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Reviving RE:Vision

In the Summer of 1999, the Central California Writing Project announced the transformation of its newsletter into a journal with a more sophisticated look and broader purpose. Titled RE:Vision to honor a process of reflection, looking forward, and thinking anew, the journal promised to continue the tradition begun in the 1980’s of featured articles and interviews written by CCWP teachers. We would add to that a deeper analysis and commentary on the critical issues that inform and shape literacy education at the edge of a new century, the concerns and questions generated by and vital to communities of teachers and students. The first issue was well received and the lead article was picked up by the National Writing Project, which featured it in The Quarterly.

No sooner had the initial issue of RE:Vision been published when the winds of change began to move the CCWP in a new direction. Caught up in the work of reinventing our professional development goals and programs, expanding our leadership capacity, and establishing school and district partnerships and state-mandated institutes, the years since 1999 have provided little opportunity to muster the time or energy for a second issue of RE:Vision. Now, after three years of lying fallow, it seems fitting that the Summer 2002 issue of our revitalized journal should focus on professional development. In the following pages you’ll find articles that highlight the work and thinking of CCWP teachers as they participate in professional communities, turn to professional writing as a venue for teacher leadership, and muse on the paradoxes of teaching, of life. This new issue is an invitation, not only to read and enjoy what’s written here, but to join the dialogue with writing of your own. In this way, together, we can keep revising who and what we are as teachers of writing, and as a community of professionals determined to make a difference with the work we do.

Leslie Smith and Susan Freeman, Editors
Kevin Beck stands before the staff of a rural elementary school several miles away from his own classroom. Gathering his confidence, he speaks about the journey that has taken him from his days as a student teacher here to the end of his second year at Ann Solido Elementary, a large, year-round school.

Improving student writing through the improvement of the teaching of writing is a complex task. Since 1998, the Central California Writing Project continues to explore innovative ways to support teachers and students with site-based professional development. Building on twenty-five years of dialogue and interactive learning in our Invitational Summer Institutes, we now partner with schools and districts to create vibrant collaborative communities that sustain professional learning and leadership as teachers work to improve the literacy of their students. Reflecting recent research in teacher development and school reform, the current CCWP model of professional development has its roots in schools and extends across an entire school district. Built on a guiding principle of the Writing Project, teachers teaching teachers in collegiate communities forms the heart of CCWP professional development. Kevin Beck, sharing his work with colleagues, exemplifies this philosophy in action.

In Watsonville, California, the brightly illustrated pages of the class books his students wrote open across the span of his long arm. Telling how he created a purposeful writer’s workshop that motivates his students to become skilled writers, he speaks with confidence.

An enthusiastic young teacher, Kevin shares the writing of his third-grade students with others who, like himself, work to improve the literacy of the English Language Learners who fill their classrooms. Narratives and non-fiction, stories from the lives of migrant families or the beginnings of student ventures into scientific research, the work of Kevin’s class sparks delight and interest in his colleagues. This is new territory for Kevin, taking his work on the road, yet it is grounded in months of dialogue and collaboration with colleagues at his own school as part of a partnership with the Central California Writing Project.

Through partnership with the Pajaro Valley Unified School District, Kevin Beck and teachers at three elementary schools participate in CCWP programs. They work collaboratively with colleagues in grade-level teams, school-wide staff development sessions, and Teacher Dialogue and Inquiry groups, learning from each other about their students’ work as writers and shaping curriculum.

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Teachers Teaching Teachers: Changes in the CCWP Model of Professional Development

Within a diverse group of teachers is the expertise and knowledge to call up the critical questions we need to ask, pose solutions to teaching dilemmas, and increase the knowledge and skills of each member of our professional community. This fundamental concept drives the CCWP partnership model and is not just about making competent young readers and writers. It is also about building professional communities in which collegial relationships, time for reflection, new knowledge and pedagogy are built through dialogue, shared inquiry and decision making. In these settings, seasoned veterans and new teachers, like Kevin Beck, see themselves as active partners in transforming what happens in their classrooms and in the school at large. If Writing Project fellows and teacher leaders carry this principle into their schools, what forms might it take and what force could it have to inform and reinvent teaching and learning? What contexts and conditions need to exist to create these vital communities in schools?

