

NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT AT WORK

---

# Summer Institute

## Developing Citizen-Teachers Through Performance Arts in the Summer Institute

by Nancy Mellin McCracken and Anthony Manna,  
with Darla Wagner and Bonnie Molnar  
*National Writing Project at Kent State University, Ohio*

The National Writing Project at Work monograph series documents how the National Writing Project model is implemented and developed at local sites across the country. These monographs describe NWP work, which is often shared informally or in workshops through the NWP network, and offer detailed chronological accounts for sites interested in adopting and adapting the models. The programs described are inspired by the mission and vision of NWP and illustrate the local creativity and responsiveness of individual writing project sites. Written by teams of teachers and site directors—the people who create and nurture local programs—the texts reflect different voices and points of view, and bring a rich perspective to the work described. Each National Writing Project at Work monograph provides a developmental picture of the local program from the initial idea through planning, implementation, and refinement over time. The authors retell their journeys, what they achieved, how they were challenged, and how and why they succeeded.

Please see the inside back cover for more information.

NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT AT WORK

Summer Institute

Developing Citizen-Teachers  
Through Performance Arts in the  
Summer Institute

by Nancy Mellin McCracken and Anthony Manna,  
with Darla Wagner and Bonnie Molnar

*National Writing Project  
at Kent State University, Ohio*



National Writing Project  
Berkeley, California

## **NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT**

The mission of the National Writing Project is to improve the teaching of writing and improve learning in the nation's schools. Through its professional development model, the National Writing Project recognizes the primary importance of teacher knowledge, expertise, and leadership.

The National Writing Project believes that access to high-quality educational experiences is a basic right of all learners and a cornerstone of equity. Through its extensive network of teachers, the National Writing Project seeks to promote exemplary instruction of writing in every classroom in America.

The National Writing Project values diversity—our own as well as that of our students, their families, and their communities. We recognize that our lives and practices are enriched when those with whom we interact represent diversities of race, gender, class, ethnicity, and language.

© 2006 by the National Writing Project.

All rights reserved.

Developmental Editor: Elizabeth Radin Simons

Editors: Joye Alberts, Amy Bauman

Design: Diana Nankin, 38degrees.com

National Writing Project  
University of California  
2105 Bancroft, #1042  
Berkeley, CA 94720-1042

Telephone: 510-642-0963

Fax: 510-642-4545

Email: [nwp@writingproject.org](mailto:nwp@writingproject.org)

[www.writingproject.org](http://www.writingproject.org)

## FOREWORD

More than thirty years after the first Bay Area Writing Project Invitational Summer Institute in 1974, nearly 200 National Writing Project sites continue to hold invitational institutes each summer. Several thousand teachers participate yearly in these summer institutes, and every year new groups of summer fellows at local sites across the country describe their summer institute experience as “life-changing,” “the place where I rediscovered myself as a writer,” “the best professional development I have had in all my years of teaching,” or “the reason I have decided to continue to teach.”

This set of monographs in the NWP at Work series offers readers a behind-the-scenes look at the intentional and complex thinking that supports teachers as professionals, as researchers, and as writers in NWP summer institutes. Collectively, the monographs provide insight into both the principles shared by writing project sites and the unique imprints that individual sites put on their invitational institutes.

National Writing Project summer institutes are lively venues where, for four or five weeks every summer, groups of experienced teachers, K–16, gather on a college or university campus to engage in collaborative learning and inquiry into teaching practice. With teacher knowledge and expertise squarely at the center, participants discuss current research, share demonstrations, and brave going public with their own writing. During the process, not only do they develop their capacity as leaders at their schools and writing project sites; their understanding of what it means to be professional teachers and colleagues is transformed, and they take this new vision back into their classrooms.

What makes each writing project site unique is the nature of its local context, the challenges presented by that context, and the kind of risk taking involved in addressing the site’s concerns. Each of the monographs in this set describes in vivid detail the way a writing project site identified and took steps to refine a local practice in order to improve the impact of its summer institutes. The monographs’ foci range from developing more effective recruitment to improving the responses to demonstrations. In one case, a site determined that application to its summer institute needed to be a year-long process and required a greater pool of applicants and a structure for increasing diversity. In another, site leaders took a magnifying glass to the process of response to teacher demonstrations and developed a collaborative approach that moved the responses from a kind of “thank you very much” to a richly nuanced critique. In yet another case, site leaders developed a summer institute curriculum that included the arts as a focus, from the “writing wall” created by participants the first day to a group improvisation at the end. No matter what the primary focus of the monograph, readers will notice a strong commitment to equity and diversity throughout.

While each site's summer institute has its own distinctive stamp, the institutes share common components:

- Teachers attend voluntarily, by invitation.
- Their participation places them in a national network of K–12 and university practitioners.
- All are exposed to the power of collaborative practices.

Significantly, the summer institute is not a venue for turnaround training. For teachers, it is a form of professional development that focuses on classroom and social practices that take into account their local context, opportunities, and challenges. The summer institute is never a “one size fits all” approach to professional development.

At the site level the institute purposefully prepares teacher-leaders to extend and deepen the ongoing work of the local site. Following the summer institute, teacher-leaders continue their connection to the professional community in a number of ways. For example, they lead study groups, conduct classroom inquiry, join the local site's leadership team, and facilitate professional development in the site's programs in schools and districts. These multiple opportunities to exercise leadership become for the teachers an ongoing form of professional development. These and other activities all begin with an intensive summer institute experience. Nor should we overlook the power of personal connections that begin at the summer institute and continue to deepen as teacher-consultants find their place in the NWP network.

The National Writing Project at Work monograph series debuted in 2002 with four monographs focusing on professional development, followed by four additional models of professional development published in 2004. The monographs, authored by teams of writing project teachers and site directors, focus on various aspects of the work of local writing project sites. We are pleased to add the summer institute monographs to the NWP at Work series. We are hopeful that teachers, site directors, policymakers, academics, and all who work in the realm of school reform will find much to think about in this series. This second set will be followed by monographs on continuity and on sustaining professional communities at local writing project sites.

The NWP at Work Advisory Board:

JOYE ALBERTS  
SHIRLEY BROWN  
ANN B. DOBIE  
ELYSE EIDMAN-AADAHL  
TOM FOX  
PATRICIA MCGONEGAL  
MICHEL MATHIS  
PAMELA WILLIAMS MORGAN  
MARCI RESNICK  
ELIZABETH RADIN SIMONS  
GWENDOLYN WILLIAMS

## INTRODUCTION

*“Real performance is as creative an act as composition.”—Susanne K. Langer, *Feeling and Form**

Why focus on the arts in a professional development program aimed at improving student essay writing? This is a question that our board of regents asked us to answer the first year that they provided additional funding for our summer institute—that of the National Writing Project at Kent State University (NWP@KSU) in Ohio. The question arose in response to our having scheduled “Lunchtime at the Movies” to watch *Il Postino*, the Italian film about a simple postman who learns how to make “metafore” in a vividly imagined mentorship with poet Pablo Neruda. Our anonymous proposal reviewer pointed out that the grant funds were designed to prevent high school students from needing remedial writing in college. “What does watching Italian films have to do with improving writing the English essay?” the reviewer asked. We appreciated the question.

Nancy and Tony are professors of English education and English at Kent State University. Darla is assistant principal at Solon Middle School and former English department chair at Columbiana High School, and Bonnie Molnar is a teacher-consultant who teaches English at South Range High School. Cumulatively, our classroom experiences range from preschool to graduate school. Nancy and Darla shaped the first NWP@KSU Summer Institute in 1997 with their colleagues Deborah Dortch and Nanci Bush. Bonnie has been a teacher-consultant with our site since the first summer in 1997. Tony joined the directors’ team in 2001. Written as a collaborative effort, this monograph is our answer to the above question about the relation between watching a film and improving writing. We hope that in the following pages, as we describe some of our site’s summer activities, the connections will become more apparent.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> As Lorri Neilsen reminds us, “a more artistic, or holistic approach [is] one which allows for recursiveness and for intuitive leaps which defy audit. . . . Exploring artistic alternatives (poetic, fictional, narrative, dramatic, and anecdotal, among others) to writing research, pushes our inquiry as much as it challenges our writing.” (1998, 275–276). For the teacher-consultants in our summer institute “learning to write is a matter of learning to shatter the silences, of making meaning, of learning to learn” (Maxine Greene cited in Neilsen, 276).



# DEVELOPING CITIZEN-TEACHERS THROUGH PERFORMANCE ARTS IN THE SUMMER INSTITUTE

by Nancy Mellin McCracken and Anthony Manna,  
with Darla Wagner and Bonnie Molnar

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The central reason for our focus on the arts in the summer institute is the desire to support education reform—with a particular eye to social justice in our schools. Quite simply, we believe that when we open the field wide enough to allow everyone's ideas to be discovered and explored through multiple aesthetic modes, an equitable opportunity for all students to succeed as writers emerges.

Almost all of the rhetoric and practice around proficiency tests and standards in our region assumes a cultivated blindness toward issues of social justice.<sup>2</sup> There is little or no recognition of the effects of poverty and racism in standards that declare what all first-graders should know and be able to do or in curricular materials designed to be used with all children as preparation for success on reading and writing tests. The journey toward achievement of the state standards is far more arduous, circuitous, and fraught with obstacles for some of our children and teachers than it is for others. Current assessment practices and standardized instruction are unjust culturally and economically for many of our children and teachers. For some of our teachers, the opportunity to participate in a writing project summer institute has meant a chance to boost already high proficiency scores and reap the attendant economic rewards for the school. For others, participation in a writing project summer institute has held the promise of support for continued work on a small, individual, and often unrecognized Freirean literacy project (Freire 1992).

For these teachers, the primary goal is to teach neighborhood kids how to use words to navigate in a hostile world. We were determined not to turn a blind eye to the disparities in school funding that characterize our state's education system and that have undermined the success of many one-size-fits-all models of professional development. We wanted to support explicitly the development of what Todd DeStigter has since called "the citizen teacher: a person invigorated by hope, a person who believes and acts on the notion that democratic education can further social justice and the release of human potential" (2001, 13). We want our teacher-consultants to be citizen-teachers in the sense that they are rough and ready to battle for their children's literacy despite the oppression they may encounter in their work. We believe that the way to arm a group of citizen-teachers is not just to honor and support their knowledge and provide time for sharing their best practice. Something more is needed, something "life-changing"—as so many National Writing Project participants say of the summer institute. For us, the something more is the arts developed by teachers as active participants in an artists' community.

---

<sup>2</sup> DeStigter describes the effect of participation in such discourse: "When I consider the challenges to democracy either in the localized settings of schools or in the broader public spheres of U.S. society, I feel a mild but incessant form of anxiety that smolders in me like a low-grade fever. As a citizen of the United States, I worry about what I see as the degradation of democracy in our nation's public policy and civic life. I worry, for instance, about the growing separation in this country between the rich and the poor. . . . I am thinking, too, of the alarming rise in the frequency of and weight given to standardized tests that measure 'knowledge' divorced from any kind of social or ethical context" (2001, 14).

From our perspective, as writers, performers, viewers, and readers of artistic works ourselves, we recognize the lie in the old school saw that if you can't write the answer down in complete sentences, you don't know the answer. We know how much more is known by writers than is available for expression in the linear strings of nouns and verbs that compose sentences, paragraphs, and essays. (Howard Gardner's [1993] "multiple intelligences" theory is but one attempt to recognize this.) We and our students have learned to use the arts as a bridge that provides access to the kinds of knowledge (and also the misunderstandings) that refuse initial attempts to fit them into prefabricated expository essay structures. With James Britton, we value the *expressive* and *poetic* functions of language (Pradl 1982) for their own uses and as necessary to the full development of the *transactional*, *expository* functions measured on proficiency tests. We have learned in each of our classrooms that previously unexpressed ideas, once performed or shared publicly in artistic forms, become available for further exploration, revision, and even shaping into the highly valued academic expository essay form demanded by academic content standards.

