Remembering and re-membering our beliefs as a National Writing Project community, the fifth annual Directors Retreat participants took a serious look at the NWP Basic Assumptions. Drawing from a process used with local sites, pairs of participants were assigned one assumption to reflect on and make concrete, using this prompt: “Because we believe_____, we would ______. We would never ______.”

Exploring our basic assumptions, we created colorful songs, skits, and posters. In the responses that follow, you may want to imagine us singing in rounds and visualize skits with Mary Ann Smith as a host, while others provided “a word from our sponsor.” While the printed page cannot recapture the retreaters’ creative outpourings, these written samples do reflect their collective wisdom.

**Basic Assumption 1**
Because we believe that, working as partners, universities and schools can articulate and promote effective school reform

We would
- use (the assumption) as a platform for dialogue
- share work between peers
- model best practices
- learn from each other

We would never
- work alone
- offer only single workshops, except as a demonstration of what is available in a writing project (providing a way to lead into series of work).
Basic Assumption 11
Because we believe the NWP, by promoting no single “right” approach to the teaching of writing, allows a critical examination of a variety of approaches from a variety of sources

We would
• invite teachers to share their best practices
• explore and share resources
• invite different perspectives
• promote dialogue K-16
• support authentic teacher inquiry
• provide a range of resources
• provide a public forum for dialogue and discussion
• provide opportunity for community-based writing

We would never
• engage in a critical examination of a variety of approaches
• expect all to be open to and respect others’ experiences and perspectives.

We would
• require a cookie-cutter, lock-step approach to writing
• promote only one theory of composing
• become overly identified with one school of research
• discredit the experience of classroom teachers
• proclaim there’s only one Truth.