

Technology Liaisons Network Annual Report 2007-2008

Submitted by Felicia George

The 2007-2008 year has been a full and fruitful one for the Technology Liaisons Network (TLN) as we continue our evolution as an emerging special-focus network. Throughout the past year, the leadership team planned programs designed to further the network's goals and to reflect on and reconsider services offered prior to our shift to being a special-focus network.

Summary of the Year's Work

- November 2007 The TLN commissions seventeen sessions for the more than 150 tech liaisons (TLs) in attendance at the Annual Meeting (AM), as well as co-commissions with the Technology Initiative two site development sessions; The TLN Leadership Team (TLN LT) meets to plan the year ahead, setting up two task forces and mining the Technology Matters minigrant data.
- January 2008 Technology Matters 2007-2008 minigrant progress reports are submitted by sites; three teams from local sites attend NWP's National Programs Dissemination Retreat to write up their minigrant work.
- March 2008 TLN Minigrant Committee meets in Philadelphia to finalize a new request for proposals and minigrant application process.
- April 2008 The TLN LT meets to hear reports from its task forces and minigrant committee. These task forces help the team define and explore the TLN's transition to being a special-focus network and discuss the opening of their minigrant process to the entire network of NWP sites.
- June 2008 Technology Matters Debrief Retreat is held in Nebraska City, Nebraska, where former Tech Matters facilitators and the TLN chairs review selected data collected from the five Tech Matters Institutes.
- September 2008 TLN LT prepares for AM presentations and select tasks for coming year. Welcoming letter and packet of information is sent to new TLN LT members.

Membership and Rotation

Karen McComas and Felicia George served as co-chairs of the TLN LT with support from Paul Oh, thinking partner to the TLN. Three new members rotated onto the team at our November 2008 meeting. Two members replace exiting team members Gail Desler and Danilo Baylen, who have done three years of great work on the TLN LT. One additional team member is being added to the Network owing to the team's increasing work.

Currently, the team consists of

Joe Bellino, Maryland Writing Project

Betty Collum, Mississippi Writing and Thinking Project

Tracy Duckart, Redwood Writing Project (CA)

Felicia George, Chair, NYC Writing Project

Rebecca Kaminski, Upstate Writing Project (SC)
Clifford Lee, Bay Area Writing Project (CA)
Seth Mitchell, University of Maine Writing Project
Gary Ryan, Gateway Writing Project (MO)
Jason Shiroff, Denver Writing Project
Paul Oh, Thinking Partner, National Writing Project
Natalia Cooper, Program Specialist, National Writing Project

Reflections on the Year's Work

Leadership Team

The Technology Liaisons Network Leadership Team had two face-to-face meetings during the previous year: at the 2007 Annual Meeting and at the 2008 Urban Sites Conference in April. At the November meeting, the team grappled with issues of reduced funding and the transition to become a special-focus network. Two task forces, the Resource Task Force and the SFN Transition Task Force, were set up to explore these key strands of work in greater depth. Our Minigrant Committee worked to adapt our minigrant application process from a closed application process to an open one. In previous minigrant cycles, TLN restricted our minigrants, only awarding grants to sites that had sent representatives to the Tech Matters Institute. Starting with the 2009-2010 minigrants, we have extended our request for proposals to any site with an active TL. The Resource Task Force looked at the technology resources available on the NWP website, exploring featured resources and taking note of what resources seemed to be missing. The SFN Transition Task Force set out to review how the TLN is described and presents itself to local sites and nationally.

At our spring meeting the task forces reported on the work they had done. The Resource Task Force and SFN Transition Task Forces reconstituted themselves between the spring meeting and a follow-up phone conference in May, with the SFN Transitional Task Force becoming the Program Task Force. This new Program Task Force was charged with responsibility for identifying and coordinating the TLN activities for the 2008 Annual Meeting.

2007 Annual Meeting

The TLN again coordinated a rich selection of 17 sessions at the 2007 Annual Meeting, representing a wide variety of writing project sites and topics that focused on the development of core work at sites and on the teaching and learning of writing with technology. Visit the NWP website for a full listing of the TLN sessions at the 2007 Annual Meeting:

http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/doc/07am/friday_sessions_a.csp and
http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/doc/07am/friday_sessions_b.csp.

A few examples follow:

“Immigrant Voices.” Presenters: Nelson Colón, Bonnie Kaplan, Judith Rance-Roney, Hudson Valley WP; Carmen Vazquezteell, Newburgh EC School District; Martha Young, Hudson Valley WP. Digital storytelling by immigrant secondary students—weaving pasts, presents, and futures.