Literacy educator Reggie Routman has written, “Every time a new national report emerges, it creates a crisis of confidence among teachers. Too many teachers assume that “experts” outside the classroom somehow know more than they do.” When teachers are well informed – by learning theory and relevant research, as well as by careful reflection on their own experiences – they can make confident decisions about teaching practices. And one of the most powerful approaches to developing this confidence is ongoing professional conversation and collaboration.

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Continued on page 7
Sustaining the Dialogue: An Interview with Roger Mock

I learned in the Project and realize that they are still very sound. I just have to find a way that I can implement them on a regular and meaningful basis. If people could just write – that would be it. So, anyway, I still feel it’s the best model for professional development that I am aware of.

L: You’re bringing up the challenges of replicating what happens in the summer during the year in terms of processes as well as teaching strategies?
R: I find that sometimes an assignment won’t be received by the entire class with the enthusiasm that I would like. Maybe 2/3 of the class are really into it. Then 1/3 of the class might just go through the motions. One of the things that’s really difficult in teaching is how to give meaningful opportunities to practice. I find that a real challenge.

In retrospect, to me it’s one of the most, if not the most, sound professional development programs in the country. I think all teachers should have that kind of opportunity to enjoy professional development. We generally don’t reflect, or have time to reflect during the regular year to the degree that we would like. We almost never get to reflect when we are rested and so that is the key thing about the Writing Project. You have sustained dialogue when you are rested and people are much more willing to take risks, much more willing to be optimistic about things. They engage in conversations that they often don’t engage in as professionals during the regular year. It’s really sad, but there’s something about the setting of the Writing Project that fosters the kind of professional development that you would hope that teachers would do all the time. Over the years, from 1982 to the present, I have gone back to help facilitate at various projects. It kind of averages every 5 years.

L: Almost twenty years now. That’s amazing.
R: One of the things I have always been concerned about, and this particular pattern hasn’t really changed that much, there is a euphoric kind of mind set about the last week of the Institute especially, particularly the last two days, and then there is a sharp drop after that. Getting people to return to that same euphoric state is a real challenge. So people get discouraged at times and the nature of our profession is that it is very easy for teachers to get isolated. There’s not the same kind of exchange that they enjoy during the Institute because there’s not that immediate feedback, not that sustained feedback, because there is not regular writing time, teachers get out of the habit of focusing on writing with the same amount of commitment and enthusiasm they did during the Institute. I have found myself doing the same. On the other hand, I keep coming back to many of the principles and strategies that I use in the Project and realize that they are still very sound. I just have to find a way that I can implement them on a regular and meaningful basis.

In 1982 I was encouraged to participate by a teacher in the English Department at Watsonville High School. At that time I was teaching Science and he thought it would be a good idea to get people from other disciplines to participate. So, I was probably one of the first non-English teaching high school teachers to get involved. I never perceived myself as a writer up to that point. I enjoyed the whole writing process that summer and realized that anybody could become a writer, with the right frame of mind: by being willing to explore, take a leap, and try different things. I still have great memories of that summer. At that time I didn’t reflect on why the Writing Project at UCSC might be different from others, and over the years more and more I realized that the heart of the project at UCSC is Don Rothman. His facilitation style seems to get people to reflect on their professional development.

Leslie Smith.

Consultant and Return ISI Fellow, Culminating a long career in Watsonville Charter School for the Arts. Watsonville High School. At that time I was teaching Science and he thought it would be a good idea to get people from other disciplines to participate. So, I was probably one of the first non-English teaching high school teachers to get involved. I never perceived myself as a writer up to that point. I enjoyed the whole writing process that summer and realized that anybody could become a writer, with the right frame of mind: by being willing to explore, take a leap, and try different things. I still have great memories of that summer. At that time I didn’t reflect on why the Writing Project at UCSC might be different from others, and over the years more and more I realized that the heart of the project at UCSC is Don Rothman. His facilitation style seems to get people to reflect on their professional development. In retrospect, to me it’s one of the most, if not the most, sound professional development programs in the country. I think all teachers should have that kind of opportunity to enjoy professional development. We generally don’t reflect, or have time to reflect during the regular year to the degree that we would like. We almost never get to reflect when we are rested and so that is the key thing about the Writing Project. You have sustained dialogue when you are rested and people are much more willing to take risks, much more willing to be optimistic about things. They engage in conversations that they often don’t engage in as professionals during the regular year. It’s really sad, but there’s something about the setting of the Writing Project that fosters the kind of professional development that you would hope that teachers would do all the time. Over the years, from 1982 to the present, I have gone back to help facilitate at various projects. It kind of averages every 5 years.

