

Changing Times:
A Director's View of Adapting the Invitational Summer Institute
of the Maine Writing Project to an Online Environment

By Ken Martin ~ 2015 ~ Maine Writing Project



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Introduction

Today, there can be no doubt: the landscape of education is changing, and much of this change has been influenced if not prompted by emerging technology (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). It should be no surprise that change would also come to institutions like the Invitational Summer Institute (ISI) of National Writing Project sites. Beginning in 2011, harsh reductions in federal, state, and local university funding added impetus for sites to seek and consider new alternatives for doing business. This document is the story of the Maine Writing Project's response to these changing times.

In 2012, the MWP instituted a hybrid annual institute – 14 weeks online followed by seven days on campus. In this monograph, I describe the structure and elements of the hybrid format, including modifications we made in the second and third years (2013-14). I report what we seemed to learn in the first three years based on student work as well as surveys, course reflections, and interviews or focus groups with participants. Finally, I provide analysis of what I believe to have been the effects of going online. Some attention is given to the two-week, face-to-face portion, but the focus of this report is on exploring how elements of a traditional summer institute translate to an entirely online setting.

In this document I have tried to distinguish actions or claims that were my own as course instructor, researcher, and author by using the pronoun “I.” Use of “we” indicates actions or beliefs attributable to the Maine Writing Project leadership, program planners, or institute co-directors – groups of which I am a part and with whom I agreed in each instance.

Technological change is neither additive nor subtractive. It is ecological...One significant change generates total change...New Technologies alter the structure of our interests: the things we think *about*. They alter the character of our symbols: the things we think *with*. And they alter the nature of community: the arena in which thoughts develop.

- Neil Postman, *Technopoly* (1992)

What Prompted the Move Online

For 15 years, beginning in 1997, the Maine Writing Project (MWP) conducted an Invitational Summer Institute (ISI) to initiate K-16 teachers and other educators into the organization. Following the National Writing Project (NWP) model, these institutes lasted four weeks on campus at the University of Maine in Orono. While institutes initially ranged from 16 to 27 participants, beginning in the mid-2000s enrollment began to fall from about a dozen to as low as seven in 2010. We attributed this decline to multiple factors.

- *Market saturation.* Maine is a geographically large state with a widely dispersed population. Daily travel to the Orono campus or the expense of staying over seemed unrealistic for many educators within our wide service area. Within the immediate area, the pool of interested educators may have been thinned over time.
- *Reduced funding for course reimbursement.* Historically, participants rely on their employer to fund institute tuition. Facing pressure to reduce school budgets, districts were severely limiting funds allotted to professional development, especially for individual teacher's graduate study. Instead, funds were being directed to local, school-based programs.
- *Declining interest in a four-week summer format.* It may be that Maine teachers were feeling an increased need to supplement their income with seasonal work or that increased demands during the school year discouraged them from work related pursuits during their summers. Our recruitment efforts revealed that teachers were either unable or unwilling to commit to the traditional summer institute schedule.

- *Increased interest in online education.* We were aware that Maine teachers were increasingly being drawn to online options including our own masters program in writing and the teaching of writing at the University of Maine which was attracting students from a 150 mile radius.

Regardless of the reasons and faced with declining enrollments, we speculated that an online path to the Maine Writing Project might be a natural fit within a relatively new masters program at UMaine that already accommodated online coursework with summer options on campus.

Our Invitational Summer Institute was a six-credit University of Maine graduate course, and so we created two, three-credit courses in 2012. One course took place online throughout the 14-week spring semester and focused on the role of writing in teachers' personal and professional lives. The second course took place at the university campus from 9-4 for seven days in July and focused on the teaching of writing, including fellows' teaching demonstrations. While logistically straightforward, the new hybrid format appears to have had significant effects on participants' individual work, on their interaction with each other, and on their sense of affiliation with the Writing Project. In the following sections, I briefly describe our traditional ISI program before explaining in detail the new online course (an Introduction to the National Writing Project) and the seven-day July Institute in Teacher Leadership. I then introduce three change factors manifested in the new hybrid format: sociality in participant interaction, timespan of each course, and visibility of student work; and, I review the apparent effect of these change factors on Institute elements. Finally, I report changes we made to the hybrid institute format in its second and third years (2013-2014) and conclude with changes considered for 2015.

What We Did

Both the traditional ISI and the new, hybrid format were oriented toward three core values of the National Writing Project:

- Teacher as writers: In any discipline, teachers who write themselves are the most effective teachers of writing;
- Teachers as colleagues: A reflective and informed community of practice is in the best position to design and develop comprehensive writing programs; and,
- Teachers as leaders: Teachers who are well informed and effective in their practice can be successful teachers of other teachers.

These principles are reflected in fellows' institute activity: writing and sharing their writing; reading and discussion of current issues in education; and, sharing their own effective practices through the teaching demonstration. Students or *fellows* in the institute are K-University teachers and administrators drawn from many disciplines, although historically English Language Arts have been more highly represented. Many fellows enroll in the MWP as non-degree graduate students interested in professional development and then go on to enter a masters degree program in education.

Invitational Summer Institutes are instructed by an MWP teacher-consultant (TC) who is a member of the regular or adjunct UMaine literacy faculty, assisted by a TC who is an advanced graduate student. In both the ISI and hybrid formats, MWP TCs have served as *mentors* that pursue their own reading, writing, and discussion while assisting a small group of fellows. The mentors' role is rather different in the traditional and hybrid formats and is discussed in more detail below. The hybrid format was instructed by Ken Martin, Ph.D. (MWP 1999), Lecturer in

Literacy at the University of Maine and Associate Director (at that time) of the Maine Writing Project. Site Director Rich Kent, Ph.D. (MWP 1997) assisted in developing and leading the new format. Regardless of format, we hope that every participant in the MWP institute will return to his or her local practice better informed and energized for writing, reflective practice, and teacher leadership. For those that are interested, the institute may begin a continuing association with MWP colleagues and involvement with professional development at regional or national levels. While these aspirations were common to both approaches, we realized that the hybrid structure would be different and might well change outcomes as well as the nature of the experience. A description of the hybrid format and its effects follows a review of our traditional ISI format.

Our typical Invitational Summer Institute (1997-2011)

Our traditional ISI began in late spring with a 1 1/2-day orientation. Fellows came together on campus to get-acquainted and to cover logistics (e.g., parking permits, lodging requests), review the institute plan (i.e., syllabus and schedule), and view model assignments (i.e., learning autobiography and teaching demonstration). In late June and early July, participants spent two weeks meeting on campus from 9-4 each day, followed by an independent reading week (more recently this became a “virtual” week with some online interaction), and one final week back on campus. Early in the first week, we placed fellows into writing groups, and they went off on a writing marathon around campus. ISI co-directors formed the writing groups based on fellows’ stated interests (e.g., genre), application and interview information, recommendations from TCs that had recruited or otherwise knew a fellow, and initial impressions during the orientation and first days of the institute. The objective was to craft groups that could be self-directed and move through the social process of forming a working

group. Fellows devoted the first week to presenting learning autobiographies that portrayed one or more illuminating aspects of their learning history. Learning autobiographies often included guitar playing and song, displays of original art work or crafts like pottery, and even dramatic scenes as well as images from throughout the world; autobiographies sometimes focused on a life-altering event such as a medical diagnosis, a particular mentor, or an Ah-ha moment.

Beginning with the orientation, fellows were assigned an MWP mentor who was available to answer questions, listen to concerns, read fellows' writing, when asked, and generally help support fellows' affiliation with the MWP. In order to provide multiple layers of interaction, fellows were grouped with mentors in a different configuration from their writing group. Mentors coached fellows, in groups and individually, to prepare their teaching demonstration – a 70-minute workshop style presentation of some aspect of the fellow's practice. Fellows presented these demonstrations to the full institute class during the second and fourth weeks. Following each demonstration, audience members completed a response protocol with praises as well as polish suggestions, and fellows underwent more extensive debriefing with their mentor and course instructors. In part, this process prepared fellows to conduct their workshop for a wider, public audience at our annual, statewide Fall Effective Practices Conference.

Other ISI activities included small group discussion of 3-4 assigned or choice books on writing and the teaching of writing as well as guest speakers, often MWP TCs, who conducted workshops on writing, the pedagogy of writing, and effective workshop development and delivery. Of course, there was ample time for fellows to write and to share and respond in their writing groups. During the Institute, each fellow made daily entries to a writing journal and composed multiple pieces of writing for publication (e.g., one creative writing piece and a

position paper or other informational writing). Each ISI class prepared an anthology with 5-7 pages of each fellow's writing. In our early years, the anthology was an insider publication – 8 1/2 by 11 photocopied pages, spiral-bound, with newsletters and other memorabilia interesting and comprehensible only to institute participants. Later, the anthology evolved to a professionally-published 6 by 9 folio of fellows' writing only. For many fellows, this anthology is a first professional publication, and for our organization it represents the quality of our members' work to prospective members, administrators, and other general audiences.

Finally, there was an important social side to building community in any ISI and to establishing fellows affiliation with writing project principles, practices, and traditions. Individual fellows, often working in pairs, hosted each day of the ISI – providing snacks, presenting brief opening and closing moments (e.g., reading a short poem), and creating a newsletter for the day. Affectionately termed *The Muckraker*, the newsletter not only recorded events but also captured the spirit of each day in what fellows said and did together. It provided comic relief and was a way to spoof, compliment and acknowledge each other as fellows tried to outdo one another in the newsletter's presentation and content. Hosting was one example of the social aspect that accompanied this intense educational experience. Sharing food, frequent laughter, and occasional tears marked each day of any ISI. On our last day, the Institute culminated in a barbecue at which fellows submitted their Institute portfolio – typically, a 2 inch binder filled with the student's own work (writing, journal entries, and demonstration notes) as well as conference materials and memorabilia like newsletters. Portfolios were not graded *per se* by the course instructor. Rather, fellows shared their portfolios with each other in a two-hour “read-around,” taking time to insert comments on sticky notes, before handing their portfolios

over to their mentors who read and responded with a letter. These forms of response reflect the nature of “assessment” in the institute that welcomed new fellows into our professional community of practice. Instead of answering to a single, often temporary authority, we are accountable to ourselves and our colleagues. Perhaps most importantly, on the final day participants exchanged personal notes, often accompanied by mementos that exemplified some aspect of their experience. Interestingly, most fellows did not open their envelope of collected notes until later when they were alone at home. This final act demonstrated the emotional yet satisfying end to an intense immersion experience.

Going online – 2012: Introduction to the National Writing Project

Twenty-one fellows took part in the online portion of our first hybrid institute: 10 elementary teachers (female), 3 middle school teachers (female), 7 secondary teachers (4 female, 3 male), one university instructor and one k-12 literacy specialist (both female). Twelve fellows registered as non-degree graduate students while nine were enrolled in a masters program in education. Twelve fellows were located within a one-and-one-half-hour radius of the University of Maine campus; the remaining 9 were from as far as four hours away.¹

In moving from a traditional Invitational Summer Institute to the hybrid format, our guiding principle was to transfer program elements as intact as possible from the original institute design to the hybrid design. We divided the online spring course into six, two-week sessions. Each session involved a mix of reading, writing, and discussion. Fellows read one

¹ This geographic distribution has remained fairly constant across the three institute years. In 2013, 11 fellows were from within 1.5 hours travel time to UMaine, and 9 were outside that radius, stretching 300 miles from Portland in the south to Presque Isle and Limestone in the north. In 2014, 10 were within 1.5 hours, 7 were from beyond 1.5 hours south to as far as York, and one fellow connected from Aupaluk, Quebec, Canada, 1000 miles due north of UMaine!

common text and two choice books as well as various articles. A mixture of required and optional discussions were prompted or supported by the required readings, optional, enrichment articles, and fellows’ own experience. Fellows wrote and shared writing in multiple ways, including community activities based on a short writing prompt and a journal with at least 2-3 entries each week, one of which was published to the class during each two-week session. Fellows also wrote “for publication” – one creative piece and a position paper, both “highly revised.” While individual elements have changed over time, this essential structure to the institute has remained the same and is represented in Table 1 and detailed in Appendix A, the 2014 course syllabus for ERL 545, an Introduction to the National Writing Project. A description of each two-week session follows an overview of our online setting for the program.

Table 1. ERL 545 Timeline of reading, writing and discussion activities in the 14-week online Introduction to the National Writing Project.

	Reading & Discussion	Writing and Writing Response Activities	
Session 1	Required: <i>Because Writing Matters</i> (Nagin & NWP) Articles: journaling Forum discussion: Hopes & Fears	Response to required reading 2-3 Journal entries (post 1) Writing Activity #1	Create digital writing portfolio Compose & post Learning Autobiography
Session 2	Articles: writing rituals; should teachers write? Forum discussion: Teachers as Writers	2-3 Journal entries (post 1) Writing Activities #2 & #3 Develop & publish writing plan to portfolio	Read/view & comment: classmates’ learning autobiographies
Digital Writing Marathon: Describe the experience in a journal entry and post 1-2 writing samples.			
Session 3	Choice book on writing/ writing life Articles: writing communities and groups	Response to choice reading 2-3 Journal entries (post 1) Writing Activity #4	Begin “writing for publication” Post draft of one: creative piece or position paper
	Writing groups read and comment on group mates’ writing plans and begin reading and responding to their writing.		
~ ~ ~ Semester Break (two weeks) ~ ~ ~			

	Reading & Discussion	Writing and Writing Response Activities	
Session 4	Articles: peer response, response protocols (including NWP <i>Bless-Address-Press</i>) Forum discussion: Peer response (as writers and as teachers with students)	2-3 Journal entries (post 1)	Post draft of other: creative piece or position paper
		Begin revisions to “writing for publication” and writing groups continue reading and responding on each other’s writing.	
Session 5	Choice book on teaching writing Articles: publishing writing, including student writing and writing portfolios NWP website: Resources on teaching writing Forum discussion: portfolios & publishing	2-3 Journal entries (post 1) Write or share writing with students	
		Continue revisions to “writing for publication” and writing groups continue reading and responding on each other’s writing.	
Session 6	NWP: <i>30 Ideas for Teaching Writing</i> Article: questioning assumptions about teaching writing Forum discussion: Rethinking teaching writing	Complete revisions to “writing for publication” and writing group response to each other’s writing.	
		Response to choice reading on teaching writing (session #5) No journal entries required Writing Activity #5 Reflection on writing with students	Complete “writing for publication.” Complete digital writing portfolio. Course reflection
	Confirm plans for July institute, begin planning teaching demonstration, and confer with mentor.		

The online course used Moodle², a learning management system that enables instructors and students to organize and manage resources and activities in multiple ways. Instructors can upload materials like the syllabus and articles or connect to Internet resources using external hyperlinks. Course work can be exchanged amongst students and with the instructor. Most importantly, Moodle *Forum* is a particularly robust application for threaded discussion in which participants post their own discussion entries and reply to entries posted by other users. Forum entries may be enhanced by attaching materials like PDF and word documents, images, videos,

² Moodle is an acronym for modular object-oriented dynamic learning environment. See moodle.org.

audio recordings, and so on. All Moodle activity takes place in an *asynchronous* manner that does not require participants to be online at the same time. We used multiple Forums to discuss reading, conduct writing activities, and support writing group work. Each fellow used the Moodle Forum application to create an individual, online, digital writing portfolio. In this portfolio, fellows gathered course elements like journal entries, book responses, and writing for publication in one place, accessible to classmates, mentors, and the instructor to read and comment (Appendix C, sample digital writing portfolio index page).

Session One. The first, two-week session was devoted to building the writing community. Fellows introduced themselves by composing a personal profile in Moodle, creating their digital writing portfolio, and participating in the “Hopes and Fears Forum” where they discussed their writing aspirations and concerns as well as their objectives in taking the course. Fellows read *Because Writing Matters: Improving Student Writing in our Schools* (Nagin & NWP, 2006) and posted a response to their online portfolio; and, they completed the first writing activity based on a prompt from *The Pocket Muse: Ideas & Inspirations for Writing* (Wood, 2002). (See Appendix D, writing activities.) Fellows’ principal activity during session 1 was to compose the learning autobiography. Fellows were required to post a print version of 4-6 pages, and they were encouraged to include at least a few images or even to create a digital writing such as a podcast or digital story. I posted my own autobiography as a model in podcast form with spoken narrative and images.

Session Two. Fellows began their second, two-week session by reading (or viewing) and commenting on each other’s learning autobiographies. In session 2, fellows also began to

consider the role of writing in their personal and professional lives as well as the importance of “teachers as writers” generally. They completed the following activities.

- Fellows shared their writing habits and preferences in writing activity #2, prompted by the *NWP Quarterly* article “Who, what, when, and where of writing rituals” (Dobie, Maher, McDonald, & O’Shaughnessy, 2002).
- Fellows tried some creative writing. In writing activity #3, they composed their own “first sentences that simultaneously summon the past and foreshadow the future” (e.g., *All that day as she waited for her sister to come home, Maxine remembered the goats*, from “Testimony,” a short story by Jessica Treadway, again based on Wood’s (2002) *The Pocket Muse*).
- Fellows joined the debate over whether teachers should or should not write, individually or with students, based on a selection of articles (Gillespie, 1995; Jost, 1990a, 1990b).

By the end of session 2, fellows posted initial ideas for their creative writing and position papers.

At the end of session 2, fellows organized their writing groups. The Moodle choice activity allowed fellows to self-select writing groups of 4-5 members. Then, writing groups came together in a *digital writing marathon*. (See Appendix E, digital writing marathon instructions.) Each fellow independently determined four, specific locations based on broad, common descriptors:

- a place connected with the natural world;
- a civilized place;
- some place with food; and,
- a kind of place *you* think would be well-suited to a writing marathon.

At some point during a four-day window, each fellow spent about two hours visiting the four locations and stopping to write for 10-20 minutes at each spot. Some fellows traveled around

their community (e.g., a beach, mall, and coffee shop), while others stayed close to home (porch, study, and kitchen). Completing the marathon individually and asynchronously was a first occasion for members to experience the affordances and constraints of working in this manner in a writing group. Each writing group was assigned a private discussion space (i.e., a Forum visible only to group members and course instructors and mentors). On this Forum, fellows posted an entry describing their marathon journey as well as one or two *un*-revised writing excerpts. Fellows read and commented on their group mates' journey description; but in keeping with our ISI writing marathon tradition, we asked fellows *not* to comment on their group mates' writing excerpts except to say, "Thank you" – a rule that most groups chose to bend.

Sessions Three and Four. With writing groups underway, sessions 3 and 4 were devoted to fellows' writing and to exploring the nature of peer response in their writing groups and general discussions.

- Fellows read an individual choice book on writing selected from our MWP reading list and posted a book response to their online portfolio; and, they read NWP articles on building a writing group and writing response (Bridgford, 2001; Elrod, 2003).
- In writing activity #4, fellows wrote "something in the voice of someone who has, until now, been silent" or silenced (Wood, 2002).
- Most importantly, fellows posted drafts of their writing for publication – a creative writing piece and a position paper. Within writing groups, they began to read and respond to each other's writing. Although not required, we encouraged fellows to use the NWP "bless-address-press" response protocol (Appendix F). This protocol supports a recursive writing process with progressively more explicit comments.

Sessions 3 and 4 fell on either side of a two-week University of Maine semester break, effectively creating a six-week immersion in writing. During this time, no general online discussion was required, but an Open Forum was available for optional discussion of any topic related to writing or the teaching of writing.

Sessions Five and Six. During session 5, fellows continued to focus on response within their writing groups and final revisions to their writing for publication. It is important to note that the term “writing for publication” was more a mindset than a requirement – a phrase we used to inspire highly revised writing with an authentic purpose and importance for the writer. We encouraged fellows to write for a specific audience whether local, regional, national, or online – for example, a creative writing or professional journal, local newspaper, school board, a blog. Fellows also knew that some of their writing would be published in our own annual print anthology. Session 5 also included optional reading and open discussion on the use of portfolios and other topics related to publishing students’ writing.

In sessions 5 and 6, fellows gave more explicit consideration to their role as teachers of writing, a move that would point toward the seven-day July Institute. They read individual choice books on the teaching of writing from our MWP reading list and posted a book response to their online portfolio. They read the article “Sacred Cows: Questioning Assumptions in Elementary Writing Programs” (Power & Ohanian, 1999) and participated in a required Forum discussion on rethinking teaching writing. Fellows also wrote or shared their writing with their own students and posted a reflection on this activity to their online portfolio. Finally, they posted a “final” version of their creative writing and position paper as well as a course reflection to their digital writing portfolio. Those fellows that were continuing on to the seven-day July Institute

posted initial ideas for a teaching demonstration and began discussing these plans with their mentor.

Role of the mentor

Throughout the online semester, fellows worked with a mentor. Mentors are MWP teacher-consultants enrolled online in their own three-credit graduate Seminar in Mentoring. During our first year, five TCs from as early as 2003 to as recent as 2011 signed on as mentors. Of course, all of the five had come to the MWP through a traditional summer institute. The mentors' curriculum included choice reading on writing and the teaching of writing, locating and contributing resources about mentoring (e.g., articles and websites) to a shared collection, maintaining a journal of their mentoring experience, and participating in online discussion with other mentors. As with the fellows' online institute, the essential structure to the mentors' program has remained the same over its three years, although individual elements have changed significantly as we have worked to better understand and enhance online mentoring. Appendix N provides the course syllabus for ERL 547, the Seminar in Mentoring.

Mentors also supported 3-4 fellows in specific ways. First, mentors responded privately to their fellows' learning autobiography and Hopes & Fears Forum entry through the internal Moodle messaging system. Then, they followed their fellows' digital writing portfolio, reading and responding publicly with replies to their journal entries and book responses. Mentors were invited but not required to read and reply to fellows' writing activities and discussion Forums. At the end of the online course, mentors wrote each assigned fellow a letter commenting in a collegial fashion on their portfolio, especially their writing for publication and final course reflection.

Mentors were able to view writing in the various writing group spaces. However, we specifically asked mentors *not to comment* on their fellows' writing. This was intended to ensure that writing groups would be self-managed and self-reliant. We did not want a fellow's mentor to be perceived as an evaluator or gatekeeper along the way to writing for publication. This proved to be a critical instructional decision in going online. Over time in the traditional summer ISI, mentors' preparation had become more extensive, detailed, and formalized.³ Nevertheless, the relationship between mentors and their assigned fellows continued to develop in a predominantly informal manner. There were specific guidelines and expectations for coaching the teaching demonstration, but there were no explicit requirements for mentoring fellows' writing or other institute work. This is not to suggest that mentors did not typically have rich and diverse contact with their fellows, only that the *organic* process of developing the mentor-fellow relationship in the ISI stands in stark contrast to the more formally structured process that was introduced from the outset online. Indeed, the question of how to conceptualize and achieve the natural and vigorous mentor-fellow relationship of a traditional ISI within an online environment has proved to be an ongoing challenge and concern.

Role of the instructor

As instructor, I took a largely hands-off stance with respect to fellows' institute work. I did not respond to individual fellow's writing, although I did follow writing group Forums and

³ Evolution of our mentoring program: In the earliest years, course instructors served as "coaches" working with fellows to prepare their teaching demonstrations, and they naturally responded as instructors to any other questions or requests for help from fellows. In 2003, we began to recruit TCs as "mentors" to take up the role of supporting a small number of fellows with their demonstration as well as other requests for help and to assist with institute activities like leading reading discussions. A separate curriculum began to emerge for these mentors and continued to evolve into an advanced institute that included both mentoring fellows and mentors' own reading, discussion, and writing activity. This advanced institute was a three-credit course alongside the traditional ISI with mentors in attendance for about half the fellows' institute days. In 2012, it was a natural progression to the six-credit program of a spring online Seminar in Mentoring (ERL 547) and a seven-day July Advanced Institute in Teacher Leadership (ERL 548).

communicate as needed with individuals or the community as a whole regarding *process* issues or writing assignment questions. I also followed writing activities and discussion Forums, commenting voluntarily as an interested colleague. I followed each fellow's digital writing portfolio, where I monitored journal entries and book responses but did not routinely respond to these entries. Following sessions 1, 2, 4, and 6, I sent individual notes to each fellow confirming completion of course assignments or identifying any assignments that had not been completed. These notes included an individualized comment on a central element of the session(s) (e.g., the learning autobiography, a particular Forum discussion, writing group participation, etc.). Meanwhile, mentors provided the kind of individual nurturing most often undertaken by facilitative teachers in online courses.

In part, my restrained response activity was a logistical necessity. The communication load in an interactive online course with 21 students can be overwhelming (Thormann & Zimmerman, 2012). Moreover, I was also teaching the Seminar in Mentoring, following the individual course work of five mentors as well as their support efforts with the 21 fellows. Even so, in the asynchronous online setting where *all* communication is recorded in writing, I was certainly more aware of each fellow's work than had ever been possible in the traditional ISI. It was a conscious decision, therefore, to remain as far in the background as possible. In keeping with traditional ISI practice, fellows' peer communication was the primary interaction. While I did monitor activity and sometimes guide course processes (e.g., encouraging writing groups to follow the NWP bless-address-press sequence rather than immediately asking for an editing press on first drafts), we wanted above all to foster the kind of self-directed community of practice into which fellows were entering in the Maine Writing Project.

