

Project Newsletter

WMWP: Prospect and Retrospect

Looking back over the year that has been, a year that will be marked in our minds forever as the year that Pat Hunter died, we realize that despite our personal and professional loss, the Project has had yet another remarkable year. Kim Costino has done our '98-'99 totals, and again we have given over 13,000 teacher-contact-hours of in-service programming.

In July we met our new 'class' of Institute alumni, a talented group of teachers and a substantial addition to our network. Deborah Carlin's summer program on Narrative, Anne Herrington's Teacher as Researcher seminar, and Martín Espada's week-long poetry seminar have all been completed, to rave reviews from participants. We ended the summer with a workshop for 30 alums who wanted to put together their copy for the new WMWP In-Service catalog.

Looking ahead, we have a full schedule: mini-grants, our fall reunion, the writing and response groups, the publication program, our new in-service catalog just off the press, the writer's retreat, and a series of in-service workshops. To manage all of this we have created an Executive Board of nine: the three co-directors and Mary Kate Fenton, Anne Herrington, Mary Ann Palmieri, Pam Howes, Leslie Skantz-Hodgson, and Irene Hopp. We look forward to this new governance structure, for it will bring more of our hard-working alums into leadership positions.

WMWP 1999-2000 Calendar

"Best Practices in the Teaching of Writing"

Saturday, September 25

UMass, Bartlett Hall, 8:30-1:00

Alums of the 1999 Invitational Summer Institute and of the 1999 "Teacher as Researcher" institute present two sets of concurrent workshops describing and demonstrating good practices in the teaching of writing. Each workshop will be clearly related to the Massachusetts Frameworks and Learning standards. Free, but registration required. You won't want to miss it!

WMWP Alumni/ae Reunion

Saturday, October 23, 9:00-2:30

Bullard Farm Conference Center
New Salem, MA

For alums of the 1993-9 Invitational Summer Institutes, members of the WMWP Steering Committee, successful applicants to the 1999-2000 Mini-Grant program, and invited guests.

Writing and Response Groups

Saturday mornings, Fall 1999: Sept. 18, Oct. 16, and Nov. 6.

UMass, Bartlett Hall, 9:00-1:00

Open to all K-12 teachers in western Massachusetts, these gatherings provide a supportive and creative atmosphere in which all levels of writers can write and revise with the help and advice of others. Led by Diana F. Callahan, Co-Director of WMWP. Free of charge.

Student Writers' Workshop

Saturday, January 15

UMass, Bartlett Hall, 8:30-1:30

A workshop for western Massachusetts student writers in middle and high school (grades 5-12). Students have the opportunity to share their writing with others and receive feedback. Free of charge, but registration required; limited to 100.

Student Editing Day

Saturday, March 4

UMass, Bartlett Hall 8:30-1:00

A workshop for western Massachusetts students in middle and high school (grades 5-12). Working with teacher-editors, students select manuscripts to include in five student writing anthologies (see Student Writers' Workshop, above, and Student Publication Celebration, below). Free of charge, but registration required; limited to 100.

Teachers as Writers' Retreat

Thursday-Saturday, May 4-6,

Jiminy Peak Resort, Hancock

Massachusetts. Come celebrate

writing with other teacher-writers.

Work in small response groups in a relaxed environment.

Open to all K-12 teachers in

western Massachusetts. Led by

WMWP teacher-consultants. Fee.

For further information, call

(413)545-5466 or mail in the

form at back of this Newsletter.

WMWP Highlight: "Best Practices in the Teaching of Writing"

On Saturday, September 25, WMWP will sponsor a workshop featuring teacher-consultants from the 1999 Invitational Summer Institute and the 1999 Teacher as Researcher Institute. The program will consist of two sets of concurrent workshops. Topics focus on the teaching of writing and the uses of writing as a means of enhancing students' learning. A number of workshops have been designed in light of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, its associated Learning Standards, and the MCAS.

The workshop will begin at 8:30 in the Bartlett Lobby with coffee, tea, bagels, and conversation. The first session will begin at 8:45 and end at 10:45; the second session will begin at 11:00 and end at 1:00.

