

Workshop helps make writing fun

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MANTECA – Andrea Barriga didn't know about the Writing and Technology Workshop until her mother signed her up for the three-week class last summer.

Barriga, a sophomore at Manteca High School, said she didn't like the idea of going to school during her summer vacation at first, but she changed her mind once she started taking the workshop.

"It made me really enjoy writing," she said.

Offered for the first time last year, the Writing and Technology Workshop is gearing up for another summer session in which students will learn about the art of writing by working closely with teachers and fellow students and by using computers to produce multimedia assignments, teachers and students from the program said.

"It was really fun, and I learned a lot," said Brittany Reed, a sophomore at Manteca High.

Reed said she liked to write stories and poems before she took the class, but the workshop helped her enjoy it even more. "I learned different ways to express things I wanted to say."



Credit: Michael McCollum/The Record

Sarah Alexander, 11, looks over her book of writings compiled at the writing workshop she attended. The Writing and Technology Workshop in Manteca is gearing up for another summer session.

And making movies made the workshops even more fun, she said.

Sarah Alexander, a sixth-grader at Golden West Elementary School, brought to the workshop pictures from a school play, where she portrayed an attorney for the Wicked Witch of the West. She made a slide show of the photos and added narration she wrote about how to stage a play successfully.

Making videos, slide shows or audio recordings or adding clip art to assignments gets children more excited about their work, said Sarah's mother, Robin Alexander, a fifth-grade teacher at Stella Brockman Elementary School in Manteca. Alexander taught at the first workshop.

"It showed them how everything in life is writing," she said.

The workshop is part of the Great Valley Writing Project, a federally funded, nonprofit program housed at California State University, Stanislaus, said Melissa King, the workshop coordinator. Teachers at the workshop enroll in a yearlong course at Cal State Stanislaus. Half the 90-hour course is spent with the children in the workshop. Then, teachers meet about once a month to discuss how to use workshop methods in the classroom. The course begins in April.

Students began signing up for this summer workshop at a program open house Tuesday night, King said.

The fee for the workshop is \$100, but scholarships for 34 students are available through Manteca's Give Every Child a Chance, King said.

This summer's workshop in Manteca has room for 68 students entering sixth through 12th grade. The three-week workshop runs from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. weekdays starting June 6 in Manteca.

For more information about the program, call the Great Valley Writing Project at (209) 667-3490.

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