“Making Digital Compositions the New Language Arts Essay.” Presenters: Leslie Moitoza, Bay Area WP; Gary Ryan, Gateway WP. A presentation of how two writing project teachers used digital composition to teach basic writing skills and, in the process, changed the social and political dimensions of the learning environment.

“Technology as a Tool for Diversity and Equity.” Presenters: Lynne Culp, UCLA WP; Kevin Hodgson, Western Massachusetts WP. With funding from Technology Matters minigrants, two technology liaisons tackle the issue of how technology can best support NWP’s mission to achieve equity and diversity.

“Online Peer Response with English Language Learners.” Presenters: Joe Bellino, Maryland WP; Ailish Zompa, Maryland WP. Two teachers of English language learners share how they used Google Docs, an online document-sharing space, with their students for sharing and commenting on each other’s documents.

Minigrants

Led by the TLN LT Minigrant Team consisting of Betty Collum, Felicia George, and Gail Desler, the TLN LT supported work from the nine minigrants awarded in September 2007 (<http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/projects/43>) to those applicants who had attended the Technology Matters 2007 Institute (TM 2007). Evidence of much of this work will be apparent at the 2008 Annual Meeting during the SFN Poster Session and elsewhere. Ten sites were represented at TM 07, but only nine grants were awarded owing to significant leadership changes at one of the participating sites. Reviewers noticed that the proposals were focused on building the sites’ technology capacity and connecting technology to the sites’ core work. See appendix for a detailed analysis of the Technology Matters 2007-2008 Tech Matters minigrant proposals.

Because TM 07 included teams from participating sites, we expected proposals to focus on the development of tech teams and/or work that would increase the technology capacity of site leaders. In fact, six of the nine sites submitting proposals sought to establish or strengthen existing tech teams. Activities for team development or support included expanding the numbers of and providing professional development to team members. In addition, five sites included building the technology capacity of their leadership team in their minigrant plans. Eight sites specified the forum they planned to use for professional development that included advanced institutes, tech retreats, and tech series. One site identified support for the summer invitational institute as a goal. Four sites planned to address Web development and one site indicated that it would develop a technology plan. Among the other activities mentioned were follow-up on a 2007 Technology Institute, implementation of classroom projects using technology, and preparation of a descriptive annotation of technology tools for a facilitator’s handbook. One site was planning a visioning retreat in which technology was to be a major focus.

The final reports due September 2008 will let us know how close sites came to fulfilling their goals. Early indications that these sites are right on target include the TLN support of several TM 07 participants to attend the 2008 dissemination retreat in Atlanta and the selection of TM 07 participants to present at the 2008 Annual Meeting.

In addition, members of the minigrant team participated in a two-and-a-half day retreat to rewrite the minigrant application so that TLN is aligned with the other special-focus networks in their minigrant process. The team met at the Philadelphia Writing Project office and drafted a new application form and scoring rubric for TLN minigrants. The revised minigrant application and rubric are posted on the NWP website: <http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/lpt/projects/>. The team also considered some of the issues that accompanied the change to an open process, such as expanding the minigrant review team to accommodate an anticipated increase in the number of applications.

Technology Matters Debrief Retreat

The TLN is no longer sponsoring the Technology Matters summer institute for TLs and technology teams. This year we brought a select group of past Tech Matters facilitators together to reflect on the work that had been accomplished during those institutes and to identify what Tech Matters afforded that the TLN needs to hold on to. Paul Allison, New York City WP; Will Banks, Tar River WP; Betty Collum, Mississippi Writing and Thinking WP; Felicia George, New York City WP; Troy Hicks, Red Cedar WP; Karen McComas, Marshall University WP; and Chris Sloan, Utah WP were joined by Christina Cantrill, Paul Oh, and Lizzy Berryman for a three-day retreat at the Lied Lodge in Nebraska City, Nebraska, from June 19 through June 21, 2008. The group looked at selected data gathered from the five years of Tech Matters institutes including the online programs—Drupal, Nicenet, and Manila—used to support discussions and reflection before and during the institutes, agendas, participant reflections, writing into the day, applications, and minigrant reports. The data were grouped into three categories representing structure and process, reflections, and resources. The team divided into three groups and each group looked at the materials in relation to four larger themes: Technology and Literacy, Site Development, Leadership, and Network and Sharing.