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The Trout Farm
By Roger Mock

There are many highly motivated kids, too, of course. There are the ones who constantly welcome and seek an authentic challenge, are receptive to correction and coaching, ask thoughtful questions, and write creatively and critically. They turn in all their assignments, and will often ask for more than what was assigned. They welcome the opportunity to help others. They are active, spontaneous, compassionate and natural leaders. They will chase you all around the campus for an early lunch pass, or to sell you a half dozen chocolate bars. Trout with a goal. Trout with pizza. Big fish in a big pond. Salmo aguabonita. The Golden Trout.

There were the pond at Walden. Katherine, Henry, and Jane had Golden Pond. I work at the trout farm. Some of the trout never bite. Some just nibble. Some you never hook, and some of the big ones get away. Some are beautiful trophies, which adorn the mantle of my memory, and which I show off to the world. It's a special place, the trout farm. On days when all the pieces are in place, the trout do intellectual and recreational covenanting in nutrient-rich waters. They will give you an inspired fight, and there are no limits. The fishermen are special, too. They share pedagogy, materials, success stories, and even dreams. You should visit—no, you should experience—the trout farm. You could get hooked. I did.

That's another thing that I have thought a lot about implementing with my students. How to use letter writing to make it more conspicuous in my teaching. I feel that it's a great instrument, a great vehicle for having them address a particular issue and defend it. In recent years, I have used letter writing as one of the main ways to get students to reflect on their learning. It's been good reading some of their letters. I can tell that they have actually reflected. In fact, I think it would be great to make a collection of student letters, like there are the letters of Mark Twain to his publishers. Letters of students to their teachers.

L: What led you to your decision to join the staff at the newly formed Watsonville Charter School for the Arts?
R: It started out by being at Pajaro where I was the bilingual resource teacher. I was also the Spectra Arts Coordinator and so I got to have meetings with Sue Ferson, who was the director of the Spectra Program. She invited me one time to some of the initial meetings about the charter school. It was just in the infant stage and she asked if I might be interested in being on the curriculum writing committee. I had been wanting to do something for the arts before I got out of education. Here was a chance to maybe try it. I met a lot of different people in the meetings and the spirit of this group was quite moving. They definitely had a qualitatively different energy about them.

L: How many of your colleagues have been through the Writing Project?
R: The director has been through the Summer Institute. Probably there aren’t that many principals who have. In fact, in her newsletter, she made it a point to have students at each grade level interview teachers. For example, my students were responsible for interviewing the art teacher and the music teacher. I think that was a good exercise for a couple of reasons: to have students interact with teachers in a different way, and to give the readers a look at the teachers from a student’s standpoint.

Conclusion
A note from Leslie: Having chatted at length with Roger, I can attest to the value of interviews—for both writers and readers. An essay and poem by Roger are included in this newsletter (pages 4 and 14). They are further examples of his commitment to our profession.
We often don't give the students enough time to practice before we go on to something else. So they might be doing one genre and before they even have that close to being mastered, we are already going on to another genre because we feel the pressure to do that. For example, I would like to spend more time on paragraphing, but I have already spent a month on that and I want to go on to something else. And yet I know they need practice.

I have often thought that it would be really interesting to see what degree the Writing Project has authentically impacted the teaching of writing. I don't know if we really have good data on that. I think there are some inferences you could make just by looking at people who got involved really early in the Project, back in the late 70's, and are still involved. Indirectly that's saying that yes, this is a valuable concept and it's worth continuing and refining. It would also be interesting just to get sort of a Stuhi-Terkel type approach to getting everybody's life and their writing, post-Institute.

L: You surprised me when you said there was a quarterly publication of staff writing. Some people did poetry, some people did fiction, and some people wrote non-fiction. The head custodian was the most frequent contributor. His thing was he had gotten his pilot's license, so every chance he could, he wrote about flying. And then another person who got really involved was Juanita Aguileria. She was an instructional aide and she really put her heart into a couple of pieces. When we were making the Writing Project video, there is a session with her that didn't get into the final video. She was so dramatic, there were tears coming down her face. She just wanted to make a point that there are some things that only can be said through writing. Another person was the office manager, and she also wrote a couple of pieces that were very personal from her journal. I wish we could have gotten her to write more often because we could tell from the way she wrote that she really had a knack for it. So that was not a very successful project.