A second related basis for our use of the arts in the summer institute is our belief with Maxine Greene that "the arts keep us alert and in a state of wakefulness, of connection, to nurture the observant and observing self" (1995). As our participants work with aesthetic projects, they grow attentive to the complexity of their experiences as teachers and discover a renewed sense of agency within their writing and teaching selves.

While the state and national curriculum theory seems to be returning with a vengeance to what is known as "the Tyler technical rationale" (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, and Taubman 1996), with its lock-step, assembly-line model of education, our summer institute has held firmly to the belief that the aesthetic is the engine for cognitive development. We believe that nondiscursive language provides access to complex understandings that are inaccessible in the purely discursive (Langer 1953). With Elliot W. Eisner (1994) and Maxine Greene (1995), we embrace the arts as a way of knowing and coming to know. With Dorothy Heathcote (1984), we believe that when people move inside a drama they are cocreating and are able to make visible their understanding as they discover new perspectives.

Finally, we find ourselves agreeing with Rubin's belief that "[a]rtist teachers invest more in, and profit more from, their work. . . . [T]hey experiment freely, often replacing a routine maneuver with something that is better" (1985, 19). Over time we have learned that much of the transformative power of artistic work in our summer institute is related to its performative nature. Our teacher-consultants credit their work done as performance as the most teacher-empowering part of the summer institute. There's something high at stake in the arts, after all. The arts put our teachers on the line, and, as the summer institute intensifies, the risks, the honesty, and the energy intensify. We've discovered over time that the same potential is true for students.

## BEGINNINGS AND UNEXPECTED CONSEQUENCES

When, as a site of the National Writing Project, we began planning our first invitational summer institute at Kent State University in 1996, we decided to focus on the arts as our primary means of teacher development. At that point we had two reasons. First, we wanted to tap into our teachers' creativity, which we felt was being ignored in our state-mandated inservice programs aimed at raising proficiency test scores. And second, we shared the belief that successful writing in one mode often grows out of writing in other modes, across the "universe of discourse" (Moffett 1968). We understood from the start that we would have to make a curricular trade-off: any time scheduled for creative work would be time not available for direct focus on academic essay writing and its grade-level proficiency. We judged this trade-off to be a strategic risk worth taking because in our own teaching experiences, we had discovered that writers who worked with poetry and short memoir were learning to focus a laser beam of attention onto word choice and sentence structure, as well as organization and what is sometimes called the "main idea." Skill with these aspects of writing is required for success with the kind of essay demanded in the proficiency testing tied to our standards.

During our very first institute, we discovered powerful, unexpected consequences of our focus on artistic work. We expected our participants to enjoy their creative writing opportunities and to discover ways to fold creative work into their classrooms as a means of motivating reluctant writers and creating a sense of classroom community. What we did not expect was the role that artistic performance would play in bringing many of our teachers a new sense of personal and professional empowerment. Now, ten years and ten summer institutes later, we are more confident about our early decision to turn toward the aesthetic as a means of supporting education reform. We know that changing the life and practices in schools demands touching teachers' sense of agency, and we have discovered that engaging them intensively in performances of aesthetic work is a powerful means to this end.

As we worked together in writing this piece, we deepened our understanding of how and why the aesthetic strands of our work have been successful in supporting teachers in the no-nonsense work of helping all students reach high national and state standards for literacy and learning. We challenged each other to explain and refine our practices and to be explicit about how our aesthetic work with teachers addresses their need to teach to ever higher standards in conditions that seem ever more challenging. This monograph is our effort to share our aesthetic approach to the summer institute, through which we hope to nurture citizen-teachers. In the following pages we describe three aesthetic approaches we use every year in our summer institute, showing how each addresses our academic content standards for writing while developing the capacity of our participants as citizen-teachers who serve as leaders in their school communities. Along with providing illustrations of our summer institute, we reflect on how we have grown as directors along with our participants. In the final section of this monograph, we explore the tensions teachers experience when they move from the safety and artistic energy of the summer

institute back to their schools, where the leadership is driven by state assessments that do not suit the ideals expressed in our state standards and by school cultures that undermine teachers' sense of agency at every turn. We close with a discussion of our realization of the important role this tension plays in supporting effective education reform.

## THE SUMMER INSTITUTE AS A COMMUNITY OF ARTISTS

How do we get our participants to invest in work that is normally reserved for “artists”—specially gifted people called poets, actors, and artists? Our answer is that we take care to make all of the activities we do with teachers as inviting and as natural as talking among friends. We show our own improvisatory processes, and we rely on our participants' native talent—or their beginners' luck. For the five weeks we are together, we declare ourselves a community of teachers playing with arts that we hope to use with our students in the coming year. We know that a number of our teachers would never apply to a creative writing or drama institute. They would not view it as appropriate to their work. But the fact that we are all teachers engaged in artistic work that will help us grow as teachers of writing, math, science, or social studies makes the prospect inviting. Maggie Anderson, the summer institute's poet-in-residence in the first several years, has written a poem that serves as a kind of anthem for the way we use the arts to get our work done. The poem, called “Art in America,” describes a day three artist friends spend together in the country, and it ends this way:

But today, we think we'll  
Get it right because  
We're not alone  
And we're laughing,  
Arguing a bit,  
Examining the vegetables,  
Making up our minds,  
And  
Saying how we think we might  
Believe in the perfection  
Of communities of artists,  
The common work among us.  
What one of us does not get said,  
The others will.

(Anderson 1986, 39)

Three of our central aesthetic activities—the writing wall, performance poetry, and process drama—have been powerful tools for helping our participants shape their work as citizen-teachers. Each activity was present in some form in our summer institute from the start, and each has evolved and grown in importance over the years. Each begins the first week of the summer institute and continues developing throughout all five weeks, interwoven with, and supportive of, our core work of demonstration lessons, writing response groups, and research into best practices. (See appendix A for a sample schedule of our summer institute.) Like our colleagues at other writing project sites’ summer institutes, we have selected approaches that are rooted in our individual experience and passion. We know that many other sites do similar work with the arts—writing exhibitions, performance poetry, drama work, music, or dance. In fact, we have also begun to use visual arts with good results in our summer institute, although we do not discuss this mode here. We are not advocating any particular aesthetic work here. What we are advocating—and we hope clearly illustrating—is that summer institutes tap into the energy that teachers have within and can draw on as they grow as writers and active shapers of their lived experience and as change agents in their schools and educational communities. We believe that writing project teachers who are energized by their successful public engagement with the arts have a better chance of helping their students grow as writers and as active members of their own communities.

## THE WRITING WALL

The writing wall, the first attempt at “going public” with things close to the heart, takes shape the first morning of the summer institute, but it begins more than a month earlier. At the preinstitute orientation meeting, our participants are invited to conduct a “literacy archaeological dig,” seeking artifacts that will help them construct an answer to the question, Who have you been, and who are you coming to be as a writer? Participants are asked to contact relatives and friends and make forays into attics and basements to find traces of their past lives as writers, and to bring the artifacts they collect to the first day of the institute. They are told that they will be given time and space on our writing wall to display their chosen artifacts.

“What counts as an artifact in this literacy dig?” someone always asks.

“Anything on which you’ve left your intentional writer’s mark,” is the answer. Over the years, participants have included these artifacts and many others: signatures on legal documents, letters to unborn children, postcards, diaries, love letters, first grade drawings, middle school notes still folded in their origami triangles, graded high school essays, and yellowed newspaper articles. With this activity we are telling participants that where you came from and who you are matter to us in this place. What better foundation could be built for taking a risk as learners?

On the first day of the institute, as our new colleagues arrive with their boxes of artifacts, we point them to a table stocked with a variety of eight-foot lengths of

fabric, boxes of quilting pins, and duct tape. Each participant chooses a piece of fabric and a space on our meeting room walls, and, affixing the artifacts to the fabric, constructs a visual display that becomes part of our writing wall. As co-directors of the summer institute, we contribute to the wall as well. Since some of us have been creating these displays for many years now, we continue to display some of our earliest treasures each year, but each year we also find new things to add to our exhibits.

We think of the writing wall as a cave painting: it is the way we claim the room for ourselves. At the end of the first hour, our meeting room has been transformed into a museum of natural writing history with the rough-cut, colorful banners, each covered with the artifacts a participant has carefully arranged to make a public, artistic statement of who he or she has been and is coming to be as a writer. Collectively we have constructed an exhibit of the many roles writing plays in our lives. The literacy archaeological dig, which is conducted in private and then made public through exhibition, is our first attempt at aesthetic work performed in community.

Once all the participants are finished setting up their displays, we leave the room and then return to experience it anew. Participants, reentering with a fresh cup of coffee, are given a pack of sticky notes and invited to begin a walkabout, sampling the writings on the wall and stopping to affix notes to pieces that catch their attention or make them curious. This is a time of pure magic. We smile as we watch participants reading one another's work, their self-conscious, first-day shyness melting away as they enact the loving attention to artistic work described by poet and essayist Mark Doty in his essay on still life paintings:

. . . I have been drawn into the orbit of a painting, have allowed myself to be pulled into its sphere by casual attraction deepening to something more compelling. I have felt the energy and life of the painting's will; I have been held there, instructed. And the overall effect, the result of looking and looking into its brimming surface as long as I could look, is love by which I mean a sense of tenderness toward experience, of being held within an intimacy with the things of the world. (2001, 4)

Later in the summer, we will read and discuss Doty's essay and its implications for writers and writing teachers, but in these first hours, the only sound will be soft jazz playing as we move around the room, reading piece after piece and writer after writer. Because it is the first day, most of the participants don't really know their writer-colleagues by name and face, and in this happy ignorance, they read the performances of strangers whom they are about to discover as community members. The first layer of our participants' performance, then, is the writing wall. The experience of the walkabout is mysterious and enticing. Debriefing it later in a circle, we record comments such as these: "Who wrote all those amazing haiku postcards and had friends who actually kept them over the years?" or "I can't believe someone else brought in a whole diary from sixth grade."

As the days go along, we will connect the people in our writing groups and reading groups with the writing they have put up on the wall from other eras of their literacy lives, and we will return to read their writing with more knowing eyes. But on this first day, all of us read with a kind of wonder, thinking "So this is what people value as writers!" We also read with a sense of awe and intimidation as participant

Bonnie Molnar (1999) wrote in her summer institute reflection:<sup>3</sup>

I never defined myself as a writer, not even when I had success at it, and had never, ever, taken a class that had writing foremost in the course title. Still, [the summer institute] was just a writing class. Really, how hard could it be? The first day we were told to bring artifacts of our lives as writers to hang on our “walls.” All I had were letters, grocery lists, and dozens of literary criticism papers of which I had once been proud, but which had never held their charm much past the particular course’s end. But it couldn’t be that bad. I pinned my earnest analysis of *Moby Dick* to my writing wall and walked around the room as we were invited to do and read the writing of my classmates. When I read Terry Murcko’s poetry, I knew I was in over my head. I wasn’t wrong.

But as it turns out, Bonnie wasn’t in over her head; she was simply unaccustomed to working outside the impersonal academic genre. Working with poetry and other genres that were new for her, she found a confidence in her own creative voice, and was the first of that summer’s group to have a piece of her summer writing published in a professional journal (Molnar 1999).

