

ENG/EDU 610: PRAIRIE LANDS WRITING PROJECT INVITATIONAL INSTITUTE

Summer 2008

Missouri Western State University
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Journalism
Department of Education

Institute Director: Tom Pankiewicz, pankiew@missouriwestern.edu

Office: Eder 222R

Phone: 816-271-4156

Institute Co-director: Christie Hofmeister, christie.hofmeister@sjd.k12.mo.us

Prairie Lands Writing Project Site Director: Dr. Jane Frick, frick@missouriwestern.edu

Office: Eder 201

Phone: 816-271-4315

Prairie Lands Writing Project Web Site: <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/plwp/>

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

ENG/EDU 610 Prairie Lands Writing Project Invitational Institute (6 credits) This month-long writing workshop (plus spring orientation and fall reflection) brings together teachers, grades k – 16, as they prepare to assume leadership roles that promote good writing in their own schools. Participants will:

- Write, revise, and publish their own writing
- Study current theory and research, especially research of teachers of writing
- Share classroom expertise, especially their most successful writing practices.

Prerequisite: Admission into the Invitational Institute: at least one year of successful teaching experience; a commitment to writing as a way to learn and to communicate learning; recommendation from building administrator, department head or Prairie Lands Teacher Consultant; potential for leadership; successful meeting with Prairie Lands interview team.

MATERIALS

Selected articles from the National Writing Project.

The Writing Life Text: *Writing Toward Home* by Georgia Heard.

The Common Text: *The Reading Zone* by Nancie Atwell.

The Teaching Life Text (Select One):

- *Teaching Day by Day: 180 Stories to Help You Along the Way* by Donald H. Graves.
- *Zigzag: A Life of Reading and Writing, Teaching and Learning* by Tom Romano.
- *Teach Like Your Hair's on Fire: The Methods and Madness* by Rafe Esquith.
- *Teach with Your Heart: Lessons I Learned from the Freedom Writers* by Erin Gruwell.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Summer Institutes involve teachers from all levels of instruction, elementary through university, as well as teachers from across the disciplines; writing is as fundamental to learning in science, mathematics, and history as it is in English and the language arts. (from National Writing Project Basic Assumptions)

The Prairie Lands Summer Institute provides the Summer Scholars opportunities to write and to publish their writing, to discuss issues regarding teaching and the teaching of writing, to read and discuss current theory and research, to pose a classroom inquiry question and study that question in depth, and to present a teaching demonstration to their colleagues.

Writing:

Teachers of writing must also write; the process of writing can be understood best by engaging in that process first hand. (from National Writing Project Basic Assumptions)

We suggest the following writing tasks during the July sessions.

1. An "In the Trenches" memoir about a teaching incident. Due Monday, July 7.

2. Explore a topic of your choice. Select a prose genre to examine a topic of personal or professional interest. Due Monday, July 14.
3. I Inquire: From Classroom to Question to Demonstration to Classroom. Using your personal writing, learning logs, research notes, and demonstration, share the story of what you discovered or how you will extend your inquiry by conducting classroom research during the coming academic year. Reflect on your inquiry. Due Tuesday, July 22.
4. Revision. Revise at least one of these writing to publish in the 2008 Institute Anthology and to post in the PLWP Archives. Due Thursday, July 25.
5. In addition, we will also write:
 - Journal entries;
 - Learning log reflections;
 - To demonstration prompts and activities
 - Responses to demonstrations;
 - Entries to the institute log;
 - Responses to posted writing;
 - During an off-campus writing marathon.

Writing Groups:

You will be assigned a writing group with whom you will share drafts of your work and respond to the works of others.

Reading and Response Groups:

Effective staff development programs are ongoing and systematic; they bring teachers together regularly throughout their careers to test and evaluate the best practices of other teachers and the continuing developments in the field. (from National Writing Project Basic Assumptions)

Reading is an important component of the Summer Institute. We will read and discuss several common texts including *The Reading Zone* and selected articles from the National Writing Project and National Council of Teachers of English. In addition, each scholar will read a text on the writing life and a text on the teaching life. Finally, each scholar will select an article from NWP or NCTE resources as part of the inquiry demonstration and discussion.