Presenters and topics in the first session include Michael Silverstone, from Westwood Elementary School in Amherst, on establishing a classroom environment for writing; Lynn Schmitt, from Thornton Burgess Middle School in Hampden, on integrating poetry in the classroom and how this relates to the standards and MCAS; Irene Hopp, from High School of Commerce in Springfield, on creating "life maps" for writing; and Leslie Skantz-Hodgson, from Smith Vocational & Agricultural High School in Northampton, on using journalistic techniques to inform and enhance other writing genres.

Presenters and topics in the second session include Karen Sumaryono, from West Springfield High School, on the use of collaborative collages to prepare students for MCAS writing; Andy Frantz, from

Swift River Elementary School in Belchertown, on "Making Poetry Accessible and Enjoyable"; Damon Douglas, from Swift River School in New Salem, on the practices that transform the research report into a meaningful activity for students and teachers; and Gail Gilman, from Brimfield Elementary School, and Bonnie Moriarty, from Cathedral High School in Springfield, on specific approaches and strategies for teaching revision.

This workshop is free of charge and open to all western Massachusetts K-12 teachers. Registration is required, however, and the first 100 to register will be accepted. To register for "Best Practices in the Teaching of Writing," please complete and mail to the Project the registration form on the back page of this *Newsletter*. Participants will earn 4 PDPs.

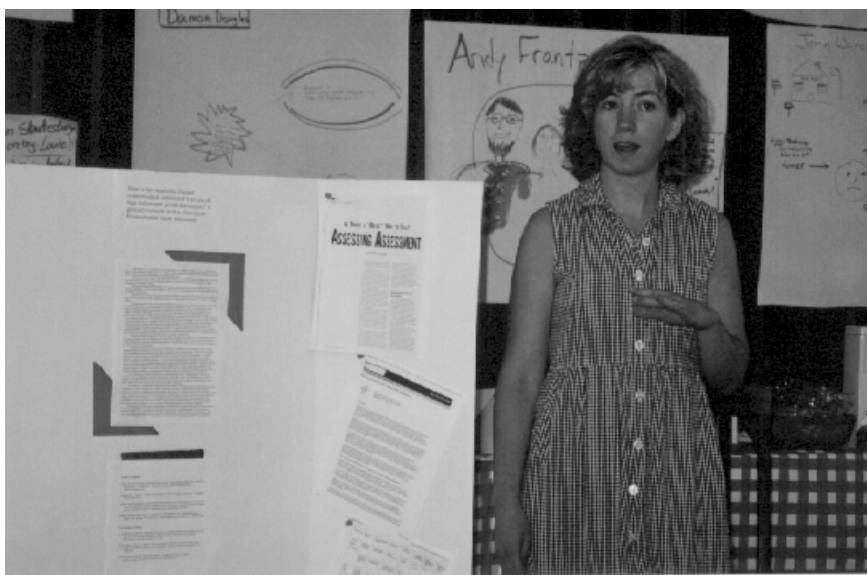
Writing and Response Groups, Fall 1999

by Diana Callahan

Have you been trying to find time in your busy schedule to write and just can't? Or perhaps you have several pieces in progress and need response? Saturday morning writing and response groups may be just the thing for you. Groups meet once a month at UMass in Bartlett 252 on three Saturday mornings: September 18, October 16, and November 6. Parking is free and close by in Lot 71.

Usually we start with coffee, bagels, and conversation; write for a period of time and finish with some sharing and responding. There is no need to make a commitment to attend all meetings and, although we take time to write together, pieces in progress are always welcome.

As in past years, WMWP will publish pieces from the group in its publication, *Teachers Write*. All area teachers are welcome to attend, so bring a friend, and bring your pen!



Leslie Skantz-Hodgson, of Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School, speaks at the WMWP Summer Institute on the politics of standardized testing. Leslie is a presenter at the "Best Practices" workshop, where she will give a session on using journalism and its strategies to facilitate other kinds of writing.

1999 WMWP Summer Institute Invigorates Teachers

by Leslie Skantz-Hodgson

The WMWP Invitational Summer Institute is like a spa for writers. For three weeks participants receive intellectual nourishment, whole blocks of time to exercise writing skills, and, through reader-response groups, suggestions for “massaging” their writing.