Seven days on campus: Institute in teacher leadership

The face-to-face portion of our hybrid format is not the focus of this report. However, some description of the July Institute is required to appreciate the effects of going online in this new approach. Of the 21 fellows in the online course, 11 enrolled in the July Institute. These participants came face-to-face for the first time at an afternoon orientation immediately following the end-of-April conclusion to the spring semester. This orientation included a model teaching demonstration. The first day of the July Institute included a second model demonstration as well as time in mentor-fellow groups of 3-4 to share demonstration ideas and begin serious planning. The second Institute day included additional planning time, a writing marathon, and an introduction to our online writing spaces (i.e., NWP Connect and the e-Anthology).

Fellows had a long weekend break before returning to five days devoted primarily to teaching demonstrations. On Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, two demonstrations ran concurrently each morning and afternoon. Each demonstration was a 70-minute workshop followed by a 20-minute protocol that included a written praise-polish-question response from each participant and discussion of a related inquiry question on the workshop topic that was introduced by its presenter. The audience for each session was five fellows, two mentors, and one institute co-director. This was a different experience for both presenter and audience compared with a traditional institute where two weeks provided time for all fellows to see every teaching demonstration and presenters faced a full audience of 15-20 participants. Other events were distributed throughout the week: a morning conducting writing mini-workshops with elementary and high school students at the MWP young authors camp; discussions on topics ranging from digital writing to portfolio based classrooms; and, time for individual writing and workshop preparation. One text, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a*

Teacher's Life (Palmer, 2007) was required reading. Fellows also read a book of their choice on teacher leadership and shared this book in a 15 minute book talk and discussion.

During the July Institute, mentors enrolled in an Advanced Institute in Teacher Leadership. Of the five spring mentors, four continued into July and were joined by three TCs who had not mentored in the spring.⁴ Again, mentors had their own curriculum with reading, writing, and discussion oriented around the challenge of returning from an MWP institute and implementing writing project practices in an environment that may not be aligned with our principles. This work included developing a proposal with the potential to make a positive change to writing pedagogy in their own school context. Mentors' work with their assigned fellows was almost entirely oriented toward coaching and facilitating the teaching demonstration. Mentors did read and respond to fellows' July portfolio following the Institute.

Conclusion to what we did in 2012

Faced with declining enrollments in our summer ISI as well as growing interest in online education, we made the strategic decision in 2012 to build an alternative, hybrid pathway to the Maine Writing Project. We appreciated that this would necessitate change. Still, we hoped to continue as many elements as possible from the traditional institute. We felt these elements were vital to new fellows' success as members and to the continuity of our organization. We believed certain activities were the foundation to our community of practice and to ongoing shared affiliation amongst members and to the principles and practices of the writing project. In that first year and the two that followed, we learned a great deal about apparent effects of that transition on individual participants, the institute experience, and our organization as a whole.

⁴ The spring Seminar in Mentoring has never been a prerequisite to the Advanced Institute in Teacher Leadership for mentors in July.

What We Learned

All eleven fellows that participated in both the spring semester online course and the July institute in 2012 provided input on the hybrid format: a survey of their experience with both closed and open-ended questions, individual course reflections on both the online and July courses, and a focus group discussion. Five of the seven July mentors (3 of whom were also mentors in the online course) took part in their own separate focus group. The most important data source from the eleven participating fellows was their work from both the online course (e.g., learning autobiographies, Forum discussions, student writing) and the face-to-face July Institute (e.g., teaching demonstration materials, observations).

One limitation to this study is that it did not include any of the ten fellows that completed the spring semester online course but did not continue on into the July 2012 institute. None of these fellows were surveyed or included in the July focus group. From spring course reflections and informal discussion, we know that some spring fellows did not continue for logistical reasons, mainly due to summer scheduling conflicts. For others, the spring experience did not inspire further interest in the MWP. At least two were disappointed that the spring course was not oriented toward more direct instruction to improve their writing. A second limitation of our comparison is that information on the traditional MWP ISI is anecdotal and largely based on my own experience as a fellow in 1999, a mentor in 2006, and an ISI director in 2011. Information on our traditional summer institute was also gathered through informal discussions with teacher-consultants on the MWP leadership team as well as formal review and comment from ISI co-directors spanning six institute years.

The Maine Writing Project initiated its hybrid institute format in 2012. For 15 years, we had conducted a traditional ISI. In January 2012 we began a fourteen-week, online introduction to the National Writing Project followed by a seven-day, on-campus July institute in teacher leadership. This format change, in and of itself, introduced three fundamental change factors into the nature of the institute: sociality or participants' interpersonal relations; time, both as it was available and as it was distributed across activities; and, visibility or the degree and manner in which student activity was apparent to other participants. In the following sections, I define these three change factors. I then relate how we attempted to translate the elements of our writing project institute into the hybrid format. Finally, I describe what appear to have been the effects of the three change factors on those institute elements within the hybrid format. One pattern of effect seems to have flowed through the online portion of the new format in particular: Each of the three change factors seems to have generated a sense, whether real or imagined, that is best described as more course-like and less like an institute – for example, an environment where fellows seemed to consider course elements more like assignments than collegial activities or were more focused on meeting deadlines than immersion in a process like writing group response.

Three change factors

Sociality was the first change factor prompted by the transition from an entirely face-to-face to the hybrid format. Simply stated, the experience of moving to a largely online context affects the tendency and manner in which participants develop interpersonal connections and form their community. Research has established the importance of *social presence* to learning online. The sense that students are interacting with real people creates a “warm, open, and

trusting environment” (Rourke, Anderson, Garrison, & Archer, 1999, p. 4) which in turn is essential to participants’ satisfaction, to their persistence in completing courses, and to their sense that they are learning (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007; Picciano, 2002). Of the 11 participating fellows, three reported that they felt “disconnected” in the online portion. Five reported that they “liked” the online format either because of its convenience and flexibility in controlling when they did their work or because they felt more comfortable or disinhibited in sharing their writing online.

We were, of course, interested in how going online might affect fellows’ *overall* attitudes toward their learning experience. However, our format change was not a generalized experiment in online education. A 2011 survey of existing MWP TCs overwhelmingly confirmed their preference for immersion in a 3-4 week, face-to-face institute over *any* online alternative; however, we recognized that we were likely polling the wrong audience – namely, those that had been able to make an extended summer commitment. The move to a hybrid format was targeted to address our decline in enrollments, and so we were interested in specific areas of effect. Our principal interest was how individual, time-honored elements of the traditional summer institute would transfer into an online environment, and how we could most effectively structure those elements to work in a hybrid model. At the same time, any institute format would need to satisfactorily induct fellows into the core principles of the Maine and National Writing Projects and establish an acceptable degree of affiliation with our organization – results that would ensure the continuing growth and stability of our membership. We were not considering whether the hybrid format would be preferable to a traditional summer institute but whether it would be an effective, alternate path to membership in the Writing Project.

Half of the 2012 July fellows stated that the hybrid format was essential to their participating, and the spring course enrollment alone indicates an appetite for this pathway to the Maine Writing Project. Of course, the fact that only eleven of 21 spring fellows enrolled in the July institute raised important questions about how or to what extent this format addressed the enrollment issue. Were some fellows unable to commit even to a seven-day institute in the summer? Was the spring online experience unsatisfactory to some fellows in ways that discouraged their going on to become MWP members? My own primary concern as instructor was with effects on specific institute elements, and sociality was just one of three factors that changed with the hybrid format. Nevertheless, engagement with colleagues is elemental to the Maine Writing Project, making social presence a consideration with respect to incoming fellows' affiliation with the organization. While we recognized that the online format might not be an acceptable path for all, we remained committed to improving the social presence experienced by those willing to try this format. The discussion of individual elements that follows will show that sociality is a complex factor that seemed to play out differently across the two formats.

A second factor that changed with our transition to the hybrid format was *time*, a change that cut two ways. The 14-week semester dramatically increased the time allotted for teachers to explore and compose their writing, while just seven days in July dramatically decreased time to prepare and experience teaching demonstrations. From a social standpoint, fellows' had much greater total time in contact with each other, yet 90% of that time (14 weeks) was invested in the online context while just two weeks took place in face-to-face contact. Of the three change factors, time management best captures our circumstances and concerns. Time is where the joy of extended immersion in the company of others meets the limits of participants' lives and

availability. Time (how much and how invested) is where institute objectives and realities must be balanced. It is worth recalling that the online interaction preceded any face-to-face contact. Several fellows said they would have preferred some face-to-face experience prior to going online and claimed that a prior face-to-face experience would have increased their social presence in the online setting. This begs consideration of a live orientation before the online course begins, but we have resisted this so as not to discourage enrollment by students located far from our university. Interest in face-to-face interaction also begs consideration of using videoconference technology (e.g., Skype, Google Hangouts) for an orientation, mentor-fellow meetings, or writing groups. We have not ruled out these methods, but again we have resisted incorporating them in order to preserve the asynchronous nature of the online course.

Visibility was a third factor that changed with the online environment where fellows' work, including discussion, is both public and permanent when posted to the common, online space. In the traditional ISI, most fellows' activity goes unpublished during the institute – that is, unseen by the course instructor or mentors and largely shared only informally and briefly with sub-groups of colleagues. In book discussions, for example, fellows go off in small groups, talk for a while, and return with perhaps a summary reporting out to the whole. Online is different. With one exception (viz., writing group discussions), fellows' participation on Moodle was entirely public. Book and article discussions are published as they occur and are visible to classmates, mentors, and the instructor throughout the remainder of the course. Similarly, in the traditional ISI a fellow's portfolio is not shared with classmates until the final day of the institute when it is read carefully by some classmates and skimmed by others in a two-hour read-around. Online, the digital writing portfolio is available to all as it grows across the 14-week semester,

and activity records confirm that portfolio materials were both viewed and commented upon by classmates, the fellow's mentor, and the course instructor. These Forum replies frequently turned into extended conversations involving multiple experiences and perspectives. In the traditional setting, readers responded to portfolios on the final morning with sticky-note comments which invites comparatively short remarks; following the ISI, the fellow's mentor reads and responds to the portfolio with a comprehensive, summary letter. Certainly fellows enjoy and appreciate the sticky notes, yet they seem more validating than generative. Even when substantive, these notes are one-way and not conducive to co-constructing knowledge and perspective. The online discussions are also validating as participants build social presence in the community; in addition, the online conversations often lead in developmental directions more representative of cognitive presence.⁵

The one kind of fellows' work that is not visible to all in the online context is writing group response, yet there remains a difference. In the traditional ISI, writing groups generally meet, share, and respond orally with no record of the exchange or response other than any notes that authors choose to jot for themselves. Online, writing group discussions were not open to fellows outside one's own group, but they were accessible to mentors and the instructor. More importantly, comments were preserved and continued to be visible to these readers as well as the

⁵ Research into online learning has identified three conditions that are elemental to the co-construction of knowledge in online environments: social presence, cognitive presence, and teaching presence. Social presence is the foundation for participation or the motivation to participate. For online communities to succeed, however, users need to be more than just friendly toward each other; they also need to be committed to purposeful relationships that help the group to think and to achieve learning objectives. This commitment is represented by *cognitive presence*: a response that develops, evaluates, and extends discussion. Research generally points to *teaching presence* as the critical factor in facilitating this transition from social to cognitive presence. Teaching presence encompasses functions traditionally associated with the instructor: designing and managing the educational experience, facilitating discourse, and providing subject knowledge and process leadership. What is not entirely clear is whether teaching presence must be provided by the instructor or the extent to which its functions can be undertaken by other participants (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 1999; Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007; Martin, 2011).

writer. This design illustrates how the increase in visibility online was more than participants' seeing all that fellows expressed. It was also that written expression was more permanent and seemed unforgettable, a perception that appears to have influenced fellows' writing directly.

As readers and writers, we tend to consider oral communication as ephemeral while we are apt to perceive written communication as indelible (Elbow, 1985), and so the shift from oral to written discussion can influence how we compose. The perceived expectation that writing can be more clear as well as more permanent may cause participants in an online environment to be self-conscious about what they "say" or post. As one fellow stated, "I was always so careful, so meticulous about what I posted, to be sure I had said everything in just the right way." In other words, what we "say" online matters. How we present ourselves is important in any context. It affects not just how others see us, but how we see ourselves (Rheingold, 2012, p. 138-139). The indelibility of written interaction increases the urge to present ourselves thoughtfully and carefully when online. Moreover, the absence of familiar supports like tone of voice, facial expression or body language may further serve to slow our pace or disrupt our confidence while communicating online. Written text may generate more reflective work as we take time to read others more closely and consider our own entries more thoughtfully. It may also lead to more guarded response, decelerate the rate of response, and hinder the kind of interactive flow that we associate with constructing knowledge through discussion. In this case, posts were available to the ongoing scrutiny of a wider audience in ways that were not typical of our traditional summer institute. This is not to suggest that an online environment is necessarily more or less conducive to achieving the goals of a writing project institute. It is simply to recognize how the two

environments are different and to alert planners to a potential influence on achieving their own institute goals.

In moving from a traditional summer institute to the hybrid format, our guiding principle was to move traditional elements online as intact as possible. Naturally, we wanted to preserve the character and purpose of these elements for our fellows; but as program evaluators we also wanted to provide for the closest possible comparison between the two formats. Insofar as possible, we wanted to identify effects related to the change in format. Changes in visibility, time, and sociality were embedded in the transition from an entirely face-to-face institute to a predominantly online approach, and these three factors help to explain the translation of institute elements under the new format.

How writing project activities translated online

The learning autobiography was one of the first elements to reflect the three change factors prompted by the online context. Under each format, the learning autobiography is a get-acquainted activity intended to build the learning community, and in each context the content was essentially the same – a narrative slice of each fellow’s life. However, in 2012 the character of autobiographies online did not have the personality of the live performances. Despite having the model of an audio podcast with still images, almost no fellows provided pictures let alone an audio reading or other performance piece to accompany their written text. Learning autobiographies in the traditional ISI were presented with everyone physically present and able to respond at the same time with each other and the presenter. Online, learning autobiographies were viewed in isolation, and Moodle activity reports do not track when users view but do not respond to Forum entries. Therefore, it was not possible even to assure that every classmate

viewed a fellow's autobiography, let alone shared in what is apt to be an intense, emotional experience in the live setting.

Response also differed in the two settings. In the traditional ISI, fellows respond to learning autobiographies with brief, handwritten notes immediately following each face-to-face presentation. This format provides strictly one-way transmissions from audience to presenter with limited interaction adjacent to the event. In the online context, fellows post their learning autobiography to their digital writing portfolio where classmates may respond with more lengthy or multiple written comments over more than a week; and, the author is able to interact with the audience by responding to these comments, all within the view of other participants. In their online replies, fellows not only complimented the author's writing, experience, or thought, but also shared their own experiences or discussed related writing and teaching issues. The following excerpt illustrates these response possibilities.

Fellow 1: What a touching story! I think it is a perfect LA! Learning takes place on many different levels and about many different things. It is clear that this experience enhanced your understanding of multiple things on many different levels!

Author: Thanks. I was a little hesitant to put this story out there so this timely feedback has settled me. Thank you. :)

Fellow 2: This is courageous writing. This is a courageous life.

Author: Thank you for your kindness. I don't think any of us really feels courageous in the moment. We just do what we do. Thanks again. :)

Fellow 3: I'm pretty blown away. Your honesty inspires me, your passion is clear.

Author: Wahoo! Honesty translates easily enough, but passion is hard to convey sometimes. I'm glad it surfaced here. Thanks. :)

Fellow 4: Wow. So, so beautiful. I love the way you tie the stories of [your daughter] and [foster daughter] together and how honestly you write about parenting and teaching. And: "We must never assume we know the whole story." Amen to that. I'd say this is totally fitting as a learning autobiography because who we are in the classroom is really

the same as who we are in the world, if we are doing it right. You are clearly doing it right.

Fellow 5: Thank you for sharing that wonderful story about your own daughter and foster daughter. It appears that you have the "listening" part down. Listening beyond the classroom. "Once you take the time to really get to know your students, you realize that each one of those voices surprises you." A few years ago I had a similar moment with one of my boys, drawing away from me when I offered a hug, acting depressed and not talking to me. After much thought and discussion with my husband about where this "attitude" was coming from I thought I would take that boy on a long ride to see if I could reach in. It wasn't until we were heading back towards home that he opened up. Tears fell as he told me how much he missed his room, his space at his old school...This was a big eye opener for me...I thought I was the only one having trouble with the transition. This day taught me the importance of listening beyond the daily words that are spoken and taking the time to show you care.

This example is not entirely typical. Most comments on learning autobiographies ran about 80 words spread over 5-6 sentences (mean average: 85 words, median: 78 words). Here, three quite short comments are balanced by one exceptionally long entry. Also, the author's level of response is somewhat above average at 1:2 while the class average was 1 author reply per 3.25 reader comments.⁶ Nevertheless, this example demonstrates the capacity of the asynchronous online format to support social presence, perhaps verging on cognitive presence given more extended time and space for direct response. This example is not intended to suggest that response to learning autobiographies was necessarily more robust online. It does, however, invite consideration of how sociality may grow differently in each context.

The traditional ISI is structured such that fellows complete learning autobiography presentations as soon as possible – beginning on the second institute day and finishing by the end of the first week at the latest. Research into online education advocates teachers' actively

⁶ This calculation includes two reader comments that were not included in the example because their authors did not participate in the study. These two were more typical in length at 70 and 82 words each. Also, they further enriched the discussion by introducing pedagogical considerations on the power of authentic audience and purpose and the effect of student attitudes on their learning.

building social presence with intentional activities, unlike face-to-face environments like the traditional ISI where teachers often rely on informal interaction and conversation to create the community (Garrison, 2006). Accordingly, online learning autobiographies were delayed until the end of the first two-week session, and they were preceded by two other activities oriented toward building the fellows' community of practice – the Hopes and Fears discussion forum and the first writing activity. Research has also indicated that social relations in a face-to-face context are apt to be taken for granted and may be more assumed than real (Picciano, 2002). This is not to suggest that the learning autobiography and related activities more purposefully initiated fellows' community of practice online than in the face-to-face setting. To the contrary, we specifically structured activity in the ISI during the first week to generate multiple connections and interrelationships. Contemporaneous with their learning autobiography presentations, fellows in the ISI were coming to know one another in various whole class and small group activities: book discussions, model teaching demonstration activities, and a writing marathon. In other words, sociality was a focus during the initial phase in each format. However, in the ISI the learning autobiography was a hub around which other events revolved while online the learning autobiography was a culminating event at the end of a structured sequence. As one mentor stated, "The first week of my summer institute was like a stew of activity. Online it was more like an assembly line." In other words, the online format may seem rather linear compared with the sense of bricolage associated with the traditional face-to-face program, a feeling that may account for perception of one as a course and the other as an institute.

In summary, the learning autobiography appears to have effected its objective, albeit somewhat differently, in each context: contributing to fellows' coming to know one another and building their learning community. While immediate response in the ISI was brief, it was elemental to weaving a strong social fabric for the face-to-face institute, often birthing symbols that endured throughout the month and certainly introducing tangible connections to individual fellows. In the online space, fellows demonstrated the potential for longer, interactive response, although this appears to have been more the exception than the rule. Moreover, activity reports indicate that individual connections formed during the learning autobiography continued during the online institute (e.g., in later self-selection of writing groups); but unlike the traditional ISI, there is no indication that community-wide characteristics (symbols, customs, or conventions) germinated in the online learning autobiography.

A second example of how fellows' worked differently to build their community online was the opening moment activity. In the traditional ISI, each day begins with a five-minute opening moment in which a fellow who is hosting that day presents a short reading, video clip, or other piece of text. There is no follow-up to these opening moments as we move immediately into the first activity for the day. Online, different fellows posted an opening moment each Wednesday (the start day and midpoint of each two-week session). Classmates could read and post optional comments on these opening moments over the following week, but we did not require or even suggest that fellows should do so. Nevertheless, each opening moment prompted a discussion thread complimenting the author and sharing both personal experiences and professional resources. "Ahh...How to Decide" (Appendix G) represents a fairly typical opening

moment and discussion. Nine different fellows posted a total of 11 replies⁷ in which they contributed quotes on writing and the writing life. Responses express appreciation and compliment the initiating Fellow's offering, share experiences with students or family, or comment on their teaching life, writing or the teaching of writing. The following excerpt is typical.

Presenting Fellow [following the text of her own original poem]: Here's a fun site my husband sent me – "Advice from Kurt Vonnegut" and another – quips from writers...

Fellow 1: After the weeks we have had to write and revise ...this list...was encouraging to read. Thanks for sharing it! These were my favorites.

“[An] important virtue for a writer...is self-forgiveness. Because your writing will always disappoint you. Your laziness will always disappoint you.” – Elizabeth Gilbert.

(I love that word – self-forgiveness, trying to live it)

Presenting Fellow: Self-forgiveness! Love that – my word for it is grace! We all need to give ourselves more of that!

...

Fellow 2: "Don't get it right, just get it written." James Thurber

...I wish I had a dime for every time I told a child to "write it down now and don't worry about the spelling." Some students get so caught up in the correctness of everything that their real thoughts, the good ones that make the story flow, are lost forever. These are the students who stew over every little flaw rather than putting pen to paper to tell the tale or write their ideas. Now I have a great quote to use every time a student comes to me during their first draft writing to ask me how to spell a word! Thank you!

With two exceptions, the full, 16-entry conversation took place over just four days, representing a friendly and rich exchange with a mix of social and cognitive presence. The presenting fellow herself contributed four replies, illustrating the interactive potential of the asynchronous, online

⁷ Entries by two fellows that did not participate in the study are included in these tallies although their content is not included in Appendix G.

context. Nevertheless, activity reports on opening moment discussions raise questions as to how typical this experience was for *all* Fellows throughout the institute.

Table 2 reports that both the average (mean) and the median number of replies posted to each opening moment forum was about 12; however, there was a significant gap in replies posted to opening moments *by each fellow* between the average (mean) of nine and the median number of four. This gap indicates what activity reports reveal: nine of the 2012 fellows were regularly posting replies to the opening moment Forum while the other 12 fellows were posting rarely if at all.

Table 2. Average frequency of posting reply entries (i.e., comments) in response to weekly opening moments.

	Mean # of Replies	Median # of Replies
Posted <i>per Forum</i>	12.7	12
Total replies posted to opening moment forums <i>per Fellow</i>	9	4

Moodle activity reports did not track when fellows only read but did not reply to the weekly opening moments, and posting replies was not required. It may be that a number of fellows viewed the opening moment even though they were not generally inclined to comment.

In the traditional ISI, the opening moment itself is fleeting and goes by with no more than applause or casual comment. Presenting an opening moment, however, is embedded in the day-long hosting responsibility that includes providing snacks, taking photographs, presenting a closing moment, and taking notes and pictures for the daily newsletter to be delivered the following morning. As such, this moment is a prolonged opportunity for fellows to shine in multiple ways and it contributes to building the sociality of the institute, often through small,

informal acts. As demonstrated in “Ahh...How to Decide,” opening moments online did provide an opportunity to leverage the extended time and heightened visibility and permanence of written work to foster not just social but also cognitive presence for those that participated. What is not clear is the degree to which the online community as a whole was inclined to take advantage of this opportunity or whether different or increased *teaching presence* in the design or management of this activity might generate more response. In the ISI, the opening moment is naturally bathed in a kind of communal reaction of applause and casual comment whereas the online experience is quite individualized and any resulting community would need to be actively constructed. Yet, the idea of requiring response to opening moments (if not learning autobiographies) still seems counterintuitive to writing project culture. So, the opening moment activity appears to have the potential to serve its traditional purpose and to do so in differently enhanced ways, yet it is not clear how or whether this potential may be realized. What does seem apparent is that the online opening moment is a standalone event, isolated from rather than networked with other elements.

In ways similar to the learning autobiography, opening moments do seem to have strengthened relations between fellows that *chose* to participate in their related conversation, even though there is no evidence that opening moments generated identifiable, community-wide characteristics. This is not to suggest that opening moments in the online setting were not well-received or purposeful or that they failed to help in building the learning community. I believe they were important in all these ways. On the 2012 course survey, about half of the respondents rated opening moments as important or very important while almost half rated opening moments as “beneficial but not necessary,” and only a few fellows rated these not important. In the final analysis, what seems to stand out from reported experience and other data on these initial

activities, is a difference in the nature of the program environment itself. The traditional ISI as represented by these activities seems to form and progress in more informal ways while in the online setting the community is not just more formally structured but more formal altogether.

Throughout the online course, writing activities and Forum discussions continued to represent fellows' work and participation more formally than the context of a traditional ISI – a trend that represents affordances commonly associated with online education. The extended time and visible nature of students' written contributions enable others to read, consider, and when necessary return and review what others have written (Garrison, 2006; Kirk & Orr, 2003; Picciano, 2002; Swan, 2006). This, in turn, provides the opportunity for more extended, complex, and thoughtful response. More widespread permanent and public documentation of fellows' work also affected the fellows' writing portfolio. Unlike the traditional portfolio, the online portfolio made journal entries, book responses, and writing public immediately as they were added. Although not required, many fellows did read and respond to their classmates' portfolio entries frequently and at length. In the traditional ISI, portfolios were shared on the final day, which necessarily limited and somewhat decontextualized the reading and response. These participation trends do not mean that fellows' online activity was necessarily more productive or otherwise better than their face-to-face interaction. Compared to the traditional ISI, however, it is accurate to say that fellows' activity online was more thoroughly, permanently and publicly *documented* before the whole class, and this does appear to have affected the nature of the work.

