

2012

Teacher, Writer, Researcher

Volume 4, Number 2



Words from the Director

The CWP is excited to complete its 30th year this semester, which we will honor with a Reunion Celebration to be held May 11. You can learn about that here: <http://www.cwp.uconn.edu/30thanniversary.php>.

We are also excited that the National Writing Project has been awarded an \$11.3 million Title II Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) grant. Our site anticipates receiving Teacher Leadership funds, and we will also apply for Critical Needs School funds. Awards will be announced later this spring. The Teacher Leadership grant will provide new Teacher-Consultants with stipends that will allow them to continue their research and professional development for a year beyond the completion of the Summer Institute.

We have also continued our successful partnership with the University Writing Center, launching a writing center in Ashford School last month, which was featured in both the Hartford Courant and the Willimantic Chronicle.

We have seen continued interest in the SI from teachers from critical needs schools, community colleges, and graduate programs in the School of Education, namely the Bilingual and the Gifted and Talented programs.

We also continue to see sustained interest from schools for professional development services. In the past twelve months we will have worked in eleven different schools.

Personally and professionally, I am excited by new developments that have emerged from my Teachers for a New Era Fellowship, namely the approval of a Learning Community for undergraduates interested in teaching English and the approval of an MA in English for Teachers. To learn more about these new programs, follow this link: <http://www.english.uconn.edu/teaching.html>.

Enjoy the summer as we embark on our 30th Summer Institute!

Jason Courtmanche (SI 99), Director

The Connecticut Writing project at Storrs



Spring

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Reflection on CAACE Conference 2012 Presentation

Karen Adrian

Several years ago I was introduced to Wikispaces through the Connecticut Writing Project. While impressed by its features, I underestimated its purpose for my classes and did not return to it until months after its introduction. But when I started creating my own wikis, I couldn't stop learning more about how I could take advantage of the features. I used the Wikispaces Help link often and even viewed several YouTube videos to learn and edit simultaneously. By the time I began my 2011-2012 school year, I had created a Wikispace for each of my classes, and I couldn't help sharing my new-found knowledge of Wikispaces with my colleagues. It was then that the director of my program suggested that I give a workshop to teachers on how they too can make use of Wikispaces in their classrooms. At first, I was flustered and reluctant to do it since I am, by no means, a guru at Wikispaces. But she urged me to share what I know as a teacher because that is what other teachers will take into consideration. I agreed and began preparing to share what I've learned and what I wanted to show the teachers.

The months passed and I slowly gathered information on the importance of technology in the classroom, particularly for Adult learners. I re-read Marc Prensky's research on Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants, and included the research in my PowerPoint presentation. The challenge then became identifying which Wikispaces features to share with the teachers in the one hour I was allotted until I finally had a presentation and a plan.

The conference proved to be both successful and a learning experience. I had not realized that a one-hour presentation on technology would not be sufficient for first-time learners, particularly if the attendees were not very computer literate. I found myself rushing through my PPT presentation just to make sure the attendees had enough time to create and edit their own wikis, but even that did not give me enough time to share all that I had wanted to share, so I had to condense my already condensed presentation. Nonetheless, I went through my presentation twice with success. The workshop evaluations from attendees showed that they learned and enjoyed the presentation, and the main suggestion given was to make the presentation a two-hour presentation instead of one hour.

In reflection, I realize that I need to differentiate my presentation just as I do my instruction in the classroom. Since there were different levels of computer/technology knowledge among the 25 to 30 attendees, for future reference I need to present the information slower (given more time) and not only rely on the "Getting Started with Wikispaces" handout that I passed out. I will also need to consider recruiting helpers for my workshops, people who can go around from person to person making sure that they are on the same page as I am, and troubleshooting as needs arise so that I can continue with my presentation while the attendees are being assisted.

I also am glad that I was able to represent my program at the Conference. It is a pleasure and privilege to be able to demonstrate the different technological techniques East Hartford uses in their academic programs like ESL and CDP. It gives me a great sense of pride to be able to use this technology with my students and share it with my colleagues from around the state.

Karen Adrian (SI 10) teaches at East Hartford Middle School.