Once I made the commitment to be available during the course of the institute, I was glad I did. The rigorous course requires participants to present a workshop, conduct research and, most of all, write. Participants are essentially given the gift of time to do the kind of personal interest work they rarely have time to do as teachers. After years of providing feedback on my high school students’ writing, I was thrilled to be on the receiving end for a change. Like my students, I could not wait to get my papers back from the co-directors, who always had meaningful and helpful responses to my writing.

The co-directors’ main role is to ensure that everyone realize their potential as writers by providing both mentoring and technological support.

Math and science teachers became poets. Guidance counselors and ESL teachers became authors of profound pieces. English teachers, who have spent years reading the writing of adolescents and no longer believed they could be mature writers, realized they were wrong. Participants learn from

each other, as well, through workshops and the sharing of writing and research.

I now have a cache of terrific ideas to bring back to the classroom, and a body of research and writing I never would have produced without the institute. Like a good spa, the institute sent me off feeling invigorated.



From left to right. Front: Damon Douglas, Karen Sumaryono, Leslie Skantz-Hodgson, Elsie Aragonés. Middle: Diana Callahan, Irene Hopp, Krishnee Perumal, Mary Lareau Moore, Lynn Schmitt, Celia Pyfrom-Stephens. Back: Michael Silverstone, Charlie Moran, Andy Frantz, Jeff Kenney, John Warchol, Bruce Penniman.

“Writing for All” Scheduled for Summer 2000

In July 2000 the Project will offer a two-week program focusing on the teaching of writing/language arts to speakers of other languages. Karen Sumaryono ('99) and Wilma Ortiz (WFA '97) will lead the seminar, which is scheduled to take place over two four-day, Monday-Thursday weeks, July 10-20. There will be an orientation-day as well on May 27.

“Writing For All” grows out of a year-long WMWP program funded in 1997-8 by the Braitmayer Founda-

tion. Both Karen Sumaryono and Wilma Ortiz were participants in that program, which was led by Renata Pienkawa and Tina Browne, alums of the '96 Invitational Summer Institute.

For this program WMWP hopes to draw 15 K-12 teachers, some of whom will be ESL/TESOL teachers and some of whom will be mainstream teachers who work with students with limited English proficiency. The program will focus on the latest theory and best practice in the teach-

ing of writing, with particular emphasis on teaching the teaching of the Language Arts to students for whom English is a second language.

Participants in the program will receive a stipend of \$400 and 68 PDP units. Applicants must be full-time K-13 classroom teachers in western Massachusetts--from Worcester west to the New York state border. If you are interested in applying, please call the WMWP office--413-545-5466--and ask for an application form.

Noteworthy at WMWP

New WMWP Coordinator for Mini-Grants

Pam Howes is WMWP's new Coordinator for Mini-Grants, succeeding Caryl Finn who is now enjoying the sea and the weather on a tiny island in the Caribbean. Pam is an alum of the WMWP 1997 Invitational Summer Institute, where she prepared a workshop titled "Living History: A Different Kind of Research Paper." She and her school were recipients of a WMWP mini-grant in 1997-8. Together with colleagues Kristen Hamilton, Norma McClain, and Walter Morse, Pam led a "Writing and Publication" seminar in which each of the participating teachers completed a classroom publication project. Pam teaches seventh grade Language Arts at South Hadley Middle School, where she serves on the Curriculum Committee. Pam comes to teaching from a background in Residential Life. She has worked in this field at Georgetown Law School, Rennselaer Polytechnic Institute, the University of Vermont, and the University of Massachusetts.

Executive Board

With the advice and consent of its Steering Committee, the Co-Directors have established an Executive Board that will meet monthly and will oversee the in-service staff development of the Project. The new Board will be composed of the three co-directors, the coordinator of the Mini-Grant program, the coordinator of the Student Publication Program, the coordinator for the Springfield programs, a member of the University's English Department, and a member from the most recent Invitational Summer Institute. Persons now occupying

these positions include Pam Howes, Mary-Ann Devita Palmieri, Anne Herrington, and Leslie Skantz-Hodgson and Irene Hopp (both elected co-members from Institute '99). Mary Kate Fenton will serve as the coordinator for the Springfield programs.