How the writing project experience translated online

From opening moments to learning autobiographies, forum discussion, and the digital writing portfolio, there appears to have been a substantive change in the nature of fellows' activity – a change that reflects the influence of time, visibility, and the dynamics of social presence in an online environment. While the traditional summer ISI is characterized by brief, informal, private or semi-private encounters, the online version was represented by more extended, formally structured, and generally public events. A similar stylistic shift also occurred between fellows and the course instructor. In each setting, we aspired to encourage individual initiative. Nevertheless, assignments online were naturally described in greater detail, as is customary in a setting that relies on written communication where students and the instructor are separated by time and space. Despite this careful presentation, I was surprised at the number of questions and requests for clarification that I received regarding assignments. In the face-to-face Institute, co-directors tended to introduce assignments orally and discuss them with fellows altogether, and I do not recall the kind of individual inquiries that I received online.

In moving from a traditional ISI to a hybrid format, we attempted to move activities online as intact as possible. However, the separation in time and space and more detailed presentation online may have created an impression that traditional elements were more like assignments than activities, either due to the message being sent by the instructor or the perception of fellows. In any event, as instructor I felt concern that the tone of fellows' inquiries suggested heightened concern for meeting my expectations rather than exploring an individual vision, that students seemed to perceive the online version as a more rigid and confined space than is typical of the traditional ISI. To the extent that participants did perceive the online

version as a formally-structured graduate course rather than a collegial institute gathering, I wondered what the implications might be for fellows' writing project experience? Most significantly, how might the entire hybrid experience have affected fellows' *affiliation* with the principles of the Maine and National Writing Projects?

At the 2012 July Institute, a number of participants initially interpreted the teaching demonstration as an expectation to explore and present a teaching method that was new to them rather than a familiar and favorite teaching practice of their own. At least one fellow presented a workshop demonstration espousing an approach to writing instruction that is not typically in keeping with writing project doctrine. On the third day of the July Institute, one fellow admitted to not realizing that this program was the Maine Writing Project! These experiences helped us to realize that we needed to better clarify our National Writing Project foundation. In a larger sense, any indication that participants saw themselves as students rather than institute fellows raised questions about the feasibility of our hybrid model. Was the online context and the considerably shorter face-to-face experience incompatible with achieving broader goals associated with growing the Writing Project movement in its historically organic fashion? Or might those goals be achieved with modifications to our approach?

In their focus group, mentors questioned how they could help their mentees develop teaching demonstrations that illustrate or extend the core values of the NWP. The traditional ISI included James Gray's (2000) *Teachers at the Center: A Memoir of the Early Years of the National Writing Project* as well as *Because Writing Matters: Improving Student Writing in Our Schools* (Nagin & NWP, 2006). Related discussions explicitly addressed writing project values. Nevertheless, 2012 mentors reported that as fellows in a face-to-face Institute they had been

immersed in writing project culture as they were starting to think about the teaching demonstration, so they absorbed the values of the writing project gradually without anyone explicitly stating what those values are. As one who presented his teaching demonstration on the third day of his summer Institute (with two prior coaching sessions), I question the timeline that these comments suggest. Nevertheless, I appreciate the mentors' questioning how effectively the writing project culture can be transferred in the hybrid setting, accustomed as most fellows are to face-to-face versus online interaction. As one mentor stated, "Part of the power of the writing project is that it's about soaking it in from experience, rather than being told these are what the values are" (M. Wilson, personal communication, July 13, 2012). What this mentor emphasized is immersion in our community of practice. Altering that experience risks undermining the benefits for teachers' writing and the teaching of writing.

The Writing Project historically links two essential and interconnected dynamics: teachers writing themselves and teachers crafting environments that are conducive to their students' writing. We know that teachers will not pursue let alone advocate for effective writing practice if they have not themselves experienced and come to believe in those practices. Maja Wilson worked closely with mentors in July 2012. She described the situation this way.

It's the simple idea that you can't do or defend what amounts to very difficult practice in these times, which is to create a community in your classroom and to do this sort of writer-based stuff with students, unless it has been such a meaningful experience for you that you want to give it as a gift to your students. To me, that is what the Writing Project does so beautifully. It's not really *efficient* to learn about writing practices in the way that the Writing Project has its participants learn about practices. But that's not the point.

The point is that if you don't experience it, and it doesn't have any value to you, then you're not going to do it if it's difficult.

Wilson's statement captures the essential dynamic behind the Writing Project Institute. Fellows experience what it means to be a writer in a community of writing practice in ways that are less about competence and more about self-efficacy. They leave with sufficient confidence in their own writing project experience as a developing writer to want to share that experience and pursue that model with others. There is no evidence that our 2012 institute failed at supporting this dynamic, but that first attempt did indicate that moving the traditional institute *experience* online is not a simple matter. Learning to adapt writing groups and the role of the mentor, proved to be particularly complex examples of this challenge.

Writing groups online

Online writing groups presented a number of particular questions. How does self-selection or instructor-selection affect the sociality of writing groups? What is the effect of different size groups? What is the effect of factors like members' writing experience, genre interest, or teaching background (e.g., grade level)? How does the online environment affect individual's writing response or the timeliness and other characteristics of response? How does the visibility of online work affect writing and writing groups? If fellows considered other elements of the online program more like a course than a collegial institute, what if any effect did that have on their approach to writing groups? Although writing groups were small and self-contained, is it possible that fellows considered the writing they posted to their writing group to be less work-in-process and more finished-product? Although we were attempting to replicate traditional institute elements online, we soon realized that writing groups were perhaps the

element about which we knew the least in their face-to-face version where they operated independently and almost entirely out of sight.

Online writing groups were the one element that we purposely designed to take place in small, private groups. We restricted mentors from communicating with their fellows about their writing to help in preserving the self-managed and self-reliant nature of these groups. And, we attempted to leverage whatever social presence fellows had developed by the fourth week of the online course by having them self-select their own groups. Five fellows formed one group almost immediately, and a second group of five (the size limit) followed shortly thereafter. A third and fourth group with four members each came together by the end of the five-day window for selecting groups, at which time the instructor negotiated the remaining three fellows into a final group. During session 3 when groups were formed, we provided NWP articles about writing groups (Bridgford, 2001; Elrod, 2003) as well as an open forum for discussing these articles along with any process questions and concerns.

The *frequency* of response was relatively consistent across the five groups. During sessions 3-5 (an eight-week period with semester break), fellows received an average of 8.8 responses to their writing for publication, with group averages ranging from 7.75 to 11. Creative writing received somewhat more response than position papers (59%/41%), likely due in part to most fellows' having posted their creative writing before their position paper, although these trends may indicate that fellows were more comfortable with responding to creative writing.

What was most noticeable in writing group activity was the nature of members' response. Although we recommended the *progressive* bless-address-press response protocol of the National

Writing Project, fellows routinely moved immediately to asking for a press of their first writing drafts. For example,

For my creative writing piece, I have compiled a collection of poetry – all with nature-based themes. Please comment freely (PRESS!) Do they all "fit" together? I intend to write at least five more – any suggestions for things that might be missing? Which poems work? Which should be revised?

Most of all, fellows seemed to struggle at identifying parts of their writing for readers to “address.”

Online writing groups began with the digital writing marathon, which was socially different from the traditional writing marathon. In a fashion reminiscent of the learning autobiography experience, fellows did not have the shared experience of selecting common destinations or of writing at the same time while in the physical presence of their group mates. Instead, they traveled independently, at different times, to different locations that they had selected on their own, and they wrote in isolation with no immediate opportunity for casual sharing let alone conversation. Online fellows also missed the kind of impromptu bonding event that can arise from this time together in the ISI. As one TC recalled,

A goofy toy that someone found during the marathon found its way back to our classroom, and then, even months later, it showed up in photographs of TCs, as it was passed around the group, long after the ISI ended.

The digital marathon format also altered fellows’ sharing and responding to each others’ writing. Discussion forums were created for each group, visible only to its members (as well as instructors and mentors). Fellows posted a description of their journey and 1-2 unedited pieces of their writing. This differed from the traditional marathon in which fellows have the option to share or not, casually, while together at each stop where they have done their writing.

Online, groups were encouraged to discuss their marathon *experience* – where they had been, what they had seen and heard, the kind of writing they had done, etc. In an effort to replicate the ISI marathon, however, we discouraged fellows from responding to group mates' writing with more than a simple "Thank-you" – a response protocol that seemed to translate especially poorly online! Our intention was to foster social presence by delaying evaluative comments. Instead, controlling response intensely frustrated group members – a feeling that was likely brought on by the visible nature of writing online.⁸ In retrospect, the restriction was akin to saying, "Look, but don't touch," and it may have disrupted the natural development of the group dynamic. Rather than supporting social presence, limited response may have been a missed opportunity for fellows to bless each other's initial offerings – low-stakes writing that was not for publication – in ways that would have paved the way to more challenging address and press phases. This is not to suggest that writing groups were not cordial and supportive toward one another. To the contrary, even though most fellows immediately asked for their work to be pressed as soon as it was posted, response tended, if anything, to be oriented toward blessing the writing with positive comments rather than addressing or pressing with more substantive notes. Transcript analysis revealed that the ratio of social presence to cognitive presence in response comments was 1.55:1.0. The tendency toward more social than cognitive presence in comments has been identified in other research as common to online interaction.

Social presence in online environments is essential to fostering trust and participation.

Cognitive presence constitutes *purposeful* relationships that help users achieve learning

⁸ Anecdotal evidence indicates that fellows in a traditional ISI bend the prohibition on responding to each other's writing. The truly private nature of a face-to-face marathon certainly affords cover to conduct this guerrilla activity and may actually contribute to building the group's sociality as they conspire together outside the instructor's or mentors' view.

objectives through response that develops, evaluates, and extends discussion (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007). Cognitive presence is widely represented as an inquiry process in which students move through phases of exploration (generating multiple possibilities) and integration (evaluating and revising those possibilities) on their way to resolution (a selected outcome or new inquiry question) (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2001). These phases are recursive and map nicely onto a writing process where drafting and revision lead to publication (Figure 1).

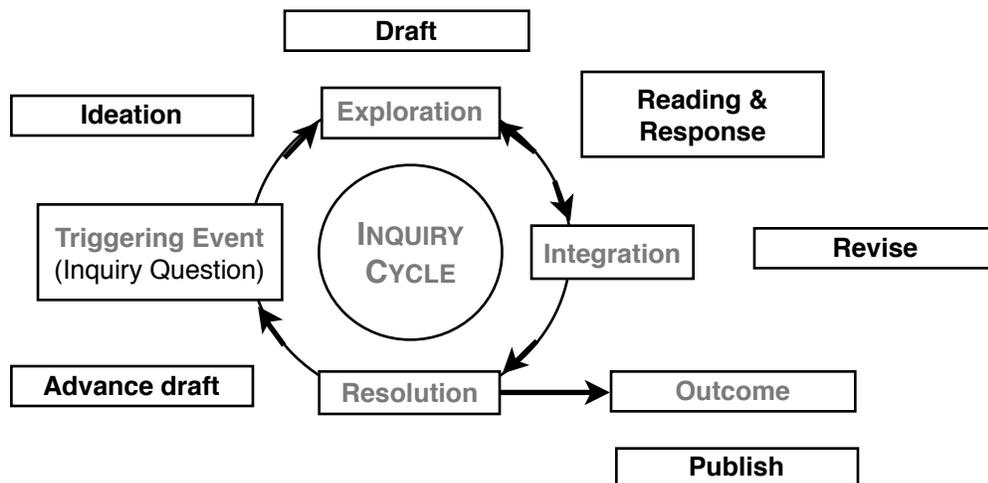


Figure 1. Writing process in black superimposed over the inquiry cycle in gray. Reading and response by writing group members relies on a successful transition from social to cognitive presence to support substantive response in the bless-address-press NWP protocol.

While social presence is sufficient for exploration, completing the process requires cognitive presence. In discussion, cognitive presence represents an attempt to construct meaning and move the group process forward. In writing groups, it can support developing meaning and language that moves text through its drafts. In either case, individuals not only move between exploration and integration, they also progress by moving *into and out of* the group setting, alternating between interaction with other group members and private reflection or drafting (i.e., “reading and responding”, Figure 1).

Research indicates that the transition from social presence to cognitive presence can be difficult to achieve (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007; Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2001).⁹ A teacher's influence can be instrumental and may be necessary to provide process leadership for students to make that move. Research is divided on how or whether students themselves can provide this teaching presence (Martin, 2011). The distribution of teaching presence in online communities is actually a power issue. The move from a traditional face-to-face classroom into an online environment prompts the need for both students and teachers to redefine their roles and relationship in ways that involve consideration of the teacher's authority (Anderson, Rourke, Garrison, & Archer, 2001). With each of the functions associated with teaching presence, what is at stake is whether the teacher reserves the action to him or herself or releases ownership of the action to the student(s). Rightly or wrongly, we consider our traditional summer institute to have been successful at transferring teaching presence to fellows in the management of their face-to-face writing groups. In the online format, the success of that transfer seems less certain. It may be that the online writing groups needed more direct teaching involvement in learning to manage their writing process. It may also be that more effective orientation to writing response as well as the nature of writing groups would have prepared fellows to self-manage their work in more complex ways. Finally, it may be that fellows would have developed a more advanced writing group dynamic if we had formed writing groups earlier and/or provided more low-stakes discussion of their writing before turning to their writing for publication assignments.

⁹ Garrison et al. (2001) conclude that the inquiry cycle in online environments tends to breakdown between exploration and integration largely because participants are more comfortable with exploration than with integration or resolution since the latter two stages are more demanding both cognitively and socially. Exploration is a kind of brainstorming that de-emphasizes rules or consequences. Integration and resolution, however, require skills that are more complex mentally and for which students typically feel more *insecure* emotionally (e.g., probing with questions, pointing out misconceptions, evaluating positions).

Comparison of online writing groups with face-to-face writing groups is difficult since writing groups in our traditional ISI have not been monitored. Those writing project sites with documentation of how their ISI writing groups function may be able to compare that experience directly with our online experience. In our ISI, the assumption has been that groups effectively provide fellows with one alternative for writing response and that they foster the idea of sharing and responding as part of the Writing Project program. What anecdotal evidence we have speaks favorably of writing groups as informal rather than formal structures. TC language almost always indicates that writing groups provided spiritual support to continue the hard work of writing and often responded with relatively brief suggestions for addressing a specific challenge rather than extended, comprehensive commentary. One TC recalled,

Often we met briefly and then went off on our own or in pairs to write. Some days we shared our ideas and/or our actual writing. Sometimes we asked for feedback or suggestions. It was the suggestions that helped the most. If I was stuck, my writing group friends could often move me in a direction that got me unstuck.

Of course, it may be that writing groups in the traditional ISI functioned no more or less effectively than those in the online course. It may also be that the nature of face-to-face interaction is somehow better at helping fellows to adopt effective writing group practice. Certainly, it is easier to envision what this TC describes – likely a more rapid-fire conversation – occurring in a face-to-face than an online setting.

Writing groups in any context rely on strong sociality to support substantive work. Sharing writing is so personal that it cannot proceed unless participants feel that warm and trusting relationship. Although eight weeks online seems like a lot of time, it may not have been

structured to support the trajectory of writing group development. The distribution of entries suggests that groups needed to develop social presence before moving to cognitive presence. The marathon may have been too short to provide for this. Therefore it may be that groups needed to form earlier and participate in something like our writing activities together before moving on to writing for publication. Anecdotal evidence is strong that fellows routinely find peers who are helpful responders *informally* in the traditional summer institute regardless of the effectiveness of their assigned group and this may further contribute to imbuing fellows with the writing project perspective on writing response. In the online course, fellows sought response only from members of their assigned group which may have further contributed to a perception of the spring format as a course rather than a collegial institute and their writing as an assignment rather than a work-in-progress.

The question of how best to support writing group development anticipates consideration of the mentor's as well as the instructor's role in writing project institutes. Self managed, self-reliant writing groups are a high priority. Adopting this model is more important than individual pieces of writing that fellows turn out. Nevertheless, if time and the visibility of online education makes the work of writing groups visible in new ways, it may be a failure on our part if we don't leverage that affordance to support fellows' writing in equally new ways.

Role of the mentor

A final area of effect was the role of the mentor in the new hybrid format. As noted, mentors in the traditional ISI had various levels of contact with their fellows. They almost always assisted fellows with the learning autobiography and typically facilitated some discussions and activities. Nevertheless, mentors' only defined responsibility was coaching the

teaching demonstration. Other contact was arranged informally, as needed. According to one TC who had been both a mentor and an institute co-director in a traditional ISI, “The role of the mentor seemed to depend, in part, on the needs of the fellow. Simply put, some fellows needed more support and mentors provided varying degrees of support for each fellow.” In the traditional ISI, mentors enrolled in a three-credit course and attended only periodically over the four weeks. They were available to fellows but certainly not ever-present. Indeed, we cautioned mentors not to be so present that they might interfere with fellows’ sense that the institute was their own. In the hybrid format, two factors may have contributed to increasing the mentors’ presence. First, mentors took either the online spring course (3 credits) or the seven-day July Institute (3 credits) or both for a total of six credits.¹⁰ In addition to expanding their own curriculum, the new format increased and formalized mentors’ contact responsibilities with individual fellows. Previously, mentors read their fellows’ work portfolio only at the end of the ISI and responded with a single, comprehensive letter. Online, mentors followed portfolios throughout the course and responded along the way to various work posted by their assigned fellows. Although not formalized until year 3 (2014), the Response Guide (Appendix O) indicates how mentors were expected to respond to fellows’ work beginning in 2012. This periodic response, including the public nature of many responses to fellows’ digital writing portfolio, may have increased mentors’ presence or fellows’ perception of their presence in the online setting. Moreover, in the online setting users may appear online at any moment and whenever users arrive they may view and thereby be present for the work others have posted.

¹⁰ Although we tried to assign fellows the same mentor for each course segment, these enrollment options necessarily meant that some fellows had different mentors in the spring online and July on-campus segments.

These realities may have further increased fellows' sense that mentors were ever-present in ways that they clearly are not in a face-to-face setting where presence is physical.

From the outset, we acknowledged that fellows might perceive their mentor as an instructor or gatekeeper with respect to their work, and we worked to counteract that perception. We restricted mentors from responding to fellows' writing, we instructed fellows to direct questions about assignments and course work to the instructor, and we encouraged mentors to represent themselves as collegial helpers. Of course, mentors in that first year were all graduates of a traditional ISI. Naturally, they associated the mentor's role with coaching the teaching demonstration, and they seemed to undervalue their contribution in the online course where the demonstration was not an element. Two, in fact, called themselves "lousy" mentors because they were not "doing enough" for their mentees. This typified mentors' feeling that they were not elemental to their fellows' work or course experience. For their part, fellows described their mentor as encouraging, supportive, and helpful, but not essential/important (Table 3). Most fellows described contact with their mentor as limited, and seven of the eleven fellows surveyed said they would have preferred more involvement and a fuller relationship with their mentor during the online course.

Table 3. 2012 Fellows survey response to "How important was your mentor to your course experience?"

essential	important	beneficial but not necessary	not important	no answer
1	1	3	2	4

As with writing groups, the role of the mentor raises questions about the prospects of going online – what is lost and what might be gained. Like writing groups, mentoring is recognized as relationship-based (Zachary, 2011), and it may be that the online setting or our use

of it was not designed to approach that same kind of foundation. In their focus group, mentors expressed frustration, feeling that they had not established a relationship that was productive for the fellows online. First, they reported that it was hard to establish a receptive relationship where they could not couple body language and facial expressions with conversational speech patterns to express themselves or interpret their mentees. They described online communication as both clunky and oversensitive. They complained that when they asked questions, fellows were apt to respond defensively in ways that tended to shut conversation down. They claimed that written feedback was not conducive to the tentative nature of opening discussion about anything (e.g., teaching demonstration plans or writing ideas). Written communication was too “concrete” and did not allow for wandering around half a dozen ideas on the way to one you might pursue. Put simply, the low stakes conversational nature of the face-to-face mentoring relationship seemed difficult to replicate online (M. Wilson, personal communication, July 13, 2012).

Conclusion to what we learned in 2012

The inaugural 2012 iteration of the Maine Writing Project hybrid Institute was informative, yet not definitive. We left with a clear sense of our successes: opening moments, learning autobiographies, writing activities and discussions were favorably received by fellows and seem to have achieved their essential objectives; more time allowed for more writing, and we had the sense from discussion and activity that fellows had come to value writing for themselves and their teaching practice; fellows enjoyed at least an acceptable degree of sociality especially among those that completed both courses; and, most importantly, we gained 11 new teacher-consultants and 10 associate members (status granted to those who complete only the spring course). We also left with clearly delineated uncertainties. Two elements had not

translated as we had hoped: writing groups and the role of the mentors. Admittedly, these are two elements for which we had no clear baseline data from our traditional summer institutes. Program updates will show that these uncertainties have continued across the following two years.

Swan (2006) maintains that failure to achieve objectives in the use of any technology may be attributable to either of two explanations. It may be that an application *as it is designed and used* does not support a rhetorical feature or pedagogical objective, *or* it may be that the desired outcome is simply unrealistic no matter how the application is formatted or introduced. The dilemma Swan identifies is just what our 2012 experience suggested. Was the online environment just not suited to writing groups or the role of a mentor, or could practical changes overcome the challenges we had experienced? Our 2012 experience was inconclusive. Even for those accustomed to working in online environments, it can be daunting to attempt cognitive presence as well as social presence, to say nothing of resolving the uncertainties of incorporating teaching presence. Nevertheless, we felt energized by the reception of our first hybrid fellows, and we were encouraged by that initial experience to continue tuning the model. At this writing, the Maine Writing Project has conducted two more hybrid institutes. Therefore, I will report on changes tried in 2013 and 2014 before describing recommendations and plans for 2015 that are based on this three-year experience.

Program Update: What Changed in 2013

Based on what we learned in the 2012 hybrid Institute, we made a number of recommendations to ourselves as well as modifications in the 2013 version. First, we acknowledged what seemed to go well.

1. Opening moments and writing activities were well received. Each seemed to contribute to social presence as well as fruitful discussion around writing and the teaching of writing among those fellows that chose to join in. Fellows experienced the joy of writing, engaged in extended conversation, and shared both personal experience and professional expertise.
2. Forum discussions were generally robust and important to participants. Fellows seemed to appreciate the topics (although many suggested that we update some of our readings), engaged in lengthy, thoughtful discussion, and again shared their experience and expertise.
3. Fellows wrote *a lot*. Indeed, on the basis of just two factors – total time and a writing-based format – 2012 fellows arguably did more writing than traditional summer institute participants. Online education naturally requires lots of writing. Fellows wrote in customary institute ways from journaling to more formal efforts like their book responses. They wrote for fun, and they wrote and read each others' writing for publication with serious intent. They also relied on writing in new ways, most notably to express experiences, ideas, and positions in written discussion. Because the program began during the public school year, we could also add the activity of writing with students. Moreover, the time allotted for writing quadrupled in the hybrid format from 4 weeks to a total of 16 weeks (14 weeks online plus 2 weeks in July), and this time was spread over seven months! It may be that the intensity of a month of daylong immersion can produce special qualitative gains in writing, but it is hard to imagine that a

four-week institute, however intense, could provide a similarly extended period of time in which to explore and experiment with the aspect of writing in the personal and professional life of a teacher. Fourteen weeks allows time for developmental changes to arise, take hold, mature, and generate extended effects in ways that likely are not possible in the shorter time.

This last assertion regarding amount of writing in the new hybrid institute is particularly compelling because a fellow's tendency toward writing and self-identification as a writer are so fundamental to the Maine and National Writing Projects. If one objective of the writing project institute is to effect change in the role of writing in fellows' lives, then the quality of the experience is paramount. Even so, it is hard to deny the potential benefit of such extended support and time to produce written work, especially including time in the context of a teacher's practice. This opportunity invites serious consideration of how best to refashion the online experience to leverage this benefit in ways that are not possible in the traditional ISI.

From graduates of the traditional ISI, it is common to hear, "This is the best professional development I have ever taken. It changed my life." Reflections from both the online course and July institute were more reserved. This is testament to the revolutionary effect of the traditional summer institute's boot-camp-like experience. Nevertheless, fellows in the hybrid format universally described their experience in positive terms.

- One of the best courses I have ever taken *by far*. This has increased my desire to continue writing, but almost more importantly, it's changed my focus as a teacher. It's made me really question *why* I do some of the things I do.

- Part of me wants to take this course again. I feel I would benefit from taking it again and again. Isn't that what writing and teaching is all about? Write, write, write, and keep writing. Thanks for this opportunity to learn to write better. I loved it.

