

# Project Newsletter

## WMWP Highlights

Charlie Moran

The Project has been, this past fall and winter, busier than ever. The WMWP New Teacher Seminar is a huge success, oversubscribed and characterized by high-level talk among the participants and the WMWP master-teachers. And the Executive Board is coming up with more ideas for programming than we can possibly execute. Some that will happen this summer: SummerWrite! 2000; Jim Freeman's "Teaching the Bible as Literature"; Karen Sumaryono and Wilma Ortiz' "Writing for All," and our second Advanced Institute for the Teaching of Literature. Others planned for next fall include the publication of teachers' writing, headed up by Mary Ann DeVita Palmieri.

WMWP teacher/consultants have given dozens of workshops this past fall and winter. Heading the list of presenters are Diana Callahan and Bruce Penniman, but not far behind are Jennifer Traverso, Joanna Cackett, Mary Ginley, Bonnie Moriarty, Gail Gilman, Nina Tepper, Tina Browne, and Christine Johnson. Bruce Penniman has organized a full-day workshop in March for the Worcester Public Schools, and Bonnie Moriarty and Gail Gilman will be giving a one-week mini-Institute at Endicott College this summer.

Looking ahead, we have a full spectrum of in-service programs for this spring and summer. These programs are described inside this *Newsletter*. Please read, select, and apply or register. It's March already!

## Spring-Summer Calendar

### Writing and Response Groups

Saturdays: March 11, April 8  
9:00-1:00 p.m.  
UMass, 256 Bartlett Hall  
*Free of charge. Led by Diana Callahan, Co-Director, WMWP.*

### Teachers as Writers' Retreat

Thursday-Saturday, May 4-6  
Jiminy Peak Resort  
Hancock, Massachusetts  
*Open to all K-12 teachers in western Massachusetts. Fee.*

### Student Publication Celebration

Tuesday, June 13, 4:00 p.m.  
UMass, Campus Center Auditorium  
*Free of charge, but space is limited to participating students and teachers.*

### Teachers as Writers 3: Exploring Character

July 24-28  
UMass, Tobin Hall  
*Led by Lucile Burt. Open to all K-12 teachers in western Massachusetts. Fee: \$99. 35 PDP's. Graduate credit optional.*

### Teaching the Bible as Literature

July 24-28  
UMass, Tobin Hall  
*Led by James Freeman, UMass English Department. Open to all K-12 teachers in western Massachusetts. Fee: \$99. 35 PDP's. Graduate credit optional.*

### WMWP Invitational Summer Institute

July 10-27  
UMass, Tobin Hall  
*By application and invitation. Limit 12. Open to full-time K-12 teachers in Massachusetts. \$600 stipend. 89 PDP's. Graduate credit optional.*

### WMWP Advanced Literature Institute

July 5-21  
UMass, Tobin Hall  
*Led by Bruce Penniman and Bonnie Tipaldi. By application; open to alumni/ae of WMWP Invitational Summer Institutes. Stipend. 60 PDP's. Graduate credit optional.*

### WMWP Writing For All

July 10-20  
UMass, Tobin Hall  
*Led by Karen Sumaryono and Wilma Ortiz. By application; open to all K-12 teachers in western Massachusetts. \$400 Stipend. PDP's. Graduate credit optional.*

*For information on any of the programs listed on our calendar, please call the WMWP office (413) 544-5466. You may also return the back portion of this Newsletter to: WMWP, English Department, Bartlett Hall, Box 30515, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003-0515.*

## ***New Teacher Seminars 2000***

WMWP has been awarded a grant by the Department of Education to conduct a series of five seminars for new teachers in the western Massachusetts area. The goal of the seminars is to support new teachers in their first or second years, connecting them to a network of their peers—both new and veteran teachers. Massachusetts Commissioner of Education, David Driscoll, has noted that “Approximately one-third of today’s teachers leave the profession after just a few years. We must develop innovative ways of making the teaching profession more attractive to prospective educators as well as those who have made the initial commitment to teach.”

Project Co-Directors Diana Callahan, Charlie Moran, Bruce Penniman, and project teacher-consultants, Jack Czajkowski and Paul Oh, are leading the seminars this spring at the Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School in Northampton. Seminars run on Thursdays from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. Seminar dates are February 10, March 9, April 13, May 11, and June 8. Fifty new western Massachusetts teachers are participating.

