

# READING WRITING IN THE DISCIPLINES

## Reading and Writing in English Video Transcript

### **Dale Allender:**

Literacy is about making meaning and communicating that meaning, and it happens in a range of different ways.

### **Andrew Spinali:**

Ask yourself, "What is my piece really about?"

### **Barbara Moss:**

There's quite a bit of research that tells us teaching students the structure of the text facilitates comprehension. So the more we teach those discourse structures, the better students will learn to comprehend them.

### **Christina Dobbs:**

Teachers need to be constantly really attuned to what language structures and what text structure and what complex vocabulary and all these things are in the text, and pointing out to them when it comes up and making sure that students are really explicitly aware of how those things operate.

### **Jacy Ippolito:**

Things like vocabulary, writing to learn versus writing to demonstrate knowledge, and kind of understanding when and how to kind of dance back and forth between that.

### **Jennifer Roberts:**

I think the preposition you're looking for is "toward" killing.

### **Student:**

Yes, toward.

### **Roberts:**

Make sense? Okay. Like, I can like football and you can like soccer, and those aren't opposites, they're just different. Can you revise, maybe, that last couple of sentences to maybe not make them quite so opposite?

**Student:**

Okay.

**Roberts:**

Try that for me?

**Student:**

Yes.

**Moss:**

We need to teach our students to write for a variety of different audiences. And one of the things we need to learn to do is to branch out and incorporate this into their classrooms.

**Ben Berman:**

Keep going until all of a sudden you find some words that suddenly seem to speak to something about your relationship.

**Allender:**

If we employ writing activities that give students teaching that's situated in their lives...

**Jane Cunninham:**

What do you want your listeners to be thinking about at the end of your podcast? Whatever comes to mind right now...

**Allender:**

...then we move beyond the artificial line between the classroom and the real world.

**Student:**

Do you like living in the town of Reading?

**Student:**

Boston's just down the road, of course. There's a ton of things to do there, that's a major city.

**Moss:**

When students can have a real purpose for writing instead of a pretend purpose for writing, they become more involved, they're more engaged, they're more interested, and they're getting valuable practice in adjusting their writing style to meet different audiences.

**Student:**

Trying to get it to flow better. That's where I lack.

**Cunningham:**

Okay. So maybe you have a really brief story that you could tell.

**Student:**

Okay.

**Cunningham:**

What do you want them to walk away with here?

**Student:**

Understanding, like, who she is and, like, what her job is.

**Cunningham:**

Exactly. And it can be as simple as that.

**Manny Martinez:**

Now somebody read the Preamble of the United States. Edgar, go ahead.

**Edgar:**

"We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union..."

**Allender:**

It's very important for the English language arts teacher to be teaching nonfiction text – teaching it as an individual text and then also teaching it intertextually, seeing how that nonfiction text relates to fiction text.

**Martinez:**

But think about how "The New Colossus," this poem about the Statue of Liberty, connects to the Preamble of the United States, all right? How can you make a connection? I want you to think about it. Talk to somebody next to you. And I'll give you about two minutes to do that.

**Allender:**

So you get complexity in the act of reading and the teaching of the text. What intertextual factors can you bring? What contextual factors can you bring?

**Moss:**

If we're going to ask students to read complex text, we need to give them a good percentage of texts that have "interestingness," as we talk about in literacy. We need to find some texts that students can really connect to.

**Spinali:**

What is he really trying to say? Turn and talk to your groups. Let's get some ideas that way.

**Student:**

When you go back to the quote, it gave you a little preview, and that got me interested.

**Ippolito:**

When a teacher's able to talk about what they see when they look at a very complicated piece of text, when students engage in those complex texts that the teacher has been so passionately engaging themselves, that's really exciting. That's really fun. And I think those are the productive classes.

**Moss:**

The responsibility for literacy now rests more squarely than ever on the shoulders of all the content-area literacy teachers, not just the English teachers, and to get everybody engaged in collaborative efforts to improve literacy.

**Allender:**

It's about communicating and making meaning, and we do it better the more forms we're able to communicate in.

**Martinez:**

Talk to me. How do you connect those two?