These comments exemplify the positive tone of course reflections and they recognize the spring emphasis on writing. At the same time, language in these reflections confirms a course-like vision of the spring program. While this vision may have been mitigated for those who completed the course sequence in July (11 of 21), it raises a noteworthy concern: To what extent were ten spring fellows deterred from continuing by their spring experience, by its entirely asynchronous, online format or by any failure of that format to convey the special nature of the writing project and its professional development program? A number of fellows included a suggestion to increase the amount of face-to-face time in the program, in particular advocating a live meeting before beginning the online course.¹¹

In 2013, the structure and components of the online course remained essentially the same, yet we did make the following critical adjustments based on the 2012 experience.

1. *Learning autobiographies*. We *required* fellows to create a “performance piece” as part of the learning autobiography.

Options for the performance piece included reading the text in a podcast with at least a few images or visuals, a digital story, or a video program. Mentors offered technical help in creating these pieces which seemed to launch the mentor-fellow relationship. Viewer response

¹¹ Initially, we resisted any diversion from an asynchronous online format. We did not wish to disrupt participants' expectations with respect to convenience or control on which the new format had been based. Also, we wanted to test the limits of asynchronous online education, to see how far we might go before possibly blending online with face-to-face elements in the spring course.

seems to have confirmed that these performance pieces enhanced the enjoyment and personality conveyed.

- What a gift your Auto-Biography is to you and your family. I read the text and then I viewed the audio/visual. What a lovely tribute to your mom and dad. Your words set a lovely tone to your early years, but I have to say that the old photos certainly contributed to the bond that was forged through the daily expression of creativity and the value that it held. Your mother, "Put music in my path as an invitation." – lovely line. And the image of your dad with your handmade apron strung around his neck. It is certainly an image that you want to pass on to your children. It reveals so much about your dad and his relationship with you. I heard the passion to create in your voice. I love the use of the weaving to describe the transition between your young adulthood and leaving your home of origin. Brilliant, indeed.
- What an appropriate and entertaining approach to the assignment [a children's book by and about the author growing up]. I was instantly transported back to my childhood when my father used to make up bedtime stories that always involved me as the main character! I particularly loved the way you present the "problem" the little girl had of not finishing things. It is not necessarily negative or detrimental, but simply part of her journey in growing up. I think we all need those unfinished phases in order to figure out who we really are. Do I want to be a painter? Maybe. Oops, no that's not for me. How freeing and exhilarating to think that perhaps we haven't found all of our talents and passions yet!

These comments are typical in noting the impact of the audio-visual element of the autobiography as well as hearing the text in its author's voice. Moreover, the number and length

of responses to the learning autobiography increased markedly in 2013, indicating that the performance piece had better capitalized on the online setting to prompt both social and cognitive presence.

2. *Writing groups.* We reduced group size to 3. Instead of self-selection, we invited fellows to request group mates, but the course instructors organized the triads. We created a video describing the role of writing groups and how they typically function [See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZAOBr20wQc&feature=youtu.be>]. And, we were more explicit about how the NWP bless-address-press response protocol works and periodically reemphasized its importance.

These changes do *not* appear to have positively affected fellows' frequency of response. The average number of responses to each fellows' writing for publication decreased from 8.8 in 2012 to 7.4 in 2013. Effects on the nature of response seemed mixed. Fellows did not immediately ask for work to be pressed. Rather, many asked that specific issues be addressed and most fellows posted more than a single draft. Unlike 2012, the topic of writing response was frequently discussed on Open Forums, both with respect to their own work and in teaching with students. Nevertheless, the ratio of responses to fellows writing for publication that evidenced social presence over response that evidenced cognitive presence increased significantly from 1.55:1.0 to 2.11:1.0. In other words, in 2013 social response to writing for publication increased by a third compared to substantive response. It may be that our increased emphasis on process over product raised the visibility of this topic, a finding that would be in keeping with research advocating direct instruction on how students function in online discussion and activity. However, there is no evidence that this emphasis re-oriented the substance of response itself to

writing for publication. Of course, cause is difficult to determine since we made multiple changes to the writing groups and their process in 2013. These findings will be more meaningful when compared with adjustments we tried in 2014 (below).

3. *Role of the mentor: Writing.* We softened the restriction on mentors' involvement with their fellows' writing.

Although we continued to restrict mentors from participating in writing group discussions, the 2013 course syllabus actually asked fellows to share an advanced version of their writing for publication with their Writing Project mentor. Various fellows and mentors expressed confusion as to when and how fellows should share their writing, and in actuality a number of fellows shared their writing with mentors multiple times across sessions 4-6.

Instructors took a hands-off stance to this guerrilla approach, and what sharing took place did not seem to adversely affect writing group interaction. To the contrary, bending the rules on sharing demonstrated that an informal exchange between fellows and mentors could occur online without mentors becoming or being perceived as a gatekeeper or final judge to that writing.

The role of the mentor generally continued to be an uncertain aspect of the online course. We consider mentors essential to a rich experience for fellows as they can provide a personal and intimate connection to the Writing Project. Tuning mentors' relationship with fellows, especially with fellows' writing, continued as the most important challenge in developing the hybrid format.

4. *Emphasis on NWP affiliation.* We actively sought to raise awareness of NWP affiliation and principles.

We increased attention to the bless-address-press response protocol, made explicit our use of NWP publications and the NWP website, and generally sought any opportunity in course announcements and correspondence to remind fellows of this affiliation. In 2013, we did not observe comments or actions similar to those in 2012 that had suggested fellows were out-of-step with writing project principles. Instead, we found that references to the National Writing Project and its principles were apparent in discussions and fellows' work.

Program Update: What changed in 2014

The hybrid format of the Maine Writing Project Annual Institute continued to evolve in its third year. We had continued confidence in most elements of the online program for fellows – the learning autobiography, writing activities, readings and online forum discussions, and various writing expectations. At the same time, online writing groups and the contribution of our mentors continued to be works-in-progress and the focus of our research and development. Perhaps significantly, 2014 was the first year in which all of our mentors had graduated as fellows from the hybrid institute model. In 2014, we also enhanced mentors' own curriculum and training, allowed more mentor-fellow contact over fellows' writing, and returned to larger writing groups.

1. *Mentors' training.* We increased resources and support for mentors.

One aspect that troubled us from the outset in 2012 was that a single instructor was facilitating both the fellows' and the mentors' spring course. Theoretically, we expected mentors to provide fellows with the kind of continual attention and individual support that distinguishes effective online education. This would enable the instructor to limit his focus to the operation of the fellows' whole course system, thereby leaving time to manage the mentors' course and attend to mentors individually. In practice, this expectation proved unrealistic. In 2013, a graduate teaching assistant who had been a mentor in 2012 helped to follow and respond to fellows' online activity in the spring semester. Even with this assistance, the continuous stream of fellows' work took precedence over the instructor's time and attention in ways that interfered with his attending to mentors. The course instructor was not able to develop the mentors' curriculum, attend to their progress, or support their work with fellows. Therefore, in 2014

Brenda Jackson co-directed the fellows' spring course and was almost entirely responsible for monitoring fellows' work and providing the instructor's response. Brenda was a fellow in the inaugural hybrid institute (2012) and a mentor in 2013 as well as a graduate student in our Certificate of Advanced Study (CAS) program in writing and the teaching of writing. This enabled me to dedicate time and attention to developing and conducting the mentors' program.

The mentors' reading and response curriculum in 2014 was enhanced by studying excerpts from *The Mentor's Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships* (2011) by Lois J. Zachary. Mentors read and discussed Zachary during the first two weeks of the seminar, and they completed exercises that helped them to reflect upon their own experience as mentees while MWP fellows. This study helped mentors to consider their role in more sophisticated ways. It helped them to grasp the skills needed for effective mentoring, to understand the stages through which mentor-mentee relationships develop, and to appreciate the hopes and fears they and their mentees would likely face in pursuing the ground rules as well as the trust on which that relationship rests. Perhaps most importantly, Zachary (2011) helped mentors to appreciate the *collaborative mentoring paradigm* – “a mutual discovery process” in which both the mentor and mentee have something to give and something to gain (p. 3). The conventional paradigm for mentoring is an authoritarian model in which knowledge is transmitted from the mentor to the mentee. In the collaborative paradigm, each is both teacher and learner and there are three, interdependent, growth outcomes: mentor and mentee each achieve certain individual learning goals and together they arrive at new, shared understandings-in-common.

The collaborative mentoring perspective not only benefits individual mentor-mentee pairs but also strengthens the organization as a whole. At the Maine Writing Project, we strive to be

what Zachary (2011) terms a *mentoring culture* – that is, a culture in which one’s own learning and the teaching of others is rooted in the principles of the organization and of each member.

Like any National Writing Project site, we believe that teachers themselves are the most promising teachers of other teachers. We recognize each teacher-consultant as a mentor-and-mentee in the spirit of the collaborative paradigm where each member can simultaneously help others to achieve their goals as a writer and teacher while working toward their own goals.

Zachary (2011) notes that with a collaborative mentoring paradigm, “[w]isdom is not passed down but discovered and nurtured. This shift frees both partners to learn together” (p. 3). In a larger sense, organizational devotion to a collaborative mentoring paradigm not only shifts individual relationships, but it also promotes a learning net that fosters the development of all its members and the ongoing, dynamic growth of the organization itself. This organizational disposition begins with the initial mentor-mentee pairing in our introductory institute.

Our organizational interest in the collaborative mentoring paradigm is clear, yet achieving that paradigm in the writing project context is challenged in ways that Zachary does not address directly. Zachary is oriented toward a business setting where certain organizational imperatives usually prevail: beyond general guiding principles, there are specific expectations for mentees’ development and advancement in the organization; and, the prospects for both mentee and mentor are more or less dependent on meeting those expectations. In other words, the stakes are higher and more proscriptive for both mentor and mentee. In a voluntary organization like the writing project, however, building a mentoring relationship let alone an entire mentoring culture depends on patient, careful, skillful nurturing of interpersonal relations. Introducing new fellows

to this relationship and culture is an acute challenge, a point that was well-illustrated by our 2014 mentors' struggle to assist their mentees in goal-setting for the spring institute.

Assisting mentees in their goal-setting for learning is an important skill for any mentor (Zachary, p. 103). In the writing project setting, goal-setting is intensely personal – that is, driven by the needs and interests of the mentee rather than the expectations of the organization. Certainly, the Maine Writing Project has an institutional interest in fellows' achieving self-efficacy as writers, coming to appreciate the importance of their own writing to their teaching of writing, and developing their competence as teachers of writing. However, these interests are embedded in our institute activities, and it can be challenging for mentors to nurture fellows in ways that gently bring out the larger objectives. One mentor described the relationship this way.

I think the higher goals including the shift in thinking and the way we put that thinking into practice is implicit in the course. One moves to that shift through the actual assignments as well as the conversations around those assignments. Some shifts are brought right out in the open (bless-address-press) and others are realized through the process of reading/writing/reflection/writing/reflection, etc.

What this mentor points out is once again that experiential basis for coming to know the writing project culture and understand its principles. Our osmotic system demands a much *softer* process than in the more career-based setting that Zachary describes. Rather than applying an outside, corporate agenda, this softer process requires our mentors to be entirely reflective. Our mentors need to pose questions, make summarizing statements, and articulate wonderings that encourage fellows to shift perspective or extend their thinking in new ways.

The Seminar in Mentoring is the first time that mentors confront the challenge of helping fellows arrive at goals by navigating the space between writing project principles and personal needs and interests. Having recently passed through that space themselves, it can be difficult to let fellows swim around on their own, difficult to resist pointing out the obvious path. Some mentors recalled their own experience this way.

- Thinking about my goals last year, I was really focused on just keeping up with the work and the new challenge for me of writing daily in a journal. My other goal was to complete the two published pieces. So, the goals may be already set, and the fellows' personal goals will vary.
- The goal setting aspect was challenging for me as a fellow. My mentor was very skilled at asking me to define my own goals – at times I was foggy and wanted another person to set them for me. This, it turns out, is a weakness I have faced time and again in setting up my classroom to decisions made in an independent study class last fall. Sometimes I do not want to set a goal, it's easier to have another do it for me and then my only responsibility is to complete the task.
- For me as a fellow, I was so busy doing the work that I do not remember that I established goals with my mentor. As a natural consequence of the course and my reflective and driven nature, I established goals on my own such as writing everyday and posting to my blog. This focus changed everything for me as a writer. Recurring questions like, "Why do I write?" and "Who is my audience?" and "Is it important to have an audience, if my primary reason for writing is for myself?" and "Do I really, really just write for myself?" and "What will sustain me?" I began to view myself as a writer and a blogger through all the exploration and work.

Zachary rightly recommends that mentors look to their own experience as mentees as a way to understand their new role. Our first mentor notes how fellows may be focused on just keeping up with their coursework. Our second states that it might be easier for the mentor to simply set the goals, but she suggests that her own mentor skillfully kept the onus on her to do so. And, our third mentor recalls how her goals came about organically through and throughout the course. Together, these three suggest that course activities are the mediating means for developing goals, that fellows' own reflection is the path to finding their goals within writing project culture, and that a mentor's contribution can be redirecting fellows back toward that reflective stance. This goal-setting process is a struggle that begins as a fellow and is more richly understood from the side of the mentor; it illustrates the value of the collaborative mentoring paradigm to the MWP.

There is evidence that the resources and support provided to mentors in 2014 had some impact on their work and relationship with fellows. Unlike 2012 and 2013, the majority of fellows that completed the course survey in 2014 identified their mentor as important or essential (Table 4). In written comments, these respondents emphasized the psychological or motivational support they received, describing their mentor as supportive, encouraging, and helpful, giving positive feedback.

Table 4. Fellows survey response over three years to "How important was your mentor to your course experience?"

Online Course Year	essential	important	beneficial but not necessary	not important	no answer
2012	1	1	3	2	4
2013	2	3	2	2	3
2014	6	2	-	2	6

Perhaps most noteworthy, half of those fellows that rated their mentor as essential included appreciation for their mentor's response to their writing. As one fellow noted, her mentor helped with "generating topics...providing quality feedback...[and] for providing additional support and another sounding board." A second fellow who rated her mentor as *not* important made the obverse point in her survey. She described her mentor as encouraging but expressed disappointment that her mentor always seemed to answer questions by reflecting her own words back to her. She noted, "I wondered if perhaps mentors weren't supposed to participate in the bless-address-press protocol." This fellow's speculation is, of course, quite accurate; we had steered mentors away from providing that kind of writing response.

I have already detailed our ongoing search for how to balance mentors' support with fellows' ownership of their work, including in particular peer writing groups rather than mentors as the source of response to fellows' writing. Our experience repeatedly indicates how difficult it may be to achieve that balance where the informal and organic nature of a traditional institute gives way to a more formal and structured online framework. Difficult, but not impossible. Another fellow that identified her mentor as essential described the relationship this way.

Very helpful. Mine was the perfect blend of not overbearing yet not too far away to give realistic feedback. She made it clear she would only help us if we wanted her help and to contact her and made it a very welcoming invitation. She was also important for motivation because she would respond to posts on the discussion boards which kept the discussion moving and an authentic audience.

Interestingly, this fellow mentions feedback, presumably to her writing, but does not emphasize it. Instead, what she describes is a comprehensive relationship with multiple points of contact.

Moreover, it is clear that their relationship flowed from the mentor's *availability*, her "welcoming invitation," and not from proactive intervention. In other words, ownership and responsibility for directing the relationship remained with the fellow. In the following section, I will return to the particular topic of mentors' role with respect to fellows' writing. Here, with respect to the mentor-fellow relationship generally, it is enough to note how comments on mentoring in 2014 indicate that the balance we seek is possible but difficult to achieve.

It is important to remember that our mentors are themselves students. They are studying mentoring and acquiring its skills, and they are doing so under what is a uniquely demanding paradigm. It is reasonable to expect that different mentors would progress in different ways and at different rates. This realization prompts two considerations. First, it may be important for the course instructor to more effectively monitor mentor-fellow relationships and to somehow intervene as needed. Second, it may be important to bring everyone into the conversation. We may need to alert fellows to the fact that their mentors are learners, too, to encourage fellows to communicate directly with their mentor (and perhaps with the course instructor) about their needs, and to free mentors to respond more aggressively to the needs of some fellows.

2. *Online writing groups and the role of the mentor.* We returned writing groups to 4-5 members and continued the shift toward fellows sharing writing with their mentors.

Writing group size. In 2014, instructors again selected the writing groups but we increased their size from 3 back to 4-5. Although still undecided as to what constitutes the most productive size for writing groups, we were inclined to believe that smaller groups in an online context may be too confining. Given the increased visibility or formality of a group's interaction, members seemed to feel that writing response was limited to their private group and

that going outside the group for response was somehow inappropriate. Although fellows could exchange writing and response through email or the Moodle messaging system, there is no evidence that fellows sought these kind of informal lines that are apt to arise in the traditional face-to-face institute. Therefore, if one member of an online writing triad is not fully engaged the remaining pair are left with very limited response. Groups of 4-5 ensure that each member will receive multiple responses, even though this likely increases the response workload.

Whether or not our reasoning was correct, frequency of response increased dramatically in 2014. Compared with 2012 and 2013, frequency almost doubled from about 8 to more than 15 responses to each fellow’s writing for publication. In addition, the ratio of social to cognitive presence in these responses shifted significantly toward the more substantive cognitive response (Table 5).

Table 5. Change in frequency of response to fellows’ writing for publication across first three years of the MWP hybrid institute, including distribution between social and cognitive presence.

Year	Average # of responses to each fellows’ writing for publication	Average # of responses exhibiting SP (social presence) and CP (cognitive presence)	Ratio of SP:CP (social to cognitive presence)
2012	8.8	SP = 5.65	1.55:1.0
		CP = 3.65	
2013	7.4	SP = 5.00	2.11:1.0
		CP = 2.37	
2014	15.5	SP = 7.8	1:1
		CP = 7.7	

While frequency naturally varied between groups, distribution of responses across groups was most even in years with groups of 4-5 members – that is, in both 2012 and 2014 (Table 6).

Table 6. Average number of responses made to each fellows’ writing for publication by writing group.

Year	Average # of responses to each fellow					
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Across groups
2012	7.75	7.75	8	9	11	Ave: 8.8
2013	3.03	3.67	3.7	5.25	25	Ave: 7.4
2014	9.75	13.8	17.25	21.2		Ave: 15.5

Not surprisingly, fellows received more responses to their writing for publication when they were in larger groups, so it is also important to note that fellows in larger groups were also posting more responses to their groups mates (Table 7). This was true even in 2012, but markedly so in 2014 when we had added more support to the group process (e.g., emphasis on bless-address-press, discussion of response, and the explanatory video on writing groups).

Table 7. Average number of responses made *by* each fellow to group mates writing for publication by writing group.

Year	Average # of responses to group mates by each fellow					
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Across groups
2012	1.93	1.93	2.7	1.8	2.2	Ave: 2.07
2013	1.01	1.22	1.25	1.75	8.3	Ave: 2.25 ^a
2014	2.43	2.7	4.1	4.24		Ave: 3.45

^a Note: 2013 average is skewed by group 5. Otherwise, all 2013 groups are below 2012 and 2014 in number of responses by groups mates to each fellow’s writing.

Our expectation going forward is that we will continue group size at 4-5 members, although we readily admit that group size as well as how best to organize writing groups are still open questions. More important than number of responses is the quality of the discourse that

frequency represents. Even though discussion shifted toward more substantive entries (i.e., cognitive presence) in 2014, it is reasonable to question whether 2-4 responses to one's writing is sufficient. Many response entries were comprehensive in the sense of responding on multiple points and in some detail. For example, the following response to the first draft of a short story in 2014 covers three separate points and shows the effects of more carefully articulated written text (despite the use of hyphens) rather than conversation which may tend to be more fragmented.

Whoa – so creepy! I loved the description of the reflection in the window, the realization that there could be dozens of people outside looking at her, the rationalizations she tells herself and whether to keep reading and go watch TV – you captured the scene and the feeling so vividly!

I think the story works as an adult telling the story or could work as the teenager recounting the story – I think either one would work. The adult narrator gives a lot of self-reflection and context to the character of the babysitter, such as she wasn't that into babysitting and she just needed a job – a teenage narrator may not have as much self reflection?

One part that kept the story from flowing a bit for me was the build up for the teenager about the old house – I was surprised that a teenager would be so excited to get in an old house to explore the architecture, etc. The teenager is described in the beginning as a somewhat apathetic babysitter, which didn't flow for me into a person who would be interested in old houses. I wonder about including a couple of details that would explain why she was so interested in old houses? (Maybe she likes historical fiction or she has a passion for architecture?)

I also liked how you told the story of the babysitters interactions with the boy, and his comment that the Captain lives down there – that was a scary zinger! This story is told with mounting suspense – you kept me reading the whole way through, and wanting to read quickly to find out what happened!

Forum posts like this were not uncommon and illustrate how the online environment can support rich and extended response entries. The complete discussion from which this response was taken not only exemplified multiple, lengthy responses to one member's creative writing; it also demonstrated both social and cognitive presence within the group, explicit reference and use of

the NWP bless-address-press protocol, contributions by all group members, posting of a second draft, and a sense of conversation between the writer and other group members. Admittedly, running discussions like this were more the exception than the rule. In this respect, writing group discussion was similar to opening moments and learning autobiographies where examples illustrated the potential rather than a routine for rich response in an online environment where users can compose lengthy, detailed comment. The asynchronous nature of online discussion affords that opportunity for those that choose to take advantage of its affordances. Even so, the separation in time is not conducive to the kind of concurrent, sustained, often rapid-fire interaction that we associate with a traditional writing conference, a conference that can help a writer to think aloud and construct writing in the presence of another.

In an online environment, students have a good deal of responsibility for the quality of their experience by virtue of the organization and effort they bring to bear (Thormann & Zimmerman, 2012). Some fellows may have been more successful with opening moments as a result of their own activity or more engaged with others in a writing group due to serendipitous combination with complementary mates. Indeed, a focus group with one writing group in 2014 referred to “fortunate chemistry” as a part of their success together. It may be that as new fellows arrive with more experience at online education, writing groups and other structures will function more and more effectively. It may also be that greater teaching presence in design or facilitation is needed to better prepare and support fellows’ for success. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, although we have resisted introducing *synchronous* elements into the spring program, our three-year experience with writing response begs consideration of combining live conferencing with the written, online Forums. Again, as new fellows arrive with greater

technical experience it is only natural that we progress to more complex and sophisticated technological supports.

Role of the mentor: The second important change to writing response in 2014 was that we continued to loosen the reins on mentors' response to fellows' writing. In 2013, we had witnessed the potential benefits of fellows sharing writing with their mentor. The 2014 fellows' syllabus did not emphasize or even encourage fellows to do so. It read simply, "In addition [to response from writing group members], you may share these writing [for publication] pieces with your Writing Project mentor." Although we wanted to open the door to response from mentors, we still did not want to position mentors as writing evaluators or gatekeepers or to suggest that sharing writing with mentors was required.

We realized that the key element in the dynamic of writing exchange between fellow and mentor would be the mentors' response. As with goal-setting (above), it would be essential that mentors' response be reflective, not directive. Accordingly, we explicitly introduced mentors to our concern that their fellows not perceive them as writing instructors with either a red pen or grade book, and we provided certain specific guidelines for response (Figure 2). Mentors could observe but not participate in writing group discussions, mentors response should be "private" – that is, to the fellow only and not posted to the writing group – and, response should be oriented toward the writer's process rather than the writing itself. In terms of the NWP bless-address-press protocol, mentors certainly might bless writing to encourage a writer. Rather than addressing or pressing with specific recommendations, however, mentors were encouraged to probe with questions that might prompt fellows to experiment with their text in new ways; they might respond to a fellow's question or comment about the writing with a process suggestion;

and above all, mentors were urged whenever possible to suggest ways that a fellow might take their writing back to their writing group as a way of building that process.

Response to Assigned Fellows' Writing for Publication: As part of their “writing for publication,” fellows are advised that they “may share these writing pieces with their Writing Project mentor.” As you know, the National Writing Project values self-governing writing groups and *peer* response. At the same time, fellows often appreciate their mentor’s response as a different view, one with particular expertise, or someone with whom they have developed a relationship over the first weeks of the course.

Mentors are welcome to respond to their fellows’ writing, and doing so can be a test of your growing skill as a mentor. Please observe the following guidelines:

- Respond privately, one-to-one. Do not post to a fellows’ writing group forum to avoid disrupting the group dynamic.
- Pay particular attention to facilitating the fellow’s writing process rather than evaluating the writing itself. While you will certainly want to answer direct questions (address), be sure to leave decision-making with the writer. Inevitably, you wield a certain power in this relationship and it is important not to be perceived as the instructor or gatekeeper.

Figure 2. Syllabus guidelines for mentors’ response to fellows’ writing in the Seminar in Mentoring.

Writing response seemed to present a continuing challenge for 2014 mentors. Some were concerned that they did not have the necessary expertise in writing instruction to help their fellows (despite our minimizing that role), yet most continued to feel they were not “doing anything” especially when fellows did not reach out to them for help with writing. Mostly, mentors just seemed to find it very difficult to restrain their response – that is, *not* to respond as they had been accustomed to do as fellows to their writing group classmates. We discussed this in an ongoing open Forum for mentors. I reassured mentors that their role in responding to fellows’ writing is and has been our biggest challenge in designing the online Introduction to the National Writing Project. At the same time, I emphasized that our objective is clear: we want fellows to appreciate writing as a recursive, developmental process that benefits from collegial response (both for them and for their students). What we are struggling to understand *in the*

online environment is how to approach this objective. I addressed these points in a forum response to the question, “What if a mentee needs extra help with his or her writing?”

