

## **Delaware Writing Project**

### **Best Practices in the Teaching of Writing for New Teachers: Summer and School-Year Programs**

**By Bonnie Albertson, Chris Evans, Martha Ford, and Carol Vukelich**

#### **What is the program design?**

The Delaware Writing Project (DWP) has designed and implemented two structures to support effective writing instruction by novice teachers. The Best Practices in the Teaching of Writing Cluster is a ten-session series of workshops during the school year for novice teachers in two counties in northern Delaware, with follow-up coaching/reflection in participants' classrooms. During the summer DWP offers Best Practices of Teaching Writing Cluster for New Teachers, a graduate-level course aimed at meeting the needs of novice teachers.

#### **How is it implemented?**

The cluster is facilitated by teacher-consultants who develop ten sessions treating aspects of writing instruction. Each of the sessions includes a two-hour presentation by a teacher-consultant that is followed by a guided discussion on the presentation topic, followed by ideas for application to the classroom. As a requirement for completion, participants submit a portfolio documenting their classroom implementation of practices taught.

Because of the quality of its programs, the DWP has developed an excellent relationship with the state's department of education, and teachers who participate in the cluster earn a 2 percent increase on the state's portion of their salary for five years. In addition to the state support, DWP has a particularly close relationship with one of its school districts, which shares the cost of cluster delivery.

The summer course is research based, comprehensive, and rigorous. It concentrates on how best to support student learning at various age levels and through differentiated instruction. In both venues of the cluster—the summer graduate course and the school-year workshop series—participants maintain a reader response journal to reflect on writing topics and to guide thoughtful discussions with colleagues. The journals are turned in, and the instructor and/or facilitator responds to the entries. This process creates a dialogue between the instructor and the teacher beyond the end of the course or series.

#### **What is the design rationale?**

The cluster, with its ten sessions and emphasis on classroom implementation with support, provides teachers a structure for learning with teacher-consultants and colleagues and then for application of the strategies learned in their own classrooms. Through guidance and reflection, novice teachers can try out new ideas and make them their own. An emphasis on teacher inquiry is encouraged within such a structure. The summer course allows another opportunity for new teachers across the state who were not within the cluster area to take a graduate-level course that supports the improvement of writing instruction.

**Delaware Writing Project, New-Teacher Initiative**  
***Best Practices in the Teaching of Writing Cluster***  
**Grades 3–8**  
**Syllabus**

Time: 4:45-7:45

Date	Title	Topic	Activities	Tangible Products or Evidence	Timeline
			<b>Participants will</b>	<b>Participants will</b>	
January 4, 2006	<i>Taking the Writer from Seed to Publishing</i>	Instructional Program Design: Implementing a Workshop Approach	<p>Review the classroom's, school's and district's policies and procedures that impact the implementation of a "true" writing workshop</p> <p>Study the components of a writing workshop where there is a balance between process and procedure</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> As a group, write an implementation plan including classroom environment, materials, resources, etc.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Select 3 students to study in depth throughout the cluster.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Read grade-level appropriate sources on writing workshop procedures and prepare a reading response. (See directions, page 6, and attached reader response forms.)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Write and implement a procedural lesson</p>	<p>3 hours of instruction</p> <p>8 hours of implementation</p>
January 18, 2006	<i>The Writing Process</i>	Writers share their experiences so that readers	Learn the basic structure and techniques to write a memoir.	<input type="checkbox"/> Begin a draft of a memoir that will be revisited several times during the	<p>3 hours of instruction</p> <p>6 hours of</p>

		might learn from those experiences and make sense of their own lives.	Learn the importance of memoir writing.	course of the cluster. Final draft of memoir due with portfolio.	implementa- tion
February 2, 2006	<i>Revision</i>	The Writing Process	Engage in the behaviors of a writer  Study how to support students' generation of ideas, and to draft, revise, and edit	<input type="checkbox"/> Model the writing process and use a teacher-generated piece to demonstrate brainstorming, drafting, revising with students  <input type="checkbox"/> Develop and implement a lesson plan on one of the following topics: generating ideas, drafting, revising, and editing	6 hours of instruction  8 hours of implementation
February 13, 2006          February 27, 2006	<i>Assessing &amp; Scoring Writing: Grades 3-8 – Part 1</i>          <i>Assessing &amp; Scoring Writing: Grades 3-8 – Part 2</i>	Assessment of Student Writing	Study the Delaware State General Writing Rubric (DSGWR)  Connect the DSGWR to the Delaware Student ELA Content Standards  Score anchor papers at their grade cluster using holistic and analytical scoring guides  Analyze student writings to identify instructional needs	<input type="checkbox"/> Write a prompt in the style consistent with the DSTP writing assessment  <input type="checkbox"/> Administer the prompt to their students  <input type="checkbox"/> Holistically and analytically score their students' writing  <input type="checkbox"/> Identify their students' strengths and weaknesses  <input type="checkbox"/> Chart students' instructional writing needs [Form will be provided]	6 hours of training  8 hours for implementation