Alice Kuzel

This year in Writers Workshop my class worked on many projects; I will share just a few of the highlights here with you. Early in the year, response journals were woven into the curriculum,

and once the children got used to them they would ask, "What are we going to journal about today?" The journals really proved to be a place where the children were able to put down their thoughts about the day's activities, writing progress, and ideas for new stories. Student-led craft lessons were my personal favorite addition; I took this idea from Katie Wood Ray's, *Wondrous Words*, a text from the Summer Institute. Preparing the students initially was more work for me. However, the end result was tremendously worthwhile for student engagement, both on the part of the volunteer student leader and the student group receiving the lesson. Some of the topics for lessons included the following: general vs. specific detail, pacing, and integrating sensory details. Two exciting units this year were poetry with emphasis on haiku, concrete and found poetry, and author study. Several authors covered in the author study were Gary Paulsen, Karen Hesse, Roald Dahl, and Jerry Spinelli. I am always amazed by the students' creativity and choice of topics for investigation.

Alice Kuzel (SI 11) teaches at Oak Grove Montessori School in an Age 9-12 classroom.

This year has brought about new and challenging opportunities for me at ISAAC in my role as Literacy Specialist. I have been co-teaching an Advanced Spanish class and teaching an ELL literacy class. My co-



Rose Clack

teacher and I have been working together to implement literature-based instruction in Spanish for our bilingual students. Students have been reading and responding to literature in Spanish and participating in writing workshop. Since the number of our ELL students increased significantly this year, I applied for and received a Math LEAD fellowship through the Neag School of Education's Bilingual Studies program and started taking classes in January. As a result, I have been conducting an evaluation of our Bilingual/ELL program and am working with administration to develop a quality program and curriculum. I have to recognize the CWP Summer Institute for opening the door to this opportunity. The 2011 Institute connected me with professional development and training I needed to better serve the needs of my students this year. A special thank you to Violet Simms, CWP Teacher Consultant, who connected me to the Math Lead Program.

Rose Clack (SI 11) is a teacher and Interdistrict Assistant at the Interdistrict School for Arts & Communication (ISAAC) in New London.



Participating in the CWP has transformed my approach to teaching writing. Since completing the Summer Institute, I have focused on the process approach to help students explore their ideas through writing. I have made a commitment to write with my students and share multiple drafts with them, and my students are eager to give me feedback to help with the revision process. The CWP philosophy has brought new life, energy, and spirit to my classroom. For the first time, I am being told by students that they only came back to college to get a better job but now find that through writing they can find their voice and discover more about themselves. The writing process has given them reason to enjoy being in college rather than making it an obligation.

Most notably, I am teaching an ELL class, and all of my students are Spanish speakers. I write with that class, and they have been receptive to me and to each other, and very supportive of our writing process. During one class, a student asked me to write in Spanish. I was terrified, but I did it! Now, the students help me with my writing in Spanish, while I help them with their writing in English. We have interdependency.

Lastly, on Valentine's Day of this year, I gave a workshop to the faculty called "For the Love of Writing." In that workshop, we had the opportunity to write creatively, and it sparked a meaningful discussion on the process vs. product debate, and how to create lifelong readers, writers, and thinkers. The workshop was extremely well-received, and I was asked to facilitate more professional development as the semester goes on.

CWP has been an invaluable experience for me on a personal and professional level.



A week for *Daniel R. Blanchard*

The end of March was a busy time for Dan Blanchard. On Monday the 26th, he spoke at the (AFL-CIO) American Federation of Labor's annual legislative conference. His subject was the life and commitment of a teacher.

One day later, he did a television interview on the subject of teen leadership. Another speaking engagement came on the 30th, when he spoke at the Connecticut Association of Adult and Continuing Educations (C.A.A.C.E) annual conference on how to create a better teaching and learning environment for young adult learners

Daniel R. Blanchard (SI 10) is a Social Studies teacher and coach at New Britain High School.



Jena DeMaio

I am finishing my second year of teaching at Coventry High School. Currently, I am teaching English 10 Pre-AP and College Prep English 10. My students are finishing units on Shakespeare's *King Lear* and Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. This winter, I presented my research project on "The Art of Revision" to the entire faculty at Coventry High School. Faculty and staff became aware of ways that we can help students improve revision and metacognition with the writing process. In addition, I am continuing my own education and began my Sixth Year in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Connecticut.

Jena DeMaio (SI 11) teaches English at Coventry High School.

Janet Lussier—Writing Center at Ashford School

A second middle school writing center is now on the map in northeastern Connecticut with the April 2 opening of the Ashford School Writing Center.