We definitely want fellows to produce “good” writing and writing that they feel “good” about. At the same time, we are interested in more than the fish. We’re interested in their experiencing how to fish. We want them to explore writing as a process (e.g., bless-address-press), peer response, and especially writing groups. It’s not unusual for fellows to immediately press themselves to produce polished work rather than using their writing as an exploratory, developmental process. So, part of our work, is to foster writing groups as a laboratory for fellows’ writing.

To a varying degree, mentors will have the opportunity to respond to their assigned fellows’ writing. *How best to handle this is the one aspect of these courses that is least well developed or understood!* We know we want mentors to help fellows develop as writers while maintaining ownership of their writing, and we’re pretty sure we want mentors to contribute to individual fellows using and succeeding in their writing group. How to do that is a work in progress and something we should continue to consider together throughout the course.

If at any time you feel a mentee needs more writing support than you are able to give, we should talk about that. But, I’m confident that all of you can meet the demands of responding to your fellows’ writing. Remember, this is not a course in rhetoric or composition (although I suspect you could handle that if it were). Your response based on listening, interest, a rich, ongoing relationship, and belief in the writer will carry the day.

The heart of the challenge for mentors is to distinguish and focus on what they are mentoring. In our institute model, what mentors are mentoring is not the writing itself but a way of writing, collegial response, and affiliation with other MWP ways of being with respect to writing and the teaching of writing. These notional objectives are understandably challenging to convey and grasp, and stretching to achieve them is what constitutes growth for mentors.

If the principal challenge for mentors online is to foster affiliation with writing project principles and practices in concert with fellows’ own personal and professional goals, this is essentially the role of a mentor in the traditional ISI. Where the two contexts differ is in the peculiar affordances and constraints each setting imposes. Three years experience has

demonstrated that one risk to the online introduction is that fellows will perceive the program more like an instructor-driven course and less like a collegial institute – that is, less an experience driven by shared responsibility for what fellows do and what they take away. More than anywhere else, we confront this risk in responding to fellows’ writing. We know from fellows’ evaluations that a small number of spring fellows have not continued on into the July institute because they did not receive the direct instruction in writing that they expected in the online segment. While disappointing, this is not disheartening to the extent it indicates that a majority of fellows were persuaded to use and pass on the National Writing Project perspective on writing and the teaching of writing. At the same time, we cannot disregard the appeal for mentors to support the development of their fellows as writers by responding to the development of their writing. Here, we might recall Swan’s (2006) admonition that use of a technology may fail for either of two reasons: an application as it is designed and used may not support a desired outcome, or the outcome may simply be unattainable no matter how the application is formatted or used. It may be that we need to better define the mentors’ role with regard to online response to fellows’ writing, *or* it may be that the online setting is just not suited to developing the kind of relationship that we have come to expect from a traditional face-to-face writing project institute.

Conclusion: Looking Ahead to 2015

At this writing, the Maine Writing Project has completed three iterations of a hybrid institute model that began in 2012 with 14 weeks online focused on writing and seven days face-to-face focused on leadership in the teaching of writing based on the exchange of teaching demonstrations. Based on this experience, we believe that this format has significantly addressed the declining enrollments that prompted the change. Of the 18 fellows enrolled in spring 2014, 16 continued on into the July institute and 2 fellows from spring 2013 returned to complete the six credit sequence. This is the highest MWP institute enrollment since 2006. In addition, six MWP Teacher-consultants enrolled in the 2014 Seminar in Mentoring and continued on to mentor fellows as part of the July 2014 Advanced Institute in Teacher Leadership. Of these six, four were the first graduate students to earn the newly created University of Maine, College of Education and Human Development, Graduate Certificate: Teacher-Consultant in Writing. These are all indications that our hybrid model can effectively meet the logistical and academic needs of Maine teachers interested in writing and the teaching of writing. The attitude and performance of our 2014 mentors as well as the work of three members of our leadership team that joined through the hybrid model demonstrates that this approach can foster clear understanding of writing project principles and strong affiliation with the organization.

At this juncture, we have high confidence in specific elements of the hybrid format. The learning autobiography, weekly opening moments, and writing activities provide a range of writing experience and effectively build the social presence foundation required for online communities. The reading topics and combination of required and open discussion Forums are relevant and well-sequenced. These discussions support the transition from social to cognitive

presence as fellows share both personal and professional experiences. The addition of the writing-with-students activity has enhanced fellows' consideration of the connection between writing and the teaching of writing.

The digital writing portfolio is one large and significant element that has received mixed reviews. On the one hand, it has provided wider sharing of fellows' work and more extensive response from classmates and mentors. On the other hand, the Moodle Forum application is not designed to this purpose which means it can be awkward to navigate and does not always index, organize, or present materials in the best way (e.g., media files and document attachments). In addition, using the Forum application does not create a collection of work that is transportable and can be "owned" by fellows outside Moodle after the course is over. We have asked fellows to create a "home portfolio" that includes all of their work, but of course the home portfolio does not capture others' response to their work. Despite these limitations, in program surveys for all three years a clear majority of fellows have recommended that we keep the portfolio within the Moodle learning management system rather than asking them to navigate away from this base to an outside portfolio program. We are aware of Mahara, an ePortfolio and social networking application that integrates with Moodle. With a more stable core program, 2015 may be the year to consider this approach to the fellows' digital writing portfolio.

Two program elements continue to challenge the hybrid model: defining the role of the mentor, especially with respect to fellows' writing, and the design of fellows' writing groups themselves. We continue to view mentors as the linchpin to our annual institute program. More studied preparation based on Zachary (2011) appears to have better prepared 2014 mentors for their work. In addition, 2014 was the first year in which all of our mentors had come to the

MWP through the hybrid institute which naturally gave them a more informed understanding of that model. The one recommendation for 2015 is to continue allowing mentor response to fellows' writing to develop organically as a natural part of their developing that relationship – in other words, to respond in individual ways to each fellow as we have traditionally done in the ISI.

The main question facing the online institute model is how best to foster productive writing groups. We are committed to groups of 4-5 meeting in separate groups visible only to their own members (plus mentors and the instructor), and we are determined to restrict the instructor and mentors from joining in writing group discussions. Planning for 2015 includes tuning writing groups by addressing questions like the following.

- Do we form writing groups earlier? If so, when? And, how might that affect timing of the digital writing marathon?
- In the digital writing marathon, should we invite response to fellows marathon writing as well as the post describing their journey?

These questions reflect further consideration of how we can best support social presence in writing groups and encourage their progress toward cognitive presence and self-generated teaching presence.

Finally, with respect to writing groups or the role of the mentor, the most important concern is whether it may be time to incorporate synchronous online approaches (e.g., Skype, Google Hangouts). So far, we have resisted using any synchronous applications in the interest of preserving and testing entirely asynchronous expectations. It may be worth remembering that while the growth of Skype videoconferencing began to accelerate as early as 2009, Google

Hangouts did not launch until May 2013. In other words, user familiarity and comfort with videoconferencing technology has increased markedly during the three years of our hybrid format. It may now be appropriate to invite or encourage if not require the use of synchronous, interactive communication to strengthen social presence among program participants and further advance both cognitive and teaching presence.

Afterword

The purpose of this document has been to share the Maine Writing Project's experience in moving its introduction for new members from a face-to-face to an online format. Scant attention has been given to the seven-day, on-campus institute in teacher leadership or its effects on fellows' experience or the organization. I should note one significant change to the shortened July institute as originally constructed. We no longer have fellows present their teaching demonstrations across three institute days as we did in 2012. In 2013, we instituted the Promising Practices Conference on the next to last day of the July institute when all demos are presented in four rounds of about four demos each. In addition to fellows, mentors, and instructors, we invite all MWP TCs to attend. Although this precludes fellows seeing more than three other teaching demonstrations,¹² the change has had multiple benefits. Each fellow's audience is larger (about 12 attendees), and each fellow has the same amount of time and more time to prepare. Moreover, delivering demonstrations no longer takes over the seven-day schedule. Institute activity is better balanced and includes more time for writing as well as discussion activities. Most important is the added support for continuity. TCs return and reconnect with the summer institute, and existing and new members get-acquainted.

I should also note that participants who complete the spring online course become "associate members" of the Maine Writing Project. To become an MWP teacher-consultant, participants must complete the July institute, but associate members are invited to participate in most Maine Writing Project activities and events.

¹² In 2015, we may record demos and make them available to fellows.

Throughout this report as well as the three-year experience it recounts, I have resisted the question, “Which is better, a traditional, four-week immersion in a face-to-face summer institute, or the new hybrid format that spans a half-year by relying mainly on new technologies in an online setting?” As one who was able to devote four weeks in summer 1999, I have my own preference. Still, I hope that I have fairly represented the characteristics of the new format, its affordances and constraints, in relation to traditional MWP expectations. After three years trying to replicate our institute experience online, I believe we are well-informed and positioned to move to a new generation in our program. As one former ISI co-director noted after reading a draft of this paper, “Maybe the online version needs to be recreated. I don’t think it’s possible to move a traditional course online. When a course goes online, the very nature changes and expectations have to change as well.” As Postman (1992) warned, one significant change inevitably brings on total change.

Of course, one challenge to any cultural shift, especially technology integration where digital immigrants are concerned, is a need not just to learn the new but to *unlearn* certain habits and practices embedded in the culture (Gura & Percy, 2005). Expectations and their representation in program design and delivery may well need to change to meet educator needs in the 21st century and today’s climate, and we may already be feeling the effects of a membership shifting in that direction. In one leadership meeting, I raised the possibility of returning to an ISI in some future summer. One active TC who had been both a fellow and a mentor in the new format declared, “Don’t do that. We need this format!”

I would be foolish to contend that our new hybrid model, or any one model, is the best possible approach to what teachers need today, but I would be equally misguided not to

recognize that what teachers need today will likely involve emerging technologies that function across time and space. The introduction to this monograph identified three values that have guided the MWP institute from its inception: teachers as writers, teachers as colleagues, and teachers as leaders. If we have learned one thing from our three year experience with a new institute format, it's that continued dedication to these values is a sound foundation on which to build any institute model or to pursue the vision started in 1974 by James Gray himself. As Gray noted in *Teachers at the Center*,

Though the key elements of the summer institute were in place from the beginning, we made some major mistakes. For instance, during the first year of the summer institute, we failed to include elementary teachers...By the second institute, we had corrected our error (54)...the project remains open to new ideas, approaches, and variations. This open mindset keeps us from ever saying, "This is it! *This* is the Bay Area Writing Project approach to the teaching of writing!" The writing project is not a writing curriculum or even a collection of best strategies; it is a structure that makes it possible for exemplary teachers to share with other teachers ideas that work. (Gray, 2000, p. 83-84)

Whatever structure proves best suited or necessary, as long as we continue to keep teachers at the center of what we do, including our annual institute, we can continue to be that unique approach that changes their lives.

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APPENDICES

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ERL 545: Course Syllabus**Appendix A****Introduction to the National Writing Project**

ERL 545, Spring Semester

Online: 1/13/14-5/2/14

Course Description: This course is an introduction to the principles and practices of the Maine and National Writing Projects. *Fellows* (i.e., those enrolled as students in the course) are asked to explore and reflect upon the writer's life as well as promising practices for the teaching of writing. Fellows will read about writing and the teaching of writing and discuss these readings online. Fellows will write both informally and for publication, and by participating in a writing group they will assist each other to develop their writing as well as their philosophy on the teaching of writing.

Course Objectives or Learning Outcomes:

1. Participants will explore the role and importance of writing in their personal lives and in their professional lives as teachers of writing. This exploration is supported by informal writing activities and by writing for publication.
2. Participants will explore the role and nature of writing groups and peer response. This exploration will be supported by participation in a writing group and writing response.
3. Participants will consider questions and issues related to writing and the teaching of writing. In addition to reflective writings, this consideration will be supported by online discussion with classmates and course mentors.
4. Participants will begin to consider the nature of teacher leadership in professional development in anticipation of the Maine Writing Project *Institute in Teacher Leadership*.

These outcomes support performance standards drawn from the core principles of the [National Writing Project](#) and the [Maine Writing Project](#).

Required Reading and Resources - See separate MWP book list:

- *Because writing matters: Improving student writing in our schools* (2006) by NWP and Carl Nagin ([Amazon](#)).
- One book from the "On Writing" portion of the course reading list.*
- One book from the "Teaching Writing" portion of the course reading list.*
- Selected articles provided and posted to the course Moodle.

*Alternate texts may be read with the instructor's permission. Please ask.

Our online space is a Moodle learning management system where resources are posted, discussions and other activities are conducted, and participants' writing and writing response is posted.

Semester Plan: Overview

The curriculum is divided into six sessions of about two weeks each: three sessions and a digital writing marathon before our two-week semester break and three sessions after semester break.

- Sessions generally begin on a Wednesday and conclude on a Tuesday.
 - Be sure to see “Course Assignments” (below) for detailed expectations.
-

Course Elements

- **Reading** and responding to three texts, one each during Session #1, #3, and #6.
- Online **discussion** Forums.
 - In sessions #1, #2 and #6, required discussions are class-wide and oriented around your reading. Each discussion is supported directly by one or more articles and indirectly by your text reading. “Open” discussion Forums are also available for voluntary participation from time-to-time throughout the course.
 - Writing response groups will be created at the end of Session #2. Following a digital writing marathon, Forum discussion beginning in Session #3 will focus on peer reading and response to individual writing within these writing groups.
- Individual **writing** supported by writing groups.
 - You will create a digital portfolio on Moodle, with space for book responses and published journal entries as well as *revised* versions of your learning autobiography and writing for “publication.”
- **Other** activities:
 - A few “get acquainted” writing activities during Sessions #1-3 (also Session #6).
 - An occasion of writing with students or sharing your writing with students, documented by a reflection (journal entry style) in your portfolio.
 - A short opening moment posted at the beginning of one week during the course.
 - A final, summary course reflection

Course Assignments

See the Semester Plan for Due Dates.

“More than anything else the project does, its insistence that teachers . . . must write has caught the interest and imagination of the larger community. Writing is the ultimate hands-on experience for the National Writing Project.”

James Gray, founder
National Writing Project

Digital Portfolio Requirements

The **Digital Portfolio** is a representative selection of your work in this course. This portfolio is posted to the course Moodle where it is shared with classmates and made available to the course instructor for grading. Listed below is a description of the items to be included in your digital portfolio. Please read each description carefully. Reminders and due dates for posting these items appear in the Semester Plan (provided separately).

- **Please Note:** Because the digital portfolio is housed in the course Moodle, it may not be available to you after this course ends. Therefore, you are *strongly encouraged* to create a **Home Portfolio** that includes all of your work and materials from this course - all of your journal writing, all of your writing drafts, writing not shared with your group, articles and resources that you have annotated or found during the course, and so on. You may wish to copy and paste into your home portfolio any online discussion entries that were of particular interest. The Home Portfolio may be hard copy, digital, or a combination of both. Past Fellows have emphasized how important it is to have the larger, complete home portfolio as a resource and remembrance of their Writing Project experience.

1. Journal entries: Keeping a writing journal is an activity that supports your writing and learning and helps you to experience the writing life throughout the semester. Reflections on discussions and other course activities, connections to events outside the course, rehearsals for writing - think of this as a record of personal and professional discovery, related however tenuously to this course. This journal is all yours and should reflect your experience in the course as a thinker, reader, writer, teacher, friend, and so on.

Ideally, this practice will continue after the course is finished. Therefore, I encourage you to find ways that make journaling work for you. In other words, you are encouraged to experiment not just with entry content but also with the materials, style and format you choose as well as where and when you journal (even how often!). Traditional print or digital formats are equally welcome, and the composition level is first draft.

In order to provide an opportunity for the journaling habit to take hold, throughout this course you are asked to journal at least 2-3 times per week - on your honor :) **For purposes of course credit:** Please select one journal entry during each two week session and post this entry to your portfolio together with a brief paragraph that contextualizes this entry - that is, explain why you selected the entry, and what it says about your journey as a writer, learner, and/or teacher of writing during this two-week period.

2. Response to reading: a 1-2 page response (12-point, double-spaced, or equivalent depending on genre and medium), written with “casual courtesy” (i.e., checked for typos, spelling, and clarity but not expected to be a highly revised piece). You are encouraged to write in ways that inform your understanding of the text and may reveal your perspective to others in an engaging way. You are invited to write a reader response or analytical essay or to try a different format (e.g., a letter to the author, found poem, synthesis of quotations, double entry journal, etc.)

3. Learning Autobiography (LA): The LA is a chance to reflect on your history as a learner and writer. Rather than a comprehensive history of your life, you are encouraged to focus on a particular interest, pattern of events, memoir, etc., that provides a window into your biography. A print version of your LA text (typically 4-6 pages, standard font, double-spaced) should be posted to your digital portfolio, and the composition level is highly revised.

The LA is *also* a way of introducing yourself to classmates and essential to building our online community. Traditionally, the LA text is presented orally in a National Writing Project institute. Accordingly, all Fellows will prepare a “performance piece” as part of the learning autobiography. Options include reading the text in a podcast with at least a few images or visuals, a digital story, or a video program. Your course mentor can help with developing an approach for this performance element.

4. Writing for “Publication”: Fellows are expected to produce at least two additional pieces of writing that are highly revised and intended for publication - one creative piece and a position paper. Your portfolio plan should include some expectation to submit these two pieces for publication. You may anticipate a particular audience (e.g., school community, local community newspaper, educational or creative writing journal). In addition, writing may be published to the NWP e-Anthology.

a. Creative piece: a short story, memoir, selection of poetry or song lyric, etc.

b. Position paper: an article to submit to an educational journal or an OpEd piece (“opposite-the-editorial-page”) to submit to a newspaper, a proposal to faculty or administration urging creation of a student-staffed writing center, a brochure on a school issue to share with parents or community, etc.

Because the length and genre of these writings necessarily varies from writer to writer, your individual plan for these writings will be subject to approval by the course instructor. At least two (2) drafts of each writing should be posted to your writing group’s response Forum on Moodle for feedback from your writing response group members. In addition, you may share these writing pieces with your Writing Project mentor.

5. Writing with Students: As a classroom teacher, you undoubtedly have many opportunities to write with students and to share your writing with students.* For this course, you are expected to document at least one occasion of writing with or sharing your writing with students. This will typically be a 1-2 page response, posted to the journal section of your digital portfolio.

*If you do not work in a classroom, you may arrange an alternate setting to write or share your writing with young writers. You are *not* required to use your “writing for publication” from this course for this sharing with students assignment.

6. Course reflection: Upon completion of the portfolio, write a 2-3 page reflection on your course experience. This will also be posted to your online portfolio. At the end of the course, your assigned mentor will provide a summary response to your digital portfolio. This mentor’s letter is not a grading exercise but a collegial reading response.

This portfolio should be about you and your needs as a writer. While I have provided some guidelines, I trust that you are a curious and thoughtful professional. I know you will read, talk,

think and write about issues concerning writing, the teaching of writing, student literacy, education, your teaching practice...all of it! Please don't hesitate to stretch the guidelines of this portfolio in innovative and thought-provoking ways.

Other Assignments

Writing Activities: These are conducted once or twice during the first three and final sessions of the course as a way of getting to know yourself and others. Writing activities are one-draft writing that should take no more than 20-30 minutes to complete. Each writing activity should be placed in your home portfolio and posted to the Writing Activity space on Moodle.

Forum Discussions: Reading Response (Sessions #1, #2, and #6):

1. Fellows are expected to initiate a discussion thread in Discussion Forum #1 (Hopes & Fears Forum), and Fellows are invited to read and respond to threads initiated by classmates.
2. In Discussion Forums during sessions #2 and #6, Fellows are invited to initiate discussion threads and are expected to participate by reading and replying to classmates' discussion entries. You are not required to read and respond to every entry, but are encouraged to participate in these discussions in ways that are meaningful and genuine for you and assist classmates' to engage in fruitful ways.

Digital Writing Marathon: Fellows are expected to complete the four digital writing marathon stations in one continuous session and to post an entry to the digital marathon space on Moodle. In this entry, briefly describe your marathon journey and attach one piece of writing - *un-revised* - from the marathon. Fellows are also expected to read (and are invited to comment on) marathon entries posted by their own writing group members.

Forum Discussions: Writing Response (Sessions # 3-6): These Forums are for requesting and providing response to writing-in-process by members of your writing group. Discussion is conducted in "closed" groups - that is, only those Fellows who are members of your writing group will view and respond to what you post.

I resist providing specific requirements for writing group discussions, except to say that published pieces typically undergo 2-3 revisions in a recursive, developmental model (represented, for example, by the National Writing Project *Bless-Address-Press* response protocol). These Forums are not restricted to discussing your "writing for publication" pieces. Rather, you may choose to write and share more than the pieces required for this course, but do be considerate of your group members time in what and how much you post.

Directions for posting and responding to writing are provided at the top of each writing response Forum. As you will see, pieces of writing may be posted as *attachments* to a Forum entry for reading and response. Group members may download these attachments, insert comments or suggested changes into the text, and re-attach the edited copy to a reply entry. In addition, questions about one's writing may be posted as an entry to these writing group Forums.

Opening Moment: Each Fellow is asked to post an "opening moment" at the beginning of one week during the course. Opening moments should be short and are not oriented toward

coursework, just toward the joy of writing, teaching, and learning. In a format of your choice (print, audio, visual, a link), share some prose, poetry, music, video...whatever. The audience should be able to read/view/listen and enjoy your opening moment in five minutes or less.

Semester Plan

Important: Unless otherwise noted, tasks are due by the last day of each Session!

Session #1: 1/13/14 - 1/28/14 - *Building the writing community*

- *Course management:*
 - carefully read course syllabus and semester plan
 - sign up for one “opening moment”
 - create (or update) your profile in Moodle
 - create your digital writing portfolio on Moodle
- *Discussion Forum #1:* Hopes & Fears Forum (getting acquainted, objectives for the course, writing aspirations and concerns, etc.)
- *Reading:*
 - *Because writing matters: Improving student writing in our schools* (2006) by NWP and Carl Nagin ([Amazon](#))
 - Introduction to *The Journal Book* (Boynton-Cook, 1987) by Toby Fulwiler, pp. 1-6.
- *Writing:*
 - Response to *Because Writing Matters*.
 - Writing Journal: 2-3 entries per week. Publish and contextualize one entry from the two-week period.
 - Complete Writing Activity #1.
 - Learning autobiography: post to your digital portfolio. *Important:* Be sure to read the learning autobiography description and note the requirement for a “performance” element.

Session #2: 1/29/14 - 2/11/14 - *Teachers as writers...*

- *Reading:*
 - Read or view classmates’ learning autobiographies. Comments encouraged.
 - Article: “Who, what, when, and where of writing rituals” by Ann Dobie and others (NWP *The Quarterly*, Fall 2002).
- *Writing:*
 - Writing Journal: 2-3 entries per week. Publish and contextualize one entry from the two-week period.
 - Complete writing activity #2.
 - Complete writing activity #3 (to be opened February 5th).
 - Develop ideas for your creative writing and position paper, and publish your writing plans to the journal section of your digital writing portfolio.
- *Discussion Forum #2:* Teachers as writers.

- Article: “Joining the debate: Shouldn’t writing teachers write?” by Tim Gillespie (NWP *The Quarterly*, vol. 17, no 1, Winter 1995).
- Two articles by K. Jost. “Why high school writing teachers should not write” (*English Journal*, 79 (3), 65-66); and, “Why high school writing teachers should not write, revisited” (*English Journal*, 79 (9), 32-33).
- *Course management*:
 - Writing groups will be created by 2/11 (just prior to the digital writing marathon).
 - Post individual plans for “writing for publication” to Moodle by 2/16 (the final day of the digital writing marathon).

Digital Writing Marathon: 2/12/14 - 2/16/14

- Complete four marathon stations.
- On Moodle Digital Marathon Forum, post an entry recounting your journey.
- As an attachment to your entry, post one piece of writing from your marathon - *un-revised!*

Session #3: 2/17/14 - 3/2/14 - (public school vacation, 2/17-21/14)

- *Reading*:
 - Choice Book on writing
 - Article: Writing within a community by Kim Bridgford (NWP, *The Voice*, January-February, 2001, pp. 20-21).
 - Article: Reflections on an online teachers writing group by Anne Elrod (NWP, *The Quarterly*, Winter, 2003, pp. 21-27).
- *Discussion*: Read and comment on group members’ plans for creative writing and position paper.
- *Writing*:
 - Response to your choice book on writing.
 - Complete Writing Activity #4.
 - Writing Journal: 2-3 entries per week. Publish and contextualize one entry from the two-week period.
 - Post a draft of your first “writing for publication” piece (creative writing *or* position paper).

Semester Break: 3/3/14 - 3/16/14

Session #4: 3/17/14 - 4/1/14

- *Reading*: Peer response. You are invited to raise questions or comment on peer response (as a writer or teacher of writing) on the Open Discussion Forum.
 - “Bless, Address, Press: A protocol for writing response”
 - Handout on various Writing Response Protocols.
 - Handout on peer interviewing strategies.

