

## **Project Outreach Annual Report 2007-2008**

**Submitted by Tom Fox**

### **Summary of the year's work**

The third cohort of ten project outreach sites began its work in 2006. During that first year, the participating sites conducted site-self-studies that examined their publicity, their programming, and their participants. In 2007-2008, sites completed their year of action research and began developing plans to disseminate their learnings. Though Project Outreach has a clear progression of activities (site self-study, action, dissemination), our communication to sites stresses the interconnection among the activities and the ongoing nature of each.

To support the 2007-2008 work, our leadership team facilitated the following activities:

1. Annual Meeting workshops, including two "Reading the Research" sessions, one on Whiteness Studies, another on English Learners and Academic Literacy; a Site Development workshop on site self-studies; and a Friday session "The Power of Words."
2. Leadership team meetings at the Annual Meeting that include site coordinators from each site and the nine national coordinators.
3. Ongoing phone check-ins from National Coordinators designed to support the site's action plans.
4. Site visits that support the site's action plan, consulting on changes to all parts of the writing project work.
5. The Dissemination Planning Meeting, which brought together a team of three from each site to create a plan to support continued action and dissemination at their local site.
6. Site awards to support a year-long structure of support for dissemination.

### *Lists of Participating Sites and Leadership Team Membership*

The ten sites in Project Outreach 3 are

1. CA Central California WP
2. GA Red Clay WP
3. KY Morehead WP
4. MA Western Massachusetts WP
5. MO Greater Kansas City WP
6. MS University of Mississippi WP
7. MT Montana Writing Project
8. NY Hudson Valley WP
9. OR Oregon Writing Project at Eastern Oregon University
10. PA Western Pennsylvania Writing Project

The National Coordinators are

**Joye Alberts**, National Writing Project  
**Tom Fox**, National Writing Project  
**Vanessa Brown**, Philadelphia WP  
**Kim Douillard**, San Diego Area WP  
**Lynette Herring-Harris**, National Writing Project  
**Norma Mota-Altman** UCLA WP  
**Denise Patmon**, Boston WP  
**LaWanda Ransom**, Coastal Georgia WP  
**Melba Salazar-Lucio**, Sabal Palms WP  
**Rick Snodgrass** is the Program Specialist.

### **Reflections on the year's work**

The ten sites involved in Cohort 3 of Project Outreach wrote "action plans" at the end of the 2006-2007 program year. A short list summary of each is listed below:

1. **Central California WP** implemented an "early and comprehensive recruitment plan" to attract more diversity to their summer institute by focusing on the southern section of their service area, an area that has more Latino/a students and teachers.
2. **Red Clay WP** devised a three part plan to 1) bring their insights about children in poverty to the leadership of Red Clay WP, 2) revise all Red Clay WP publicity to increase the accessibility of the site to teachers in low-income communities, and 3) initiate community-based programs in low-income neighborhoods.
3. **Morehead WP** developed a plan to enrich the follow-up to their summer institute in order to facilitate increased capacity for inservice.
4. **Western Massachusetts WP** plans to focus professional development on the Massachusetts Test for Educator's License in order to reach a diverse group of teachers who struggle with the test.
5. **Greater Kansas City WP** developed a more accessible and collaborative leadership structure for their summer institute planning that will result in increased relevance.
6. **University of Mississippi WP** designed a plan to bring the goals of access, relevance, and diversity to the leadership team, working primarily on the ideological stance of the site.
7. **Montana WP** proposed Open Programs to be conducted on Indian reservation sites; they are designed to implement the state law Indian Education for All and to identify potential applicants to their summer institute.
8. **Hudson Valley WP** planned to create a new leadership structure that would be more accessible to teacher leaders in the project, one that would improve communication among leaders and provide opportunities for new professional development in low-income communities.

9. **Oregon WP at Eastern Oregon University** “revised and redesigned” its summer institute to make it more relevant to teachers in their service area and thus increased access to the site.
10. **Western Pennsylvania WP** planned to redesign its professional development program to reach teachers in under-served areas.