**The reflections of these working groups helped us identify consistencies and shifts within the TLN. What remained the same were the goals for the Tech Matters participants and the immersive quality of the institute. The primary goal of Tech Matters was to build the capacity of the TL to expand the use of technology for site development. The team identified a shift from focusing on development of the individual TL and his/her knowledge of specific tools to focusing on the development of the TL's understanding of his/her role as the technology leader of the site and on exploring the use of technology for specific purposes. The groups were able to identify some unplanned outcomes of the institutes, such as the building of connections across sites that resulted in a sense of exclusivity among Tech Matters institute alumni.

Each group generated a report using googledocs. Karen McComas is preparing a report that will summarize the findings of these groups and provide an overview of the work from this Debrief Retreat which will be shared with the Leadership Team at its November meeting.

Commissioned work

The TLN commissioned the writing of two “programs in action” (PIA) pieces for the NWP website. One PIA focused on the implementation of a technology conference at a local site and on the growing practice across the network of blogging the Summer Institutes. The TLN also commissioned an article written by the TL from the Western Massachusetts Writing Project, Kevin

Hodgson, called “Bringing the World to My Doorstep: A Teacher's Blog-Reading Habits.” We will also publish an article on the use of Wikis in the classroom based on the Spring Meeting presentation by Jason Shiroff on his inquiry approach as he introduced wikis to his elementary school students. We expect both these pieces to be ready for publication within the next several months.

Collaboration with the Technology Initiative

Though the TLN does not develop programming jointly with the Technology Initiative, our two programs have a profound impact on one another. Therefore, the leadership of the two programs attempt to share data and what is being learned as much as possible. Some points to mention:

- We have jointly sponsored Site Development sessions at the Annual Meeting, “Writing in the Digital Age” and “Thinking Strategically About Your Site’s Online Presence.” Both are among the first sessions to register full. “Writing in the Digital Age” has been a session in which writing project leaders share practice and engage in conversation about the implications of new digital technologies on the teaching and learning of writing. “Thinking Strategically About Your Site’s Online Presence” has been an outgrowth of the very successful Technology Initiative Web Presence Retreat event.
- We have coordinated our plans for resource development with the Technology Initiative, each drawing from the other program’s work to guard against overlap and to provide a fuller resource list on our program webpages.

Plans for the Year Ahead

The Technology Liaison Network was able to adjust to a large cut in the TLN program budget and make progress toward becoming more clearly identified as one of the Special-Focus Networks. The TLN Leadership Team took advantage of this opportunity to take stock of how much the Network has accomplished and where the TLN should head in the future. We successfully achieved our goals for the 2007-2008 program year. In the coming year we will gain a clearer sense of how many TLN minigrant applications to expect under an open process, and we will have begun to identify a forum for Technology Liaisons and teams to come together to share their knowledge and build their connections. For this coming year the Leadership Team has elected to sponsor a Resource Development Retreat (RDR) for July 8-12 2009. This RDR is an interim program that will contribute to the TLN’s mission to support the production of additional resources for sites, as well provide an opportunity to identify potential leaders and work that we might sponsor for dissemination purposes among the TLN and the overall NWP network. One of this year’s goals is to identify an ongoing program—options include the Resource Development Retreat, or the RDR in combination with a conference—that will support the technology work of sites and provide a venue for TLs and technology teams to come together to develop and share that work.

The TLN has some major charges in the 2008-2009 program year. One will be the transition to an open minigrant process and another will be the hosting of an RDR. We will also move toward solidifying our alignment with other Special-Focus Networks. The tasks of transitioning into a SFN program include completing Program In Action pieces for TLN’s Web presence; rewriting

descriptions of the TL's role and the TLN's mission to reflect our standing as a Special-Focus Network; and identifying and/or commissioning resources to help sites expand their work in understanding the impact of new technologies on teaching and writing. The job ahead is daunting but the Network will look to the examples and experiences of other SFNs for guidance.

In addition, we will work to follow up on the Tech Matters Debrief group's findings. The information collected during the Tech Matters Debrief retreat needs to be analyzed and decisions made about how what was learned should inform the TLN's future work with TLs. From the initial group reports, the data indicate that immersing TLs into using technology to write, share and learn as they socialized, collaborated and shared experiences created strong bonds and laid the groundwork for a learning community that went beyond the Tech Matters Institute. As we consider replacing TM with a forum that is more in line with the goals of our emerging Special-Focus Network, we will explore how important is it to replicate the immersive process. The small groups' summaries also need to be mined for questions that might be the focus of continued work for the TLN.

As a leadership team, the TLN LT is also changing the way it operates. We are in the process of formalizing the rotation system and providing orientation to new members (based on a process that the Urban Sites Network employs). The TLN LT will also begin stipending team members for the specific tasks they undertake rather than for general service on the team. Members will be asked to join task forces or committees with particular goals related to the TLN's major tasks and their work will be focused around accomplishing those goals.