- Article: “One approach to guiding peer response” by Kim Jaxon (2009). Available online at <http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/2850>
- *Discussion*: In writing response groups, begin reading and responding to group members’ writing. *Important*: Please note that you are asked to use the *Bless, Address, Press* protocol of the National Writing Project. You are also welcome to draw on the response protocol handout or other readings about writing response.
- *Writing*:
 - Writing Journal: 2-3 entries per week. Publish and contextualize one entry from the two-week period.
 - Begin revisions to your first “writing for publication.”
 - Post a draft of your second “writing for publication” (creative writing or position paper, whichever was not posted in Session #3).

Session #5: 4/2/14 - 4/15/14

- *Reading*:
 - Choice book on teaching writing. (Your response is due during session #6.)
 - Writing portfolios. You are invited to raise questions or comment on writing portfolios, teaching with portfolios, or related topics on the Open Discussion Forum.
 - Article: “Notes on the portfolio approach to teaching writing” by Laurie Bottoms. *The NWP Quarterly* (Spring, 1992), pp. 27-29.
 - Article: “What makes a portfolio a portfolio?” by Paulson, F. L., Paulson, P. R., & Meyer, C. A. *Educational Leadership* (February, 1991), pp. 60-63.
 - Explore the National Writing Project website page of Resources on Teaching Writing.
- *Discussion*: In writing response groups, continue reading and responding to group members’ writing using the *Bless, Address, Press* approach. You are also welcome to draw on the response protocol handout or other readings about writing response.
- *Writing*:
 - Continue revisions to “writing for publication.” Complete revisions and post a final version of your writing for publication to your digital portfolio by early in session #6.
 - Writing Journal: 2-3 entries per week. Publish and contextualize one entry from the two-week period.
 - This may be a good time to write with students or share your writing with students. A reflection on this activity is due during session #6.
- *Course Management*: Begin looking ahead by considering possible teaching demonstration ideas for the summer Institute in Teacher Leadership.

Session #6: 4/16/14 - 5/2/14 ...and teachers of writing

- *Reading*: [30 Ideas for Teaching Writing](#), an award winning NWP publication. Explore online table of contents and read a selection of entries.

- *Discussion Forum #3*: Rethinking teaching writing.
 - Article: “Sacred cows: Questioning assumptions in elementary writing programs” by Brenda Power and Susan Ohanian (NCTE, *Language Arts*, vol. 76, no. 3, January 1999)
- *Discussion*: read and respond to group members’ writing using the *Bless, Address, Press* approach. You are also welcome to draw on the response protocol handout or other readings.
- *Writing*:
 - Response to your choice book on teaching writing.
 - Complete Writing Activity #5.
 - Reflection on experience of writing with students or sharing writing with students. Post to journal section of digital writing portfolio.
 - Complete revisions to “writing for publication.”
 - Complete digital writing portfolio.
 - Course reflection.
- *Course Management*: Confirm whether you will be taking the summer Institute in Teacher leadership and confer with mentor to begin developing teaching demonstration ideas.

ERL 545: MWP Book List**Appendix B****2014 MWP Book List****Spring Course Reading****A. Reading in Common** - one required text:

Because writing matters: Improving student writing in our schools (2006) by NWP and Carl Nagin ([Amazon](#))

B. On Writing - Choose one book from the following:

The Muses Among Us: Eloquent Listening and Other Pleasures of the Writer's Craft (2003) by Kim Stafford ([Amazon](#))

The Pocket Muse (2004) by Monica Wood, volume 1 ([Amazon](#)), or *Pocket muse 2: Endless inspiration for writers* (2009) by Monica Wood ([Amazon](#))

The Writing Life by Annie Dillard ([Amazon](#))

Wild Mind by Natalie Goldberg ([Amazon](#))

Bird by bird: Some instructions on writing and life (1995) by Anne Lamott ([Amazon](#))

On Writing by Stephen King ([Amazon](#))

Crafting a Life by Donald Murray ([Amazon](#))

Breathing In, Breathing Out by Ralph Fletcher ([Amazon](#))

C. Teaching Writing - Choose one book from the following:

Teaching the neglected "R": Rethinking writing instruction in secondary classrooms (2007) by Richard Kent & Thomas Newkirk ([Amazon](#))

Room 109: The promise of a portfolio classroom (1997) by Richard Kent ([Amazon](#))

Write beside them: Risk, voice, and clarity in high school writing (2008) by Penny Kittle ([Amazon](#))

Reading and writing together: Collaborative literacy in action (2002) by Nancy Steineke (grades 9-12?) ([Amazon](#))

Craft Lessons (K-8) or *What a Writer Needs* by Ralph Fletcher ([Amazon](#))

When writing workshop isn't working: Answers to ten tough questions, grades 2-5 (2005) by Mark Overmeyer ([Amazon](#))

Teaching Nonfiction Writing by Laura Robb (grades 5 & up) ([Amazon](#))

What if: Writing exercises for fiction writers (2009) by Anne Bernays & Pamela Painter ([Amazon](#))

Write for Insight: Empowering Content-Area Learning, Grades 6-12 by William Strong ([Amazon](#))

Best practice: Today's standards for teaching & learning in America's schools (2005) by Harvey Daniels, Steven Zemelman, & Arthur Hyde ([Amazon](#))

Write like this: Teaching real-world writing through modeling and mentor texts (2011) by Kelly Gallagher. ([Amazon](#))

Looking Ahead: Anticipated Reading for Summer Institute in Teacher Leadership

Required:

Thrive: 5 ways to (re)invigorate your teaching (2014) by Meenoo Rami. [Amazon](#)

One choice book that helps you (and might help others) to think about teacher leadership.

Recommended:

How to make presentations that teach and transform (1992) by Robert J. Garmston and Bruce M. Wellman ([Amazon](#))

Teachers at the center: A memoir of the early years of the National Writing Project (2000) by James Gray ([Amazon](#))

Deciding to lead: The English teacher as reformer (1997) by Denny Wolfe and Joseph Antinarella ([Amazon](#))

The Courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life (2007) by Parker J. Palmer ([Amazon](#))

*ERL 545: Digital Writing Portfolio Index Page (sample)**Appendix C*

 **Ken's digital portfolio**
by [Ken Martin](#) - Wednesday, 4 January 2012, 07:39 PM

 **Welcome to my digital writing portfolio!**

[Reply](#)

 **Ken's published journal entries**
by [Ken Martin](#) - Wednesday, 4 January 2012, 07:51 PM

I will post my published **writing journal entries** as a reply to this entry, and you are invited to comment on any of those journal entries by using its reply button.

Always be sure to use the reply button of the entry to which you are responding!

[Show parent](#) | [Reply](#)

 **Ken's book responses**
by [Ken Martin](#) - Wednesday, 4 January 2012, 07:50 PM

I will post **my book responses** as attachments in a reply to this entry. You are invited to comment on any of my book responses by using the reply button of the entry to which they are attached.

Always be sure to use the reply button of the entry to which you are responding!

[Show parent](#) | [Reply](#)

 **Ken's Learning Autobiography**
by [Ken Martin](#) - Wednesday, 4 January 2012, 08:04 PM

 [Learning_autobiography_narration.PDF](#)

I am attaching **my learning autobiography** to this entry as a PDF. You are invited to comment by selecting the reply button on this entry.

[Show parent](#) | [Reply](#)

 **Re: Ken's Learning Autobiography**
by [Ken Martin](#) - Wednesday, 4 January 2012, 08:03 PM

 [Twenty_Questions_podcast.m4a](#)

Here is a audiovisual version of my learning autobiography that I created using GarageBand. You can view this MP4 with Quick Time Player.

[Show parent](#) | [Reply](#)

**Ken's creative writing**

by [Ken Martin](#) - Wednesday, 4 January 2012, 08:09 PM

 [poems.PDF](#)

Here is my creative writing - a selection of poetry. You are invited to comment by selecting the reply button on this entry.

[Show parent](#) | [Reply](#)

**Ken's position paper**

by [Ken Martin](#) - Wednesday, 4 January 2012, 08:10 PM

 [Team_Teaching_of_writing.PDF](#)

Here is my position paper - a selection of poetry. You are invited to comment by selecting the reply button on this entry.

[Show parent](#) | [Reply](#)

*ERL 545: Writing Activities**Appendix D*

Writing Activities

Writing Activity Guidelines: Writing activities are one-draft writing that should take no more than 20-30 minutes to complete. Each writing activity should be placed in your home portfolio and posted to a Writing Activity Forum space on Moodle. Use "Add a new discussion topic" to post your writing activity response to each activity forum.

Writing Activity #1 (session 1):

From *The Pocket Muse: Ideas & Inspirations for Writing* by Monica Wood: Almost any situation includes insiders and outsiders. Most human beings, no matter what their stations, consider themselves outsiders.

{Write about being an insider} {or, write about being an outsider}

Writing Activity #2 (session 2): Writing Rituals

In the [article](#) "Who, What, When, and Where of Writing Rituals," Dobie et al. (2002) address the role of rituals in supporting the act of writing.

Please use "Add a new discussion topic" to post an entry in which you share writing rituals that are important to you. Feel free to do so in a genre or format of your choice - narrative, fiction, essay, poetry, a song...

Writing Activity #3 (session 2): First Sentences

From *The Pocket Muse: Ideas & Inspirations for Writing* by Monica Wood

As a reader and writer, I love encountering first sentences that simultaneously summon the past and foreshadow the future. For example:

- “All that day as she waited for her sister to come home, Maxine remembered the goats” (“Testimony,” a short story by Jessica Treadway)
- “Although just barely--without laudes, without distinction, and from an academy which is third-rate at best--Suzanne Kaplan’s son, Seth, has managed to graduate from prep school, and Suzanne is having a party to celebrate.” (“Family Dancing,” from a collection by David Leavitt)
- “That night when he came to claim her, he stood on the short lawn before her house, his knees bent, his fists driven into his thighs, and bellowed her name with such passion that even the friends who surrounded him, who had come to support him, to drag her from the house, to murder her family if they had to, let the chains they carried go limp in their hands.” (*That Night*, a novel by Alice McDermott)

Aren’t these sentences magical? In each one, some provocative past event is being conjured just as a present event is about to begin. Try your hand at a few. The right sentence might spark an entire story.

Writing Activity #4 (session 3): First Sentences

From *The Pocket Muse: Ideas & Inspirations for Writing* by Monica Wood: “I’ve always been interested in writing about people...who are not able to speak for themselves. As in my novel *Black Water* - I provide a voice for someone who has died and can’t speak for herself.” (Joyce Carol Oates)

{Write something in the voice of someone who has, until now, been silent.}

Writing Activity #5 (session 6): One picture, six words...

Use "Add a new discussion topic" to create an entry that includes:

- **one** picture (use the attachment function at the bottom of the composition screen to insert your photo); and,
- **six** words.

That's it!

ERL 545: Digital Writing Marathon Instructions**Appendix E****The Digital Writing Marathon**

The digital writing marathon is the first activity conducted in writing groups rather than class-wide. It is an opportunity for you to complete a long-lasting, writing activity of a specific kind and to share this adventure with a small group of colleagues. The digital writing marathon is designed to honor the principles of more traditional, face-to-face writing marathons.

- giving yourself time and space to write...doing it for yourself
- sharing within the affective space of your developing writing group...
- ...sharing without response (other than a simple, "Thank you").

Here are “The Rules.”

1. Identify and visit a total of four locations - one each that, *in your opinion*, fits the definition provided (“Marathon Stops,” below). You may visit these locations in any order.
2. Spend 10-20 minutes writing at each location. You may “bookend” this writing time with settling in (looking around, smelling the roses, etc.) and wrapping up (reflecting on but not revising what you have written, taking another look around, short meditation, etc.). Altogether, you might spend a half-hour at each stop.
3. Writing marathons typically take place in one, continuous session. However, this may not be possible for you. Whether you do an uninterrupted or a segmented marathon will necessarily be an individual decision.
4. Other than time and a rough location, there are no criteria or limitations on writing. You are encouraged to write more-or-less continuously, but genre and format are up to you.

After you have completed your writing marathon:

1. Post an entry on the class Moodle to the “Digital Writing Marathon Forum.”
 - Purpose: describe your marathon journey.
 - Audience: Your writing group (Provided the technology cooperates, only your own writing group will see this entry. All writing groups will be visible to Ken and our mentors.)
2. Please attach *one* writing from your marathon to this entry. You may post the entire writing or a substantial portion of this writing.
3. Optional: If you would like, you may reply to your own entry (#1, above) and post a second writing from your marathon as an attachment. *Please do not post more than two of your marathon writings!*
4. Responding to writing group members: Please read entries posted by your writing group members (#1, above), including their attached writing (#2, above).
 - You may comment on group members’ marathon journey itself (#1, above).
 - **You may *not* comment on the writing that group members post except to say, “Thank you.”**

Marathon Stops:

1. a place connected with the natural world.
2. a civilized place
3. someplace with food
4. a kind of place you think would be well-suited to a writing marathon

Bless, Address, or Press? A Protocol for Writing Response

Like any response protocol, BAP (Bless, Address, or Press) helps readers to focus their response and writers to receive the kind of response they are seeking. BAP was developed by Michelle Rogge-Gannon at the Dakota Writing Project (South Dakota).

Bless: “Tell me the strengths only...Tell me what’s working.”

A first-draft writer may solicit encouragement on the way to taking a piece public or may be questioning what direction to take with a writing idea that is just starting to take shape.

Ask for *Bless* when you

- Are not ready for a full blown critique of your work.
- Post writing that is more reflective or highly personal.
- Post writing that you do not plan to develop into a polished piece.
- Post a piece that is just for fun or inspiration.

Address: “A specific question I have about this piece is...I would like feedback on a particular part of this piece.”

The writer of a more finished piece of writing may request specific feedback, targeted to a particular aspect or section of the writing.

Ask for *Address* when you

- Have a specific area that concerns you.
- Need suggestions for where you should go with a piece.

Press: “Bring it on...Tell me what I need to polish this piece.”

Not for the faint of heart, *Press* is a request for open and direct feedback on points of the reader’s choosing. Responders to *Press* feel free to identify what they consider weaknesses in reasoning, structure, tone--wherever the piece seems to need additions, deletions, or changes--and to suggest possible alternatives. Of course, this may include *Bless* and *Address*.

Ask for *Press* when you

- Have a strong piece of writing that you think is a final draft.
- Are ready to accept and understand suggestions made by others about your work.

*ERL 545: Opening Moment Discussion (sample)**Appendix G**Ahh...How to Decide*

Author: Well, I'm being true to myself in that I couldn't decide! So, I'm including all three choices! Happy searching the sites, and I hope you LOVE the poem as much as I do! It's about all those lost ideas that you thought of in the middle of night, then rolled over and left somewhere in dreamland!

Gone Forever by Barriss Mills

Halfway through shaving, it came -- the word for a poem.
I should have scribbled it
on the mirror with a soapy finger,
or shouted it to my wife in the kitchen, or muttered it to myself till it ran
in my head like a tune.

But now it's gone with the whiskers down the drain. Gone forever,
like the girls I never kissed,
and the places I never visited -- the lost lives I never lived.

Here's a fun site my husband sent me -- ["Advice from Kurt Vonnegut"](#) and another -- [quips from writers](#) -- Love Anne Lamott about being willing to offend! Sooooo true! Enjoy!

Fellow 1: After the weeks we have had to write and revise (more to do) this list of statements was encouraging to read. Thanks for sharing it! These were my favorites.

“As for discipline – it’s important, but sort of over-rated. The more important virtue for a writer, I believe, is self-forgiveness. Because your writing will always disappoint you. Your laziness will always disappoint you.” – Elizabeth Gilbert.
(I love that word - self-forgiveness, trying to live it)

If there’s a book you really want to read, but it hasn’t been written yet, then you must write it.
~Toni Morrison
(for my boys, posting this on my fridge tonight)

Every writer I know has trouble writing. ~Joseph Heller
(I still never imagine this, even though I know it to be true!)

The best time for planning a book is while you’re doing the dishes. ~Agatha Christie (or hanging up the clothes)

Author: Self-forgiveness! Love that -- my word for it is grace! We all need to give ourselves more of that!

Fellow 2: My students are writing about how to be a writer, so know that these are being passed along to the next generation! I'll add, "I'm one of those people that believes you should start writing before you think you're ready" (Joseph Ellis), and "What I did have was a capacity for sticking at it" (Doris Lessing).

Author: I love that Doris Lessing quote, and that is my biggest challenge. I have tons of "starts", but I haven't stuck to it! Inspiration for the future!

Fellow 3: "I am one of the those people that believes you should start writing before you think you are ready."- Joseph Ellis

I like this one, too! There have been many times when I have read a mentor text to the students not knowing what kind of writing reaction I would get from the kids and then finding that it sparked my own writing just as much as I had hoped it would spark theirs.

Great inspirations are those that you aren't even aware of at the time. You never know what you will end up writing!

Fellow 4: Love Vonnegut's advice - start as close to the ending as you can. I also could relate to Mills poems - Gone - the places I'll never visit - the lost lives never lived. Thanks for sharing all three - I couldn't decide which I liked best.

Author: Me either! That's why I had to post them all!

Fellow 5: Found this one invigorating - more about hard work than natural talent.

"What I did have, which others perhaps didn't, was a capacity for sticking at it, which really is the point, not the talent at all. You have to stick at it."

Entering the 7th inning stretch, summer is in the not too far distance, need "stick with it" to finish the year strong.

Fellow 3: I hear you! We have so much left to teach and the weeks and days are passing by. The stretch between February and April has been very productive but I am afraid with all the transitional activities for my fifth graders the time after April vacation may not be as fruitful. The "Stick With It" theory is a good one. Here we go!

Author: I know -- I really think about that one when I look at my 250 page manuscript that isn't done -- but has literally been gathering dust for 10 years!

Fellow 3: "Don't get it right, just get it written." James Thurber
This quote really hit me. I wish I had a dime for every time I told a child to "write it down now and don't worry about the spelling." Some students get so caught up in the correctness of everything that their real thoughts, the good ones that make the story flow, are lost forever. These are the students who stew over every little flaw rather than putting pen to paper to tell

the tale or write their ideas. Now I have a great quote to use every time a student comes to me during their first draft writing to ask me how to spell a word! Thank you!

Fellow 6: What a great set of resources. I found many gems that my middle school writers will love. Thanks!

Fellow 7: I loved the quips. I have been out of commission for a couple of weeks and I found some solace in that unconscious choice from some of the quotes of these writers.

I had read *Bird By Bird* by Anne Lamont so I was trying to find a time everyday to write, the ritual, I even did it with my students, but I wasn't feeling it and the students weren't doing it, which made me even more frustrated.

I don't feel like some of the writers that writing is their breath, but I do believe that if you have an idea, a thought, no matter where you are you should write. I also have found that during depression, which many famous writers have experienced it is hard to pick up a pen. So I wonder what they did during those times?

Thank You for bringing more for me to think about.

ERL 546: Course Syllabus**Appendix H****Maine Writing Project: Institute in Teacher Leadership**

ERL 546, Summer 2014, UMaine campus

July 1-2 and 7-11, 2014 9:00-4:00 each day

Course Description: This course is a continuation of the introduction to the principles and practices of the Maine and National Writing Projects that began with the prerequisite course ERL 545 (Introduction to the National Writing Project). Fellows (i.e., those enrolled as students in the course) explore and reflect upon writing and the teaching of writing with particular attention to their role as teacher leaders in classroom practice and systemic professional development. Fellows read and write about questions and issues related to teacher leadership. They also support each other in discussion and cooperative activities on this topic. A central element of this institute is the teaching demonstration, a workshop-style presentation based on their educational philosophy and teaching practice.

Course Objectives or Learning Outcomes

1. Building on the foundation of ERL 545 (Introduction to the National Writing Project), participants continue to explore the role and importance of writing in their personal lives and in their professional lives as teachers of writing. This exploration is supported by informal writing activity as well as one highly revised piece of creative or expository writing.
2. Participants consider questions and issues related to writing and the teaching of writing. These considerations are supported by discussion with classmates and course mentors.
3. Participants explore the nature of teacher leadership both as classroom practitioners and in professional development. In addition to discussion and class activity, this exploration is supported by preparing and delivering a workshop style teaching demonstration based on their educational philosophy and practice.

These outcomes support performance standards drawn from the core principles of the [National Writing Project](#) and the [Maine Writing Project](#).

Required Reading and Resources

- *Thrive: 5 ways to (re)invigorate your teaching* (2014) by Meenoo Rami. You will create a multigenre composition according to separate, pre-institute guidelines. [Amazon](#)
- Choice book: One book of your own choosing that helps you (and might help others) to think about teacher leadership. You will compose a one-page response and you will share your book in a 5-10 minute book talk and discussion. See “course assignments” (below) for details.
- Selected articles provided and posted to the course Moodle.

Our online space is a Moodle learning management system where resources are posted and activities may be conducted.

Recommended Reading

- *How to make presentations that teach and transform* (1992) by Robert J. Garmston and Bruce M. Wellman ([Amazon](#)). For some Fellows, this book helps in preparing the teaching demonstration. For all, it should help in thinking about presenting as a teacher leader.
- *Teachers at the center: A memoir of the early years of the National Writing Project* (2000) by James Gray ([Amazon](#)). Gray's book recounts the origin and early years of the National Writing Project and may provide interesting background for the core beliefs of teachers as writers and as leaders in professional development.
- *Deciding to lead: The English teacher as reformer* (1997) by Denny Wolfe and Joseph Antinarella ([Amazon](#)). Although written for secondary English teachers, this text has a lot to say for teachers across disciplines and grade levels on the subject of leading within the context of our own practice and field.

Institute Plan

Orientation: March 22, 2014 - University of Maine, Orono, ME

- Introductions and get-acquainted face-to-face
- course registration, overview of institute syllabus and schedule
- model book talk
- model teaching demonstration and time for questions and answers
- Teaching demonstration review in mentor groups

Tuesday: July 1, 2014

Preparation:

- Complete the metaphor response but do not share your metaphor with anyone. See separate instructions.
- Read excerpt from *Deciding to Lead* (Wolfe & Antinarella, 1997) and prepare discussion starters. See separate instructions.

8:30 Morning munchies

9:00 Opening Moment...
Welcome & share metaphor representations.

10:15 Break

10:30 *Writing our way in: Where we're from and where we're headed* - a model teaching demonstration

11:30 Mentor and Fellows: conversation around teaching demonstration plans. Include time for lunch together.

2:00 Considering teacher leadership:

- Discussion of excerpt from *Deciding to Lead* (Wolfe & Antinarella, 1997)
- Brief overview of the Maine and National Writing Projects

3:30 Scheduling book talks and hosting days

3:55 Memorable Moments and Closing Moment

Wednesday: July 2, 2014

Our Hosts:

- 8:30 Morning munchies
- 9:00 Opening moment
- 9:15 *Summon your writing sense! Sharing favorite writing prompts.*
- 10:00 Writing marathon
- 12:00 Lunch...writing time...coaching available for teaching demo
- 2:00 Writing marathon read-around
- 3:00 Book Talks (3)
- 3:55 Memorable Moments and Closing Moment

Monday: July 7, 2014

Preparation:

- Read and respond with a hard copy letter to multigenre compositions by members of your writing group.
- *Please read:*
 - “Writing to Learn and Learning to Write” by James Britton (*Prospect and Retrospect: Selected Essays of James Britton, 1972/1982*)
 - “Growth through English” by Peter Smagorinsky (*The English Journal, 2002*)
- Compose problematic situation for diversity discussion. See separate instructions.
- Post to Moodle: Draft description of your teaching demonstration.

Our Hosts:

- 8:30 Morning munchies
- 9:00 Opening Moment
- 9:15 Book Talks (4)
- 10:00 Diversity Discussion
- 11:30 Book Talks (2)
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:15 Book Talks (4)
- 2:15 Workshop time: Writing and teaching demonstration prep
- 3:55 Memorable Moments and Closing Moment

Tuesday: July 8, 2014

Preparation

- *Please read:*
 - “A brief history of networked digital information” by David Warlick (2004)
 - “Writing in the 21st century,” an NCTE policy brief (2009)
- Compose response for discussion of writing in the 21st century. See separate instructions.
- Read “Teachers Lead the Way at Edcamp” (Kalesse, 2014)
- Preparation - Post to Moodle: Final program description of your teaching demonstration.

Our Hosts:

- 8:30 Morning munchies
- 9:00 Opening Moment

- 9:15 Book Talks (4)
- 10:30 Time to plan for our “Field Trip” on Wednesday
- 11:45 Lunch - Optional *Dine & Discuss: Author To Be Announced*
- 1:45 *Edcamp: Writing in the 21st century* (4 rounds @ 20 minutes)
- 3:55 Memorable Moments and Closing Moment

Wednesday: July 9, 2014

Our Hosts:

- 8:30 Morning munchies
- 9:00 Opening Moment
- 9:30 Field Trip to Young Authors Camp
- 11:15 Make-up Book Talks if needed
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:00 Workshop time: Writing and final teaching demonstration prep
- 3:55 Memorable Moments and Closing Moment

Thursday: July 10, 2014 - Conference Day

- 8:00 “Registration” - set-up & refreshments - session sign-up
- 8:45 Welcome & Opening Moment
- 9:00 Session 1
- 10:15 Break
- 10:30 Session 2
- 11:45 Lunch
- 12:45 Session 3
- 2:00 Break
- 2:15 Session 4
- 3:45 Wrap-up

At the end of each conference session, the audience will be asked to provide one prays and one polish (colored index cards). The Fellow’s mentor will collect these, remove any “unkind” remarks, hold cards and give to Fellows at the end of the conference day.