R: The last two or three years, the most successful thing I've done in terms of the use of writing is writing little stories using the names of my students. That being the prompt for a piece of writing. They really get into it. They are always anxious to see the sequel and they look for their names right away. Usually they are a few pages long so I can get everyone's name in. They'd feel so slighted if their names were not in there. It's the one thing I have done where I could almost say that there is 100 percent buy-in. They are all eager to write and continue the story. I enjoy doing that. It helps me to reflect on the writing process as I am writing the story.

Some of the things that you read about from many of the great experts on the writing process, I see myself actually practicing it. Same way with poetry. That whole process of writing something, getting it down on paper, being willing to improvise just as you write. That whole improvisational mentality, I think it's really important in writing. Then again, it's often hard to pull it off in the classroom because you can't always get everybody to buy in on any given day. They may just not be in the mood to write that day. Nevertheless, I feel that has been the one thing that has been successful, when I actually used my own writing to facilitate and inspire the writing of the students. And that I have been happy about.

L: You did a staff newsletter?
R: Well what happened is that at Pajaro Middle School, Jewel Hyland, who was in her first year there, decided to organize a staff literary magazine. I was just a regular contributor. What we had there was a quarterly publication of staff writing. Some people did poetry, some people did fiction, and some people wrote non-fiction. The head custodian was the most frequent contributor. His thing was he had gotten his pilot's license, so every chance he could, he wrote about flying. And then another person who got really involved was Juanita Aguileria. She was an instructional aide and she really put her heart into a couple of pieces. When we were making the Writing Project video, there is a session with her that didn't get into the final video. She was so dramatic, there were tears coming down her face. She just wanted to make a point that there are some things that only can be said through writing. Another person was the office manager, and she also wrote a couple of pieces that were very personal from her journal. I wish we could have gotten her to write more often because we could tell from the way she wrote that she really had a knack for it. So that was not a very successful project.

In fact, I don't know of any other staff that sustained a publication over that long a period of time.

Proposition 227 was voted into law by the citizens of California in 1998. Its stated purpose was to legislate English language education for immigrant children, but its underlying goal, as believed by many bilingual educators, was to weaken bilingual education programs and eventually eradicate them altogether. It states that all immigrant students entering California's educational system, whose language is other-than-English, must be placed in a Sheltered English Immersion (S.E.I.) program for the first 30 days. In this program they must be taught "overwhelmingly" in English. After the first 30 days, and then only pursuant to a waiver signed by their parents and approved by the administrator of the school, can these students be placed in a bilingual program (if one exists in their school) where they can be taught in their primary language while they are acquiring English.

For the past three years I have opened the school year speaking a language my students do not understand. I am a bilingual kindergarten teacher and the students in my class are all dominant Spanish speakers and eventually eradicate them altogether. It states that all immigrant students entering California's educational system, whose language is other-than-English, must be placed in a Sheltered English Immersion (S.E.I.) program for the first 30 days. In this program they must be taught "overwhelmingly" in English. After the first 30 days, and then only pursuant to a waiver signed by their parents and approved by the administrator of the school, can these students be placed in a bilingual program (if one exists in their school) where they can be taught in their primary language while they are acquiring English.

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Like a Pendulum
By Meredith Willard

It’s early morning. I sit in still sunlight, surrounded by hues of green and purple, birds’ songs and fragrance. A sparkle catches my eye and I follow the glinting path of a spider’s silk, from the earth up—up where a motherlode, thoughtful face headed West. It takes me back to my youth.

Does every child watch a passing cloud drift against its blue canvas and wonder: How many forms will it take before it finally disappears? How many other eyes will see the very same cloud a thousand times transformed? Where did it first come to be and where might it go? What of the blind child? Are there “clouds” traveling and transforming within sounds? Are there children too afraid to see? Too afraid to wonder? Too broken? Too—

A sudden breeze breaks the stillness and a mourning dove flies awkwardly with wings like squeaky hinges.

Why is flight such an effort for this bird? It hardly seems fair. Ah, FAIR. The word we teach. The world we seek, Why is smiling such an effort for a young boy I know? Why does his head hang so dispassionately low? Can I help him to lift it toward the sky? Will he then see the possibilities?