The TLN's primary focus remains the capacity building of sites and their respective TLs as they plan, create, and implement programs that support teacher-consultants and teachers as they move into the digital age of communication, teaching and learning. We eagerly anticipate what the changes in our program, and the processes we've chosen to address those changes, will mean for our growing Network. To that end we will:

- Monitor the open migrant process, paying particular attention to the number, strength and program variety of applications received.
- Develop a system for monitoring and identifying new resources in digital literacy and technology appropriate for our website, presentations, and other forms of dissemination.
- Identify a program that brings technology liaisons and teams across the Network together for an opportunity to share and learn. This year we will sponsor a resource development retreat but there are other forums that we might consider. A TLN-sponsored live conference; an online TLN conference; a day focused on technology that is connected to another SFN or another organization's live or on-line conference; and/or a resource development retreat. We may also consider a schedule of hosting a technology event in alternating years, allowing time to secure an appropriate venue and plan effectively.

State Site Name Applicant Name	Goals	Successes	Questions from Participants	Struggles/Challenges
<p>GA Red Clay Writing Project</p> <p>John Bishop, TL and Co-Directors, JoBeth Allen, Bob Fecho and Lois Alexander</p> <p>(Paige Cole)</p> <p>(Betty)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grow a tech team through a “series of monthly meetings ... in which team members will engage in reading group discussions, technology workshops, and classroom support protocols.” Share group's learnings with broader audiences and use newly developed skills at an open or advanced summer institute in 2008. 	<p>-tech team of 7 members meeting monthly</p> <p>-dates set for tech workshop and summer advanced</p>	<p>none</p>	<p>-concerns about how to document meetings and maintain spontaneity of discussion "finding a way to document the monthly meetings and our thinking without sacrificing ... the capacity for building an intimate dynamic wihtin which to share thinking"</p> <p>-opening tech meetings to other TCs</p> <p>-plan events to share knowledge while still learning</p>
<p>GA Southwest Georgia Writing Project</p> <p>BJ Bagwell, TL and Peggy Ellington, Dir.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support “the development of technological expertise of [its] leadership team and selected [from 	<p>-1st meeting held in Sept.</p> <p>-individual strides towards goals</p> <p>--dir. use of Google docs and Reader in a course</p> <p>--google docs used to collaboratively write</p>	<p>none</p>	<p>- "...Leadership Team needs to clearly communicate goals and deadlines with respect to creation and maintenance of an online forum for reflection and documentation."</p>

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(Betty)	the 2007-2008 Advanced Institute in technology] TCs.	CFA --attendance at tech workshops in NY --member assumed responsibility for restructuring website		-spotty posting to blog and missing scheduled meeting -school districts block Web 2.0 resources is an obstacle
LA Northwestern State University Writing Project Lisa Abney, Dir. and Paula Callender, TL (Nancy Dickerson)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a technology team to “support teachers in the development and implementation of technology in teaching.” • Provide sustained and high quality professional development in technology to TCs through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a mini-advanced institute in technology • a technol 	-technology training retreat to establish goals for tech team and work -date set for Advanced Institute of Technology		progress report lacks specificity (how many on the tech team?, what will be presented at the Advanced) -recognition that it may take more time to achieve stated goals

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(Gail)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add online resources to existing website, • Develop a long range technology plan. 			
<p>MI Crossroads Writing Project</p> <p>Lynn Chrenka, Dir. and Lavon Jonson, TL and Sonja , Tech Team</p> <p>(Gail)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop site leadership by adding a "technology team" to the leadership structure. • Hold a visioning retreat • Provide for online collaboration of tech team • Host culminating Technology Advanced Institute and Tech Day • Provide tech support for SI. 	<p>-vision retreat held in January that resulted in a vision statement</p> <p>-dev of "baby" website by new tech team member</p> <p>-persons identified to lead Tech Advanced Institute, and online book study</p>	<p>questions for TLs</p> <p>-How do I, as the technology liaison, best support the development of these experts?</p> <p>-Do I continue to dabble in everything?</p> <p>-Do I find my own area(s) of expertise and simply encourage the others?</p> <p>-Where do I find enough quality people willing to work hard</p>	<p>-has tech team been established? 4 people identified as taking on specific tech tasks is this the team?</p> <p>-lack of technology resources and dealing with glitches</p> <p>-developing "experts"</p>