**Seminar 1: Classroom Management and Effective Interactions with Students.** Seminar leaders will survey participants prior to this seminar, and will craft the seminar to meet these interests. Likely topics will include time management, long-range planning, developing appropriate classroom authority, and positive student-teacher interactions.

**Seminar 2: Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum.** Participants will learn how to foster reading strategies that lead to active involvement and deep comprehension, how to design high- and low-stakes writing prompts that promote learning of content, and how to craft and process open-ended questions that spur inquiry and improve class discussion.

**Seminar 3: Use of the Curriculum Frameworks and Assessments.** Participants will learn about the evolution and ongoing revision of the state frameworks and assessments, explore the relationship between state standards and local curriculum, and discover how assessment data can inform classroom practice.

**Seminar 4: Teaching With Technology.** In this session experienced teachers will demonstrate ways of using technology to help students’ learning. Participants will share successes, failures, and frustrations.

**Seminar 5: Special Education Issues in the Classroom.** This session will begin with the concerns of participants and will include practical ideas on management and differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all learners.

In addition to the WMWP New Teachers Seminars, two other western Massachusetts sites are holding seminars for new teachers. For information, please contact Steven Bengis at New England Adolescent Research Institute (413) 532-1713 or sbengis@aol.com; or Kathy Skinner at the Massachusetts Teachers Association (617) 741-7950 or kskinner@massteacher.org.

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## ***Micro-grants for Student Publishing Projects***

Chapbooks.com is proud to announce the continuation of its New Publisher Program, which has to date helped over 500 teachers around the country turn their students into published authors.

This year, Chapbooks.com is working with the Western Massachusetts Writing Project to make these grants available to our members.

The New Publisher Program

awards micro-grants to K-12 and college level classroom teachers to publish anthologies of student writing in paperback book form through Chapbooks.com’s new online private publishing service. New Publisher micro-grants of \$160 cover the production and shipping costs for 30 copies of an anthology. There are absolutely no further obligations on the part of the recipients.

Grant recipients must have basic user-level familiarity with any standard word processing program and access to the Internet either at home or at school to use the grant.

The application deadline is April 1, 2000. Your book must be submitted before June 30, 2000. To apply for this grant, go to [www.chapbooks.com/org\\_grants.html](http://www.chapbooks.com/org_grants.html) Please include 154 as your confirmation code.

# WMWP 1999-2000 Mini-Grants

*Pamela Howes*

This year the WMWP awarded six mini-grants of \$2,500 each to six teachers. Each teacher and her team submitted a proposal and are now working to develop programs intended to improve the teaching of writing in their school and/or district.

Two mini-grants are focusing on the teaching of writing within their English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. Karen Sumaryono of Springfield High School and Bonnie Tipaldi of Springfield Community College have each received a mini-grant. They have each put together a team of ESL teachers and writing teachers to look at curricula and teaching practices in order to improve the writing skills of ESL students and students with limited reading and writing ability.

Bonnie Moriarty of Cathedral High School and her team of writing teach-

ers are working with teachers from other disciplines as well. Specifically, they are meeting with teachers from different departments to support and help establish effective and quality writing programs that also meet the individual needs of the different disciplines.

Michele Turner-Bernhard of Northampton High School and Elizabeth Fydenkevez of Hadley Elementary School have each established teams of teachers to help their schools understand the realities of the MCAS testing. In Northampton, the team of writing teachers is improving their writing program by sharing ideas, observing each other, and evaluating students' progress using the MCAS standards. In Hadley, the team of teachers are presenting a series of workshops to the school's faculty on the use of rubrics, including the rubric

used for the MCAS, and how to evaluate writing in different disciplines.

Finally, at Thornton W. Burgess Middle School, Lynn Schmitt and her team have established writing response groups and publication workshops. The twice monthly meetings of the response groups have included different themes and ideas generating attendance from 12 to 27 students. The once a month publication workshops help students prepare and send out manuscripts for publication.

The WMWP mini-grant program was established to support teachers who have ideas for improving the teaching of writing in their schools and/or districts. This year's recipients have proposed relevant and thoughtful programs and are now working to make sure that the programs succeed in their schools.