A bearded stranger approaches, humming. As he passes, he softly sings, “Operator, could you help him to lift it toward the sky? Will he then see the possibilities?”

We are all asking questions. We are all reaching out. We take turns as the Operators and the Callers.

I am reminded of waking up earlier with an old Carpenter’s tune in my head. As always, I had remembered very few of the lyrics, and instead came up with a line to fit my mood, my wonderings. This line comes back to me now: “Why do leaves fall down from the trees?”

By Meredith Willard

As the sun’s angle shifts, the mourning dove begins to build a nest, her wings squeaking back and forth above her head. She carries a small bundle of twigs and dry grass in her beak. At my feet, two green flies buzz, chasing each other, and then stop to rest on a fallen leaf. Nearby, the sounds of a wakening world can be heard. The voices and traffic chime in to the day’s symphony.

I smile at the simplicity. I smile at the complicatedness. I swing on the fine line between the two, like a pendulum, all the while asking and watching, sharing and transforming, teaching and learning.

power of having children share their work with each other in the form of Author’s Chair and Partner Reading. The results were tangible and rewarding for both myself and the children. The children became more aware, through explicit writing instruction, of what “good writing” looked like. The children also got to feel successful as writers. They were elated to get such positive, constructive feedback from their peers. In the end what came out of using these strategies within my writing program was that the children established for themselves a voice in their writing as well as pride in the work they did. The grade level planning time was focused, directed, and best of all, practical. Having two or a half hours a month to communicate with members of my grade level team made me a better teacher this year and positively impacted what my children received in writing instruction.

In May, they collaboratively created a school-wide matrix that correlates the teaching of writing, learning goals, ELA and ELD standards, and specific structures and strategies that scaffold student learning up through the grades. Each class has a map of their collective thinking and learning, and a celebration of the breakthroughs they’ve made as teachers of writing, this matrix will be the blueprint from which next year’s classroom writing programs blossom.

The teachers now know exactly where they are going and where their students need to go. The CCWP will continue to make the road with them as they walk it. Beginning teacher and former PVUSD school board member Jamie Marks felt this collaborative model of professional development was more valuable than other mentoring and staff development time because we focused on the students and shared our ideas. I felt valued as a teacher...and thought the suggestions, strategies and insights from other teachers were critical to enlightening me and improving my teaching.

The teachers of Ann Soldo Elementary have worked to unlock the mysteries of narrative and expositional writing through collegial dialogue and the exploration of student work. They understand that what empowered them and helped them redefine their classroom practice was the process of learning in the company of colleagues. They are ready to test their newly-discovered ideas, and their students are already demonstrating a shift in attitude and performance as writers. "Building a sense of community as writers…and the inspiration I feel from the meetings is very important. I could have future potential writers in my class and I need to remember this—to make writing more than an everyday task. Writers are artists and need to be nurtured and taught in a number of ways," wrote Theresa Purpuri, a 1st grade teacher at Ann Soldo.

Professional development in the Central California Writing Project relies on the mindful construction of communities of teachers, administrators, students and their families. From the seed of the TD&Is to the movement of new ideas and practices throughout a school, we encourage and engage teachers to take steps toward significant, deep change in the culture of their schools. This is the process in which teachers and students create new knowledge and meet valued goals.

As Ann Lieberman notes, communities of practitioners “become arenas for professional learning because the people in them imbue activities with shared meanings, develop a sense of belonging, and…shape professional identities” (2002). In forging these identities and shared understandings, teachers create the foundation for student learning and achievement.

Teachers, finding their own voice, tell other teachers of their work and the journey it takes to do it well. With cautious steps, we become visible to one another, to our students, and to those who evaluate our work. Once we name the obstacles and challenges that impede our teaching or our understanding of what we need to teach, we can transform what prevents us and our students from succeeding. Like Ming Lo, the character in the old Chinese folk tale, we learn best through hard experience and reflection, determined to dance our way into the light, though the maddening obstacles we face may overwhelming to us and seem immovable. It takes time. It builds slowly. And when it happens, we know why.