			Examine prompt-types and rhetorical specifications needed to guide students' text construction		
March 13, 2006	<i>Mini-Lessons</i>	Instructional Program Design: Creating Lessons Based on Student Writing Needs	<p>Review workshop materials and other resources (literature, teacher-generated, student-generated writing) to incorporate in writing lessons</p> <p>Study the gradual release of responsibility model to create lesson plans that address student needs</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Using student writing needs, design a lesson on any one of the four (not conventions) writing traits detailed in the ELA Student Content Standards  <input type="checkbox"/> Implement the lesson and reflect on student performance and teaching;  <input type="checkbox"/> Revise lesson based on student response  <input type="checkbox"/> Read grade-level appropriate sources on designing lessons and prepare reading response	<p>3 hours of instruction</p> <p>8 hours for implementation</p>
March 27, 2006	<i>Conferencing</i>	Instructional Program Design: Conferencing	<p>Study conferencing strategies (e.g., questions, procedures, roles, record keeping)</p> <p>Design questions linked to students' needs Study the purposes and structures of</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read grade-level appropriate sources on conferencing and prepare reading response  <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-tape 1 teacher/student conference and analyze for effectiveness	<p>3 hours of instruction</p> <p>5 hours of implementation</p>

			<p>different kinds of conferences</p> <p>Watch video and analyze</p> <p>Consider how to manage conferencing in the classroom</p>		
April 10, 2006	<i>Reading-Writing Connection</i>	Instructional Program Design: Connecting Reading and Writing	<p>Study the ELA Student Content Standards to understand reading stances, genre, and text structure</p> <p>Learn a range of strategies for helping students process texts in order to produce high-quality written evidence of their processing</p> <p>Differentiate between TBWs and other kinds of open-ended constructed responses</p> <p>Score student responses to TBW prompts for reading and writing</p> <p>Learn how to design an item-specific rubric to assess reading comprehension</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Select two grade level appropriate texts representative of different discourses (literary, informative, or technical) and design a two Text-based Writing prompt</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Administer one of the prompts</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Score the students' responses for writing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Design and implement one lesson to link writing to reading</p>	<p>3 hours of instruction</p> <p>8 hours of implementation</p>

April 24, 2006	<i>Writing Across the Curriculum: Informative Writing</i>	Teaching Writing in the Content Areas	Study the teaching of the writing of informative texts  Study the multi-genre approach to research reporting  Study using writing as a tool to learning and communicating knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/> Read grade-level appropriate sources on the writing of informative texts and prepare reading response.  <input type="checkbox"/> Develop and implement one informative writing lesson.	6 hours of instruction  9 hours of implementation
May 8, 2006	<i>Writing Across the Curriculum: Persuasive Writing</i>			<input type="checkbox"/> Read grade-level appropriate sources on the writing of persuasive texts and prepare reading response.  <input type="checkbox"/> Develop and implement one persuasive writing lesson.	
May 11, 2006 (Snow Day)					

*As a guide, a 2% cluster will include a minimum of 90 hours of activity.*

*Instruction in knowledge and skills: 33 hours*

*Participants' application of knowledge and skills: 60 hours*

*Participants' reflection and adjustment after application: Embedded in the above hours*

*Other (specify types of activities):*

**Total: 93 hours**

**Please note: Writing Cluster products will be typed.**

**1. Evaluation of cluster outcomes**

Cluster participants in collaboration with DWP teacher-consultants and coaches will demonstrate understanding of the theoretical and pedagogical implications of the cluster content. Such understanding should be clearly evident in the design of assessment activities and lesson plans implementing the content, techniques, and/or strategies suggested in the readings and class discussions.

All activities and lesson plans must include the following information: pertinent demographic information (e.g., grade level, gender stats, level information); lesson or

activity rationale; goals for the lesson or activity; context of the lesson or activity; detailed description of all implementation procedures followed. Three samples of student work should accompany each lesson or activity. At least 2 of these samples should come from the 3 students selected by the cluster participant for in-depth study throughout the cluster. These artifacts should also include a copy of the assignment and the scoring rubrics used to assess the work.

### **Bibliography for DWP Best Practices in the Teaching of Writing Cluster**

- Bintz, W.P., & Dillard, J. (2004). Seeing writing instruction differently: Lessons with lasting impressions. *Language Arts*, 82(2), 110-119.
- Fracarreta, P., & Phillips, D.J. (2000). Working with a writer's notebook. *English Journal*, 105-113.
- Graves, D. (2004). What I've learned from teachers of writing. *Language Arts*, 82(2), 88-92.
- Lunsford, S.H. (1997). "And they wrote happily ever after": Literature - based mini-lessons in writing. *Language Arts*, 74(1), 42-48.
- Ray, K.W. (2004). Why Cauley writes well: A close look at what a difference good teaching can make. *Language Arts*, 82(2), 100-109.
- Zaragoza, N., & Vaughn, S. (1995). Children teach us to teach writing. *The reading teacher*, 49(1), 42-47