After the walkabout, participants meet with the dialogue-journal partners they were assigned at orientation, and they conduct literacy archaeological dig interviews in which each asks the other to talk about his or her own dig and its results. We provide guiding questions for this interview:

- What was hard to find? What was easy?
- What writing was well remembered, but long gone?
- What writing was found but not brought in to be shared?
- What kinds of writing did you find on other people’s walls that were different from your own? What kinds were similar?
- What functions does writing play in people’s lives?

Together the partners reflect on the different roles writing plays at different points in people’s lives. They begin to think about how their own writing wall sections speak to the question of who they are coming to be as writers. After the partner interviews, we gather as a whole group, and the participants talk about what they have learned from the experience. By the time we complete the circle, words and lives have begun to connect. Many uneven paths to becoming a writer have been illustrated. Invariably, there is a shared sense of respect and admiration for the talent and honesty of the writers in the room. The elementary teacher, the high school math teacher, the science teacher—they all temporarily trade their school-based labels for their identity as writers. Before the day is out, the writers work their way back to their own walls and read the yellow sticky notes—which a teacher-consultant once described as “yellow butterfly kisses”—that have been anonymously affixed to their displays.

The writing wall stays up all summer, with the writers changing and rearranging their displays as the weeks go on, and we refer to the wall almost daily. “Check out Jay’s wall,” someone will say. “He’s got a new poem you should read.” It would be hard for us to think of a more powerful means of creating a working community at the start of our summer institute. The effects of this activity are profound and last-

<sup>3</sup> Bonnie Molnar (1999) developed her demonstration lesson, “Teaching Seniors How to Say Goodbye,” into an article that was published in the *English Journal* the year following her summer institute.

ing. In our follow-up visits during the school year after the summer institute, the most frequently observed sign of the writing project's impact on instruction is student writing walls covered with appreciative peer sticky note responses in the teacher-consultants' classrooms. Our participants' students are able to collect and display evidence of their development as writers. We believe that seeing the layers of writing displayed by their peers helps our participants and their students see the art of writing as a way of having been and coming to be in the world.

The research on the self as a writer, which begins with the literacy archaeological dig, continues during the summer and forms the basis for a literacy narrative that each participant writes before the summer's end. These narratives are often multigenre compositions that draw on pieces unearthed for the literacy dig and the memories and insights that those pieces prompted. They are performances of a more traditional sort, printed and shared (both aloud and in writing) with fellow participants.

### The Writing Wall and the Standards

Clearly this activity when conducted in K–12 settings addresses a number of very important academic standards—even though it looks nothing at all like the review sessions for writing proficiency tests that our participants are expected to conduct. Here are just a few of the benchmarks quoted from the Ohio Department of Education's Academic Content Standards (2002) that students who work with a writing wall during their school year address:

- By the end of the program, students will be able to
  - explain how an author's word choice and use of methods influences the reader (K–3).
  - identify similar recurring themes across different work (grades 8–10).
  - publish writing samples for display or sharing with others (grades K–2).

### The Evolution of the Writing Wall and the Citizen-Teacher

As with all our work, the writing wall and the resulting literacy narrative taught us more each year about their power to influence teacher growth. In the first year, we assigned the writing wall and literacy narrative both as a way of prompting personal reflection on the role of writing in our lives and as a way of quickly and efficiently collecting a display that would show the range of writing possibilities across many lives and many ages.<sup>4</sup> Our original idea was to explore the larger universe of written discourse (Moffett 1968) that operates within and, especially, beyond school walls. The second purpose of the writing wall assignment was to create a community space. Since our summer institute site is not residential, the writing on the wall was one way we worked to create an art space for our summer institute. The third purpose of the writing wall was to provide a prewriting activity for the literacy narrative we had decided to assign as a required element in our summer writing portfolio.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> We assigned whole-group reading of excerpts of published literacy narratives, such as Annie Dillard's *The Writing Life* (1989), Sharon Hamilton's *My Name's Not Suzie* (1995), and Keith Gilyard's *Voices of the Self* (1991). These readings were meant as inspiration to encourage our teachers—and their students—to use writing beyond academic purposes to literally save their lives. We played with the phrase “Run for you life!” transformed into “Write for your life.”

<sup>5</sup> The Witherell and Noddings collection *Stories Lives Tell: Narrative and Dialogue in Education* (1991) was particularly helpful to us as we initially designed our summer institute's literacy narrative.

By the end of that first summer, it was clear that not only had our initial purposes been met, but something much more had happened. We discovered that in gathering the artifacts from their early writing lives and reflecting on them, as well as writing their literacy narratives in small groups, our participants experienced a sense of empowerment. Looking back to times when they first mastered their literacy, the pride they experienced, the felt power of their early written words, they remembered a sense of individual achievement. Looking on to later years in school as students and then as teachers, many of our participants observed and wrote about the comparative silencing that had occurred as they rose through the ranks of schooling. We understood that the set of activities we called the literacy archaeological dig, the writing wall, and the literacy narrative wasn't just about writing development, or about expanding the universe of written discourse to include genres beyond the essay, or even about development of "voice" in the rhetorical sense. This activity was about personal development, a giant step in the journey of the teacher-leaders we hoped to support in the summer institute. In hindsight this makes perfect sense, and we could have predicted it before we began had we thought to draw on the gender issues work that director Nancy McCracken was doing (McCracken and Appleby 1992). Studies such as those by Gilligan (1982), Belenky et al. (1986), and Witherell and Noddings (1991) help explain how the first of our aesthetic performances contributes to the development of citizen-teachers and also explain how similar work with students can contribute to their development as citizens with a sense of agency in their own communities.

The act of composing a narrative from a collection of significant scraps is a kind of aesthetic work that has been recognized for the empowerment it can generate for the writer as well as the reader. For example, Jill Ker Conway, an author and educational leader who has studied personal narratives of women reformers, provides a likely explanation for the way that writing a reflective literacy narrative helps teachers to rediscover their earlier more powerful voices. Like most literacy and writing teachers in the United States, most of the participants in our summer institutes are white middle-class women. They have managed to succeed as teacher-leaders in their districts by becoming expert in adopting a social role quite different from that of the typically male school administrators and coaches with whom (and for whom) they work. While it is true that women teachers have come a long way at the dawn of this twenty-first century, in many respects the women teachers we work with are similar to their nineteenth-century forebears. Conway discovered that most nineteenth-century women leaders of social reforms, "needing an appreciative audience for their causes to prosper, had to present themselves as . . . women to whom things happened rather than people who shaped events" (Conway 1992, x-xi). Even in their autobiographical writing, Conway finds these women "moving to the passive voice whenever they are really acting decisively (Jane Addams), or taking refuge in the convention of being drawn to act by forces of destiny outside their control (Margaret Sanger)" (x-xi). Conway notes that the public voices of the women innovators she studied are crafted to portray the speakers as "nurturant, peace loving, and swayed only by positive emotion, rather than the driven, creative, high achievers we see when we really study their behavior" (x-xi).

The nineteenth-century cultural effacement Conway describes has permeated the culture of teaching today in many schools across race and gender. The highly talented teachers, both men and women, in our summer institute are similarly “driven, creative, high achievers,” who in their public and often private narratives cast themselves as objects of forces beyond their control. Lacking a well-developed voice of agency or “teacher efficacy,” they often attribute their successes to their students or to benevolent mentors, as they attribute their failures to their inability to meet imposed administrative directives. Like Hull House founder Jane Addams, many of the teachers who enter our institute attribute their hard-won and carefully planned successes to luck rather than to their own accomplishments, talents, and long-range planning. It is a sad fact that even today, within the culture of many public schools, for teachers to publicly, and even privately, claim responsibility for successful endeavors within the school is to be seen as boastful and as overstepping social bounds. We have discovered that many of our most creative and hard-working teachers have been silently constructing writing-teaching narratives in which, like the women Conway describes, they cast themselves as passive entities subject to the whims of the educational hierarchy. It is a genuine struggle for these teachers to claim themselves as agents of their own good work. But when they return to explore their early lives as learners and proud creators of their own work, they are better prepared to write new narratives of themselves as change agents and teacher-leaders. We believe that the students of our teachers, growing up in a racist, sexist, classist society that often tells them to be seen and not heard, can benefit similarly from work with their own literacy archaeological digs, writing walls, and literacy narratives. This is the kind of work we have in mind when we write of the citizen-teacher.

## PERFORMANCE POETRY

While the summer institute teachers continue building the artistic work of the writing wall into an extended literacy narrative, they also engage in the practice of writing poetry and preparing to perform it. In the first year, we invited a poet-in-residence to visit our summer institute one afternoon a week and lead a poetry workshop. This person—in different years we have been led by Sara Holbrook, Maggie Anderson, and Mary Weems—typically shares her own writing history and leads the group in some poetry writing activities that draw the participants back to early, often forgotten, memories. In one such opening exercise, participants draw the earliest house they can remember living in and then write some words in the voice of a person living in the house. Since everyone is writing to the same challenge and since it is understood that all of the writing will be new and unpolished, people are usually willing to share in a whole-group read-around. Participant Bonnie Molnar, again, writes of the risk involved in this first-day sharing:

We had poetry days once a week—Sara Holbrook came in and gave us prompts and turned us loose to wandering, what was for me, the poetry barrens. It never, ever, occurred to me that I was going to have to read out loud this first poem I had to write—the first one since high school. That would be 1966. But, one by one, we started reading our creations. I knew mine was bad, and I knew I had to read it. I have

always been reasonably smart—a fair share of As, “good work,” academic rewards. To be revealed, on the very first day of class, as a remedial student was a totally new experience for me. I have never been so scared in a classroom in my life. And I have never felt so connected with some of my reluctant students—so this is what they feel like.

Bonnie’s response underlines the need for summer institute co-directors to handle with care those first forays into writing and performing genres that the participants have previously only read or taught. This is the first time our participants read their writing aloud in the whole group, and the words are often spoken so softly or read so quickly that they can barely be heard. We know it will take some days before our participants will be able to perform their pieces with the energy and clarity their words deserve.

At the end of the first poetry workshop on the first afternoon of the institute, additional poetry prompts are assigned for the participants to work on during the week. By the second day of the institute, folks are eager to share their work in their writing groups in preparation for the following Monday’s workshop, when they will be invited again to read aloud in the whole-group session. Their voices get stronger as, over the course of the summer institute, Nancy leads additional poetry writing activities such as the “copy-change” activity described in appendix B.

Like other leaders in National Writing Project sites, we watch an amazing transformation as teachers become members of writing groups during the summer institute. While the writing in these groups is most often not focused on teaching or education reform, we find that it develops voice that can be tapped by participants for later work as citizen-teachers leading education reform in their schools. In our summer institute, teachers usually take their writing group time to let the focus of teaching drift away for awhile each day and immerse themselves in the world of writing as a means of self-discovery. Hesitant at first to reveal themselves as writers, members of the writing groups develop a sense of security and comfort unmatched in their previous experiences as educators. In this comfort zone, they begin to take risks. They bring their own histories to the table: where they have been as family members, their childhood memories of elementary school, the losses and triumphs they have experienced. Instead of the relatively safe writing of lesson plans and curriculum maps, participants dare to share from close to the bone in the “zone of proximal development” (Vygotsky 1962). We have found that regularly assigned time for crafting poetry is, for us, the surest way to prompt exploration of what is well known but not yet speakable in essay form by a writer. The juxtaposed images that find their way into words on the page provide our participants access to their worlds of tacit knowledge (Polanyi 1969). Once on the page, the words are sharable with the writing group and available to the writer for exploration and development.