References


support provided by CCWP programs at Ann Soldo Elementary has breathed new life into the work of Kevin and his beleaguered colleagues, providing substantive content knowledge and skills, from instructional strategies to the use of protocols to analyze student work and implications for teaching. Taking what they’ve learned in monthly dialogue and inquiry sessions back to their classrooms, the teachers are seeing notable growth in their students’ writing and thinking. “My experience in the writing group has been a real treat,” Beck wrote in an evaluation of his room practice, new structures have been put in place to strengthen staff development. This year, the school hired Staff Development Coordinators, Caroline Calero, to implement the II/USP action plan. Consulting with administrators and teacher leaders, Calero and I coordinate CCWP’s role in professional development with Ann Soldo’s II/USP site improvement plan. To help the staff build essential understandings and pedagogical schema to unify and articulate their teaching, Calero has introduced them to Wiggins and McTighe’s Understanding By Design as a model for curriculum planning and reflection, and leads them through work sessions on standards, unit planning, and curriculum mapping. A cohort of creative super-sub provide regular release time for grade level teams to work on the teaching of writing monthly.

We piloted a model of professional development in writing which involves teachers at four levels: 1) several whole school staff development sessions focused on the specific strengths and needs of students and teachers in the writing classroom, in which teachers write, reflect and explore the relationship between what they were teaching and student outcomes; 2) monthly grade level team meetings in which teachers analyze student work, map standards to instruction, and build essential understandings, content knowledge and instructional strategies to take back to the classroom; 3) a Teacher Dialogue and Inquiry Group extending reflection and dialogue on classroom practice, analysis of student work, and the introduction and evaluation of new structures and strategies for student learning and achievement; and 4) individual classroom coaching. In each of these components, learning about the teaching of writing also involved developing an awareness of equity and accountability.

Teachers felt overwhelmed at first, but as they made connections between their own learning and their students’ work as writers, their thinking and classroom practice began to shift. One teacher stated, “In the beginning, I thought our process was undone. I thought we were going to start with breaking down the incremental steps of teaching writing in 1st grade and implementing these steps. Now, I realize I was a bit impatient and recognize the value of getting our team to open up, share and begin thinking about what we have done.” 3rd grade teacher, Jeanne Kurenz, agreed: “These grade level sessions have been very focused and valuable…I feel that I gained some deeper understanding as to how to move my students forward in the writing process.”

The rapid increase in the number of students in California schools has created an even greater need for more teachers, leading to the hiring of hundreds of under-prepared, inexperienced novices, many of whom work without credentials. As a result, a profile of chaos emerged in many of our schools simply because the momentum of these reforms made every teacher a beginning teacher. The rush to provide on-the-job professional development for teachers in writing and language arts has pushed the CCWP to explore innovative approaches to school-based support that address the most critical issues teachers face with the most effective strategies for improving teaching practice and student learning.
began to change as the context for professional development shifted. In designing a relevant, effective model of school-based professional development, we called upon two long-standing strengths of the CCWP: our commitment to work with the teachers of socio-economically and linguistically marginalized students, and the dialogue, collaborative structure of our summer writing institute. There we found the context to offer teachers on-site, a model in which the analysis of student work, the sharing of instructional strategies, and the pursuit of classroom inquiry take place alongside writing from teachers’ experience and explorations of professional research literature. From years of summer institutes, we knew that a more comprehensive knowledge of the teaching of writing emerges in an atmosphere of inclusion and democratic discovery. What teachers took back to the classroom often reflects the deep transformations they have experienced in the intense “think tank” that is the CCWP summer writing institute. Our first priority was to extend the base of teacher leadership necessary to provide ongoing, cutting-edge professional development at all grade levels, with an emphasis on our capacity to work with teachers of English learners. Because it is in precisely such conditions that deep transformative practice in the TD&Is sets the tone for other professional development among teachers in CCWP partnership schools and programs.

Building Partnerships: A Model For Professional Development and Teacher Leadership