Two more elaborated examples illustrate the kinds of work done by sites during the action year:

#### *Montana Writing Project*

At the Montana Writing Project, designing Open Programs to support the state of Montana’s implementation of the Indian Education for All law emerged in the very first Project Outreach summer institute. The plan was to build MWP’s capacity to do work in this area by gathering together interested teachers to design the programs, sending them out to conduct them, and bringing them back together to learn from their experiences. The Open Programs are to be held at reservation schools.

This well-designed plan, in order to have the greatest effect on MWP’s capacity, needed to be vetted, endorsed, and embraced by the site’s leadership team. Yet, the leadership team had been an informal gathering of people doing work in the project, and had not traditionally included a large number of native teachers. The director, in consultation with the local leadership team, restructured the leadership team, drawing on the expertise from Native teachers developed over the last three years, both in Missoula and in their satellite institute in Browning on the Blackfeet reservation. Native teachers comprised nearly one –half of the new leadership team. Facilitation teams will include at least one Native teacher. Teams have formed and the planning has begun.

Additionally, director Heather Bruce secured a private grant to give ongoing support and learning opportunities to the leaders of the Open Programs.

#### *Greater Kansas City Area Writing Project*

The Greater Kansas City Area Writing Project began its Project Outreach participation as a relatively underdeveloped site. Through ongoing contact with other sites, presentations by National Coordinators, and readings, GKCWP developed a greater sense of ambition for itself, the support of which was in the Project Outreach goals of access, relevance, and diversity. They recognized that the summer invitational institute, as the engine that drives leadership, was the key place to start, and they also recognized that *how* sites structure leadership impacts the invitation to participate. So they created a summer institute leadership team (SILT) of teacher leaders that replaced the director and co-director doing the planning on their own.

Their work, guided by the goals of Project Outreach, has wholesale changed their summer institute, from the publicity materials to the choice of readings, to the coaching for the summer institute.

## **Plans for the Year Ahead**

The 2008-09 year focuses on supporting the dissemination of Project Outreach 3's knowledge.

### *Dissemination Coordinators at the participating sites*

To support dissemination at the ten Project Outreach 3 sites, each site selected a Dissemination Coordinator (DC), who would track, encourage, and support dissemination at the local site; provide resources for participants engaged in dissemination; support the design of national dissemination efforts. Dissemination Coordinators serve as the point person for the site's efforts this year. National Coordinators communicate with the site through the Dissemination Coordinator (often on a conference call with the director). The National Coordinators meet with the Dissemination Coordinators at the Annual Meeting to support their efforts.

### *Monthly Phone Check-ins*

In addition to our usual monthly check-in call between National Coordinators and the sites, we have budgeted for a site visit for each site during spring 2009. We anticipate that this visit be coordinating with dissemination support events, such as writing/composing retreats.

### *Site Visits focused on dissemination*

Site visits are a regular part of our support for sites in Project Outreach 3. In spring of 2009, we plan to conduct specialized visits that focus on dissemination. Sites will need to prepare events and meetings, such as response groups or writing retreats, that the National Coordinator can assist with. This will help site prepare documents, video, and other forms of dissemination as a draft.

### *Summer Dissemination Retreat*

The site visits will ensure that participants have drafts of resources to bring to the Project Outreach Dissemination Retreat to be held at the Tubac resort near Tucson, AZ, July 8-12, 2009. This retreat invites two participants from each site, with a draft required for admission.

### *National Coordinators disseminate, too*

In addition to supporting the local sites' dissemination efforts, the National Coordinators will also engage in their own dissemination projects. All of the National Coordinators have been involved in various efforts to support diversity in

the National Writing Project, and many of them have been involved with Project Outreach's previous two cohorts. In short, there is a great deal of knowledge and experience that is largely untapped in our leadership team. We plan to participate in the National Programs Dissemination Retreat in January 2009. As an example of the type of work we intend to complete, Denise Patmon, Tom Fox, Norma Mota-Altman, and Heather Bruce are presenting a workshop at the Conference on College Composition and Communication that will articulate the process through which Project Outreach designs real change in writing projects. The goal of this workshop is to make this knowledge available to institutional contexts outside of the National Writing Project. This goal will no doubt help us to clarify and refine our knowledge.