Throughout the summer, in addition to the poetry workshop, the directors lead a variety of poetry writing and performance activities, and many of the participants’ demonstration lessons also result in poetic writing, so there is a wealth of poetic work in progress for each participant to share in writing groups and hone for performance. Again, participant Bonnie Molnar sheds light about the slow transformation from the participant’s point of view:

As time went on, I got a little better with my poems, just a little. My stomach always got tight when I had to read them, but they did get better. We had developed a strong sense of community that made it safer to fail, but made you try harder than you'd ever thought you could to produce something good. At the end of five weeks, I had made some major strides in public risk-taking and made some small progress with my poetry.

Those who would use the performance arts to support authentic transformation in the work of teachers, as we do at our site, need to be aware that self-confidence and genuine voice develop unevenly in small steps and not always in a linear fashion.

### The Poetry Celebration

In the second week, participants are shown videos of local poetry slams, and we discuss whether it might be interesting to have a noncompetitive version of a poetry slam—a poetry celebration—as part of our summer graduation festivities.<sup>6</sup> Participants are invited to prepare a few pieces of their poetry for performance singly or in groups, and we directors, and visiting teacher-consultants who are performance poets themselves, work with participants to give them some strategies for performing poetry—simple and effective uses of voice, gesture, and movement to draw an audience in to listen to the words: varying loud and soft stage voices, effective pauses, movement away from the center of the stage toward a single member of the audience, walking and abruptly stopping to look up and out. We have found that the added challenge of preparing writing to be performed aloud and with movement (with or without written notes) enlivens the work of writing groups all summer. Bonnie expresses the sentiment of so many of the participants (and the directors!):

While I got over my “I want to get up and run away” response to reading my poetry, it was still hard. Then, for our culminating activity, we were invited to perform our poems for the class and any guests we cared to invite. Not read behind a podium, not memorize and recite-perform. Act our creations out. I was stunned. I was a nervous wreck by the day of the performance. There we were—some twenty adults who were engaged professionally in making students jump through one hoop or another—having to do this most peculiar jump ourselves. And strange things happened. We jumped, every single one of us, and we landed safely in the net of audience and community and trust that came with shared risks. We could not have felt more exposed, and we could not have been safer.

It is the risk within our supportive community of artists that enables this sense of safety and willingness to risk. We have watched the transformation of the participants as they are coached to use their voices and move their bodies to accompany the words they have written. At the end of the summer institute, we present for our invited guests, families, and friends a creative work performance. It affirms our focus on the arts to see our teachers—who have been writing their way into a strong voice, claiming for themselves their agency as literate movers in the world—take the stage before their peers and, with their peers, speak out their own messages. We think often of the first summer institute, where we watched teacher-consultant Janine Harrison develop from a quiet, scholarly literature instructor into a genuine artist via her beginning small-group practice of poetry combined with bits of memoir. No one

---

<sup>6</sup> A poetry slam is an event in which poets perform one or two short poems aloud before an audience, members of which usually respond to the performance by shouting out a quality rating aloud from zero to infinity. Each year since this activity was introduced to our site, our summer institute participants have chosen to try it out, and so far it has always produced amazing results. We skip the competitive aspect of the slam and prepare instead what we call our “Poetry Celebration.” (See *PSI*, the official website of Poetry Slam Incorporated, in bibliography.)

present at graduation that year dared take a breath as we watched her final riveting performance. Unwinding her African American history in a loud, strong voice and with a proud strut across the small stage, she suddenly leaned forward, whispering the refrain of her poem: “Do you know me? Do you know who I am?” (Harrison 1997).

### **Performance Poetry and State Standards**

When our participants and their students craft their words ever more finely, they are building vocabulary, figurative language, and syntactic rhythms that they need both as effective writers and as readers. Performance poetry supports student achievement of state standards. When our participants manipulate their phrases, trying them out in different places in their poems and noticing differences in precision of meaning and rhetorical effect on their writing group audience, they are honing syntactic skills in much the same way that children hone their mathematical skills by working with manipulatives, and demonstrably more effectively than with methods such as memorizing definitions of parts of speech or diagramming sentences. In addition, practice with all of the presentational aspects of performance poetry, such as movement, vocalization, pacing, and gesture, is very strong preparation for the state standard for communication: “Students learn to deliver presentations that effectively convey information and persuade or entertain audiences. Proficient speakers control language and deliberately choose vocabulary to clarify their points and adjust their presentations according to audience and purpose.” In the words of our state standards,

By the end of the program, students will be able to

- apply their writing skills in increasingly sophisticated ways to create and produce compositions that reflect effective word and grammatical choices.
- develop revision strategies and editing skills to improve the content, organization and language of their writing.
- control effectively the language and structural features of a large repertoire of text forms. They deliberately choose vocabulary to enhance text and structure their writing according to audience and purpose.

(Ohio Department of Education 2002)

### **The Evolution of Performance Poetry and the Citizen-Teacher**

Our main purpose for including a poetry workshop in our summer institute was to highlight nonexpository writing for part of each day. The idea of hiring a poet-in-residence to lead these activities for the summer institute began as a way to connect with the Kent State University English Department’s creative writing program and tap into this natural resource at our site. While our poetry program director Maggie Anderson was unavailable to coteach the entire five weeks of our summer program, she would be able to come for two hours each Monday afternoon to serve as our official poet-in-residence. We liked this arrangement because it put us facilitators on equal learner ground with our participants. We would participate while Maggie led the workshops. We wrote our own ragged poetry drafts

at her prompting and shared them at her invitation. Maggie's voice is unassuming, even humble. When she talks about becoming a published poet, it's a good story. In her presence, it is easy to believe that we could become published writers, too.

The year of the second summer institute, Maggie was on leave, so we invited Cleveland poet Sara Holbrook to serve as our poet-in-residence. As an international slam competitor, she brought an additional edge to our rehearsals and the final performance, and she added the role of performance coach to that of poet-in-residence. In recent years, we have invited Cleveland poet Mary Weems and teacher-consultants to come and share their poetry (more and more of which is getting published in Ohio) and we have learned to lead the performance coaching ourselves. One of our first teacher-consultants, Pauline Beck, is a trained performer with Poetry Alive!, a summer residency program in performance poetry for teachers offered at the University of North Carolina at Asheville (see [www.poetryalive.com](http://www.poetryalive.com)); she teaches our participants how to stand and project their voices, and how to move on the small stage to bring their words closer to the audience.

The public performance element of our poetry workshop was new to us. Like the literacy narratives, performance poetry had unintended and wonderful consequences for our teacher-consultants and our summer institute. Only on the last day of this institute—a day spent rehearsing and then performing—did all of us discover that performing one's writing on the stage is not the same as reading aloud in a group share. Stepping into huge backdrops of projected family photographs and saying aloud the words of a poem that talked back to the people in the slide was empowering in a different way. Although the two experiences are similar, performing takes the writer to a level beyond that of simply writing it down in silence and reading it softly to a small group. And for that reason we have made performance a continuing part of our summer institute.

Educational reformers might be surprised to discover the leadership potential that can develop from work with poetry, and especially performance poetry. We think the heart of this process is the supported risk that seems to be primary in the activity. Supported risk, as Bonnie Molnar's statement above shows, while even more challenging for our participants than we'd understood at first, turned out to be the cause of many of our participants' growth toward a new level of courage—a bravery they were able to take back to their schools and help to build in their students, who are equally in need of support for risk-taking with words to confront and change the world. Like Janine, many other teachers who have participated in such a performance of their own words tell us they carry the echo of their own proud voices and the feeling of their proud strutting and outstretched arms back with them—not just to their classrooms but to their teachers' lounges and principals' offices. Perhaps most important, as citizen-teachers they also carry back with them the knowledge that they can whisper hard truths and be heard.

And when we visit our participants' schools the following academic year and see their students' performances, we see that our teachers are able to support their stu-

dents just as they themselves were supported in the summer institute. The students, like their transformed teachers, learn that through their personal writing and performance their own hard truths can be spoken and heard.

## PROCESS DRAMA

Process drama is a relatively new teaching and learning strategy that invites participants to collaboratively develop a fictional event through which they explore human problems and issues.<sup>7</sup> Our trust in the power of process drama to create authentic writing and support the emerging citizen-teachers has grown over the ten years of our summer institute. In our first summer institute, looking for ways to tap into a variety of genres and a variety of ways of knowing, we invited Tony Manna, a member of our English education faculty, to be one of our Thursday guest speakers. Tony teaches children's and young adult literature and drama at Kent State University. Tony's two-hour workshop, built around the story of the Pied Piper of Hamelin, introduced process drama to our summer institute participants. Everyone enjoyed this activity and immediately began spinning ways the strategy could be used for prewriting and literature response in their classrooms. The process drama continued as an annual Thursday guest presentation for the next three years. Tony's workshops demonstrated the imaginative turns readers and writers take when drama leads them into different fictional stories such as *Out of the Dust* (Hesse 1997). Teachers enjoyed working with the improvisation of process drama and learned about the possibilities of the "teacher in role"—the teacher creating a temporary in-role identity as a leading member of an evolving dramatic action in which the students also participate in role. Those early experiences in the summer institute increasingly alerted us to the value of using drama as a catalyst for crafting many different forms of writing for many different audiences.

Over the years, Tony had watched teachers and their students move from seeing drama as a "pleasant diversion" or an activity for "letting off steam" to embracing the drama process with energy, enthusiastic writing, and a belief that drama fosters an impressive range of social and literacy skills. We hoped the teachers would learn how process drama can be a powerful educational medium that encourages and excites students to move deeply into content, reflect on important issues, and develop sensitivity to other people's ideas. We hoped to build their confidence as drama leaders capable of preparing and facilitating a drama structure. (See appendix C for an explanation of the key features of process drama.) We wanted the teachers to see

---

<sup>7</sup> Process drama has also proven to be a powerful performance art in our movement toward nurturing the citizen-teacher. In process drama, teachers and students cocreate an experience that serves as a medium for reflection about significant human issues (Heathcote, Johnson, and O'Neill 1984; Manley and O'Neill 1997; Wilhelm and Edmiston 1998). In contrast to other types of spontaneous dramatic methods in which the teacher directs the students to act out imaginary scenes, in process drama the teacher joins the students in shaping the experience and fathoming its meaning. Every process drama is a powerful medium for generating and exploring a range of language styles, genres, and forms because each drama provides rich social contexts in which language is used for many purposes, both inventive and practical (Moffett and Wagner 1984). Process drama also contains opportunities to write from many perspectives and in many voices not only while developing a role in the unfolding situation that lies at the heart of the drama, but also while reflecting on the drama itself. For example, engaged in a drama on the Great Depression, one group of summer institute participants, cast as photojournalists, were invited by a representative of the Works Project Administration (the role taken on by one of the co-directors) to document in their writing and photographs the struggles of folks in the Dust Bowl. In another process drama the teachers focused on the fate of the children in "The Pied Piper of Hamelin." In this drama one of the co-directors assumed the role of Hamelin's mayor, and the participants became council members who had to decide which course of action to take now that the town's children had been taken away.

firsthand how the leader builds a drama process and keeps it moving in collaboration with the participants. We wanted them to come to understand how a theme or concept is laid out and mined through carefully structured episodes that take shape as the participants assume roles and get caught up in situations that are important to them. And we wanted them to become aware of how the participants' roles emerge in a drama as they attend to the leader's cues and closely observe and listen to the actions and dialogues of the other participants.