In the past two years, our emphasis has been on creating long-range partnerships with schools and districts. We are experimenting with developing partnerships with individual schools and school districts. The initial step in this process was to establish TD&Is – Teacher Dialogue and Inquiry Groups. Voluntary, collegial communities, the TD&Is are derived from Vygotksian sociocultural theory and the work of Paulo Freire and Myles Horton. Inclusive and democratic, giving teachers a voice in setting agenda and making decisions, the TD&Is anchor the work of the CCWP in schools. We started the first TD&I in Full 1998 at Santa Cruz High School when Teacher Consultants Norreen Winkler and Julie Minnis, ELD and English teachers, respectively, gathered colleagues to share and analyze student work. Each successive year they added teachers from across the disciplines. Repeating essential aspects of the ISI, TD&Is have provided a professional development support network within the school and a forum for rethinking teaching practice and goals for student learning. There are currently five TD&Is, each with several more planned for next year. Each partnership school has one, with each its own agenda and personality, crafted by its participants to guide and support them as they work to improve student writing. Starting from the concept of “joint productive activity,” (Tharp and Gallimore, 1995) the collaborative practice in the TD&Is sets the tone for other professional development in writing. We took on the task of designing and coordinating the assessment, gathering teams of teachers to lead site-based assessment, rubric writing, and scoring of student work. From this effort, we began to build the Watsonville K-12 Writing Collaborative, a vertical grouping of one high school, a middle school, and several elementary feeder schools that would grow over a 2-5 year span of time. CCWP Teacher Consultants and fellows who teach in the district are integrated into multiple levels of sustained professional development activity across the district at individual school sites. In two years, we have helped transform the district’s orientation to assessment as solely evaluation, reframing it as assessment to inform and extend teaching and learning. This implies a deeper awareness of the relationship among teaching, learning and assessment, and includes both teachers and students as researchers and evaluators. Significantly, the district administration is supporting this new perspective. Assessment, then, has become the forum for rethinking the culture of the school to accommodate collaborative, on-the-job professional development. Most schools are not set up to allow teachers to take this deeper time for collaborative dialogue and assessment, and very little value is given to teachers undertaking action research in their own classrooms. Yet it is precisely such conditions that changing the culture of teaching and developing students lead forward as learners.

Our primary partnership is with the Pajaro Valley Unified School District and illustrates a significant shift in our approach to teacher leadership and school-based professional development. CCWP began to collaborate with the PVUSD in June 2000, joining their effort to develop and implement a comprehensive K-12 performance assessment process in writing. We took on the task of designing and coordinating the assessment, gathering teams of teachers to lead site-based assessment, rubric writing, and scoring of student work. From this effort, we began to build the Watsonville K-12 Writing Collaborative, a vertical grouping of one high school, a middle school, and several elementary feeder schools that would grow over a 2-5 year span of time. CCWP Teacher Consultants and fellows who teach in the district are integrated into multiple levels of sustained professional development activity across the district at individual school sites. In two years, we have helped transform the district’s orientation to assessment as solely evaluation, reframing it as assessment to inform and extend teaching and learning. This implies a deeper awareness of the relationship among teaching, learning and assessment, and includes both teachers and students as researchers and evaluators. Significantly, the district administration is supporting this new perspective. Assessment, then, has become the forum for rethinking the culture of the school to accommodate collaborative, on-the-job professional development. Most schools are not set up to allow teachers to take this deeper time for collaborative dialogue and assessment, and very little value is given to teachers undertaking action research in their own classrooms. Yet it is precisely such conditions that changing the culture of teaching and developing students lead forward as learners.

Our primary partnership is with the Pajaro Valley Unified School District and illustrates a significant One School’s Struggle: Moving the Mountain at Ann Soldo Elementary

Collaboration is essential to the process of improving the teaching of writing in our partnership schools. At one site school, particu-
larly in the Pajaro Valley USD we are piloting a multi-level approach to professional development that involves every teacher in both school-wide and grade level goal setting, planning, and assessment. Ann Soldo Elementary, the newest school in the PVUSD and, according to dis-
trict leadership, one of the most challenged schools in Watsonville, is a four-track, year-round school with over 900 students. Ann Soldo was started in the winter of 2000 with a staff composed primarily of first and second-year teachers, many with little foundation in teacher education or classroom experience. Along with a handful of skilled veteran teachers, there is immediately thrown into a sea of state literacy mandates, standards, and high-stakes assessments that quickly rankled their low-income, Latino students as failures and gave the school the lowest rating on the state’s Academic Performance Index. Staff morale was low, pedagogy was not well-articulated, and the local newspaper plastered one hard-working teacher’s face across the front page under the headline, “Poor Test Scores Pajaro Valley.” Soldo accepted the challenge. CCWP formed a site partnership with Ann Soldo Elementary. In this environment Kevin Beck launched his career as a classroom teacher. Participating in Ann Soldo’s site school and in monthly grade-level team meetings, school-wide staff development days and coaching sessions, Kevin has be-
come a leader in the teaching of writing among his colleagues. The