



UPDATE

Center Workshop Hits the Road

The Center for the Study of Writing and Literacy is a federally funded research center charged with studying issues of writing and literacy education. The results of Center studies are regularly published in professional journals as well as the Center's own series of technical reports and occasional papers. Now, in response to feedback from National Writing Project liaisons and others, the Center has put together a traveling workshop designed to present Center research to classroom teachers.

CSW Associate Director Sandra Schecter conceptualized the workshop and adapted the research studies to a hands-on "workshop" format. Participants will have the opportunity to apply current research on writing and the role of writing in the classroom to their immediate classroom contexts.

The workshop consists of three parts, with strands tailored to either elementary or secondary teachers: "How Writing Comes to Be," "Understanding Our Students," and "Understanding Our Expectations as Teachers." Schools or districts can request individual sections of the workshop that interest them, or request the workshop in its entirety.

Practical strategies, including teacher-student conferencing, peer tutoring, peer response groups, journal writing, collaborative writing, and writing assessment, are emphasized. At the end of the workshop, participants will have clarified for themselves the importance of writing within their classroom curriculum and come to terms with ways to use writing to enhance student learning.

The workshop hits the road this month with Schecter conducting a two-day run in Reno, Nevada. The Center is now accepting requests for bookings. For more information, including costs, contact the CSW at (510) 643-7022, or write to: National Center for the Study of Writing and Literacy, 5513 Tolman Hall, School of Education, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720.

What is Suggestopedia?

On Thursday, February 18, the Center for the Study of Writing and Literacy sponsored a "brown bag lunch" featuring a presentation by Dr. Anastasia Papaconstantinou, a visiting scholar from the University of Athens, Greece. Her talk, titled "Suggestopedia: A Magic Art of Learning a Language," introduced participants to the theory and method of suggestopedia, a technique for teaching and learning a second language.

Suggestopedia addresses the psychological aspects of learning a second language through enhancing the memory and reducing the "affective filter," an unconscious barrier to learning.

Proponents of suggestopedia believe in a holistic approach to second language instruction. Typical features, according to Papaconstantinou, are relaxation, music, art, and large size learning materials. The music, art, and bold materials all assist the memory, and accelerated learning takes place.

For example, students may be asked to don masks during a drama exercise, symbolizing the idea that one becomes a different person while speaking the second language. The masks also serve to lower the student's self-consciousness, and thus facilitate memory and understanding of the second language.

The suggestopedia teaching/learning method is fun; students learn through games, drama, and music. The environment is supportive; mistakes are considered opportunities for learning.

Papaconstantinou's book, *Suggestopedia: An Art of Teaching, An Art of Learning*, published by Hellinika Grammata in Athens, Greece, is among the many books and journals in the CSW's Resource Room, located at 5509 Tolman Hall. The CSW periodically hosts informal "brown bag" lunches which are free and open to the public.

--PTL