Our teachers were wary. They were anxious about performing in front of others, and they had come with the concept of drama as performance—plays scripted, memorized, and rehearsed for an audience's pleasure. But process drama, to the relief and ultimate delight of the teachers, is different; it is unscripted, improvisational, and unmemorized drama. The audience is made up of the participants themselves, and they are enriched as they explore and interpret a historical crisis, human conflict, or social problem. Over the next several years, Tony's process drama became an integral part of the institute. Our teachers not only enjoy the drama workshops; they also learn ways to use drama in their own classrooms to help their students meet language arts standards.

### **Process Drama and the Standards**

When teachers and students collaborate to develop a drama structure, they move full force toward addressing many of the language arts standards endorsed by the Ohio Department of Education. When students assume roles within a dramatic experience, they can write from the perspectives of those roles. They can also serve as an audience to their peers' brief improvisations that develop in a process drama. When they do these things, they meet the following standards:

- determine audience and purpose for self-selected and assigned writing tasks (grades 3–4)
- use effective listening strategies, summarize major ideas, and draw logical inferences from presentations and visual media (grades 5–7)
- formulate writing ideas and identify a topic appropriate to the purpose and audience (grades 8–10).

(Ohio Department of Education 2002)

### **The Evolution of Process Drama and the Citizen-Teacher**

As with our other aesthetic activities, we at first did not see process drama's potential for developing citizen-teachers in our summer institute. In 2000 we were fortunate to have two teacher-consultants who helped us see how process drama could empower teachers and their students. That year we took as our theme "Making Justice Our Project"—after Carol Edelsky's book (1999)—and asked the group daily, "What if we made justice our project?" Teacher-consultant Barbara Chernesky, visiting from a primary school on Manhattan's lower east side, led the group in her demonstration lesson, which engaged participants in a process drama rooted in social injustice in an urban elementary school. This time, instead of merely playing

with the inventive possibilities of fictional dramatic situations, our participants became more intense. Several became genuinely angry in their dramatic roles; a number of participants wept. A few days later, teacher-consultant Barbara Smith, who had studied History Alive! (<http://www.historyalive.com>), a curricular program that draws on the performing arts to teach history in schools, brought us a demonstration lesson from her classroom practice called “Stepping into the Slide.” In this demonstration, participants were placed in small groups, and each group was given a set of excerpts from books about the Holocaust and a single photograph from one of the books. We were asked to read and share our excerpts with our groups, and then pick someone in the photograph and imagine what that person would be saying. Next, each group’s photograph was projected full size on the wall, and the group members were asked to go and stand in front of one of the people in the photograph and speak their words for them.

The powerful effects of these two demonstration lessons on our participants’ political writing and thinking persuaded us to include process drama as an integral part of our summer institute from then on, and in 2001 we invited Tony to join the institute as a full-time co-director. Each year we have allotted a little more time for process drama and moved strategically to develop an extended drama sequence that directly supports the developing citizen-teacher. In the fourth year, after several years of success with fiction or history-based process dramas, we decided to explore the issues of power, control, and professional equity that render proficiency testing such a pressing issue in the participants’ and their students’ daily lives. In just the way that we were learning how literacy narrative and poetry performance could be put to the service of empowering teacher-leaders to better the lives of their students, we decided we would see how process drama might be shaped to our goal of developing citizen-teachers.

Taking our inspiration from the process drama Libman (1996) developed about educators who had made a difference in her students’ lives, we, the co-directors, outlined the episodes for a drama we titled *The Good Teacher* (see appendix D), which takes place in the fictional Tarlington School District. The first episode unfolds around a teacher-of-the-year competition that is causing a great deal of tension. The second episode develops a school board meeting focused on the district’s falling proficiency scores. The final episode plays out a community forum convened to discuss ways to raise scores. We encouraged the teachers to role-play a range of attitudes and beliefs—as teachers, school administrators, clergy, parents, concerned citizens, and journalists—about mandates for standards and testing. These three one-hour episodes first took place over a three-week period during the 2003 summer institute. The first two episodes were designed to support the participants’ improvisational skills and provide information on process drama strategies, and to prepare for the third episode, which would dramatize the intersection and complexity of power, control, and equity in schools.

When we gathered to discuss where the three episodes of *The Good Teacher* had taken us in regard to proficiency testing, the participants were surprised by the

drama's form. They had expected rehearsed scenes or a short skit acted out with assigned, rather than self-selected, roles. Most had been anxious about performing in front of an audience of other participants. They were surprised by how everyone, including the site directors, got involved in the experience by taking on different roles. We were our own audience. Also unexpected was how Tony used the participants' input as they played out their roles to help shape the three episodes. They liked the collaborative, nonthreatening feel of process drama and the opportunity it gave them to come at a topic from various points of view, particularly with views that they otherwise might have felt uncomfortable expressing. When asked about the skills required to participate in or direct a drama in their own schools, participants told us that the drama they had experienced didn't require acting skills in the usual sense of the word. It was more like thinking on your feet in response to what others, including the leader, would say and do. As one of the participants put it,

All of a sudden, almost without being aware of it, you are smack in the center of a heated debate about what really matters to you. The drama put me in a debate I could relate to in a voice I hadn't known I could express. It was exciting. It was a release.

Each year now, using the basic storyline we provide, our summer institute participants create a one-of-a-kind drama, a fleeting situation that will never be replicated exactly because it is an unscripted enterprise. This past year, the teachers worked in small groups to construct brief dramas that grew out of the thorny political tensions they face at their own schools. For example, one group led institute participants in an improvised union meeting to respond to a superintendent's mandate that all literacy teachers return to school two weeks early for training aimed at boosting proficiency scores. Another group set the drama at a school board meeting to consider the proposed addition of a community center to a school site.

As co-directors, we have discovered that only when we provide the fictional settings and roles in process drama do some of our participants voice their positive views toward increased proficiency testing, which they might have felt reluctant to express out of role, given the strong antitest sentiment so often expressed in the summer institute. Until those views are voiced and heard, there is no opportunity for the genuine dialogue that leads to reflection and growth. Those participants who are not provided ample artistic space to express and examine strong views in opposition to dominant views of the summer institute culture are forced to divide their artist-teacher from their citizen-teacher: all of their personal writing work, including their literacy narrative, performance poetry, demonstration lesson, and teacher-inquiry papers will go on in one public summer place, while all of their standards work, including their approaches to test preparation, will go on in a very separate school place. This insight has pushed us to provide even more time in the summer institute for use of the fictive space we have discovered through process drama, believing with Joanne Pagano that "perhaps we can come to know ourselves more easily in fictive discourse" (1991, 199).

## REFLECTIONS

Theoretically, our summer institute is perfect. We engage participants in aesthetic kinds of knowing as a means of strengthening their own voices as they grow skillful in helping their students meet our rigorous state standards in English language arts. And at the end of each summer, our assessments indicate that we have been successful. As we talk with the graduates of our summer institutes, we hear powerful success stories from committed citizen-teachers that tell us we have not been fiddling while Rome burns—as the current popular discourse suggests of those who would work toward education reform through creativity and the arts.<sup>8</sup> One fine example of a participant carrying out the hard work of citizen-teacher immediately following our summer institute is Barbara Smith, who has become the director of our site's Rural Writing Development programs. Barbara has documented the growth of success in the reading and writing proficiency test scores of her students, who have been engaged in arts activities crafted to improve performance on the state standards. In fact, 100 percent of her rural middle school students who had not passed the standards proficiency test earlier did pass the reading and writing tests following a year of lessons infused with poetry writing and process drama related to literature. Barbara's work as a teacher-leader is having an impact all across our region.

Barbara Chernesky, another citizen-teacher, immediately following the summer institute, returned to her special needs primary classroom populated with Hispanic children from the homeless shelter next door to her Manhattan school. She decided to construct a process drama based on the story of Ruby Bridges, the first African American child to desegregate her New Orleans elementary school in 1960. In her drama the children used their voices in role to demonstrate powerfully what injustice sounds like and feels like to a child.

Barbara Chernesky and Barbara Smith are examples of artist-teachers who have begun to use their voices as citizen-teachers—those who are willing and able to work for the betterment of the lives of their students and colleagues within and beyond their classroom. This is what we hope for through the work of our writing project site.

Some questions still trouble us. Over the years, as we followed our summer institute participants into the next school year with site visits and informal gatherings and conversations, we learned that not all of our participants are equally able to carry back into their schools the sense of agency and empowerment that the summer institute had awakened in them. It was as though our summer institute ran on three parallel tracks. One track led from being an experienced teacher, through demonstration lessons, discussion, and readings, to being a teacher newly invigorated by a wealth of shared knowledge of theory and standards-based best practices. A second track led from being a stay-safe, lie-low, don't-rock-the-boat writer, through a range of artistic performances, to being a confident, risk-taking, committed member of a productive community of artists. The third track led from experiencing work in school as a member of an educational bureaucracy to experiencing

<sup>8</sup> See Harrington-Lueker (2002), "'Crayola Curriculum' Takes Over" in the bibliography. This article is representative of a popular attitude that denigrates the use of the arts for serious educational purposes—the sense that the arts are “fluff” and primarily for small children who use crayons.

work in school as a teacher-leader, newly strengthened by the experience of finding and using one's voice aloud to reclaim a sense of genuine authority. In the past two years of our summer institute, we have better focused our use of the arts to bridge these three tracks, so that all of our participants can directly experience the connection between artistic performance, pedagogical skill, and teacher leadership.

We know that we need to be even more direct about the tension between standards-based practices of artistic teaching and the political imperative of yearly standardized assessment. In following up on the participants who complete our summer institute energized with new ideas, secure in their beliefs, skillful in artistic teaching techniques, and supported by a National Writing Project network of colleagues, we find they are still struggling with the state assessment that ignores best practices (McCracken and McCracken 2001). On testing day, much of the writing world disappears, and students are resigned to sitting alone at a desk, with no resources, no choices, no interaction, and no poetry or process drama—just a stilted prompt and a ticking clock. We have to find more ways to use the tensions inherent in the roles of artist-teacher and citizen-teacher to help our teacher-consultants keep moving forward. In reflecting on our work, we picture a railroad handcar—one of those railroad vehicles that is propelled along the track by two people, one on each end, pumping in a seesaw motion. In our case the handcar represents the teaching and learning of literacy in the United States—or more modestly in Ohio. We in the writing project push down on our side to set the wheels in forward motion. Faced with ever increasing demands from the standards movement and related demands for lockstep learning and mass assessments, it feels, at least initially, as if our partner is working against us, pushing down on the other side. Our challenge as writing project site directors is to view what seems like a braking motion as a necessary counter-movement that turns the gear and keeps the handcar moving forward. We have found that the use of the arts—literacy narrative, poetry performance, process drama—strengthens teachers for the hard work of moving the car forward in the push and counter-push tension of the artist/citizen-teacher attempting to do good work in schools. Meanwhile we will continue our commitment to the artistic risk and community that the arts engender because of statements written by participants who have felt the transformative power of the arts. Again, Bonnie Molnar:

In my professional life, I never risked more and I never gained more than I gained that summer in NOWP. It is the model in my mind's eye when I think what I want as a teacher in my classroom. A place where the stretch makes you ache all over in places you never knew were there. A place where you're not afraid to fall.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Allison, D. 1995. *Two or Three Things I Know for Sure*. NY: Penguin/Plume.
- Anderson, M. 1986. *Cold Comfort*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Belenky, M.F., B.M. Clinchy, N. R. Goldberger, and J. M. Tarule. 1986. *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind*. New York: Basic Books.