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## ***Gail Gilman and Bonnie Moriarty to Head One-Week Summer Seminar in Beverly***

This coming July, Bonnie Moriarty, from Cathedral High School, and Gail Gilman, from Brimfield Elementary School, will co-lead a one-week summer program modeled on the WMWP Invitational summer Institute. Their program will be sponsored by Endicott College, in Beverly, MA, and will be held on its campus. It will enroll 20-25 in-service teachers, K-12, and will run from July 17 through July 21.

Bonnie Moriarty has been at the center of WMWP programs since her participation in the 1995 WMWP Invitational Summer Institute. She has led two mini-grant curriculum

development programs at Cathedral High School. In addition, she has given in-service workshops in Springfield, Palmer, Wilbraham, and Berkshire Hills. She has attended all three of the Project's Advanced Teacher Institutes.

Like Bonnie, Gail Gilman has been an integral part of WMWP, beginning with her participation in the 1993 summer Institute. She has given in-service workshops in Springfield, Sturbridge, Millville, Worcester, and Acton. She was a participant in the Project's Teacher as Researcher seminar and in its seminar on the Teaching of Literature.

## ***Bruce Penniman Organizes WMWP Worcester Workshops***

On March 17, Bruce Penniman and seven WMWP teacher-consultants gave a full-day workshop to teachers in the Worcester Public Schools.

On the program were these familiar names: Suzanne Rubenstein, a regular at our Teachers as Writers Retreat; Karen Sumaryono, who will be leading Writing For All this summer; Joanna Cackett and Jennifer Traverso, who have been co-leading workshops all over western Massachusetts; Karen Westerling '93, a participant in the last Teaching of Literature institute, Damon Douglas '99, and Nina Tepper '93.

# A Bevy of WMWP Summer Programs and Workshops

In addition to the annual WMWP Summer Invitational Institute, the Project will offer several other programs during the month of July for teachers and students. If you'd like to receive information on, or an application form for, any of these programs, please see the registration form at the back of this newsletter.

## **Invitational Summer Institute**

July 10-27, Tobin Hall, UMass  
Open to all K-12 teachers in western Massachusetts, the Institute helps teachers reflect upon their own expertise as writing teachers and share this knowledge with their peers; helps teachers organize and prepare specific ways of presenting this material for others; makes the latest empirical and theoretical work in the field available; and helps teachers see themselves as writers. Participants prepare a workshop presentation, complete an inquiry project, and devote time to their own writing. Accepted participants receive 89 PDP units, a stipend of \$600, and are eligible to receive 3 graduate credits (for approximately \$170).

## **Advanced Literature Institute**

July 5-21, Tobin Hall, UMass  
Alumni of the Invitational Summer Institute are eligible and encouraged to apply. This Institute helps teachers reflect upon their own expertise as literature teachers and share this knowledge with their peers; help teachers prepare specific ways of presenting their practices for others; expand teachers' knowledge of literature and literary theory; help participants learn to ask open-ended questions to promote critical thinking; and help teachers develop new teaching strategies, especially those which connect litera-

ture to writing. Accepted participants receive 60 PDP units, stipends, and are eligible for 2 graduate credits (for approximately \$120).

## **"Writing For All"**

July 10-20, Tobin Hall, UMass  
Open to all K-12 teachers in western Massachusetts, the program introduces classroom teachers to contemporary theory and practice in the teaching of reading and writing to English as a New Language (ENL) students; introduces bilingual/ESL teachers to contemporary theory and practice in the teaching of writing; reviews the Massachusetts Language Arts Frameworks and the latest developments in the MCAS; and develops a network of area teachers who combine expertise in bilingual/ESL theory and practice with expertise in the theory and practice in the teaching of writing and reading. Accepted participants receive PDP units, a \$400 stipend, and are eligible to receive 2 graduate credits (for approximately \$120).

## **"Teaching the Bible as Literature"**

with Professor James Freeman  
July 24-28, Tobin Hall, UMass  
Open to all K-12 teachers. Participants will study several biblical tales, with the DOE's *English Language Arts Curriculum Framework* (1997) in mind, and craft lesson plans that stress the tales' skilled writing techniques. The workshop will provide background information, suggestions, pictures, and questions; and participants will create usable lesson plans. The approach is more suitable for middle- and high-school teachers, but the workshop is open to all K-12 teachers. Fee: \$99. Participants receive 35 PDP units and are eligible to

receive 1 graduate credit (for approximately \$70).