Friday: July 11, 2014

Preparation: Tradition of exchanging notes with other Fellows; T-shirt day for group picture.

- 9:00 Opening Moment
Debriefing the teaching demonstrations and Promising Practices Conference
- 10:00 Writing Time (on your own or optional writing marathon)
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:00 Looking Ahead: What are you taking with you? Set goals and consider how MWP/
NWP can support you?
HO: MWP Information packets
- Personalized letter to principal; MWP sitemap; Assessing our work; NWP
resources...Plus letter for colleagues and 2015 institute information
- 2:30 Closing Moment

Course Assignments

Writing projects are distinguished by our recognition that teachers can be the most successful teachers of other teachers, the most effective drivers of professional development and agents of reform in education, what James Britton (1982) termed “change by contagion from teacher to teacher” (“English teaching: Retrospect and prospect,” p. 214).

I don't mean that nobody else matters, nobody else can help...provided we see that interactive learning applies to teachers as well as those they teach; provided [people like me in professional development] see our role as helping them to theorize from their own experience, and build their own rationale and their own body of convictions. For it is when they are actively theorizing from their own experience that they can, selectively, take and use other people's experiences and other people's theories.

- 1. Journal entries.** Please keep a writing journal with at least one entry each day during the institute. Your journal should support your writing and learning throughout the institute. Reflections on discussions and other course activities, connections to events outside the course, rehearsals for writing - think of this as a record of personal and professional discovery, related however tenuously to this course. This journal is all yours and should reflect your experience in the course as a thinker, reader, writer, teacher, friend, and so on.
- 2. Reading Responses**
 - a.** Read *Thrive: 5 Ways to (Re)invigorate Your Teaching* and follow carefully the separate instructions provided for your multigenre composition in response to this book.
 - b.** Your choice book: Compose a response in any format that you like (text or graphic), but your response must be contained within one 8 1/2 x 11 space. You are encouraged to compose in ways that inform your understanding of the text and may reveal your perspective to others in an engaging way (e.g., diary entry, letter to the author, poem or song lyric, schematic, drawing...the possibilities are unlimited).
 - c.** Compose responses to assigned articles in preparation for scheduled discussions on diversity and literacy in the 21st century. See separate instructions.
- 3. Book talk** on a book of your choosing (#2b above) that helps you to think about teacher leadership. Introduce us to this book in a book talk and discussion of 5-10 minutes. Help us to understand the intended audience and purpose of the book, how it helped to inform your thinking about teacher leadership, and whether we might like to read this book ourselves.
- 4. Writing for the institute anthology.** Fellows are expected to contribute at least two pieces of writing for the annual Maine Writing Project Fellows' anthology. We hope that you will compose at least one piece of writing during the institute -- creative or expository, highly revised and intended for publication, but anthology pieces may be composed during the leadership institute or drawn from writing completed any time during or since the spring

course (Introduction to the National Writing Project), including something from your multigenre composition.

5. **Teaching Demonstration.** A 60-70 minute workshop style presentation sharing an aspect of your teaching practice with institute colleagues. Separate guidelines provided.
6. **Course Reflection.** A 2-3 page reflection on your course experience.
7. **Course Portfolio.** An organized collection of your course materials. You may choose to build upon the home portfolio from ERL 590 (Introduction to the National Writing Project).

Required elements to submit for mentor response:

- pre-institute assignments: writing about your metaphor; possibilities and proposals related to *Deciding to Lead*; diversity problematic situation; 21st century writing thought starters
- six journal entries
- response to your choice book
- multigenre composition and any other writing composed during the institute (or during the run-up to the institute)
- Handout materials from your teaching demonstration.
- Your course reflection (2-3 pages).

Remember, you are invited to submit your entire home portfolio or to include other selected materials with the required elements. For most Fellows, the portfolio is more than a record of work completed. *It is a keepsake of your experience!*

General Participation. An institute of this nature relies on the cooperative participation of all members. Participation is represented by taking part in classmates' teaching demonstrations as well as general class discussion and group activities.

Hosting: Each Fellow is asked to work with one or more classmates to host one day of the institute. Hosting traditionally includes the following:

- Provide a moderate selection of snacks for the day.
- The opening and closing moments. Opening and closing moments should be short (~5 minutes) and are not oriented toward coursework, just toward the joy of writing, teaching, and learning. In a format of your choice (print, audio, visual, a link), share some prose, poetry, music, video...whatever.
- Memorialize highlights of the day in an artifact of your own design.

ERL 546: Pre-institute Assignments**Appendix I****Maine Writing Project: Institute in Teacher Leadership**

EDU 546, Summer 2014: Pre-Institute Assignments

It is strongly recommended that you complete these assignments before the start of the July Institute in Teacher Leadership. This will considerably relieve your work load and stress level during the institute! The date listed for each is the institute day on which it will be discussed.

Choice Book: See course syllabus for description of choice book reading. Complete your choice book according to the book talk schedule. Written response to choice book is due with your portfolio on the final day of the institute.

Shared Reading: *Thrive: 5 ways to (re)invigorate your teaching* by Meenoo Rami (2014) and respond with a multi-genre composition.

- See separate guidelines for multigenre composition.
- Post your multigenre composition to Moodle between June 27-30.

Week #1**Day 1, Tuesday, 7/1/14:**

1. My Metaphor: Complete the following sentence: “When I am at my best as a teaching colleague, I am like a _____.”

- Your metaphor should be concrete and specific (e.g., a basset hound, a cedar tree, a Ford Mustang, an Irish wedding, a toaster...). At the same time, try to name your metaphor quickly, accepting whatever image arises within you without censoring or editing.
- Think and write a bit more about why this metaphor fits you. What are the characteristics of your metaphor? What does it do? And how do these things fit you? This should be draft writing only, and not more than a few hundred words.
- This is the metaphor you will share with classmates and use in discussion. *On the first day of the institute*, please bring a visual representation of your metaphor -- an object or (if your metaphor is bigger than a breadbox) a picture or other likeness). **Important! Please do not share your metaphor with anyone until you are asked to do so at the July institute.**

2. Read pages 112-117 (excerpt provided) of *Deciding to Lead*, by Denny Wolfe (1997). Make brief notes for a discussion of examples related to the possibilities Wolfe lists or other “possibilities and proposals” (p. 112) that you may have.

.....

Week #2**Day 3, Monday, 7/7/14: Diversity Discussion**

- *Please read:*
 - “Writing to Learn and Learning to Write” by James Britton (*Prospect and Retrospect: Selected Essays of James Britton*, 1972/1982)

- “Growth through English” by Peter Smagorinsky (The English Journal, 2002)

In his essay “Writing to Learn and Learning to Write” (1972), James Britton makes the case that “children learn to write above all by writing” and that in doing so *expressive writing* is instrumental as “the language close to and most revealing of [their] individuality.” In his *English Journal* article “Growth through English Revisited” (2002), Peter Smagorinsky calls into question what he considers the “valorization” of individuality in our schools at the expense of social responsibility in students’ personal growth.

Student populations in American schools today present an increasingly diverse population, yet schools in Maine often lag behind this national trend. In either event, educators are increasingly challenged not just to teach students *of* diversity but also to teach *about* diversity so that students will ultimately be able to interact and thrive in a diverse world.

Please read the essays by Britton and Smagorinsky as the back drop for *a discussion of balancing individuality and social responsibility* in students’ personal growth generally and with respect to teaching about diversity in particular. Please consider the role of writing in thinking about these issues and your response to them.

Please prepare for this discussion by composing a *problematic situation* that illustrates an issue you see as part of this topic. Your problematic situation may be fictional or it may be based on your own experience. Describe your problematic situation in a brief paragraph (about 200 words) that you are comfortable sharing with classmates.

On Day 3 of the institute (July 7), we will have a brief Q & A session for clarifying questions on the two essays followed by extended small group discussion and a brief reporting out.

Day 4, Tuesday, 7/8/14: *Writing in the 21st century*

- *Please read:*
 - “A brief history of networked digital information” by David Warlick (2004)
 - “Writing in the 21st century,” an NCTE policy brief (2009)

In the 21st century, students are reading and writing increasingly diverse forms of text, including hypertext and multimedia as well as informal textual communication in social media. Who is teaching these kinds of composition? What constitutes text? How do we connect traditional rhetorical characteristics and expectations with new media? How does all this affect those who teach composition today?

Please read “A brief history of networked digital information” (Warlick, 2004) and “Writing in the 21st century,” (NCTE policy brief, 2009).

- In response to these readings or based on your own experience with technology use and integration or writing in the 21st century, identify possible discussion starters. These may include issues teachers and students face or technology applications you have used or seen. Compose a concise statement for each of 4-6 discussion starters.

ERL 546: Introduction to the Teaching Demonstration***Appendix J*****Maine Writing Project: Institute in Teacher Leadership**
EDU 546, Summer 2014: Introduction to the Teaching Demonstration***What is the National Writing Project Teaching Demonstration?***

The teaching demo is a seventy-minute workshop in which you share some aspect of your classroom teaching practice. The learning from the teaching demo is not intended to come from studying and presenting a topic that is new to you but from exploring a familiar and favorite piece of your current practice by sharing it with colleagues. In fact, The National Writing Project originated from “the belief that the summer institute would cross-pollinate the successful teaching of writing” (Gray, 2000). In the Maine Writing Project, we are open to sharing any literacy practice, not just writing...(See below for examples from recent years)...but we still seek to answer two essential questions: “How do you teach writing or literacy?” and “Why do you do it that way?”

There is no one way to conduct a teaching demonstration, but teaching demonstrations often include the following elements: an introduction to you and your topic, some activity and discussion, a bit of theory, some writing, examples of student work, a handout.

Ken will conduct a model teaching demo during the institute orientation at *Writing Ourselves*. There will also be time to test out some of your ideas with colleagues and your mentor. ***Please prepare for March 22nd by answering the following questions:***

- ➔ What are 2-3 possible topics for your teaching demonstration? (This might be something broad like a unit of instruction, but the best demos are often specific activities or methods that can be covered deeply in a 70-minute timeframe.)
- ➔ Why are these topics important to you?
- ➔ What part of the topic (activity) could teachers try out as part of a workshop?
- ➔ What student work, if any, do you have (or could you gather) to illustrate the topic?
- ➔ What challenges or questions does the topic raise for discussion?

Teaching Demonstration ideas from recent years:

- Building writers' fluency: A guided exploration of freewriting
- Collaborative note-taking with Google Docs
- Engaging students with read-alouds that P.O.P.
- Haiku Everything! Finding the main idea through Haiku
- Making sense of it all: Role play in the classroom
- Is there anybody out there? Creating a sense of audience with student letters to live authors
- Tweet by tweet: Using social networking to engage with literature
- Enhancing student writing through music
- Creating a classroom bill of rights
- Bringing reading and writing to the math classroom
- No, all poems do not need to rhyme: Helping students write free verse
- Coming to our senses: Using classroom stations to build cultural connections
- Writing to problem solve in mathematics
- Teaching writing with drama process
- Introducing mentor texts: The power of read-aloud
- Designing a standards referenced literacy lesson
- Voice Thread: A multimedia slide show
- Using mentor texts to teach persuasive writing
- From Aristotle to AC/DC: Teaching the ancient art of rhetoric in the age of Facebook
- Generating personal narrative writing
- Helping students find voice in writing

ERL 546: Introduction to the Multigenre Composition (fellows)**Appendix K****Maine Writing Project: Institute in Teacher Leadership**
EDU 546, Summer 2014: Introduction to the Multigenre Composition

Based on the work of Tom Romano (2000), the multigenre composition combines multiple, different genre or kinds of text on a topic. Each element displays a kind of *separateness*, as each is “self-contained, making a point of its own, unconnected to other genres by conventional transitional devices” (p. 4). Yet, across this multigenre collection there is also a sense of unity. Multigenre works are equally respectful of fiction and nonfiction, narrative, exposition, informational text, argument, and so on. Moreover, multigenre work often presents writing in ways that are not generally encountered in the traditional paradigm for school writing within a particular curriculum.

Orientation: This multigenre composition is in response to *Thrive: 5 ways to re(invigorate) your teaching* (Rami, 2014). One advantage of the multigenre composition is that it easily accommodates varied response to different sections of a book like this as well as a thread of response over the whole book. Please don't fixate on whether you are responding adequately to every chapter or topic in *Thrive*, but do be guided in broad terms by that reading.

Requirements: For this multigenre composition, please create pieces in 4-6 different genre (see below) as well as an introduction and a conclusion. You may include options like a cover, table of contents, acknowledgements/dedication, citations, illustrations, hypertext, and so on as appropriate to your interests, the nature of individual pieces, and your composition as a whole. Prepare an advanced draft before the institute begins, and post to Moodle between June 27-30. A final draft, highly revised in format and style will be due on the final day of the institute (July 11).

Suggestions...

- Have fun.
- Try genre that you've never tried before and that might surprise and entertain readers.
- Consider including images or other media, or other creative touches to enhance your composition
- *Have fun... really.*

Genre Ideas for Your Multigenre:

Advertisement	Eulogy	Portfolio
Affidavit	Evaluation	PowerPoint Model
Application (jobs)	Facebook page	Proposal
Application (college)	Facebook wall-to-wall	Quilt
Application (award)	Feasibility study	Reading log
Annotated bibliography	Flash Cards	Recipe
Autobiography	Graffiti	Research paper
Autopsy	Grant	Request
Bank balance	Graphic Novel	Response
Baseball-esque cards	Grocery List	Response to literature
Bills, receipts	Historical fiction	Resume
Biography	Horoscope	Rule
Birth certificate	IM Transcript	SAT Prompt & Essay
Book cover	Interview	Science Lab
Book dedication	Joke	Scientific Research Report
Book review	Journal	Scrapbook page
Brochure	Knitting chart	Screenplay
Bumper sticker	Letters w/ envelope	Script
Business letter	Letters of introduction	Self-evaluation
Caption	Letters of complaint	Self Portrait
Calendar	Literary analysis	Sketch
Cartoon	Literature Review	Song
CD Cover	Loudspeaker announcement	Sound Track
Collage	Magazine ad	Speech
Commentary	Magazine feature article	Sports article
Commercial	Manual	Slideshow
Compare essay	Marketing analysis	State Writing Assessment
Contrast essay	Memoir	Sticky Note
Condolence letter	Memo	Story
Contract	Minutes	Summary
Credo	Mission Statement	Survey
Critique	Movie ticket stub	Synthesis
Crossword Puzzle	MySpace Page	T-shirt art
Day Planner entry	Multigenre in a multigenre	Table/Chart
Database	Narrative report card	Technical Report
Diagnosis	Newsletter	<i>This I Believe</i> essay
Diagram	News article	Toast
Dialog	Newscast	Top Ten List
Diary	Novella	Traffic Report
Dictionary List	Nursery rhyme	TV script
Digital Story script	Observation	Video script
Directions	Oil painting	Voice mail transcript
Doodle	Outline	Watercolor
Drawing	Pamphlet	Weather report
Dream sequence	Philosophy of life	Webpage
Editorial	Play	Webpage pop-up
Encyclopedia article	Poem	White paper
Epigram	Political speech	
Elevator speech	Pop-up scene	
Essay	Postcard	

ERL 547: Course Syllabus**Appendix L**

Seminar in Mentoring
ERL 547, Spring Semester
Online: 1/13/14-5/2/14

Prerequisites: ERL 545, Introduction to the National Writing Project and ERL546, Institute in Teacher Leadership

Course Description: This course is oriented toward the study and practice of assisting others to explore writing and the teaching of writing. In keeping with the National Writing Project model of teachers teaching teachers, mentors are teacher-consultants of the Maine Writing Project who are familiar with its tenets, including the importance of teachers as writers and of reflective practice. Mentors will read about writing, the teaching of writing, and the mentoring of those who write and teach writing. Mentors will participate in discussions on these topics with each other and with Fellows, and mentors will write in various ways throughout the course. Each mentor will also work individually in a collegial fashion with a small group Fellows.

Course Objectives or Learning Outcomes:

1. Participants will explore in practice what it means to mentor those who are involved in an online community as well as a program in writing and the teaching of writing.
2. Together, participants will explore in study, discussion, and reflection the demands and opportunities involved in mentoring.
3. Participants will acquire both skills and a perspective on collegial mentoring in a community of practice.

These outcomes support performance standards drawn from the core principles of the [National Writing Project](#) and the [Maine Writing Project](#).

Required Reading and Resources - See separate MWP book list:

- **Prerequisite reading:** *Because writing matters: Improving student writing in our schools* (2006) by NWP and Carl Nagin ([Amazon](#)).
- One book of your choice that you hope will inform your thinking on mentoring. This text may be on writing or the teaching of writing and may be selected from the MWP book list. Your response to this text is due at the beginning of session #4.
- Selected readings provided and posted to the course Moodle.

In addition to joining and participating in the Moodle space for this course, mentors will join and participate in the Moodle space for ERL 545 (Introduction to the National Writing Project). Be sure to note which activities take place on each of these two spaces. The mentors' Moodle includes a separate HELP discussion Forum where mentors may address concerns related to their work as mentors. Although this Moodle is confidential to the mentors, you are asked to conduct these discussions with discretion.

Mentor Course Assignments

See separate Semester Plan for due dates.

- 1. Introduction to Mentoring:** Excerpts are provided from *The Mentor's Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships* (Zachary, 2012). See separate assignment information.
- 2. Response to course reading:**
 - a.** Please refresh your reading of *Because Writing Matters*, the one required reading for Fellows. You are invited to post comments about this text on the mentors' Moodle and from the "mentorial" standpoint of how useful it is as a text for prospective TCs, what you notice in Fellows' book responses, how the text can be leveraged in mentoring throughout the course, and so on.
 - b.** One book of your choice that you hope will inform your thinking on mentoring. Please write a 2-3 page response (double-spaced) to this text. Your audience for this text is your fellow mentors, so please share what you learned and/or what questions were raised for you by this text that may be of interest to them. Your response to this text is due at the beginning of session #4.
- 3. Contributing to mentor resource collection:** During the semester, please contribute at least two resources on mentoring, broadly defined. That is, resources may be articles, websites, books, etc., on mentoring or a related topic.
 - a.** Post each article to the Mentor Resource Collection Forum as scheduled during sessions #3 and #5. Attach or link the resources to a Forum entry that contextualizes the article and explains how it shaped or refined your thinking.
 - b.** Read and respond to at least one other article posted to the mentor resource collection during each session.
- 4. Journal entries:** Maintain a journal with periodic entries (on your honor :) regarding your mentoring experience--observations, questions, issues, etc. These entries are reflective for you but are also our starters for "class discussions" throughout the course. Please strive for timely and thought-provoking entries.
 - a.** *At the beginning* of sessions #2-5, please post one journal entry to the discussion Forum on the mentors' Moodle. If necessary, include a brief introduction that contextualizes the entry.
 - b.** During sessions #2-5, please read and respond to other mentors' journal postings. This is your way of conducting open discussion on mentoring throughout the course.
- 5. Mentor's own Writing for Publication:** Mentors are expected to produce one piece of writing that is highly revised and anticipates a particular audience (e.g., school community, local community newspaper, educational or creative writing journal). This writing may be a creative piece (e.g., memoir, short story) or a position paper (journal article, advocacy or instructional writing) but it is expected to relate in some way to mentoring or the mentor experience. At least two (2) drafts of this writing should be posted to the mentors' "writing group" Forum for feedback from your classmates, preferably using the NWP bless-address-press response protocol.

- 6. Course Reflection:** Complete final paper (~3 pages), a process analysis and personal reflection on your mentoring experience.

Individual Contact Assignments

The Annual Institute of the Writing Project is perhaps unique in that Fellows have an experienced teacher-consultant as a mentor. Each mentor will be assigned to assist a small group of Fellows. It is important to recognize that mentoring is *not* a supervisory or instructional role. Definitions of “mentor” tend to include the words trusted advisor, one who provides guidance, motivation, emotional support, and role modeling as needed. Rather than *giving* direction, mentors are asked to help Fellows solve their own problems. In other words, we hope our mentors will assist new Fellows to find their own comfortable place within the Writing Project. The Writing Project model is the highest form of peer mentoring, and much of this course revolves around exploring that rather unique relationship both conceptually and practically.

Mentors are asked to develop a collegial, not hierarchical, relationship with Fellows. Toward that end, mentors are asked to complete the following with their assigned Fellows:

1. Profiles and the Learning Autobiography (LA):

- a. As soon as possible, please update your Moodle profile, read your Fellows’ profiles, and make an initial contact welcoming them into the course. Be sure to offer your help with navigating course requirements, including their first major writing, the Learning Autobiography.
- b. Please post your own learning autobiography to the Fellows’ Moodle Help Forum as a model and to get acquainted. Let me know if you need help with this.

2. Hopes & Fears Forum:

- a. Please be sure to read the *initiating* Forum entry by each of your assigned Fellows and respond individually and privately using either email or Moodle’s internal messaging system. Without becoming officious, this is a chance to encourage, empathize or otherwise begin building the collegial relationship.
- b. Aside from the private response to your own assigned Fellows, you may feel free to participate in this Forum by responding publicly to any posts by any Fellows.

3. Forum Discussions - Fellows’ required and open discussions:

- a. Participation in Fellows’ discussion forums (whether required or open for them) is optional for you. You may participate and please do try to check-in on your own assigned Fellows. Certainly, your contributions may help to further your mentoring role with respect to assigned Fellows or the Fellows class as a whole. This is an area in which being reflective about your participation is part of coming to understand the mentor’s role.
- b. During sessions #4-6, each mentor will be assigned to moderate one of the Fellows’ discussion Forums. Moderation does not require initiating a discussion thread, although initiating a thread may be appropriate. Rather, it involves monitoring Fellows’ discussion and introducing process leadership (e.g., facilitating questions) or subject matter knowledge as needed.

4. Fellows' Digital Portfolio: Periodically throughout the course, Fellows will add items to their digital portfolio on Moodle. In the course schedule you are asked to respond publicly, in a collegial fashion, to Fellows' journal entries and book responses (i.e., using the Forum reply function within their portfolio). If you wish to share a private comment, you may also respond using email or Moodle's internal messaging system.

5. Response to Assigned Fellows' Writing for Publication: As part of their "writing for publication," Fellows are advised that they "may share these writing pieces with their Writing Project mentor." As you know, the National Writing Project values self-governing writing groups and *peer* response. At the same time, Fellows often appreciate their mentor's response as a different view, one with particular expertise, or someone with whom they have developed a relationship over the first weeks of the course.

Mentors are welcome to respond to their Fellows' writing, and doing so can be a test of your growing skill as a mentor. Please observe the following guidelines:

- Respond privately, one-to-one. Do not post to a Fellows' writing group Forum to avoid disrupting the group dynamic.
- Pay particular attention to facilitating the Fellow's writing process rather than evaluating the writing itself. While you will certainly want to answer direct questions (address), be sure to leave decision-making with the writer. Inevitably, you wield a certain power in this relationship and it is important not to be perceived as the instructor or gatekeeper.

6. Coaching for Teaching Demonstration: During Session #5, initiate contact with assigned Fellows regarding the seven-day institute on teacher leadership in July and about possible plans for their teaching demonstration. *Detailed guidelines will be provided later on this element.*

7. Portfolio Response Letter: At the end of the course, write a letter to each Fellow commenting in a collegial fashion on their portfolio generally and their writing for publication and final course reflection.

Semester Plan

Mentors will follow the semester plan for ERL 545, Introduction to the National Writing Project. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the syllabus for that course.

- Please note which activities take place (i.e., assignments are posted) on the Fellows' Moodle and which take place on the mentors' own dedicated Moodle.
- Please note where you respond "publicly" for all to see using the reply function of a Moodle Forum and where you respond "privately" to your assigned Fellows using email or the Moodle internal messaging system.
 - Please remember that your public responses are also a model of good response for Fellows to emulate.
- The following sections (Sessions #1 - #6) are only a summary checklist. Be sure to see "Mentor Course Assignments" in the Mentor course syllabus for detailed instructions.

Session #1: 1/13/14 - 1/28/14*Fellows' Moodle*

- Post your own learning autobiography to the designated Help Forum thread on the Fellows' Moodle.
- Read assigned Fellows' profiles and respond privately to your assigned Fellows with a get-acquainted welcome message. Offer assistance with assigned Fellows' Learning Autobiography, especially with preparation of the "performance" element.
- Read assigned Fellows' entries on the Hopes & Fears Forum and respond privately using email or Moodle messaging system. You may also participate in this Forum by responding publicly to any posts by any Fellows.
- Respond publicly to assigned Fellows' book response to *Because Writing Matters*.
- Respond publicly to assigned Fellows' journal entries posted to digital writing portfolio.

Mentors' Moodle

- Update your profile.
- Discussion: Post to Mentors' get-acquainted Forum.
- *The Mentor's Guide* by Lois Zachary (2012): *See Separate Instructions*.
 - assignments 1.1 (week 1) & 1.2 (week 2)
- Refresh your reading of *Because Writing Matters*. This will support your response to Fellows' book response.