Inquiry Demonstration:

- *Successful practicing teachers are the best teachers of other teachers, having credibility no outside consultant can match.*
- *What is known about the teaching of writing comes not only from research but also from the practices of those who teach writing.*
- *The National Writing Project, by promoting no single "right" approach to the teaching of writing, is open to whatever is known about writing from whatever source. (from National Writing Project Basic Assumptions)*

The inquiry demonstration is a way of sharing what successful teachers have learned about teaching through their classroom experiences and reflective practice. Each scholar will present a 90-minute demonstration (60 minutes for explanation and activity, 30 minutes for questions, discussion, and responses) on a personally-selected inquiry question.

What makes an effective demonstration? While there is no absolute formula, the most effective demonstrations in past Summer Institutes have tended to include some or all of the following:

1. Identify the specific problems your students face, and demonstrate the particular practices you have devised in an attempt to overcome these problems. Raise a question for study.
2. Explain how or why you identified the inquiry question.
3. Use examples of student writing to illustrate some point you wish to make or some approach you have found to be effective. If possible, let us see both "pre" and "post" examples of your students' writings, i.e., let us see examples of student writing that demonstrate the effectiveness of the approach you are using in comparison with earlier efforts.
4. Explain how your demonstration evolved out of your teaching and experimenting, out of the reading you have done, or out of your own thinking and reflecting. In other words, what is the basis for your particular approach to teaching? What is your theoretical framework?
5. Provide an article for the institute scholars to read in preparation for your demonstration. Select these articles from a peer-reviewed source such as the National Writing Project or a National Council of Teachers of English journal.

6. Involve the participants in some activity. Rather than merely describing an approach, have the Summer Scholars try it out.
7. Lead us in a conversation inspired by your inquiry question and demonstration.
8. Provide a bibliography showing your research into this question and provide a list of resources for the summer scholars.
9. Consider continuing your study on this question by conducting a research project during the academic year.

GRADING POLICY

No individual grades will be assigned for any activity, writing or inquiry demonstration; however, each activity, writing, and inquiry demonstration will receive critical responses from each director and many Summer Scholars. The purpose of the SI is to bring teachers together to improve the teaching of literacy; those who have been invited to join the institute demonstrate a commitment to a reflective inquiry of their own teaching. Frequent grades—an outside assessment of quality or effort—will damage the reflective inquiry community that Prairie Lands hopes to establish in the Summer Institute.

We plan, therefore, to assign only the grade of A. An “A” represents the following characteristics have been achieved:

- **Community:** The Scholar has participated fully in the activities of the Summer Institute. The scholar has shared writings, ideas, thoughts, and reactions, and has raised questions to enhance the learning and understanding of the other scholars and directors. The scholar has contributed to the creation of a strong and memorable Summer Institute.
- **Expectations:** The Scholar has met all expectations published in the syllabus.
- **Reflection:** The Scholar’s writing and conversation explore connections between the institute and the scholar’s classroom and between the institute and the art of teaching.

If the directors feel that a scholar is not achieving the characteristics of Community, Expectations, and Reflection as described above due to absences, late or missing work, inconsistent effort, or disruptive actions, the directors will meet with the Scholar to discuss their concerns. A failing grade will only be assigned to scholars who fail to meet or refuse to meet the characteristics of Community, Expectations and Reflection.

The final day to withdraw without penalty is July 17, 2008.

POLICIES

Academic Honesty Policy and Due Process:

Academic honesty is required in all academic endeavors. Violations of academic honesty include any instance of plagiarism, cheating, seeking credit for another’s work, falsifying documents or academic records, or any other fraudulent activity. Violations of academic honesty may result in a failing grade on the assignment, failure in the course, or expulsion from the University. When a student’s grade has been affected, violations of academic honesty will be reported to the Provost or designated representative on the Academic Honesty Violation Report forms. Please see the Western Student Handbook and Calendar for specific activities identified as violations of this policy and the student due process procedure. This handbook is also available online at <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/handbook/index.pdf>

Attendance:

We expect you to participate fully in every session. If you cannot make a session, please call one of the directors so we will know not to expect you. See Grading Policy above.

Student Disability:

Any Scholar who has a disability that prevents the fullest expressions of abilities should contact the directors as soon as possible so that we can work to provide assistance as needed.