## **"Teachers as Writers 3: Exploring Character"**

Lucile Burt, Arlington High School  
July 24-28, Tobin Hall, UMass  
Open to all K-12 teachers. This workshop operates from the premise that the greatest benefit to teachers comes from working on their own writing and their own identity as writers. In this workshop, participants will have the opportunity to explore the characters who have been important in their lives, character "types," and/or fictional characters. The group will write together in the morning, break for private writing time mid-day, and reconvene in the afternoon for sharing and feedback. Preference is given to teams of teachers from the same school or system. Fee: \$99. Participants receive 35 PDP units and are eligible to receive 1 graduate credit (for approximately \$70).

## **SummerWrite!**

July 10-21, Bartlett Hall, UMass  
This workshop will provide students, grades 5-12, with the opportunity, guidance, and facilities to create a writing community away from school. Pam Howes, Tina Browne, and Mary-Ann DeVita Palmieri will lead thirty-five students in journal writing, guided writing, responding, revising, and editing. Students will have access to the university's computer labs as well as its library. Students will publish a group magazine, participate in a poetry slam, and celebrate their writing. Teachers are encouraged to pass information about this workshop along to their students (and children!). Monday-Friday, 9:00-12:00; cost, \$100.

## Research Tool for Teachers

Mary-Ann DeVita Palmieri

While I was at the NCTE convention in Denver this past November, I found out about a really neat service—askERIC.

I was introduced to ERIC, the Educational Resources Information Center, when I was in graduate school, but had not used its services very much since then. Recently, I have had to gather some research on the value of Sustained Silent Reading for a committee I am on at school. At the convention, I was told simply to ask ERIC, by logging on to the website

www.askeric.org or sending an email message to askeric@askeric.org. I chose the email and within 48 working hours, I received a two-page email with abstracts and citations of research. Unfortunately, most of the material was not on silent reading. I fired back another email explaining a little more clearly what I wanted and, in an even shorter time, I received a one-page email with just the information I needed. I was impressed.

So if you need to check out research on a topic in education, just askERIC.

## Thoreau Seminar

The Thoreau Institute in Lincoln, Massachusetts is offering a summer seminar for high school teachers of English, History, and Science. *Thoreau's World and Ours* is a multidisciplinary study of the natural, literary, and cultural histories of Concord, their union through writing, and their relevance to all communities. Held from July 5th through July 18th, the seminar is designed for teachers who would like to study the interconnections of Concord's varied histories and develop models for approaching inquiry based studies of their home communities.

The seminar will feature a daily mix of lectures, field trips, and writing exercises, developed in consultation with Bruce Penniman, co-director of the Western Massachusetts Writing Project. For more information on *Thoreau's World and Ours*, please contact Helen Bowdoin, Education Program Director, by e-mail (Helen.Bowdoin@walden.org) or at (781) 259-4740.

## Student Writers' Workshop a Success

On January 15, 140 students gathered in Bartlett Hall to spend time working on their own writing and responding to their peers' writing. Attendance this year was the greatest to date. WMWP teacher-consultants offered a range of workshops including: Article, Fantasy, Fiction, Poetry, Science Fiction, and Open-Ended.

At the close of the workshop, students responded enthusiastically about their experiences. One student wrote, "I love coming to the writing workshop! I have been here for the past three years and I went to an editing workshop, too. It's great."

## Teachers as Writers' Retreat 2000

**When:** Thursday, May 4, 2000 (registration at 10:00 a.m.) through May 6, 2000 (ending at 2:00 p.m.)

**Where:** Jiminy Peak Resort in Hancock, MA

**Accommodations:** Beautifully decorated rooms, including a living room with pull-out couch and separate bedroom; all rooms equipped with efficiency kitchen, TVs; breakfast and dinner provided daily; you are on your own for lunch. Swimming pool, hot tub, exercise room facilities available.

**Cost:** \$140.00, double occupancy; \$225.00, single occupancy

### Goals:

- to provide teachers with a beautiful, "hassle-free," and relaxed environment in the company of other teacher-writers;
- to provide time for teachers to work on their own writing;
- to provide small-group response to writing;
- to celebrate writing.

Give yourself an early holiday present and join us!

See the registration form on the back page of the *Newsletter* to apply.