The school joins five other Connecticut schools with the distinction of establishing their writing centers through an outreach program sponsored by the University of Connecticut Writing Center and the Connecticut Writing Project. A seventh writing center, at Windham Middle School, was established with guidance from UConn using funding from an outside grant.

The outreach program is part of an on-going effort to launch student-staffed middle and high school writing centers where tutors practice the art of coaching fellow students in the writing process. These writing centers are intended to serve all students and focus on higher order concerns of writing such as ideas and organization.

Ashford's writing center opening began on a serious note as tutors tested their newly acquired skills in one-on-one sessions with their peers, and ended with a celebration of seven months' hard work with balloons, refreshments, and a brief graduation ceremony attended by members of the Ashford School community, UConn Writing Center Director Tom Deans and CWP Director Jason Courtmanche. The event also garnered media attention with news stories and photos published in the *Hartford Courant* and the *Willimantic Chronicle*.

Tutor training in Ashford started last September when 14 students in grades six through eight began meeting weekly with six tutors from the UConn Writing Center. Graduate assistant Jessica Mueller supervised the training, and was assisted by undergraduates Tatiana Mercado, Ricky Holtz, Garon Scott, Tran Tran and Christiane Pimentel.

In addition to weekly training, the students attended UConn's 4th Annual Conference for Secondary School Writing Centers in October. The conference included presentations and workshops by students and teachers who have either established or are in the process of starting their own writing centers. An additional field trip, funded by UConn, allowed the Ashford tutors to participate in an intensive training session on campus and included a visit to the university writing center in the Homer Babbidge Library.

Ashford School was selected for the outreach program through the efforts of language arts teacher Janet Lussier, who became interested in the writing center concept after attending the UConn conference in 2009 and conducting research as a graduate student Fellow of the 2010 CWP Summer Institute. She serves as the writing center's director.

One of the existing writing centers planted by the outreach program operates at E.O. Smith High School in Mansfield, which is attended by a majority of Ashford School graduates. The high school's writing center director Denise Abercrombie noted at the opening festivities that this next year will be the first time there would be freshman tutors who have already received training.

Janet Lussier (SI 10) teaches at Ashford School.





Memories of Kathy Jambeck



(July 6, 1956—January 31, 2012)

UConn Adjunct Professor of English (1998-2003)
and Connecticut Writing Project Director (2003-2006)

I showed up that summer as I was each day—tired, hungry, distracted—and I felt so loved and supported as a teacher, a writer, a learner, and a soon-to-be mom. At the end of our time together, Kathy organized a baby shower for me. Everyone had signed a canvas tote bag and filled it with a children's book they wanted me to have. Kathy gave me "Love You Forever" with this inscription: "Dear Mindi, This was one of my son's favorite books! I hope your family will love it as much as we did. With great admiration and affection, Kathy."

Mindi Englart (SI 05)

I have a very fond memory of Kathy. She was the best boss any one could ever ask for. Not only was she work oriented, goal oriented, she was dedicated to the well-being of the Connecticut Writing Project. She was a compassionate human being who understood the trials and tribulations of life. Not only was Kathy my boss, she was also my very dear friend. I can't say enough good things about her. Kathy was a wife, mother, sister, daughter and very dear friend. She is very dearly missed.

Program Assistant Sharlene Smith



Kathy Jambeck

Summer Institute 1982

When the CWP director retired, Kathy was thrilled to become the Program's new director, her dream job. She loved every aspect of working with teachers and writing. When her rare, very aggressive breast cancer was diagnosed, she juggled her job with chemo, surgery and radiation as long as humanly possible. Kathy was the bravest fighter I've known. She also had the most generous, loving heart. I miss her!

Joan Seliger Sidney

Kathy was an enthusiastic and enthralling professor. Her students spoke to her and asked their questions of her, with both fondness and respect in their voices. As for me, I felt Kathy's warmth each time she would contact me and invite me to share my tellings of Malory's King Arthur with her class. She would joke with me about the dangers of getting lost trying to find the classroom, but once I'd arrived and begun to speak of Arthur, she would lose herself whole-heartedly in the ancient myths. Working with students, caring for guests to her classroom, describing her family to me, whatever Kathy did, she did with her whole heart.