- Bridges, R. 1999. *Through My Eyes*. New York: Scholastic.
- Brown, V., and S. Pleydell. 1999. *The Dramatic Difference: Drama in the Preschool and Kindergarten Classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Conway, J.K., ed. 1992. *Written by Herself: Autobiographies of American Women: An Anthology*. New York: Random House.
- DeStigter, T. 2001. *Reflections of a Citizen Teacher: Literacy, Democracy, and the Forgotten Students of Addison High*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Dillard, A. 1989. *The Writing Life*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Doty, M. 2001. *Still Life with Oysters and Lemon*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Dunning, S., and W. Stafford. 1992. *Getting the Knack: 20 Poetry Writing Exercises*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Edelsky, C. 1999. *Making Justice Our Project: Teachers Working Toward Critical Whole Language Practice*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Eisner, E.W. 1994. *The Educational Imagination: On the Design and Evaluation of School Programs*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Elbow, P. 1998. *Writing Without Teachers*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Freire, P. 1992 *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Translated by M.B. Ramos. New York: Continuum. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 1970.
- Freire, P., and D. Macedo. 1987. *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World*. New York: Bergin & Garvey.
- Gardner, H. 1993. *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory and Practice*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gilligan, C. 1982. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gilyard, K. 1991. *Voices of the Self: A Study of Language Competence*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- Greene, M. 1995. *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts, and Social Change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Hamilton, S. 1995. *My Name's Not Suzie: A Life Transformed by Literacy*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook.
- Harrington-Lueker, D. 2002. "Crayola Curriculum' Takes Over." *USA Today*, September 16. Available at [www.heartland.org/pdf/12514.pdf](http://www.heartland.org/pdf/12514.pdf).
- Harrison, J. 1997. NOWP Anthology. Kent, OH: NWP@KSU.
- Heathcote, D., L. Johnson, and C. O'Neill, eds. 1984. *Dorothy Heathcote: Collected Writing on Education and Drama*. London: Hutchinson.
- Hesse, K. 1997. *Out of the Dust*. New York: Hyperion.
- History Alive!* Website of the Teachers' Curriculum Institute (TCI). <http://www.historyalive.com>.
- hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York: Routledge.
- Isenberg, J. 1994. *Going by the Book: The Role of Popular Classroom Chronicles in the Professional Development of Teachers*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.
- King, N. 1996. *Playing Their Part: Language and Learning in the Classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Langer, S.K. 1953. *Feeling and Form*. New York: Scribners.
- Libman, K. 1996. "Right From the Start: An Initial Drama Session for Pre-service Teachers." *Drama Matters* 1 (1): 67–72.
- Manley, A., and C. O'Neill. 1997. *Dreamseekers: Creative Approaches to the African American Heritage*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Manna, A.L. 1996. "Language Use through Drama." In *Books That Invite Talk, Wonder, and Play*, edited by A. McClure and J. Kristo. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- McCracken, N.M., and B. Appleby. 1992. *Gender Issues in the Teaching of English*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook.
- McCracken, N.M., and H.T. McCracken. 2001. "Teaching in the Time of Testing: What Have You Lost?" *English Journal* 91 (1): 30–35.
- Moffett, J. 1968. *Teaching the Universe of Discourse*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Moffett, J., and B.J. Wagner. 1984. *A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum*, K–13. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

- Molnar, B. 1999. "The Last Nine Weeks." *English Journal* 88 (5): 53–57.
- Neilsen, L. 1998. *Knowing Her Place: Research Literacies and Feminist Occasions*. San Francisco: Caddo Gap Press.
- Neruda, P. 2001. *Fully Empowered*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
- Noden, H. 1999. *Image Grammar*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook.
- Ohio Department of Education. 2002. *Academic Content Standards, K–12 English Language Arts*. Columbus, OH: Ohio Department of Education. [http://www.ode.state.oh.us/academic\\_content\\_standards/pdf/ENGLISH.pdf](http://www.ode.state.oh.us/academic_content_standards/pdf/ENGLISH.pdf).
- O’Neill, C., and A. Lambert. 1982. *Drama Structures: A Practical Handbook for Teachers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Pagano, J. 1991. "Moral Fictions: The Dilemma of Theory and Practice." In *Stories Lives Tell: Narrative and Dialogue in Education*, edited by C. Witherell and N. Noddings. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Pinar, W.F., W.M. Reynolds, P. Slattery, and P.M. Taubman. 1996. "Understanding Curriculum as Historical Text: Crisis, Transformation, Crisis, 1928–1969. Chap. 3 in *Understanding Curriculum: An Introduction to the Study of Historical and Contemporary Curriculum Discourses*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Polanyi, M. 1969. *Knowing and Being*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Pradl, G.M., ed. 1982. *Prospect and Retrospect: Selected Essays of James Britton*. Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook.
- PSI, the official website of Poetry Slam Incorporated. <http://www.poetryslam.com>.
- Rubin, L.J. 1985. *Artistry in Teaching*. New York: Random House.
- Saldaña, J. 1995. *Drama of Color: Improvisation with Multiethnic Folklore*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Shange, N. 1994. *i live in music*. Illustrated by Romare Bearden. New York: Stewart, Tabori, and Chang.
- Vygotsky, L.S. 1962. *Thought and Language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Wagner, B.J. 1998. *Educational Drama and Language Arts: What Research Shows*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Wilhelm, J.D., and B. Edmiston. 1998. *Imagining to Learn: Inquiry, Ethics, and Integration through Drama*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Witherell, C., and N. Noddings, eds. 1991. *Stories Lives Tell: Narrative and Dialogue in Education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

## APPENDIX A: SAMPLE SUMMER INSTITUTE SCHEDULE

**National Writing Project at Kent State University  
Summer Institute Week 1**

Monday	Tuesday June 14	Wednesday June 15	Thursday June 16	Friday	Notes
	8:00–8:30 Grounds for Thought 8:30–9:00 Arrange Artifact Wall 9:00–10:00 Walkabout: Respond to Artifacts 10:00–10:20 Interview Dialogue Partner 10:20–11:00 Whole Group Share and insights from Literacy Dig and Walkabout 11:00–11:50 Table Talk from published Literacy Narratives*; Ink-table-share	8:00–8:30 Grounds for Thought; coaching 8:30–8:35 Magical Language Minute; Announcements 8:35–9:40 Shaping the Literacy Narrative Workshop (C) 9:45–11:00 Databases and Resources (C); Independent Writing time	8:00–8:30 Grounds for Thought 8:30–8:35 Magical Language Minute; Announcements 8:35–9:30 Inquiry Projects discussion (R); Pre-Assessments 9:30–10:30 Quiet Write; Writing Groups (W) 10:30–11:50 Process Drama #1 Workshop (C)		*works by Santiago, Glyndr, Hamilton, Dillard, Conroy, Alison
Lunch	Lunch & Beautiful Minute	Lunch & Demo Coaching	Lunch & Campus Tour	Lunch	
	1:00–2:00 "Telling Moments" in Literacy Narratives (W) 2:00–2:30 Poetry Copy Change Workshop: "nothing will ever" (C) 2:30–3:00 Read-Around (W) 3:00–3:30 Questions, Announcements, Inkshedding	1:00–2:00 Teacherless Writing Groups a la Peter Elbow (W) 2:00–3:00 Inquiry Projects Part 1: I-Search Workshop (C&R) 3:00–3:20 Demo Lessons sign-up 3:20–3:30 Inkshedding	1:30–2:30 Assessment Workshop #1: What Makes Writing Good? (C) 2:30–3:20 Review Booktalks at table and collect into binder (R) 3:20–3:30 Inkshedding		

**National Writing Project at Kent State University  
Summer Institute Week 2**

Monday June 20	Tuesday June 21	Wednesday June 22	Thursday June 23	Friday	Notes
8:00–8:30 Grounds for Thought 8:30–8:35 Magical Language Minute; Announcements 8:35–9:30 Quiet Write 9:30–10:30 RIG formation and meetings (R) 10:30–1:00 Writing Groups and lunch; focus on Literacy Narratives (W)	8:00–8:30 Grounds for Thought 8:30–8:35 Magical Language Minute; Announcements 8:35–9:30 Quiet Write; Revisit your "Illuminated Manuscript" or 9:30–11:00 Ambrose Found Poetry; Tentertake: Using Children's Literature to Teach Prepositions (D) 11:00–1:00 Writing Groups and lunch (W)	8:00–8:30 Grounds for Thought 8:30–8:35 Magical Language Minute; Announcements 8:35–9:40 Quiet Write 9:40–11:10 Krajcek Writing Character; Bacha; Using Metaphors to Build Community (D) 11:10–12:30 Independent RIG work and lunch (R)	8:00–8:30 Grounds for Thought 8:30–8:35 Magical Language Minute; Announcements 8:30–9:30 Literacy Narrative read-around (W) 9:30–11:00 Evanovich: Process Drama with The Giver; Cervetack; Using Photographs to Inspire Voice (D) 11:00–noon Independent RIG work (R)		
Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	
1:00–3:00 Illuminating Writing: Visual Literacy Workshop #1 (C) 3:00–3:30 Questions, Announcements, Inkshedding	1:00–2:30 RIG work and coaching (R) 2:30–3:15 Writing Assessment Workshop #1; Ohio Graduation Test Traits (C) 3:15–3:30 Questions, Announcements, Inkshedding	12:30–1:30 Writing Groups (W) 1:30–2:30 Process Drama Workshop #2 (C) 2:30–3:15 Writing Assessment Workshop #2; OGT Traits (D) 3:15–3:30 Questions, Announcements, Inkshedding	1:00–3:15 Weems: Poet-In-Residence (C) 3:15–3:30 Questions, Announcements, Inkshedding		

(cont'd)

### National Writing Project at Kent State University Summer Institute Week 3

Monday June 27	Tuesday June 28	Wednesday June 29	Thursday June 30	Friday	Notes
8:00–8:30 Grounds for Thought; coaching 8:30–8:35 Magical Language Minute; Announcements 8:35–8:30 Quiet Write and Coaching 9:30–11:00 Forchione: Aiding Comprehension through Writing in Response to Illustrations from Children's Literature: Jackson: Using Visual Aids to Identify Nouns (D) 11:00–noon Independent RIG work; Coaching (R)	8:00–8:30 Grounds for Thought; coaching 8:30–8:35 Magical Language Minute; Announcements 8:35–8:30 RIG talk; Coaching (R) 9:30–11:00 Hartzell Writing Science Description; Cooper: Writing in Learning Fractions in Math (D) 11:00–noon Quiet Write	8:00–8:30 Grounds for Thought; coaching 8:30–8:35 Magical Language Minute; Announcements 8:35–8:40 RIG talk; Coaching (R) 9:30–11:30 Bruce: Introduction to Video Literacy (O); Individual Lab work	8:00–8:30 Grounds for Thought; coaching 8:30–8:35 Magical Language Minute; Announcements 8:35–8:30 Quiet Write 9:30–11:00 Crum: Creating Lessons Using Bloom's Taxonomy as a Guide for Writing Across Genres; Dreyer: Using Book Rhymes to Work with Sight Words and Phonics (D) 11:00–noon Writing groups (W)		
<b>Lunch &amp; Coaching</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	
1:00–2:30 Dorich: Content Area Writing (Social Studies) (O) 2:30–3:20 Writing Groups (W) 3:20–3:30 Questions; Announcements; Inkshedding	1:00–2:00 Writing Assessment (W) 2:00–3:20 Hurd: KSU Composition Program; Writing Expectations (O) 3:20–3:30 Questions; Announcements; Inkshedding	1:00–2:30 Libbyjohn: Point of View and Story; Sprague: Persuasive Writing (D) 2:30–3:20 Assessment; Writing Techniques Illustrated by the Groups (W) 3:20–3:30 Questions; Announcements; Inkshedding	1:00–3:20 Weems: Poet-in-Residence (O) 3:20–3:30 Questions; Announcements; Inkshedding		

