ve already lost them.

- Validate/Respect
- Teach
- Empower
- Facilitate
- Encourage
- Advise
- Provide opportunities
Opportunities = Empowerment

Kick off Teen Author Boot Camp early with the

Band of Misfits Launch Party!

- Celebrate the anthology’s teen authors
- Fun activities for the whole family
- Prizes for best sea-themed costumes
- Specially priced anthologies
- Book signing with four NYT bestselling authors

Friday, April 13th | 7pm
Provo Library

featuring a meet & greet book signing with:

Kiersten White  Roshani Chokshi  Maureen Johnson  Matthew Kirby

Event sponsored by
The King's English and
Provo Library
more info at
owlhollowpress.com
Any creative endeavor is personal

Remember... you are asking them to be vulnerable.

There is nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and bleed.

*Ernest Hemingway*
To get creative juice to flow...

- “Flow write” first! No edits until later. Give feedback that encourages and then teach them how to find their own weaknesses before you point them out.

- Resist imposing your voice on them. Appreciate the differences… this isn’t math.

- Limitations encourage creativity and freedom to improvise allows it to grow. Find that balance!

- Set the proper environment for creativity.

  “Great things are not accomplished by those who yield to trends and fads and popular opinion.” - Jack Kerouac
How important is environment?

• Kids have to know that what they think matters.
• They must be free to express themselves.
• Engage- Ask questions and allow them time to think.
• Provide for different learning styles auditory, kinetic, verbal etc.

“Be regular and orderly in your life, so that you may be violent and original in your work.”- Gustave Flaubert
Writing interactively in class

Writing is communication. Be collaborative. “Warm up” their creative minds with activities

- Writing prompts can be pictures, music, suggestions, scenes, dialog, questions, etc.
- Games like “And then…”
- Form teams. Come up with story ideas as groups and swap ideas with other groups. Read the results aloud and discuss the outcomes compared to the original idea.
Kids need their own voice

Understanding what their motivations are empowers kids to speak their mind and interpret things their own way. Appreciating differences in others helps them to be relationship builders, open thinkers and problem solvers.

“Once we believe in ourselves, we can risk curiosity, wonder, spontaneous delight or any experience that reveals the human spirit.” - E. E. Cummings
## Core Motives & Natural Talents

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Classroom idea:

The Lego Experiment

Have kids take the color code test and don’t tell them what the color results mean. Split them into groups according to their dominant personality color and give them the task to build something with legos.

See what happens...
Personality types by color

What are their traits?

Practical
Serious
Responsible
Prepared
Observant
Eye for detail
Analytical
Good decision maker
Follows the rules
Confident
Disciplined
Leave emotions out of it

Compassionate
helpful
Courteous
Imaginative
Enthusiastic
Detail-Oriented
Dreamer
Encourager
Confident
Relationship building
Wanting to be there for people

Calm
Cool
Collected
Conceptual
Troubleshooter
Introverted
Detail-Oriented
Task-Oriented
Thinkers
Intellectual
Inventors

Professional
Adventurer
Competitive
Free Spirited
Spontaneous
Clever
Problem Solvers
Witty
Eager
Outgoing
Creative

What does your student need?

• To look good (academically)
• To be right
• To be respected
• Approval

• To be good (morally)
• To be understood
• To be appreciated
• Acceptance

• To feel good (inside)
• To move at one’s own pace
• To be respected
• Acceptance

• To look good (socially)
• To be liked
• To be noticed
• Approval
Writing is two-way communication

• Opportunities to share.
• Allow competition.
• Read aloud to them from books that resonate with you.
• Give personal examples of things you have experienced/written.
• Feedback and rewrites- allow discussion and disagreements!
• Writing prompts (Walk the walk! Do it with them!)
Writing Prompt!

Take a few minutes to write a sentence, story fragment, or bit of dialog for one of these pictures.
Genre Swap!

Now do it again, but switch genres for the same picture!
(Horror, Romance, Fantasy, Adventure)
Black Belts don’t happen in a semester
Allow them to practice, practice, practice! Good form comes in time but in the meantime make it fun and rewarding.
Stanley and Hazel

No matter the subject, topic, time, or place, writing can be relevant to kids in the world they live in now!
For communication to cross the generation gap we have to know how and what kids think. We need to help them find their voice—not learn to echo ours. Creative writing is an excellent way to build communication bridges and foster individualization and lifelong learning.

“The purpose of a storyteller is not to tell you how to think, but to give you questions to think upon.”

-Brandon Sanderson