The change from a co-directorate to an executive board comes about largely because of the death of Pat Hunter. Replacing Pat Hunter as co-director was not an option, because of the many hats Pat wore as Project co-director. The three present co-directors, Diana Callahan, Bruce Penniman, and Charlie Moran, look to this new board to provide the energy and leadership the Project will require as it continues and expands its work in western Massachusetts.

Pat Hunter Memorial Fund

The Pat Hunter Memorial Fund is now a full-fledged University endowment, thanks to Pat's family and thanks to many of you. As of this writing, 112 teachers, family, and friends have contributed over \$10,000 to the fund. The fund will support WMWP projects that focus particularly on professional development programs for teachers from urban centers in western Massachusetts.

The door is still open for contributions to the fund. Indeed, we hope that this fund in Pat's memory will continue to grow, both as a tribute to her and her accomplishments and as a support for WMWP programs that she was so instrumental in initiating and sustaining. To make a contribution, please send a check made out to the University of Massachusetts to Charles Moran, WMWP, Bartlett Hall, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003-0515.

Call for Manuscripts!

The Western Massachusetts Writing Project solicits manuscripts for a new publication tentatively titled *A Cross-Curriculum Journal of Teaching Writing: Practice and Research*. Publication of the first issue is scheduled for February or March, 2000.

Content may include writing teaching practices, research, and/or personal writing that can be either creative or reflective.

K-12 teachers in all disciplines are invited to submit materials and to share their knowledge, opinions, and practices with other teachers in the western Massachusetts area.

Deadline for submissions :

November 1, 1999.

Please forward inquiries and manuscripts to:

Irene Hopp
High School of Commerce
State Street
Springfield, MA 01129
i_hopp@hotmail.com
(413) 348-2308

or

Leslie Skantz-Hodgson
Smith Vocational & Agricultural
High School
80 Locust Street
Northampton, MA 01060;
or, at home:
58 Upland Road
Leeds, MA 01053

A South African Woman's Experience at the Western Massachusetts Writing Project's Summer Institute

by *Krishnee Perumal*



My name is Krishnee Perumal. I come from South Africa, Kwazulu Natal, and I teach at a township high school. My contact with the WMWP has been through Judith Baker, who teaches at Madison High in Boston. I met her during her visit to South Africa. She worked with my students, some of whom came from very poor backgrounds. Judith showed much empathy and engaged students in writing pieces that eventually were published into a school magazine. Her dedication, vitality, and talent in getting even the weaker students to write was a marvel to all. Judith arranged for me to be a participant in the WMWP summer institute.

The initial week seemed overwhelming, but once the goals were clearly outlined I felt settled. The directors set clear parameters for us to work. Once the stage was set they allowed us to work independently. Their support made all of us feel safe about writing our pieces and presenting. This gave me greater confidence

in my writing. WMWP has provided me with many invaluable writing skills. I have acquired a box of tools which I can utilize whenever the need arises.

Presentations were of high standard, creative, and interactive. Like a good craftsman, I have become more aware of my writing process. The participants passed on new dimensions to the teaching of writing. The camaraderie at the workshop was great; I learned a lot about each individual through the group interaction.

The kind of exercises we engaged in—to get to know one another—could be applied to school staff. I spent eleven years at one high school, yet never got to know some of the individuals as personally as I did the participants at the summer institute. The healthy group dynamics fostered good human relations and a sensitivity to the needs of others.

I learned about the American school system, a bit, through my discussion with the group. I was surprised at how the MCAS testing operates. This contrasts sharply with the South African school system. In South Africa, standardized testing is done only in the senior year to determine students' entry into tertiary institutions. In the twelfth grade, the writing component is no longer tested formally. Instead, students' pieces are presented in a portfolio for evaluation. Schools are grouped to facilitate evaluation which is done by administrators or senior teachers.

Outcomes-based education is being advocated in the South African system. Students, especially in the junior level, are required to perform a

skill before a mark is given.

The communicative teaching method is the cornerstone to the outcomes-based model where student participation is imperative. Group activities and group projects are strongly advocated in the outcomes-based model. After many years of separation between the various race groups, the group activities help in fostering good relationships. WMWP has given me many outcomes-based activities that I could use in my classroom and that I will share with my colleagues back home.

I would like to thank Charlie Moran who has such a wealth of knowledge, experience, and expertise in the writing process, yet displays humility like the sages of yesteryear. Bruce Penniman and Diana Callahan work very efficiently and provided assistance whenever we required it. The team has provided us with good role models to emulate.