### National Writing Project at Kent State University Summer Institute Week 4

Monday	Tuesday July 5	Wednesday July 6	Thursday July 7	Friday July 8	Notes
	8:00–8:30 Grounds for Thought; coaching 8:30–8:35 Magical Language Minute; Announcements; Tee-Shirt quotation and color 8:45–9:30 Quiet Write; RIG Coaching (R) 9:30–11:00 Hayes: Combining Reading and Writing Strategies for Non-Fiction; Suttles: Selecting Effective Genres in Multi-Genre Writing (D) 11:00–noon Writing Groups (W)	8:00–8:30 Grounds for Thought; coaching 8:30–8:35 Magical Language Minute; Announcements 8:35–9:50 Rummel: Reading/Writing Across the Curriculum—5 Types of Writing; Perkins: Reader's Theater for Literacy (D) 9:50–11:50 Writing/Research Lab for individual work and coaching (R)	Write Here! Write Now! Conference Day 8:30 Coffee 8:45 Welcome 9:00 Nodas: Image Grammar (O)	8:00–8:30 Grounds for Thought; coaching 8:30–8:35 Magical Language Minute; Announcements 8:35–8:50 Quiet Write 9:00–10:00 Process Drama workshop #3 (O) 10:00–11:30 Granchi: Writing Research and Ohio Legends; Willock: Science Writing—inventing Inventions (O)	*Sessions Powers: Meeting the Reading and Writing Standards with . . . tada—Playwriting McCracken: More than Meets the Eye: Using All Five Senses to Meet the Reading and Writing Standards
<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	
	1:00–2:00 RIG work; Inkshed (R) 2:00–3:20 Wagner: Sketch Books (O) 3:20–3:30 Questions; Announcements; Inkshedding	1:00–2:00 Writing Groups (W) 2:00–3:20 Assessment workshop #3 (O) 3:20–3:30 Questions; Announcements; Inkshedding	12:45–1:45 Breakout sessions (O)* 3:00 Read-Around Coffeehouse	12:30–2:00 Writing Groups (W) 2:00–3:20 Assessment Workshop #4 (O) 3:20–3:30 Questions; Announcements; Inkshedding	Sullivan: Meeting the K–6 Standards Across the Curriculum with Moon Journals Smith: Using Students' Multiple Intelligences to Meet the Standards: "Steppin' into the Siks"

**National Writing Project at Kent State University  
Summer Institute Week 5**

<b>Monday July 11</b>	<b>Tuesday July 12</b>	<b>Wednesday July 13</b>	<b>Thursday July 14</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Notes</b>
8:00–8:30 Grounds for Thought 8:30–8:35 Magical Language Minute; Announcements 8:35–9:30 Quiet Write 9:00–10:30 Jarvey: Something Wonderful Right Away: Resources for Teachers of Writing (C) 10:30–noon Tottafeld: Illuminating Text Using Technology—PowerPoint and Poetry; Hardy: Using Propaganda Techniques in Persuasive Writing (D)	8:00–8:30 Grounds for Thought 8:30–8:35 Magical Language Minute; Announcements 8:35–9:30 Quiet Write 9:30–11:00 Editing Workshop; The Convention Game; Beat the Authors (C) (W) 11:00–noon Ohio WINS Assessment* (C)	8:00–8:30 Grounds for Thought 8:30–8:35 Magical Language Minute; Announcements 8:35–9:00 Quiet Write 9:30–10:15 Editing Workshop; The Convention Game; Beat the Authors (C) (W) 10:30–11:30 KSU Fashion Museum (C); McCracken (C)	8:00–8:30 Grounds for Thought 8:30–8:35 Magical Language Minute; Announcements 8:35–9:00 Course Evaluations 9:00–11:30 Writing Groups (W); Illuminated Art Gallery		*State Board of Regents: Ohio Writing Institute Network for Success
Lunch	Lunch & Movie // Pastno (C)	Lunch & Movie // Pastno (C)	Lunch Celebration	Lunch	
1:00–2:00 Writing Groups (W) 2:00–3:20 Revision Workshop: Citing Multiple Sources; using APA (C) 3:20–3:30 Questions; Announcements; Inkshedding	1:00–2:30 Writing Groups (W) 2:30–3:20 Howell: Designing the Final Exam around Writing "What I Have Learned From . . ." as Well as "What I Have Learned About . . ." (D) 3:20–3:30 Questions; Announcements; Inkshedding	1:00–3:20 Author's Party (W) 3:20–3:30 Questions; Announcements; Inkshedding	1:00–3:30 Graduation and Poetry Slam/Celebration		

## APPENDIX B: COPY-CHANGE EXERCISE

During the first week of the summer institute, Nancy leads the group in a “copy-change” exercise. This exercise, which is a variation of Dunning and Stafford’s (1992) exercise, is meant to build the power of the spoken voices among the institute’s budding poets. It begins with Nancy performing a first-person declaration-style poem such as Ntozake Shange’s “i live in music” (1994). The teachers are asked to listen and then to write the words as they are read aloud again slowly in dictation. Nancy reads the poem a third time to make sure all the teachers have gotten all the words down just right. Then, ostensibly just to make sure, the participants are asked to read back in unison what they have written. Then one more time the poem is read aloud in unison—this time louder and with energy.

Having now heard the poem read aloud three times, written it from dictation, and read it back aloud in chorus twice, the participants have come to know the poem as an auditory and physical object—not the way they are used to meeting poems. The poem’s rhythms seep into their ears and lungs and throats, and onto their tongues. When at last the participants are asked to change the poem strategically so that it is more about them than about the original author, they already have a structure and a rhythmic voice in which to work. Where Shange begins her poem, “i live in music / is this where you live / i live here in music / i live on c# street. . . ,” (unpaged) our participants have written opening copy-change lines such as “I live in chocolate,” “I live in soccer,” “I live in homework.”

These copy-change poems are fun to read aloud; everybody already knows the poem’s sound and structure and knows that it is a poem declaring what is very central to the writer’s life. The reading aloud of these poems is more energetic than the reading on the first day; there isn’t one that can’t be heard clearly in the room. Throughout the summer, we’ll work with other poems in the same way. Another very effective one is William Carlos Williams’ “The Red Wheelbarrow.” This poem is short and stark, beginning right off by declaring what it is that “so much depends upon” in the daily world of the writer. Copy-change lines that have resulted from this activity include “so much depends upon a small girl, beside my cluttered desk, wiggling with writer’s pride,” and “so much depends upon a black jeep parked in the driveway, declaring my son’s safe return.”

## APPENDIX C: PROCESS DRAMA TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Process drama developed in tandem with the evolution of writing process pedagogy; it emerged from earlier educational drama methods that used brief skits, theater games, simulations, teacher-directed scenes, and other performance activities to facilitate content learning and foster social skills. These earlier methods typically provided short-term, wonderfully entertaining drama experiences and almost always culminated in some sort of formal or informal in-class performance developed and produced by small groups of students for the edification or amusement of their peers.

While process drama might draw on some of these brief exercises, such show-and-tell methods do not function as ends in themselves in a process drama; rather, they serve as tools meant to enrich the participants' interpretation of the historical crisis, human conflict, or social problems being explored in the drama. For example, in the first episode of *The Good Teacher*—the process drama presented in appendix D—after the participant-teachers wrote headlines for Tarlington's daily newspaper announcing the district's poor report card, small groups of teachers interpreted the headlines with a "tableau," a brief rehearsed performance activity in which the participants shape their ideas into a still life. Then the groups reflected on their headline's theme with help from their colleagues who, serving as their audience, discussed what the tableau said and meant to them.

Other key concepts of process drama that help to distinguish it from other types of drama activity are the *drama leader*, *participant equity*, and a movement between *drama as process and as product*.

### The Drama Leader

In collaboration with the participants, and more often than not assuming the role of a central character, the leader of a process drama characteristically lays out a series of episodes that encourages the participants to scrutinize a particularly significant/complex/challenging human dilemma. Through active role playing, participants take part in the dilemma as though they were people living through it for the very first time and with much at stake. The leader directs and facilitates either from outside the action or from within the drama. She or he prepares a basic structure consisting of a series of layered, cumulative episodes, but is very aware that the improvisation could take a different turn in response to the participants' needs or interests. As the episodes move along, the leader might work from within the drama by taking on a relevant role and becoming one of the participants. The leader's status and manner as one of the crowd—including language, tone, and style—are clues the other participants read in order to position themselves in the situation, figure out their own status, and keep the action and conflict alive (O'Neill and Lambert 1982). When working in role—and this is a big issue for teachers new to process drama—the leader is working not so much as an actor but rather as a guide, as a story maker and storyteller, and, of course, as a medium for learning.

Leadership in process drama, as well as participation, is not about performing or honing one's acting skills; it's about using the imagination to project oneself into a situation and deal with the issues and challenges that arise there in the heat of the unfolding experience.

The leader will also direct from outside the drama. Directing from outside, the leader is a facilitator removed from the episode but instrumental to its development. For example, in *The Good Teacher*, the leader—in this case, co-director Tony—could have served as a narrator who established the setting and tone by reading the opening directions in the present tense, somewhat along these lines: “*As the school board director calls the meeting to order, he can tell this is not going to be an easy crowd to please. A tense atmosphere fills the gym. A small group of teachers sits huddled together. Their whispers are barely audible.*”

In the summer institute, we tell the teachers that even with limited experience in process drama, they can easily move into the drama leader's stance by drawing on the skills they use daily in orchestrating content and rallying students around the tasks at hand. While a teacher with a great deal of interest in the drama process could develop and lead a drama experience without special training (Wilhelm and Edmiston 1998), the techniques and methods found in process drama resources such as *Dreamseekers: Creative Approaches to the African American Heritage* (Manley and O'Neill 1997), *Drama Structures: A Practical Handbook for Teachers* (O'Neill and Lambert 1982), *Drama of Color: Improvisation with Multiethnic Folklore* (Saldaña 1995), and *The Dramatic Difference: Drama in the Preschool and Kindergarten Classroom* (Brown and Pleydell 1999) offer a firm foundation in drama theory as well as practical suggestions for getting students caught up in all sorts of demanding human situations through their involvement in dramatic encounters that speak to their sense of the world.

### **Participant Equity**

As the teachers in the summer institute soon discovered by participating in *The Good Teacher* and other briefer drama structures, process drama is an invitation to students of any age to live through an experience in order to make sense of it. This surprises many of the teachers, for whom the word *drama* first conjures images of those outgoing, talented students and colleagues who have a flair for the dramatic and always volunteer to get involved in skits and other performance activities. Not so process drama, a medium accessible to all of us because all of us can imagine a “What if?” situation and our place in it. (“What if a school district in which you have a stake and of which you have been supportive comes under attack when its students do poorly on state-mandated tests? What if you were a teacher in this district? Or a parent? Real estate broker? Superintendent? Older taxpayer? Student?”) Once in this situation—this imagined context—participants are not asked to perform so much as they are invited to step into someone else's shoes, as they might, say, when reading a poem or story and seeing events unfold from a particular person's perspective. And once into that imagined situation, some participants may get very caught up in the collaboration without actively participating in every aspect of it.