Session #2: 1/29/14 - 2/11/14*Fellows' Moodle*

- Read (view) learning autobiographies by assigned Fellows and respond privately. Optional: respond publicly to learning autobiographies posted by any Fellows.
- Respond publicly to assigned Fellows' journal entries posted to digital writing portfolio.
- Forum on teachers as writers: Read articles. Follow and model participation in Forum discussions as appropriate for a mentor.
- View assigned Fellows posted writing plans. Respond as appropriate to developing your role as a mentor. (Your response may need to wait until Session #3.)

Mentors' Moodle

- *The Mentor's Guide* by Lois Zachary (2012): *See Separate Instructions*.
 - assignments 2.1 (week 1) & 2.2 (week 2)
- Read "Reflecting on the Gift of Mentorship" by Chris Liska Carger.
- Post one journal entry on your mentoring experience. Read and respond to other mentors' entries.

Digital Writing Marathon: 2/12/14 - 2/16/14 - no participation required. Although you will want to read what your assigned Fellows post to the digital writing marathon forum, please refrain from responding publicly on their group forum. This should be the Fellows' time and opportunity to build their trust with one another and to have some fun. Remember also that your assigned Fellows will likely be in different writing groups. It is appropriate to send a private message to assigned Fellows commenting on their marathon trip and *perhaps* on their writing. As Fellows enter their writing group and writing for publication phase, consider how your comments here may affect the mentoring relationship.

Session #3: 2/17/14 - 3/2/14

Fellows' Moodle

- Respond publicly to assigned Fellows' response to choice book on writing.
- Respond publicly to assigned Fellows' journal entries posted to digital writing portfolio.
- Assigned Fellows may begin posting drafts of their writing for publication. *See your syllabus for separate notes on response to Fellows' writing!*

Mentors' Moodle

- Post one resource to Mentor Resource Collection. Read and comment on at least one resource posted by a classmate.
 - Post one journal entry on your mentoring experience. Read and respond to classmates' entries.
 - *Looking Ahead to Session #4...*
 - Read one choice book that you hope will add to your thinking on mentoring. This text may be on writing or the teaching of writing and may be selected from the MWP book list. Your response to this text is due at the beginning of session #4.
 - Your writing for publication should also be posted early in Session #4, so you will want to begin developing a topic and perhaps composing your first draft.
-

Semester Break: 3/3/14 - 3/16/14

Session #4: 3/17/14 - 4/1/14

Fellows' Moodle

- *See your syllabus for separate notes on response to Fellows' writing!*
- Moderate Open Forum discussion as assigned, and of course feel free to participate.
- Respond publicly to assigned Fellows' journal entries posted to digital writing portfolio.

Mentors' Moodle

- Post response to your choice book. Read and respond to classmates' entries
- Post one journal entry on your mentoring experience. Read and respond to classmates' entries.
- Post a draft of your "writing for publication" piece (creative writing or position paper). Read and respond to classmates' writing. *Important:* Please note that you are asked to use the *Bless, Address, Press* protocol of the National Writing Project. You are also welcome to draw on the response protocol handout or other readings.

Session #5: 4/2/14 - 4/15/14*Fellows' Moodle*

- Moderate Open Forum discussion as assigned, and of course feel free to participate.
- Respond publicly to assigned Fellows' journal entries posted to digital writing portfolio.
- Initiate contact with assigned Fellows regarding ideas for teaching demonstration at summer Institute in Teacher leadership.

Mentors' Moodle

- Post one resource to Mentor Resource Collection. Read and comment on at least one resource posted by a classmate.
- Post one journal entry on your mentoring experience. Read and respond to classmates' entries.
- Continue revisions to your writing for publication.

Session #6: 4/16/14 - 5/2/14*Fellows' Moodle*

- Forum on teaching writing: Read articles. Moderate Forum as assigned, and of course feel free to participate.
- Respond publicly to assigned Fellows' response to choice book on teaching writing.
- Respond to Fellows' journal entry on experience of writing or sharing writing with students.
- Confer with those assigned Fellows that are planning to take the seven-day teacher leadership institute regarding teaching demonstration plans.
- Review assigned Fellows' digital portfolio and respond privately with portfolio response letter.

Mentors' Moodle

- Post "final" version of your writing for publication.
- Participate in mentors' closing discussion.
- Compose final course reflection.

ERL 547: Instructor and Mentors Response Guide

Appendix M

ERL 547 Instructor and Mentors' Response Guide

Fellows' Assignment	Instructor	Mentors
Opening Moment	Optional	Optional
Session 1		
Profile: Get acquainted letter	Not Applicable	Private
*Journal Entry	No	Public
Writing Activity 1	(Optional)	Optional
Forum #1: Hopes & Fears	Yes, in S1 progress report	Private (Public is optional)
*Book Response #1 (<i>Because Writing Matters</i>)	No	Public
Session 2		
*Learning Autobiography	Yes, in S2 progress report	Private (Public is optional)
*Journal Entry	No	Public
Writing Activity 2 (week 1)	(Optional)	Optional
Writing Activity 3 (week 2)	(Optional)	Optional
Forum #2: Teachers as Writers	Optional	Optional
*Journal Entry: Writing Ideas	No (unless needed)	Private
Digital Writing Marathon		
*Journal Entry on Writing Marathon (G)	No	Private
*Writing Marathon writing excerpt (G)	No	Private Optional
*Writing Plans to group Forum (G)	No (unless needed)	Private (if appropriate)
Session 3		
*Journal Entry	No	Public
Writing Activity 4	(Optional)	Optional
*Book Response #2 (book on writing)	No	Public
Forum: Draft Writing (G) (Position paper & creative)	No Process comment in progress report	Private: See Syllabus for guidelines

	Session 4	
*Journal Entry	No	Public
Optional discussion Forum	(Optional)	Optional unless assigned to moderate
Forum: Draft Writing (G) (Position paper & creative)	No Process comment in progress report	Private: See Syllabus for guidelines
	Session 5	
*Journal Entry	No	Public
Optional discussion Forum	(Optional)	Optional unless assigned to moderate
Forum: Draft Writing (G) (Position paper & creative)	No	Private: See Syllabus for guidelines
	Session 6	
*Journal Entry: Writing with students	Yes	Optional
*Book Response #3 (Rethinking teaching writing)	No	Public
Writing Activity 5	No	Optional
Forum #3: Teaching of writing	Optional	Optional
*Final versions Writing for Publication (Position paper & creative)	No	Private: See Syllabus for guidelines
*Course Reflection	Yes, in final status report	Public is optional include private response in summary letter
Summary Letter to Fellows	Not Applicable	Private

Key:

*Items posted to digital writing portfolio; (G) = items posted in writing groups

Response Options:

- "Private" via Moodle message or email
- "Public" post in reply to Fellow's portfolio or on a discussion Forum
- "Optional" response (public or private): not required but may help to build the mentoring relationship.
- "No" = Instructor will not respond (unless needed to correct process)

ERL 547: Response Assignments to Zachary (2012)**Appendix N**

Zachary, L. (2012). *The mentor's guide: Facilitating effective learning relationships*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Zachary in Perspective

I have searched widely for a text for this course. There are texts to support experienced teachers in formal programs to mentor new teachers, and there are texts about peer mentoring among students (K-16), but I have yet to find a text on the special kind of collegial mentoring that characterizes the Writing Project. *The Mentor's Guide* by Lois Zachary is recommended for “managers, teachers, and leaders from any career, professional, or educational setting” (back cover), yet it is clearly intended to help mentors support mentees (yes, that really is a word, at least for Zachary) in assimilating and getting ahead in some formal way within a career context.

That's not our context. Nevertheless, Zachary provides an excellent foundation for understanding the nature of a mentoring relationship as well as the skills required of mentors. What will make this text work for us is a reflective approach. As we read and tryout what Zachary recommends, we will need to question the text: adopting some, adapting some, and perhaps resisting (or outright rejecting) some. In this way, Zachary can be both helpful and thought-provoking. A reflective stance can help us test not just what she says but our own assumptions and beliefs about mentoring in the Writing Project.

I think we can agree with Zachary's emphasis on a “collaborative mentoring paradigm” (p.3). If anything, the Writing Project takes that paradigm to a higher level. If teachers are the best teachers of other teachers, then we are all mentors to each other in this organization. Of course, this may be a new experience for Fellows, and they will naturally rely on you in traditional mentee-mentor ways as they come to know the Writing Project.

A few things to keep in mind as you integrate Zachary into your work:

- There is a difference between mentoring one individual and managing a small group of mentees. Zachary addresses negotiating common ground rules for the mentoring relationship (Handout p. 139), especially “time” (i.e., when interactions will take place). You will want to address elements like time in ways that make your own work of balancing mentees manageable.
- Zachary emphasizes “goal-setting” as part of the mentoring relationship. This is one of the clearest examples of how mentoring in the Writing Project is *softer* than in a more career-based context. Certainly, I don't discourage your helping mentees to set as well as achieve their goals. At the same time, Fellows' goals are so intensely personal that the mentor's role is reflective rather than influenced by an outside (for lack of a better word, “corporate”) agenda. Of course, we do hope that Fellows will come to know what it means to be a teacher-consultant in the Maine Writing Project, and this should be a part of our mentors' guiding role.

Finally, I want to emphasize that we ourselves are still figuring out this mentoring role. So, above all, trust your own instincts and remember that you have other mentors (other TCs) to help

you work through whatever arises. Put Zachary to use but make it your own, and help to make it our own. We can do that, together.

Assignment 1.1: *Please complete during session #1, week #1*

- Read pages 1-5 (top).
 - Respond to “Elements of the learning-centered mentoring paradigm” (p. 3-4)
 - Read *each element* and do an immediate, unfiltered, short quickwrite for each.
 - Retrospect & prospect:
 - Look back at your experience as a Fellow and look ahead to what you expect may be coming...Do these elements ring true? Do they surprise you? (emotional response)
 - So what? How important is the element? How does it apply to the writing project?
 - Share an excerpt or summary statement from 3 of your quickwrites under the corresponding category in the Forum on these elements. Read and discuss what other mentors have posted.
 - Read pages 5-15 on the principles of adult learning. You may choose to make notes or journal over this reading, but *no shared response is required*.
-

Assignment 1.2: *Please complete during session #1, week #2*

- Read pages 16-25.
 - The Mentor’s Journey: Complete Exercises 1.1 (p. 17) and 1.2 (p. 20).
 - The Mentee’s Journey: Complete Exercise 1.3 (p. 22). Much of this will be speculation, although you can begin to compose a picture based on your mentees’ profiles as well as their Hopes & Fears Forum entries and later their learning autobiographies. This exercise will also prompt questions that you might raise in your private (and perhaps public) responses to the Hopes & Fears Forum and learning autobiography.
 - Complete Exercise 1.4 (p. 24): Implication for Facilitating Learning. Compose a journal entry based on this exercise and post to the designated Forum on the mentors’ Moodle.
-

Assignment 2.1: *Please complete during session #2, week #1*

- Read pages 27-31 on what mentors do to facilitate adult learning, and pages 100-104 on mentoring skills.
- Complete Exercise 4.4 (p. 106), the Mentoring Skills Inventory.

Coming to know the skills of mentoring within a context of peer mentoring like the writing project is the work of this course. You are not expected to be an expert in these skills when you enter your relationship with assigned Fellows. What’s important now is to consider (a)how the

various skills and your own competencies and interests align, (b) which skills you want to rely upon and which you want to cultivate, and (c) what you believe will be most elemental to your work with Fellows and your own development as a mentor during the course of this semester. There may be no more personal expression of one's self than to be a mentor. This semester should be a self-directed journey (with my help and the help of other mentors and your mentees) toward competence and confidence in yourself as the mentor you want to be.

This journey will benefit from considering the mentoring skills Zachary introduces and trying them out as the semester proceeds. A couple of places to begin:

- in private (and perhaps public) response to Fellows' entries on the discussion forum of teachers as writers;
- in private (not public) response to your Fellows' writing plans.

You will continue to practice these skills as the mentoring relationship develops and as Fellows' move into their writing for publication. These skills may also provide reference points for your journal entries and discussions with other mentors.

Assignment 2.2: *Please complete during session #2, week #2*

- Read pages 113-118, *Connecting through Conversation*, including approaches that are helpful and not helpful in satisfying mentees' information needs. No response required.

Additional Resources from *The Mentoring Guide* by Zachary

- *The Predictable Phases of Mentoring* (pages 87-93). Zachary identifies four phases to the mentoring relationship: preparing, negotiating, enabling growth, and coming to closure. While part (or all) of each phase may not be relevant to our context, it may be helpful to have her overview of how mentoring relationships typically progress (or are approached by mentors especially in more structured or formal contexts).
- *Assumption Awareness* (pages 119-122). Our own experiences as mentees can lead to assumptions which may or may not be valid for others or at different times. Assumption Hunting (Exercise 4.6, page 121) may be a thought-starter, journal entry, or discussion topic.
- *Engaging in Feedback* (pages 177-186). "Giving feedback is not as simple as offering advice or constructive criticism" (p. 179). Tips for giving and receiving this essential element of the mentoring relationship.

ERL 548: Course Syllabus**Appendix O****Maine Writing Project: Advanced Institute in Teacher Leadership**

ERL 548, Summer 2014, UMaine campus
 June 30-July 1 and July 7-11, 2014 ~ 9:00-4:00 each day

*Addendum for Advanced Institute
 Please review ERL 546 - Fellows' syllabus*

Course Description: The key insight of the National Writing Project – that teachers of writing must be writers themselves – is enacted every year in local institutes across the country. But this insight is diminished when teachers are held to commercial, scripted, or otherwise-prescriptive practices within their classrooms. In other words, the concept of teachers as writers is necessary but not sufficient.

In the Maine Writing Project Advanced Institute, we will explore another insight: teachers must be rhetoricians and agents of change. How can teachers make effective arguments for the kinds of pedagogy they discover, share, and create in their annual institutes? How can experienced teachers work to create cultures in their schools that allow and even encourage younger teachers to give progressive writing pedagogy a try?

As you engage these questions and work out plans for change in your own school context, you will be working on your own writing and mentoring first time Maine Writing Project Annual Institute participants as they create and present their practice demonstrations.

Course Objectives or Learning Outcomes:

1. Through reading, writing, and discussion, participants will explore issues of policy, practice, and procedure related to teacher leadership. Participants will further their considerations through the plan or proposal for change.
2. Participants will explore in practice what it means to mentor others in teacher leadership by coaching one or more institute Fellows in a teaching demonstration as well as related activities.
3. Participants will continue to explore their own writing and the role of writing in their personal and professional lives.

These outcomes support performance standards drawn from the core principles of the [National Writing Project](#) and the [Maine Writing Project](#).

Required Reading:

- *Thrive: 5 ways to (re)invigorate your teaching* (2014) by Meenoo Rami. [Amazon](#)
 See course assignments (below) for response requirements on this reading.
- Choice Reading: Select a book or selection of articles that relate to your Proposal or Plan for Change (see assignments below). Create a multigenre composition according to separate, pre-institute guidelines.
- Additional articles may be provided and posted to the course Moodle.

Our online space is a Moodle learning management system where resources are posted and activities may be conducted.

• **Recommended reading:**

- *Because writing matters: Improving student writing in our schools* (2006) by NWP and Carl Nagin (from spring online course, Introduction to the National Writing Project). [Amazon](#)

• **Optional Reading** (recommended reading for institute Fellows):

- *How to make presentations that teach and transform* (1992) by Robert J. Garmston and Bruce M. Wellman. For some Fellows, this book helps in preparing the teaching demonstration. For all, it should help in thinking about presenting as a teacher leader. [Amazon](#)
- *Teachers at the center: A memoir of the early years of the National Writing Project* (2000) by James Gray. Gray's book recounts the origin and early years of the National Writing Project and may provide interesting background for the core beliefs of teachers as writers and as leaders in professional development. [Amazon](#)
- *Deciding to lead: The English teacher as reformer* (1997) by Denny Wolfe and Joseph Antinarella. Although written for secondary English teachers, this text has a lot to say for teachers across disciplines and grade levels on the subject of leading within the context of our own practice and field. [Amazon](#)

Institute Plan

(AIT = Advanced Institute Time: Advanced institute activity to be arranged)

Monday: June 30, 2014 – Maine Writing Project Office, Shibles Hall 315

- 9:00 Introductions: Sharing our creative representations.
- 9:45 Overview - part 1: Review course assignments
- 10:15 Break
- 10:30 The proposal for change: share introductions to multigenre compositions
- 12:00 Break: lunch...individual conferences on proposal/plan for change...sign-up for book talks, opening moments
- 2:00 Overview, part 2: Review institute schedules for mentors and Fellows...update on assigned Fellows' progress on teaching demonstration.
- 3:00 Wrap Around

Tuesday: July 1, 2014

- 8:30 Morning munchies - Greet Fellows
- 9:00 Opening Moment with institute Fellows (Shibles Hall, Room #204)
- 9:15 AIT: writing invitation...book talks (2)...writing/project time
- 11:30 Mentors meet with Fellows to review teaching demo plans (include time for lunch).
- 2:00 AIT: update re Fellows' teaching demo status...review plans for next week...

3:55 Wrap Around. Please be available to institute Fellows following this closing moment.

Monday: July 7, 2014

9:00 AIT: Opening moment...writing invitation...book talks (2)...writing/project time

12:00 Lunch

1:00 AIT: writing/project time

2:15 Time for Fellows to write and/or prepare teaching demonstrations. Please be available to institute Fellows.

3:55 Wrap Around.

Tuesday: July 8, 2014

9:00 AIT: Opening moment...writing invitation...multigenre composition sharing...writing/project time

12:00 Lunch ~ Optional *Dine & Discuss*

1:15 AIT: *Edcamp* preparation

1:45 *Edcamp: Writing in the 21st century* (with Fellows)

3:55 *Edcamp* debrief and closing wrap around.

Wednesday: July 9, 2014

9:00 AIT: Opening moment...writing/project time

12:00 Lunch

1:00 Time for Fellows to write and/or prepare teaching demonstrations. Please be available to institute Fellows.

3:55 Closing moment

Thursday: July 10, 2014: Conference Day - D P Corbett Hall

8:00 "Registration" - set-up & refreshments - session sign-up

8:45 Welcome & Opening Moment

9:00 Session 1

10:15 Break

10:30 Session 2

11:45 Lunch

12:45 Session 3

2:00 Break

2:15 Session 4

3:45 Wrap-up

3:55 Closing moment.

Friday: July 11, 2014

9:00 Opening Moment with Fellows

Debriefing the teaching demonstrations and Promising Practices Conference

10:00 AIT: Share Proposal/Plans for Change

12:00 Lunch (with Fellows)

PM AIT: finish sharing proposal/plans for change...revisit creative representations: confirmation & revision...final thoughts: what are you taking away?...closing moment

Course Assignments

*** Denotes pre-institute work ~ Please complete prior to Day One (June 30)!**

1. ***Response to Thrive: 5 ways to (re)invigorate your teaching (2014) by Meenoo Rami:**
Because *Thrive* is the Fellows' required reading, please read this text through the lens of how it might influence their experience of becoming a teacher-consultant in the Maine Writing Project. Consider questions like, How might reading *Thrive* support Fellows' understanding of the NWP? What vision of teacher leadership does *Thrive* convey? What questions might *Thrive* raise for Fellows? How can mentors leverage *Thrive* to support their work with Fellows? Compose a 1-2 page, journal-style response (500-800 words) that captures some of your thinking on this topic.
2. ***Multigenre composition in response to choice reading:** Based on reading of your own choice (see required reading, above), the multigenre composition is an opportunity to explore the topic you have identified for your proposal/plan for change (see below). The multigenre format is well-suited to this task as it supports different kinds of response to various aspects of a topic. See separate guidelines for this assignment.
3. ***Creative Representation:** Identify a creative representation of your concept of "the mentor." Examples include a metaphor (e.g., a mentor is like a tiger, a toaster, a rushing stream), a body map (i.e., relate a mentor's qualities to parts of the body), or some other creative rendition. Have fun with this and be creative! Make us think in new ways. Somehow bring your creative representation to share with us on the first day of the advanced institute.
4. ***Contact Assigned Fellows** at least once in May and once in late June for a status report on teaching demonstration plans. Be prepared to report status on Day 1 of the advanced institute.
5. **Proposal or Plan for Change:** Participants will identify a policy, practice, or procedure that stands in the way of teachers enacting some of the core pedagogical values of the Maine and National Writing Projects and develop a proposal or plan that addresses that circumstance.

The proposal or plan for change is the centerpiece of the Advanced Institute in Teacher Leadership. We will spend time during the institute trying to understand and remove some of the barriers that keep us from enacting the writing pedagogy we imagined and explored as Fellows in our first Annual Institute. The Proposal/Plan for Change is an individual plan to enact change in your own classroom, department, school, district, or beyond and should pursue an objective you actually plan to attempt.
6. **Writing for Publication:** Advanced Institute TCs will contribute at least one piece of writing to *Our Words*, the Fellows' anthology of writing. This writing may come from the multigenre composition or from writing completed during ERL 547 or ERL 548 (including your writing notebook). Individual plans may be negotiated with the instructor. During the institute, you will have a chance to share your writing and get feedback from peers and co-directors.

7. **Writer's Notebook:** Maintain a notebook with periodic entries. Your notebook should support your writing and learning throughout the institute. Reflections on discussions and other course activities, connections to events outside the course, rehearsals for writing - think of this as a record of personal and professional discovery, related however tenuously to this course. This notebook is all yours and should reflect your experience in the course as a thinker, reader, writer, teacher, friend, and so on.
8. **Mentoring:** Each Advanced Institute TC will mentor one or more institute Fellows. The primary responsibility is to coach these Fellows in preparing and delivering their teaching demonstration.
 - Communicate with Fellows prior to the institute to support preparations as needed (See #4, above) and continue coaching support during the institute.
 - Facilitate Fellows' teaching demonstration presentation and debrief.
 - Respond to Fellows' questions as appropriate throughout the institute.
 - Immediately following the course, write a letter to each Fellow commenting in a collegial fashion on their portfolio, teaching demonstration, course reflection, etc.
9. **Course Reflection:** Please write a 2-3 page reflective essay on your institute experience. You might address what you gained from the institute, what questions it has raised for you going forward, any future plans regarding teacher leadership, and so on as well as suggestions for the format and content of future advanced institutes.

ERL 548: Introduction to the Multigenre Composition (mentors)***Appendix P*****Maine Writing Project: Advanced Institute in Teacher Leadership**

EDU 548, Summer 2014: Introduction to the Multigenre Composition

Based on the work of Tom Romano (2000), the multigenre composition combines multiple, different genre or kinds of text on a topic. Each element displays a kind of *separateness*, as each is “self-contained, making a point of its own, unconnected to other genres by conventional transitional devices” (p. 4). Yet, across this multigenre collection there is also a sense of unity. Multigenre works do not discount expository writing, but they provide for narrative and other creative writing in ways that are not generally encountered in the traditional paradigm for school writing across the curriculum.

Orientation: This multigenre composition is in response to a book (or selection of articles) of your choice that supports your proposal or plan for change for this course.

- You are invited to think broadly in your text selection. Your book (or articles) may be “operational” -- that is, oriented toward the nuts & bolts how-to of your project -- or more philosophical or inspirational -- that is, one that shapes your project thinking more broadly.
- One advantage of the multigenre composition is that it easily accommodates varied response to different sections of a book as well as a thread of response over the whole book. Please don't fixate on whether you are responding adequately to every chapter or topic in your chosen text, but do be guided in broad terms by that reading.

Requirements: For this multigenre composition, please create pieces in 4-6 different genre (see below) as well as an introduction and a conclusion.

- Your introduction should *briefly* present your proposal/plan for change and acquaint us with your multigenre composition.
- You may include options like a cover, table of contents, acknowledgements/dedication, citations, illustrations, hypertext, and so on as appropriate to your interests, the nature of individual pieces, and your composition as a whole.
- Prepare an advanced draft before the institute begins, and post to Moodle between June 27-30. A final draft, highly revised in format and style will be due on the final day of the institute (July 11).

Suggestions...

- Have fun.
- Try genre that you've never tried before and that might surprise and entertain readers.
- Consider including images or other media, or other creative touches to enhance your composition
- *Have fun... really.*

About the Author

Ken Martin, Ph.D., is the site director of the Maine Writing Project and a member of the literacy faculty at the University of Maine College of Education and Human Development. Ken joined the Maine Writing Project as a fellow in the 1999 Invitational Summer Institute. He was a project director for the MWP Rural Voices Radio Program, technology liaison, inservice co-director, and associate director. For ten years, Ken taught English, Humanities, and Drama at Narraguagus High School in Downeast Maine (1997-2007), and for three years he was a technology integration coach working in 35 K-12 schools throughout Washington County, Maine. Prior experiences include banking and retail management as well as owning and operating *Arts & Letters*, a stationary and children's book store in Machias, Maine. Ken earned his doctorate degree in literacy education from the University of Maine in 2011. Ken's dissertation is entitled *Learning to Discuss Literature Online: Where Technology Design and Instruction Intersect* and his continuing research interests include technology integration, online discussion, and digital reading and writing.