I would like to thank my host, Diana Callahan, and her family for the warm manner in which they received me. The family made me feel at home, when I was away from home. They went beyond the call of being a host home, by taking me to visit different places and by treating me as a member of their family. I will take back a treasure trove of warm experiences and wonderful memories of the Callahan family.

My learning curve has reached a new horizon, and I am eager to try out the avant-garde teaching techniques offered to me.

Student Publication Program, 1999-2000

The Student Publication Program continues to seek teachers willing to serve as school and/or district contact people. Our experience has been that teachers with a strong interest in student publications are the best conduits for information about the project—and know best how to get the word out to others.

The duties of a school/district contact person are to disseminate information and materials to teachers and students, to give gentle reminders about upcoming deadlines, to receive and submit manuscripts, to distribute notification letters, to coordinate participation in the Publication Celebration, and to deliver the school's/district's copies of the publications.

We hope, too, that the school/

district contact person will serve as a catalyst for local celebrations and press coverage and perhaps even local student publications. If you are willing to serve as a school/district contact person, please check the appropriate line below and mail the form to the WMWP office.

Program Schedule

January 15: Student Writers' Workshop (Snow Day Jan. 22)

February 5: Deadline for Manuscript submissions

March 4: Student Editors' Day, UMass (Snow Day March 11)

June 13: Publication Celebration, UMass, Campus Center

Student Writers' Workshop Returns to UMass

WMWP's third Student Writers' Workshop will be held Saturday, January 15 in Bartlett Hall at UMass (Snow day January 22). Open to middle and high school students, the workshop will include an opening session, writing-and-response groups, and a pizza lunch. There will be a session for parents and teachers on creating writing clubs for students. The workshop is free, but space is limited to 100 students. Pre-registration is required. If you want to bring students to the workshop, and/or if you can help with registration, please fill out and return the form below.

Student Publication Program/Student Writers' Workshop Reply Form

Name: _____ School phone: _____

School: _____ District: _____

School Address: _____

Home Address: _____

Home 'phone: _____

Please check all that apply:

- I would like to serve as a student publication contact person for my school/district (circle one).
- I would like to assist at the Student Writers' Workshop in January 2000.
- I would like to serve as a contact person for the Student Writers' Workshop. Please send registration information.

Please send to: Charles Moran, Western Massachusetts Writing Project, Bartlett 258, Box 30515, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003

For my brother Stephen, away in London these many years

by Andy Frantz, 1999 Invitational Summer Institute

When I thought somehow today of tennis balls--
how a new can hisses sharply when it's breached,
the shocking danger of the lid right then,
the neon smell, the impossible brightness,
the balls that jump so arrogantly high,
colliding jauntily on the first rolling bounce--

it made me want to share that moment with you.
Your unassuming smile in the morning sun,
knocking your racquet with the heel of your hand,
your lanky gait and whipping arms, a heron
at net, swooping and pouncing on weak shots;
your quiet urging voice: All right, Drew, come on, Drew.

It's still true that when I stand ready to serve or return
I feel your familiar absence at my left hand.

WMWP Application/Registration Form

Name: _____

School/College: _____

School Address: _____

e-mail: _____ telephone: _____

Home Address: _____

Grade(s) taught: _____ telephone: _____

APPLICATION/REGISTRATION FOR PROGRAMS/WORKSHOPS

Please send me materials about the May Writer's Retreat

I'd like to apply to next-year's (2000) Invitational Summer Institute. Please send me materials as they become available.

Please note my new address and/or telephone number, above.

Please add my name to the Writing and Response Group mailing list.

Please sign me up as a teacher-contact in the WMWP Publication Program.

Please send me information about Writing For All, a WMWP invitational summer program.

Return this form to Charles Moran, WMWP, English Department, Bartlett Hall, Box 30515, University of Massachusetts, Amherst MA 01003-0515. WMWP is a local site of the National Writing Project. It is supported by the University's English Department, the Dean of Humanities and Fine Arts, the Provost of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and by the Massachusetts Department of Education.



Western Massachusetts Writing Project
English Department, Bartlett Hall
Box 30515
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, MA 01003-0515
2-79623