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			<p>enough to keep up and impart that knowledge to the teachers we service?</p> <p>-How do we get the technology supplies necessary to practice and then instruct?</p>	
<p>MI Lake Michigan Writing Project</p> <p>Amanda Cornwell, TL and Lindsay Ellis, Dir.</p> <p>(Betty)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate the leadership team in use of online tools to enhance collaboration and the quality of writing and reflection 	<p>clearly identified timeline</p> <p>develop a leadership model</p> <p>monthly leadership meeting, sound communication led to preparedness for next step</p> <p>workshops scheduled along with dissemination of findings</p>	<p>none</p>	<p>optimistic timeline change</p> <p>personalized workshop to encourage participants to explore technology</p> <p>grounding ourselves by asking how these technologies can improve the work of the project and specifically, streamline the flow of communication</p>
<p>NE Nebraska Writing Project</p> <p>Cyndi Dwyer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce podcasting and online collaborative document 	<p>introduced podcasting and online forums to 12 TCs</p>		<p>winter weather</p>

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TL and Susan Martens-Baker, Co-Director (Gail)	sharing Web tools to build on existing website features and TC research work in technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase TC knowledge of Web 2.0 tools • promote creative writing and spoken word • Extend the work of the 2007 Tech Institute • Increase leadership capacity and keep TCs connected to the site • Enhance website's capability for multimedia and interactive sharing. 	podcasting and online sharing are means for achieving other goals		
NJ National Writing Project at Rutgers University Joseph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support Tech Team in the development of technology classroom projects • Investigate 	-more interest in joining tech team, dir. increases funds to cover additional		-"already behind schedule" tech retreat rescheduled for August -not clear if they are on track for develop of

State Site Name Applicant Name	Goals	Successes	Questions from Participants	Struggles/Challenges
<p>Conroy, TL and Kimberly Lanza, Director (Susan Walsh)</p> <p>(Felicia)</p>	<p>how new content management systems offer a wide range of tools for communications and collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host a technology retreat for the site's leadership team during which the results of the classroom work and CMS exploration will be presented. 	<p>participants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -one mtg. held and folks given Richardson's text -E-Anthology Facilitator for SI will be involved in planning -Executive committee use Google.docs to collaboratively write the 2008 CFA 		<p>tech classroom projects</p>
<p>OH Mid Ohio Writing Project</p> <p>Terri Godby, TL and Cheryl Canada, Dir.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on technology education for the leadership team • Investigate new technologies and professional development offerings for teacher consultants and area 	<p>-Leadership introduced to tech tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --MOWP blog for archiving tech discussions --use of gmail and Google docs for collaborative writing -5 person tech team established -plans for Tech Tuesdays made & advertised 	<p>Tech team identified list of questions for how they will operate:</p> <p>1) What is our vision after this year? Where do we go from here? How do we keep the</p>	<p>getting site programs to use technology</p>

State Site Name Applicant Name	Goals	Successes	Questions from Participants	Struggles/Challenges
(Felicia)	<p>teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a five person tech team <p>Sponsor a series of technology learning sessions, Tech Tuesdays</p>		<p>energy moving?</p> <p>2) What is a good time and day for all of us to meet? We usually work through googledocs since we can never agree on a time and day.</p> <p>3) How do we get the leadership team to see technology is an important part of their programs? How do we train them? What if they resist?</p> <p>4) How will we (tech team) be involved in SI 2008? What will be our role?</p> <p>5) Do we need more</p>	

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			<p>training in our areas of expertise? Where do we get this training? (We have purchased some books to help in this area)</p> <p>6) How do we get TC's to buy into our blog? Do we require it? How do we advertise for this?</p> <p>7) What is the future for the website? What is our vision for next year? Do we want to add a blog, interactive part, etc?</p> <p>8) Do we want to continue Tech Tuesdays this summer?</p>	

State Site Name Applicant Name	Goals	Successes	Questions from Participants	Struggles/Challenges
			<p>Next year?</p> <p>9) Do we want to offer a Writing through Technology Summer Camp?</p> <p>10) What topics do we start off with for our Tech Tuesdays? What do teachers want to learn? What are the hot topics right now?</p> <p>11) Do we charge for Tech Tuesdays? If we do, how much? Do we give credit for the class?</p> <p>12) How do we market Tech Tuesdays in order to reach as many teachers as</p>	

State Site Name Applicant Name	Goals	Successes	Questions from Participants	Struggles/Challenges
	<p>be added to a recently created facilitator's handbook.</p>		<p>are some successful ways to assess comfort and skill levels of participants before workshops? What do you need to know about participants to support the goals of the workshop? Would we achieve more if we split the group and work with them based on their readiness levels?</p>	