Sarah deBeer (SI 05)

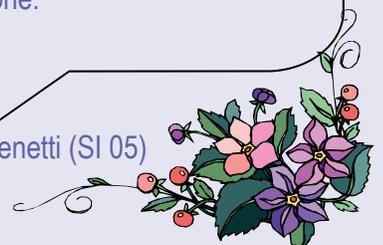
During the ending of the Project when the Workshop was due, I had some difficulties, but she worked with me and again her comforting voice assured me that I would be okay. She helped me to focus on my accomplishments instead of areas of improvement. She got me back on track.

I always think of Kathy looking very prim and proper, which contrasted beautifully with her "rich" vocabulary and wicked sense of humor!

I'm glad we got the chance to enjoy her and know we are less now that she's gone.

Laura Toffenetti (SI 05)

Verlina King
(SI 04)



TNE Fellowship Allows Director to Develop New Programs

Jason Courtmanche (SI 99)

This past Fall I received a Fellowship from Neag's Teachers for a New Era. That Fellowship has allowed me to develop several related projects designed to promote greater content area knowledge for English majors who intend to become secondary English teachers. I had already developed a Concentration in Teaching English for the non-Neag English majors that will help those students meet SDE requirements for coursework in composition, grammar, and adolescent literature, as well as help them prepare for the Praxis II test. But I wanted to do something for the underclassmen, as well, to help them prepare to pursue education as a major and/or a career.

To that end, I also developed and received approval for a non-residential Learning Community for Pre-Teaching Secondary English majors. Technically, this is a First Year Experience program, and I will be able to offer talks, workshops, and even field trips to local conferences or a place like the Mark Twain House and Museum. This Learning Community also includes a one-credit INTD course titled Pre-Teaching Secondary English that will be offered in the fall and open to both Freshmen and Sophomores, and will have one of my advisees from the dual degree program as a mentor. There will also be a LC section of Freshman English whose curriculum will be aligned with the INTD course that will also be offered in the fall. The instructor is a graduate student in English who happens to be a certified secondary English teacher in the state of New York. Some of the goals of the INTD and FE courses are to have students communicate and maybe even work with CWP Teacher-Consultants, and I have had some preliminary conversations about developing some sort of working relationship with the Teacher Prep Academy in Hartford.

In order to provide myself with a support system as this program expands, I formed a committee of English faculty, mostly of Composition specialists whose programs have existing secondary school outreach programs, but also YA Lit and creative writing faculty, and a couple of faculty members from the school of education. Two long-term goals here are to disperse the large number of advisees (between 60 and 70) among the committee members, and to use the committee as a way of disseminating knowledge of the field of education among several English faculty members.

Lastly and most ambitiously, I received approval for a terminal MA in English for Teachers. This is not actually a new degree and will not carry certification or cover methodology, but it will provide practicing secondary English teachers with an opportunity to pursue an advanced degree in their content area. Coursework will focus on composition as well as literature, and entail a Fellowship to attend a CWP Summer Institute. Upon completion of the degree, teachers will also become eligible and worthy candidates to become UConn Early College Experience instructors in English, and also to host Writing Centers in their schools as part of our collaborative outreach program with the University Writing Center. The graduate school and English Department will begin accepting applications to this program this coming fall for admission in the fall of 2013. I'm building the informational website at this time, and will distribute it as soon as it is complete.

About a third of our English majors enter the teaching profession, and these programs will help us better serve this previously under-served population.

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CWP Technology Intern Feature

Alyssa Krueger has been the technology intern for the Connecticut Writing Project for the Spring 2012 semester. Besides making regular updates on the website, she has created pages to archive publications associated with CWP dating back to 1982, such as *Writing UConn* and UConn graduate student training seminar chapbooks, as well as the chapbooks from each year of the CWP Summer Institute and every edition of *Connecticut Student Writers*. The *Writing UConn* archive may be found at <http://www.cwp.uconn.edu/studentwriting.php> and the Summer Fellows archive may be found at <http://cwp.uconn.edu/teachers/summerfellows.php>. The Connecticut Student Writers magazine archive can be found here: <http://cwp.uconn.edu/publications/csw.php>. She has created pages for the CWP 30th anniversary as well as instructions for how to make donations to the Connecticut Writing Project. Those can be seen here: <http://www.cwp.uconn.edu/30thanniversary.php> and <http://cwp.uconn.edu/donations.php>.

Alyssa will be graduating in May.

This newsletter was produced by Writing Intern Will Dunlop, who is not graduating just yet.