### **Drama as Process and as Product**

As a product, drama is a scripted, rehearsed, typically memorized, polished performance for an audience's pleasure. As an educational process, drama is a structured yet open-ended, exploratory, experimental medium for learning content and for developing awareness about some aspect of the human condition. Process drama is rough-edged in form and driven by the discoveries being made about whatever issues are being examined in the heat of the unfolding dramatic event. While a refined performance is never the goal of process drama, participants often serve as their own audience whenever they work in small groups or, very rarely, alone to prepare and exhibit their interpretation of a conflict or tension or relationship that is central to the drama's movement and resolution. For example, immediately before dramatizing the school board meeting that develops in the second episode of *The Good Teacher*, Tony invited the summer institute teachers to generate a list of the people in Tarlington who might be affected by or concerned over the district's poor report card. Then they each chose one of the folks on the list and wrote a letter to the school board in that person's voice expressing his or her reaction to the poor test scores, and some teachers read their letter to the entire group in the voice of the letter writer. Once the board meeting began, some of the letters were once again read by Tony in the role of the concerned school board president and the teachers in role as concerned school board members. In this way, we shuttled between process and product, between improvisation and a type of prepared exhibition.

## APPENDIX D: THE PROCESS DRAMA

### **The Good Teacher**

(developed in the 2003 summer institute, based on Libman 1996)

#### *EPISODE ONE: THE COMPETITION*

In the first episode Tony, as the drama leader, establishes the situation. He tells the participants that Tarlington, the fictional district that employs them, is having a competition to select the district's teacher of the year—a competition that will be covered by the local newspaper. He introduces the participants to the improvisational nature of process drama and asks them to brainstorm the characteristics of their best teachers. Their responses are recorded on poster-size paper. Tony introduces the participants to the improvisational nature of process drama by saying, "What I like about drama is that we can be different from the persons we are, and we can be in another place without leaving this room." He asks them to imagine they are the good teachers they have just described. They agree. Working in pairs, they are directed to draw on the characteristics they described to interview each other. In the interviews, they talk about the qualities of remarkable teachers.

He asks for a few volunteers to change roles and play newspaper reporters who interview the good teachers about the competition, asking, "What makes this teacher such a great teacher?" Next, the teachers come to the center of the room while the reporters sit off to the side observing. Tony, now assuming the role of the school's union representative, confronts the teachers with his suspicions about the reporters' intentions for covering the event. Given the media's negative attitude about the community's schools, he is concerned. When this discussion between the union representative and the teachers ends, the teachers in role move off to the side and the reporters come together. Now, assuming the role of the newspaper editor, Tony wonders how the reporters might spice up the good-teacher competition so that it attracts a large readership. The episode ends when both teachers and reporters write headlines for the local newspaper about the competition. While most of the displayed headlines celebrate wonderful teachers, several, perhaps a result of the reporters' conversations, suggest that Tarlington's schools may not be quite as effective as they are hyped up to be.

#### *EPISODE TWO: THE POOR REPORT CARD*

The second episode focuses on Tarlington students' test scores. Tony, as drama leader, tells the group that Tarlington's students have done poorly on the state proficiency tests. Tony joins the participants in generating a list of people in the community who would be affected by the failing schools. The participants each choose one of these people and write a letter in that person's voice to the school board expressing their feelings and offering suggestions.

The next scene is a Tarlington school board meeting with Tony in role as the director of the school board, and the summer institute participants in role as board

members. When the board members convene to assess the situation, Tony reads the letters that everyone has just written to reveal the community reaction to the poor report. In one of these letters, a supportive citizen has drawn attention to the district's accomplishments and argued for patience as the schools adjust to the changes brought on by the move to testing. A dramatic debate about the causes of the poor scores unfolds. Episode 2 ends when the board decides to invite community members to a meeting—a community forum, one member calls it—in the high school gymnasium to voice their concerns about the low scores and give their suggestions for improving their schools.

***EPISODE THREE: COMMUNITY FORUM***

The final episode is a community forum, originally suggested by a summer institute teacher as a good way to explore some of the differences that various folks in a community like Tarlington might harbor about the testing issue. This emergency meeting of Tarlington citizens and educators soon becomes a heated debate over causes, consequences, and solutions in regard to the poor report card and the quality of education in the district's schools (see sidebar “One Improvised Enactment of Episode 3, from Summer Institute 2002” on next page). Tony, as drama leader, sets the stage for the meeting and then steps into the role of school board director and asks for suggestions and concerns. He gets them!

The citizens continue voicing different opinions about student and teacher performance and the action that should be taken to improve the scores. The episode concludes when one teacher recommends that the district hire a statistician to collect data that show the differences between students who receive passing scores and those who don't. Not all agree to this tactic, of course. Several of the teachers wonder if the fee for a consultant might better be used to purchase updated classroom materials to help them meet the state standards. In turn, wouldn't this action likely affect student performance on the tests?

In process drama, the issue at hand is explored until the group's energy wanes or for as long as it takes the participants to reach some kind of satisfying resolution. Given the improvisational nature of process drama, the situation that unfolds can be pursued according to the loose structure devised by the leader or altered depending on the course the participants decide it should take.

Stepping out of the role of school board director and back into his daily role as summer institute facilitator, Tony asks the participants to predict what Tarlington's proficiency scores might be in the future. In the discussion that follows, the participants examine the issues that the drama has raised about standards-mandated instruction and proficiency testing and how the two intersect. Keeping the roles they took in the episode, the participants each write a brief piece in a genre of their choice that describes Tarlington's status ten years hence. Several participants volunteer to share the pieces they wrote about the district's future. Some predict a bright future characterized by a professional calm that reflects an awareness of how best to integrate standards with one's daily experiences in the classroom. Others, in the

form of letters or editorials, foresee the profession plagued by mandates and constraints. Several of the participants writing in role decide to leave teaching.

### **One Improvised Enactment of Episode 3, from Summer Institute 2002**

As the school board director called the meeting to order, he could tell this wasn't going to be an easy crowd to please. A tense atmosphere filled the gym. A small group of teachers sat huddled together. Their whispers were barely audible. Directly across from the teachers sat a few parents, some with their arms crossed and others staring coldly and defiantly at no one in particular. Nearby a few school board members shifted nervously as they scoped out the crowd. A handful of school administrators stood cautiously at the front of the gym. An assortment of other concerned citizens had taken their place along the back wall. Standing uneasily at the podium, the school board director called for attention above the increasing noise.

School board director: Welcome, all. And thank you for showing your support for Tarlington's schools by attending this meeting. As you well know, we are here because Tarlington's schools are in a state of academic emergency due to our students'—your children's—consistently low scores on the state's proficiency tests. Everyone's concerned. Take a look at some recent headlines in our local newspapers.

“Tarlington Schools on Trial”

“School's Failure Alarms Taxpayers”

“Tougher Standards Proposed for Failing Schools”

As director of your school board, I am here to vow that I will do whatever it takes to bring a sense of pride back to our schools. But this is not about me. It's about you. Our parents, taxpayers, teachers, administrators—and, of course, our children. I now open the floor for your suggestions and concerns. The woman in the back, please.

Parent 1: I say that we ought to do something about the kind of teachers we hire. Isn't this all about the kind of instruction our kids are getting?

Parent 2: I'll second that. When I went through this system, we worked hard. My kids hardly ever crack a book at home. Does anyone give homework anymore?

School board director: Uh, thank you. I need to point out that Tarlington is known for having some of the finest teachers in the state. Did you know that five of our teachers just received their state board certification?

Concerned citizen 1: So, tell me: Why are our children doing so miserably on these tests?

Teacher: Have you seen these tests? Sometimes I wonder what and who they are supposed to be testing. But, look, testing is here to stay. So why not look into districts like Holcomb or Riverside that are passing and investigate their strategies?

Superintendent: I want to point out that the administration held several inservice workshops for our teachers to review the tests. We made it clear that we expect total compliance in preparing our students for the tests. And there are state standards that should lead the way to this compliance.

Concerned citizen 2: Excuse me, but we've all heard this before. Soon you'll be telling us about a school levy that will only raise our taxes another notch or two. Why can't we use what we've already got? Why not get rid of some of the failing teachers and, uh, excuse me, administrators?

Parent 3: There's a lot to be said for Tarlington's schools.

School board director: Money's not the issue here. The issue is the quality of our students' education and the well-being of this community.

**Nancy Mellin McCracken** is the founding director of the National Writing Project at Kent State University in Ohio, where she is a professor of English education. She is a recipient of the University Distinguished Teaching Award. She has served as director of the NWP@KSU since its inception in 1997. She received her Ph.D. in composition and curriculum from New York University. She has taught English and composition in grades 9 through college and directed the writing centers at Kent State University, the University of Pittsburgh, and Youngstown State University. She has published a book, *Gender Issues in the Teaching of English*, and numerous chapters and articles on the teaching of writing and literature in journals including *English Education*, *English Journal*, *Voices from the Middle*, the *ALAN Review*, and the *Ohio Journal of English Language Arts*.

**Anthony Manna** is a co-director of the National Writing Project at Kent State University, where he is a professor of English and education. He received his doctorate from the University of Iowa. He has held positions at the American College in Istanbul, Turkey, the University of Maine, and the Center for Literature, Medicine, and the Health Care Professions at Hiram College and the Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine. He founded and directs the annual Virginia Hamilton Conference on Multicultural Literature for children and adolescents. A recipient of Kent State University's Distinguished Teaching Award, he is coauthor of *Children's Literature for Health Awareness* and coeditor of *Many Faces, Many Voices: Multicultural Literary Experiences for Youth* and *Art and Story: The Role of Illustration in Multicultural Literature for Youth*. He has also published many articles and book chapters on literature and drama. In 1997, he received the Arbuthnot Award from the International Reading Association for outstanding teaching of children's and young adult literature.

**Darla Wagner** is a founding co-director of the National Writing Project at Kent State University. She is currently assistant principal at Solon Middle School, Solon, Ohio. She is the former English Department chair at Columbiana High School, Columbiana, Ohio.

**Bonnie Molnar** is a teacher-consultant with the National Writing Project at Kent State University. She has been teaching since 1991 and currently teaches English, AP English, and Film Studies at South Range High in North Lima, Ohio. She is a former president and vice-president of WROTE (Western Reserve of Ohio Teachers of English) and a member of NCTE's SLATE (Support for the Learning and Teaching of English—NCTE's standing committee on social and political concerns).





Monographs available in the Summer Institute set of the National Writing Project at Work series include:

**A Work in Progress: The Benefits of Early Recruitment for the Summer Institute**

by Anne-Marie Hall, Roger Shanley, and Flory Simon  
Southern Arizona Writing Project, University of Arizona

**Enabling Communities and Collaborative Responses to Teaching Demonstrations**

by Janet Swenson, with Diana Mitchell  
Red Cedar Writing Project, Michigan State University

**Developing Citizen-Teachers Through Performance Arts in the Summer Institute**

by Nancy Mellin McCracken and Anthony Manna,  
with Darla Wagner and Bonnie Molnar  
National Writing Project at Kent State University, Ohio

The National Writing Project at Work series also includes a nine-monograph set entitled Models of Inservice.

For more information regarding the National Writing Project at Work monograph series, visit the National Writing Project website at [www.writingproject.org](http://www.writingproject.org).



National Writing Project  
University of California  
2105 Bancroft, #1042  
Berkeley, CA 94720-1042

Tel. 510-642-0963  
Fax. 510-642-4545  
[nwp@writingproject.org](mailto:nwp@writingproject.org)  
[www.writingproject.org](http://www.writingproject.org)